

6/14/2021

Docket D.P.U. 21-50

Climable.org

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Ideas/requests to increase public participation in and awareness about DPU proceedings and work:

- Given the wide disparity of resources between corporations/utilities and the general public, there should be improved channels of communications with the public. An idea is to require the incumbent utility to include robust stakeholder participation in advance of final plans and decisions so that impacted residents can be as involved as possible with planning and proposals.
- Provide an ASL translator at public events and hearings.
- Provide consistent bidirectional translation services at hearings so that participants can ask questions and also understand the answers.
- Consistently record hearings and community meetings in audio and video format so that they can be accessed online for community members who are unable to attend meetings at the scheduled time and can view them later.
- A summary of the proceedings can be provided in multiple languages so that people who could not attend a certain hearing can know what happened at the meeting. This is also helpful since hearings are mostly in English, but a summary of important information can be provided for residents with limited English proficiency so that they can also understand what was discussed.
- Provide straightforward background information about policies, projects, and other initiatives so that town residents can participate with a greater understanding of the issue in question and can make informed decisions.
- Additional platforms to publish public notices can be on social media pages of the relevant town or city. It would also be valuable to directly contact community organizations such as community centers, nonprofits, and schools to disseminate that information to stakeholders through their own communication channels.
- Post public notices about the DPU in public areas that are popular, including certain public government buildings such as public schools, libraries, DMVs, post offices, town/city halls, and more.

Criteria for determining what and when things should be translated:

- Notices of hearings, events, regulations, etc. that need public vote and input and/or are directly impacting the lives of specific residents should be provided in multiple languages so that all residents are aware of what is happening.

- The languages into which documents should be translated can be determined by looking at demographic information of a specific area and seeing which languages are the most popular for a given town, city, or county.

Submitting comments at hearings:

- Online comments could be submitted prior to a hearing so that residents who cannot attend can submit questions and comments that can be addressed at the hearing without the person having to be there. This could be done through an online form on the DPU website for each specific hearing/meeting as well as an option to submit an email before the hearing.

Additional ideas:

- We recommend potentially hiring an equity, inclusion, and justice professional to help with increasing public awareness of and participation in public matters within underserved communities. While increasing equity and inclusion is a never-ending process that takes years, the DPU could immediately create a position for an equity and justice professional. This could be similar to roles in the U.S. Department of Energy, such as the Deputy Director for Energy Justice.

Climable.org learned of this proceeding from word of mouth.