

## **AMI Stakeholder Group**

### **April 25, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

#### **1) Identification of Member Organizations**

- D. Winter took attendance based on stakeholder participant list.
- A. Eddington asked if there is an approval process for the meeting minutes, about the status of the January 13 minutes, and for an update on the website process. D. Winter responded that there is no formal approval process and participants should correct individual statements. D. Winter also responded that the January 13 meeting minutes and updates to the website are in process.

#### **2) Discussion/Feedback on EDCs' Guiding Principles for billing of TVR offered by competitive suppliers (slide 5 from the EDCs' 3/28/23 presentation)**

- D. Winter noted that the language in red is language that was offered by Larry Chretien from creditors to Consumers Alliance and is available for discussion. D. Winter invited feedback from the group on guiding principles.
- J. Oppenheim introduced the question on treatment of lower income and medically vulnerable consumers related to the default to time of use and recommended education on topic. D. Winter responded that this issue is out of scope for the current discussion and there will be a separate proceeding on the TVR orders based on directives from the Department to the EDCs.
- M. Marchand asked how the language would work with municipal aggregators.
- L. Chretien stated that comments in red were submitted with support of Elisa Grammar and intended to build aggregators into TVR with minimal cost and hassles. D. Winter notes language seems to actually limit what EDCs can offer for TVR design.
- D. Winter asked J. Oppenheim to circulate to the group for the following meeting a statement recognizing the need for protection of low income and medically vulnerable customers. J. Oppenheim agrees.
- M. Hanks noted, regarding EDC time of use or time varying rate design, that there are many within the AMI stakeholder process that would like to see an advancement of TVR for default service and that a discussion would be helpful even if it only informs the Department with respect to other proceedings.
- J. Lawrence responded, from Eversource perspective, that there is not ample time here to discuss that full topic but would endorse further explanation in another docket. J. Lawrence asked J. Oppenheim to clarify on markups related to the peak time rebate whether suggesting that there be a standard service peak time rate offer or through the course of this engagement that the EDC's work with the competitive suppliers to determine a method for competitive suppliers to be able to offer a peak time rebate either as an aggregation context or in a pure choice context.
- L. Chretien noted that the focus should be on aggregation. J. Lawrence asked to clarify that L. Chretien wanted to explore the capability for EDCs to accommodate municipal aggregators. L. Chretien confirmed.

- D. Winter asked L. Chretien to provide revised red lines to the bullet points introduced as discussed. L. Chretien confirmed. D. Winter confirmed M. Hanks will create a generic statement to be brought to the full group for discussion at the next meeting indicating: i) consensus regarding the scope for this working group established by the Department, ii) that it may be helpful to continue to discuss throughout this process TVR for basic service, and iii) note that TVR for basic service will be addressed in a separate proceeding.
- D. Winter asked for reactions on the last red line points from Energy Consumers Alliance stating “We should recognize and encourage efficiencies achieved through standardized TVR designs within and among municipal aggregations.”
- J. Oppenheim asked if this means that there is to be a developed standard TVR design to be used by/available to all municipal aggregators. L. Chretien responded that the language is fairly innocuous, just saying that there might be benefits to an individual community/consumers with aggregation. J. Oppenheim agrees but states that he wants to acknowledge that the decision lies with the Department, not municipal aggregators.
- J. Lawrence noted that he likes the last bullet because it reinforces Eversource’s goal of designing and implementing its new customer information system of creating efficiencies. He also notes that he'd like to establish an understanding of the widely applicable rate parameters for TVR moving forward so that systems can be designed accordingly. J. Lawrence noted agreement with J. Oppenheim that decisions lie with the Department and not with aggregators.
- D. Boecke requests to change the language “we should recognize and encourage” to “we should explore and encourage” to avoid prejudging any of the outcomes. L. Chretien, K. Dolan, and M. Marchard concur.
- D. Winter states that in summary, L. Chretien will take first attempt at reworking the language that Dan noted. M. Hanks and J. Lawrence will draft discussion point regarding basic service TVR and interacting with AMI stakeholder process and the secondary set of proceedings in front of the department. Also, J. Oppenheim will be drafting an additional bullet recognizing the need for protection of low-income and medically vulnerable customers.

### **3) Discussion/Feedback on EDCs’ TVR Discussion Points (slide 6 from the EDCs’ 3/28/23 presentation)**

- E. Morgera commented on concern for low-income and medical customers, some preferred the plan where they paid a lower rate during the day and a higher rate at night, important to look at.
- J. Oppenheim agreed and raised concerns with default rates.
- E. Morgera suggested putting customers on flat rate and offering switch to variable rates with education would allow customers to make informed decisions. J. Oppenheim agreed on education and starting with flat rates for large population.
- A. Edington asked clarification questions: 1. is first bullet point trying to set up a specific number of periods during the day for TVR; and 2. could the EDCs provide a definition for context on pass through billing. J. Lawrence responded that

Eversource is in the process of designing its customer information system and data management systems. Understanding range of periods will help Eversource implement rate administration processes in its new systems to support competitive rates. A. Edington replied with additional question: is there a range of periods that this group could come reach agreement on to avoid locking into something in short term before a proceeding at Department.

- J. Lawrence responded that there is a distinction between the basic service TVR EDCs will offer and TVR rates that will be offered by competitive suppliers.
- D. Winter agreed on two separate proceedings: 1) EDC will propose TVR rate design based on Department guidance for basic service; and 2) EDCs will accommodate TVR rate design offered by competitive suppliers.
- J. Lawrence addressed the second question of pass-through billing – Eversource wants to agree on easy to administer series of parameters for competitive supplier rates that would allow for bill-ready billing.

#### 4) Discussion/Feedback on EDCs’ Proposed Statement of Scope

- L. Chretien introduced edit to statement of scope: *Recognition of growing role of municipal aggregation in relating to citizen-customers and in standardizing customer usage data access requirements across a municipality.*
- M. Murray suggested the word *usage* be dropped as it is a broader examination of all customer data and there are other aspects equally valuable for getting most value from meters (i.e., billing information). C. Nouel asks for elaboration on “billing.” M. Murray responds that this is one example. C. Nouel responds that this is something we should ask EDCs for additional details. M. Murray agrees.
- K. Papadimitrin echoes M. Murray’s comments about expanding the definition beyond consumption (noted use of customer consent in data access work). M. Murray agreed and noted that other states have regretted neglecting this definition.
- M. Liazos noted that the four focus areas come from the Department’s order establishing the working group and this would be broadening the scope.
- D. Winter notes that the EDCs will discuss this request prior to the next meeting.
- M. Hanks asked the group to consider the means for distributing data to third parties accurately and securely. D. Winter asks M. Hanks to draft language for this surrounding data transmission.
  
- L. Chretien introduced the following redline text: *Prior to AMI rollout, general education about the adverse impacts of peak energy usage and voluntary opportunities to reduce on-peak consumption.*
- L. Chretien also discussed grid modernization generally, noting the benefits, the need for education of customers, and need for a concerted effort to explain the how the benefits support Commonwealth policy goals. Additionally, there is a need for customers to know financial advantages/disadvantages, particularly for medically dependent customers.
- A. Edington noted that it will take significant education and this is a tremendous requirement and therefore does not support/endorse the addition.

- Regarding the customer engagement piece, E. Morgera noted that NY is up and running with an AMI meter deployment with a robust customer package, including information on privacy of the data and the opt out.
  - D. Winter asked J. Oppenheim to confirm that previous concern regarding health consequences results from population with medical equipment depending on electricity. D. Winter noted that this population is protected under Massachusetts regulations and will receive protection despite rollout. J. Oppenheim agreed but noted that education will be necessary to ensure that customers are aware of this protection. E. Morgera noted that New York undertook this education through more personal contact for those customers.
  - J. Crawford noted the importance of education prior to rollout.
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- L. Chretien introduced red line bullet: *Manage AMI rollout on a geographic basis starting with municipal aggregations.*
  - L. Chretien noted that the intent of this proposed redline is to queue aggregators to start the process for education and rollout.
  - M. Hanks noted that he is not opposed to the redline but would like to be better informed on the EDCs' constraints (i.e., physical and circuit related concerns; a concentration of manufacturers/commercial/C&I customers that would have a tremendous impact on load) and hear more on EDCs' planning before adding to the scope.
  - J. Lawrence responds that, from Eversource perspective, customer education/engagement can begin with few system dependencies and deployment will be largely driven by system needs and replacing aging meters as well as achieving critical mass in the communications network. Also, it would be valuable to educate the group further, but this is 6 to 9 months away.
  - E. Morgera noted that in New York, there is a 5 year deployment plan for installation of meters through building a network to support starting in Central New York.
  - K. Murray stated concern that starting with willing communities will lead to communities with the most resources getting the meters first while lower/moderate income communities without as many resources not being given the opportunity.
  - J. Spring agreed and responded that as the plan is formed, lines of communication should be open and plans shared from an operational perspective.
  - E. Morgera recommended examining all the different variables and trying to incorporate a priority system when looking at community aggregator rollout.
  - D. Boecke suggested including in the variable that there are time efficiencies in deployment given the installation.
  - L. Chretien stated that he will tweak the bullet given the discussion to show that aggregation ought to be a factor in the consideration of how the meters are rolled out and also including the concern for low/moderate income communities.

## 5) Planning for May 30th meeting

- D. Winter confirmed that May 30 is okay for next meeting day and asked for topic suggestions.
- A. Edington responded suggesting that the EDCs should put together a proposal of details (i.e., relevant topics, stakeholder consensus/ non-consensus areas, and any recommendations for DPU, etc.) and the feedback from the stakeholder group.
- J. Lawrence agreed, noting the intent was to bring the billing of TVR topic to a conclusion by the end of May, including understanding of TVR parameters, pass-through billing requirements, and billing inputs. L. Chretien and M. Hanks agreed. D. Winter suggested this as an EDC task item as well to disseminate prior to the next meeting.
- A. Edington suggested a slide on discussion points for next topics for next meeting. D. Winter confirmed that the next topics are AMI deployment strategies that may expedite the ability of competitive suppliers to offer TVR products and that 2 hours is sufficient for that meeting.
- M. Hanks noted a quarterly status report due on May 15 and suggested a quick summary to reconcile any open items. D. Winter asked for EDC feedback, noting that this appeared to be an update on discussions with no resolution requirement. M. Campbell agreed. J. Spring suggested a summary of items discussed and how to deploy AMI system and timeframes, noting that everything is subject to change. J. Spring agreed on a short updated of discussion points thus far. M. Hanks noted that any order dictates reaching a consensus on matters. K. Dolan agreed with J. Spring.
- D. Winter confirmed that EDCs will use these points to develop the quarterly report and she will send EDCs a detailed outline and then once drafted it will be sent to group for input/feedback.