

Residential Ratepayers' Advisory Board
January 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Present for the Board:

Tom Moses, Chair
Dana Nute, Vice Chair
Yolanda Baumgartner
Ryan Clouthier
James Garrity
Matthew Kfoury
Neal Kurk
Kenneth Mailloux
Claira Monier

Present for the OCA:

Donald Kreis
Jamie Breen
Josie Gage
Julianne Desmet
Maureen Reno

Guest Speakers: Marc Lemenager (Eversource), Mary Downes (Unitil), and Eric Stanley (Liberty Utilities)

Public: Bruce Berke, Brian Buckley (Department of Energy), Carol Dawson, Patricia Martin, Joe Kwasnik, Donna Reardon, and John Tuthill

Mr. Moses called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. Mr. Kreis introduced OCA's new Staff Attorney Julianne Desmet. Introductions were made around the room.

1. Minutes of October 18th Meeting

Mr. Moses moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Garrity seconded the motion. Board members agreed unanimously.

2. Presentation regarding specific examples of benefit-cost screening in the NHSaves programs

Mr. Kreis presented the attached memorandum to the Board and public, "Benefit/Cost Screening in the NHSaves Programs." Mr. Kreis, Mr. Lemenager, Ms. Downes and Mr. Stanley answered questions from the Board and public.

- Introduction—Mr. Kreis explained the importance of the benefit-cost test, also known as the Granite State Test (GST) in ratepayer-funded energy efficiency. He explained that the GST focuses on utility costs but is also uniquely tailored to public policy needs to New Hampshire.
- Mr. Kreis mentioned the Avoided Energy Supply Component (AESC) Study—Studies that determine the cost effectiveness of a ratepayer-funded energy efficiency measures begin with the most recent edition of the AESC.
- Finally, Mr. Kreis noted that the specific savings achieved by individual measures in New Hampshire is outlined in the state's Technical Reference Manual (TRM)—This manual is over 300 pages long, filled with information on baseline measures, technical assistance, ways to save energy and technical support. The TRM includes formulas, ratios, estimated savings from energy efficiency measures, peak demands and more. It is location specific to New Hampshire's climate and economy.

Some questions that were answered during the meeting follow.

Mr. Moses asked Mr. Kreis about his thoughts on Jevon's paradox. Mr. Kreis replied that from the standpoint of ratepayer advocacy what consumers do with the savings they achieve via NHSaves is not of concern. Ms. Downes said the utilities have studied this as well and have to take this into account when they do the studies.

Mr. Kurk asked why has his electric bill not gone down as the result of the NHSaves programs. Mr. Kreis said that increases in the wholesale price of natural gas had been driving up costs, so bills for both electric and natural gas customers are going up, but less than they would without the NHSaves programs.

Mr. Kurk asked Mr. Kreis whether, if HB 549 is approved, the appeal recently filed by the OCA of the PUC's November 2021 decision scaling back the NHSaves programs be moot? Mr. Kreis said that while HB 549 would have the effect of overruling the PUC on key issues, there may still be questions to be resolved by the Court.

3. Legislative Update

The Board received a current list of House and Senate Bills prior to the meeting. Mr. Kreis discussed the importance of the passage of HB 549 in the House in January and of the amendment to that bill by the Senate last week, as well as the approval letter by the Governor supporting the new edition of that bill. Mr. Kreis said this amended bill would help save the NHSaves program if passed in the Senate in February and if passed by the House afterwards by resetting the budget to the 2020-2021 levels. Mr. Kreis reported on the OCA's impending submission of an appeal of the PUC's November 2021 energy efficiency order along with a motion to stay the order pending appeal.

4. Case Update

The Board received a current Activity List prior to the meeting, Mr. Kreis spoke briefly about the upcoming hearing in Docket DE 21-020, (Eversource-Consolidated, Joint Petition to Approve Pole Asset Transfer).

5. Consideration of what material to include on Advisory Board web page

In light of the impending redesign of the OCA's website, Mr. Kreis asked the Board for input on what the Board would like on the Board's page. Mr. Kurk recommended posting NHSaves to the site to include cost of electricity for consumers to see directly. Also possibly having something simple on the site that shows a 5-20 year historical depiction of the Advisory Board's job in conjunction with the Consumer Advocate. Mr. Kreis added that our new site will have a FAQ pull down mechanism, which will enable consumers a link to contact our agency with questions. Ms. Baumgartner added consumers might want to know the difference between rates and costs. Mr. Kreis asked the Board to contact him with further ideas.

6. Public Comments

Ms. Martin stated her support of the NHSaves program, elaborating that in 2011 she used the program (through weatherization, installing heat pumps and receiving the rebate) and sees the benefits of savings today. Ms. Dawson, who thinks NHSaves is fantastic, said the program saved her town \$11,000 in energy costs. She also said the NHSaves programs are carefully vetted and transparent and have value to politicians and to the public, noting some estimates in the figures of programs are to be expected.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Moses reminded the Board that the next meeting is on April 25, 2022. Mr. Kreis asked the Board to contact him with ideas for the next meeting.

Mr. Moses moved to adjourn. Mr. Mailloux seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously by the Board. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.