

maintain DG project viability, we find that a Provisional Program has the potential to facilitate viable interconnection for many of the DG facilities in the Affected Group Studies.

For these reasons, the Department finds that establishment of a Provisional Program with a modified cost allocation and cost recovery methodology is consistent with the public interest³⁰ and is warranted at this time.³¹ Under the Provisional Program, CIPs must be based on the cost allocation and cost recovery methodology set forth in the Straw Proposal and must fulfill the additional requirements set forth below.³²

The Department emphasizes that establishment of a Provisional Program does not mandate or pre-authorize any CIPs. The Department will review each CIP on a case-by-case basis and may approve, deny, or modify any proposal. The Department has a duty and obligation to protect the safety and reliability of the EPS and to ensure just and reasonable rates for all distribution customers. There are many complex issues to investigate before we

³⁰ The Department's mission is to regulate in the public interest. Zachs v. Department of Public Utilities, 406 Mass. 217, 223 (1989).

³¹ While the primary focus of this Order is facilitating the interconnection of DG facilities, the Department also notes that the distribution system investments necessary to achieve DG interconnections are also likely to help facilitate electrification of the transportation and building sectors, which are key components of the Commonwealth's plans for the short and long-term reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Interim Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2030, at 4-6 (December 30, 2020) (<https://www.mass.gov/doc/interim-clean-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2030-december-30-2020/download>). It is essential that utilities continue to take a long-term view to ensure long-term reliability for ratepayers given the complexities involved in siting and constructing prudent EPS investments, as well as the potential impacts of climate change.

³² The provisions and requirements of the Provisional Program are set forth in Sections II.B through II.D below.