



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

MEMORANDUM

TO: Investigation by the Department of Public Utilities on its own Motion into the role of gas local distribution companies as the Commonwealth achieves its target 2050 climate goals, D.P.U. 20-80 Distribution List

VIA: Electronic Mail Only

FROM: Sarah A. Smegal, Hearing Officer

RE: D.P.U. 20-80 Procedural Schedule

DATE: March 24, 2022

CC: Mark D. Marini, Department Secretary

On October 29, 2020, the Department of Public Utilities (“Department”) voted to open an investigation into potential policies that will enable the Commonwealth to reach its goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and the role of Massachusetts gas local distribution companies (“LDCs”) in achieving that goal. Investigation by the Department of Public Utilities on its own Motion into the role of gas local distribution companies as the Commonwealth achieves its target 2050 climate goals, D.P.U. 20-80, Vote and Order Opening Investigation at 7 (October 29, 2020) (“Order”). The Department docketed this matter as D.P.U. 20-80.

In its Order, the Department directed the LDCs to initiate a joint request for proposals for an independent consultant to conduct a study and prepare a report (“Report”) within the parameters discussed in the Order. Order at 4. The resulting Report is to inform and support separate proposals from each LDC that include the LDC’s recommendations and plans for helping the Commonwealth achieve its 2050 climate goals (“Proposals”). Order at 6. On March 18, 2022, the LDCs submitted the Report and their Proposals.

On February 14, 2022, the Office of the Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (“Attorney General”) and the Department of Energy Resources (“DOER”) submitted correspondence outlining a proposed procedural schedule for this matter, for which other stakeholders expressed support. The Department thanks the Attorney General and DOER for their thoughtful proposal. The Department agrees with the Attorney General and DOER that it would be administratively efficient to focus the investigation on two primary components: (1) the Report and the assumptions and modelling underlying the Report and (2) the regulatory and policy roadmap to guide the evolution of the gas distribution industry, including review of the LDCs’ Proposals.¹ Considering these two components, the Department sets the following procedural schedule in this matter.

The LDCs are directed to transmit this Hearing Officer Memorandum to the current list of D.P.U. 20-80 stakeholders as maintained by the LDCs’ stakeholder engagement facilitator, Environmental Resources Management.

DATE	ACTION
March 18, 2022	Discovery opens ^{2,3}
March 30, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.	Virtual technical session regarding the Report and the assumptions and modelling underlying the Report, including a presentation of the Report’s analysis methods and evaluated pathways
April 15, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.	Virtual technical session regarding the LDCs’ specific Proposals, including a presentation of the Proposals and recommended regulatory and policy framework
TBD	Virtual technical session (if necessary) regarding the recommended regulatory and policy framework
May 3, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.	Virtual public hearing

¹ The Attorney General and DOER further proposed a third component addressing the gas system enhancement program (“GSEP”), but the purpose of this investigation is not the operation of the GSEP. The Department will determine an appropriate forum for evaluating the GSEP at a later date.

² Discovery responses will be due in eight days.

³ Discovery will be permitted only by the Department.

May 5, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.	Virtual public hearing
May 6, 2022	Stakeholder initial comment deadline. Initial comments should be limited in scope to (1) the developed pathways set forth in the Report and the assumptions and modelling underlying the Report; and (2) the regulatory framework necessary to support the equitable and safe transition to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. ⁴
June 7, 2022	Discovery closes
June 15, 2022	Last day for discovery responses
June 22, 2022	Stakeholder final comment deadline
July 6, 2022	LDC final comment deadline
August 10, 2022	Stakeholder and LDC reply comment deadline

⁴ Comments on the regulatory framework may include comments on immediate changes that could be implemented by the LDCs to decarbonize.