

D.P.U. 24-140 – The Berkshire Gas Company

Tier 2 Proceeding Plain Language Summary and Outreach Plan for the 2025-2027 Three-Year Plan

Plain Language Summary for the 2025-2027 Three-Year Plan

Pursuant to the Green Communities Act, the Commonwealth's electric and gas distribution companies, and municipal aggregators with certified efficiency plans are required to develop a cost-effective energy efficiency three-year plan (the "Plan") that also achieves the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals set by the Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary. On October 31, 2024, The Berkshire Gas Company (the "Company") will file with the Department of Public Utilities (the "Department") its 2025-2027 Plan for the three-year period of January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2027. Accordingly, the Department will review the Company's Plan to ensure that it meets both the cost-effective and greenhouse gas goals.

Statewide, the 2025-2027 Three-Year Plan proposes to invest over \$4.99 billion in energy efficiency and decarbonization efforts in Massachusetts in order to deliver \$13 billion in total benefits to Massachusetts customers. The 2025-2027 Three-Year Plan proposes to reduce over one million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. This will be achieved by: (1) supporting weatherization and decarbonization of the Commonwealth's homes and businesses; (2) accelerating access for underserved and vulnerable customer groups; and (3) materially enhancing the customer experience.

The Company's proposed total budget for the 2025-2027 Plan Term is \$25,434,434. The Company's proposed annual budgets are \$7,771,756 in 2025, \$8,500,577 in 2026, and \$9,162,102 in 2027. These budgets include a performance incentive. A typical residential customer (R-3 Residential Rate – Heating) using 136 therms per month during the peak period could experience a peak monthly bill decrease of \$0.02 or 0.01 percent in 2025; a peak monthly bill increase of \$0.71 or 0.29 percent in 2026; and a peak monthly bill increase of \$0.84 or 0.35 percent in 2027. A typical low-income heating customer (R-4 Residential Low-Income Rate) using 123 therms during the peak period per month could experience a peak monthly bill decrease of \$0.01 or 0.01 percent in 2025; a peak monthly bill increase of \$0.48 or 0.29 percent in 2026; and a peak monthly bill increase of \$0.57 or 0.35 percent in 2027.

Incentives are available for residential and commercial and industrial customers of the Company, with enhanced incentives for low and moderate income customers.

The above plain language summary is provided for **informational purposes only** and is not intended to replace any official notice issued by the Department in this matter. Consistent with the Tier 2 Outreach Plan, a copy of the official Notice of Proceeding will be posted to the Company's website.

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Tier 2 Outreach Plan for the 2025-2027 Three-Year Plan

The Program Administrators' ("PAs")¹ outreach on the 2025-2027 Plan began in summer 2023 and continued with increasing rigor throughout 2024. During this time, the PAs were engaged in detailed and comprehensive discussions with the Energy Efficiency Council ("Council"), its Consultants, and stakeholders. As part of the development of the Three-Year Plan, the PAs participated in 32 Council and Executive Committee meetings, 20 Equity Working Group meetings, three Commercial and Industrial Working Group meetings, five Council-sponsored public listening and comment sessions, and six workshops, at which the PAs presented on a variety of topics as requested by the Council and the Consultants, and received extensive public input and suggestions. In addition, the PAs convened numerous working groups and held one-on-one meetings with stakeholders to address best practices and discuss issues related to the development of the Three-Year Plan. The PAs developed and submitted to the Council a draft version of the Three-Year Plan on April 1, 2024, which included translated version of the Executive Summary of the Plan in five most commonly spoken languages in the Commonwealth other than English. On August 15, 2024, the PAs sent to the Council their response accompanied by a matrix with final substantive updates to the draft Plan. The PAs also provided an updated full draft Plan and tables to the Council on September 25, 2024. Each of these iterations of the Plan were made publicly available on the Mass Save® and Council's website. The PAs also presented on each of these submissions during Council meetings throughout the Spring and Summer of 2024. The Council meetings are public and have provided extensive opportunities for public comment and Councilor input.

The Department has deemed the 2025-2027 Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plan filing as a Tier 2 Proceeding. Consistent with that designation, the Company will plan to conduct the following outreach:

- To publish the Notice of Filing issued in this proceeding prominently on the Company's website;²
- To publish the Notice of Filing in a newspaper as may be required by the Department;
- To serve a copy of the Notice of Filing on any required service lists as dictated by the Department of Public Utilities; and
- Any other publication or outreach that the Department may require.

Consistent with outreach previously conducted, the Company will provide a copy of the Notice of Proceeding to any other individuals who have requested to receive information

¹ The PAs are: The Berkshire Gas Company, Cape Light Compact JPE (the Compact), NSTAR Electric Company, NSTAR Gas Company, and Eversource Gas Company of Massachusetts, each d/b/a Eversource Energy, Liberty Utilities Corp. (New England Natural Gas Company) d/b/a Liberty, Massachusetts Electric Company, Nantucket Electric Company, Boston Gas Company, each d/b/a National Grid, and Fitchburg Gas & Electric Light Company d/b/a Unitil.

² https://www.berkshiregas.com/w/regulatory-notice?p_1_back_url=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dregulatory%2520filing

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on the Company's filings. In addition to the extensive outreach that has already occurred, specific solely for this Plan, the Company will be providing municipal officials within its territory a copy of the Notice of Filing, a Plain Language Summary of the Plan, along with a link to the Mass Save website containing the Plan and translated versions of the Executive Summary of the Plan in English and in the six most commonly spoken languages in the Commonwealth other than English: Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian-Creole, Mandarin and Cantonese, and Vietnamese. The Mass Save website will also contain a link with summary information with respect to the 2025-2027 Plan. The Company will also have a link on its website directing customers to the Mass Save website.

The Company will list this proceeding on its website³ for the duration of the proceeding.

Proposed Notice:

On October 31, 2024, The Berkshire Gas Company ("Berkshire Gas" or the "Company"), filed with the Department of Public Utilities ("Department"), a petition for approval of a three-year energy efficiency plan for calendar years 2025 through 2027 ("Three-Year Plan"). The Company filed its Three-Year Plan pursuant to An Act Relative to Green Communities, Acts of 2008, c. 169, § 11 ("Green Communities Act"). The Department docketed this matter as D.P.U. 24-140. The Green Communities Act requires the Commonwealth's electric and gas distribution companies, and municipal aggregators with certified efficiency plans (together, "Program Administrators") to develop, in consultation with the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council ("Council"), plans that provide for the acquisition of all available energy efficiency and demand reduction resources that are cost effective or less expensive than supply. G.L. c. 25, § 21. The Company's proposed Three-Year Plan includes energy efficiency programs for residential, low-income, and commercial and industrial ("C&I") customers. The proposed Three-Year Plan also incorporates the Company's Residential Conservation Service filing pursuant to G.L. c. 164, App. § 2-7(h).

The Company's proposed total budget for the 2025-2027 Plan Term is \$25,434,434. The Company's proposed annual budgets are \$7,771,756 in 2025, \$8,500,577 in 2026, and \$9,162,102 in 2027. These budgets include a performance incentive.

A typical residential customer (R-3 Residential Rate – Heating) using 136 therms per month during the peak period could experience a peak monthly bill decrease of \$0.02 or 0.01 percent in 2025; a peak monthly bill increase of \$0.71 or 0.29 percent in 2026; and a peak monthly bill increase of \$0.84 or 0.35 percent in 2027.

A typical low-income heating customer (R-4 Residential Low-Income Rate) using 123 therms during the peak period per month could experience a peak monthly bill decrease

³ https://www.berkshiregas.com/w/regulatory-notice?p_1_back_url=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dregulatory%2520filing

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[Placeholder for Department language.]