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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

D.P.U. 24-104

August 5, 2024

Filing by NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy for approval by the Department of Public Utilities of its Eversource Community Solar Access Program in compliance with Revisions to Model Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target Provision, D.P.U. 20-145-D (June 4, 2024).

On July 3, 2024, NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (“Company”), submitted a filing with the Department of Public Utilities (“Department”) seeking approval of its Eversource Community Solar Access Program (“ECSAP”), as directed by the Department in Revisions to Model Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target Provision, D.P.U. 20-145-D at 201 (June 4, 2024). The Department docketed this matter as D.P.U. 24-104.

In D.P.U. 20-145-D, the Department approved changes to the model Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (“SMART”) tariff (“SMART Provision”) applicable to all electric distribution companies. The SMART Provision is the primary vehicle for the funding and operation of the incentive program designed to establish and support the development of solar energy in Massachusetts (“SMART Program”). In that proceeding, the Company proposed the ECSAP, which is a low-income community shared solar (“LICSS”) program to be administered by the Company to provide access to the SMART Program for low-income customers.

In D.P.U. 20-145-D, the Department found that the Company should make certain changes to the ECSAP, and that the revised proposal should be submitted for Department approval. The ECSAP consists of two primary components: (1) a simplified billing structure; and (2) a customer enrollment process administered by the Company. The ECSAP simplified billing structure proposes to eliminate the need for third-party bills between owners of the solar project and participating customers (or “subscribers”) by distributing credits directly at a pre-determined rate, with a portion distributed as a credit on participating customer accounts and a portion paid to owners as a direct cash payment. The ECSAP is targeted toward those customers on a residential assistance rate (Rates R-2 and R-4).

As part of its revised ESCAP proposal, the Company proposes certain enrollment criteria and targets. The Company proposes the following customer enrollment targets of the total enrollment in the program: 35 percent being R-2 or R-4 customers who are both in arrears and reside in a priority community; 28 percent being R-2 or R-4 customers that are in arrears and not in a priority community; 25 percent being R-2 or R-4 customers residing in a priority community and not in arrears; 12 percent being R-2 or R-4 customers. Priority communities are communities that meet specific environmental justice criteria. Customers in arrears are customers who are struggling to pay their electric bill and have delinquent balances on their accounts. For participating customers, the Company has targeted a \$420 annual savings benefit. Customers in those targeted groups will be selected by lottery and automatically enrolled in the program.

Since filing the original ECSAP proposal, the Company has implemented a single billing system across its entire Massachusetts service territory. As a result, the Company modified the ECSAP proposal to reflect that it will conduct statewide procurements each year, as opposed to separate procurements for eastern and western Massachusetts.

The Department will conduct a public hearing to receive comments on the Company's petition on **Thursday, September 19, 2024, beginning at 2:00 p.m.** The hearing will be virtual and use Zoom videoconferencing. Attendees can join the public hearing by entering the link, <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84249529316>, from a computer, smartphone, or tablet. No prior software download is required. For audio-only access to the public hearing, attendees can dial in at **(646) 558-8656 or (309) 205-3325 (not toll free)** and then enter the **Meeting ID# 842 4952 9316**. If you anticipate providing comments via Zoom during the public hearing, please send an email by **September 16, 2024**, to krista.hawley@mass.gov with your name, email address, and mailing address.

Any person interested in commenting on this matter may submit written comments no later than the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on **September 20, 2024**. Please note that in the interest of transparency any comments will be posted to our website as received and without redacting personal information, such as addresses, telephone numbers, or email addresses. Therefore, consider the extent of information you wish to share when submitting comments. The Department strongly encourages public comments to be submitted by email using the methods described below. If, however, a member of the public is unable to send written comments by email, a paper copy may be sent to Mark D. Marini, Secretary, Department of Public Utilities, One South Station, Boston, Massachusetts, 02110.

Any person who desires to participate otherwise in the evidentiary phase of this proceeding shall file a petition for leave to intervene no later than 5:00 p.m. on **September 11, 2024**. A petition for leave to intervene must satisfy the timing and

substantive requirements of 220 CMR 1.03. Receipt by the Department constitutes filing and determines whether a petition has been timely filed. A petition filed late may be disallowed as untimely, unless good cause is shown for waiver under 220 CMR 1.01(4). To be allowed, a petition under 220 CMR 1.03(1) must satisfy the standing requirements of G.L. c. 30A, § 10. All responses to petitions to intervene must be filed by the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on the second business day after the petition to intervene was filed.

To the extent a person or entity wishes to submit comments or a petition to intervene in accordance with this Notice, electronic submission is sufficient. All documents must be submitted to the Department in **.pdf format** by e-mail attachment to dpu.efiling@mass.gov and krista.hawley@mass.gov. The text of the e-mail must specify: (1) the docket number of the proceeding (D.P.U. 24-104); (2) the name of the person or company submitting the filing; and (3) a brief descriptive title of the document. In addition, a copy of all comments or petitions to intervene should be sent to the Company's attorneys, Ashley S. Marton, Esq., at amarton@keeganwerlin.com, and John K. Habib, Esq., at jhabib@keeganwerlin.com. All documents submitted in electronic format will be posted on the Department's website through our online File Room as soon as practicable (enter "24-104") at: <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/DPU/Fileroom/dockets/bynumber>.

To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), contact the Department's ADA coordinator at andrea.r.casul@mass.gov.

For further information regarding the Company's filing, please contact the Company's attorney, identified above. For further information regarding this Notice, please contact Krista Hawley, Hearing Officer, Department of Public Utilities, at krista.hawley@mass.gov.