

Energy Affordability and Accessibility Collaborative

August 18, 2021

Meeting Chat

Regiana (I&M) -- Anne, is there a dedicated MPSC webpage for this workgroup?

Armstrong, Anne (LARA) – Regiana, here's the link to the webpage:

https://www.michigan.gov/mpsc/0,9535,7-395-93307_93312_93320_94834-558075--,00.html

Freeman, Allan (LARA) -- Better representation among the decision makers.

Briana Parker -- Ensuring Environmental Justice communities are protected.

Will (Green Projects Group) -- Well said Sylvia! Hard to top your speech. Measurable outcomes seem like a pretty good starting point.

Braunschweig, Elaina (LARA) -- Sylvia, I believe the outcome-focused work you're searching for can be found in the work we're doing in the subcommittees, since the broader EAAC group is more education-focused.

Sophia Palmer -- Have any of the subcommittees met yet? I thought I had signed up to participate, but I don't remember receiving additional communication.

Braunschweig, Elaina (LARA) -- The AAA subcommittee just met last week Wednesday, Sophia. Which did you sign up for? We can ensure you're on the email list.

Rittenhouse, Amy (LARA) -- BIO

Tremaine Phillips, Commissioner

Michigan Public Service Commission

Tremaine was appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer to the Michigan Public Service Commission on September 9, 2019, for a six-year term.

Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Phillips worked in the public and private sectors to accelerate the nation's transition to clean, renewable, and reliable energy resources. He served as the Director of Cincinnati 2030 District, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives for EmpowerSaves, and was recognized in 2016 as an emerging clean energy leader through the Midwest Energy News "40 Under 40" award.

In addition to his duties as commissioner, Tremaine also represents the Commission on Governor Whitmer's Michigan Poverty Task Force, the Michigan Council on Future Mobility, and the Connecting Michigan Task Force. In February 2020 he was appointed to serve on the NARUC Broadband Expansion Task Force, a two-year effort to identify best practices and solutions to improving broadband access in underserved communities throughout the country. In addition, he serves as a member of the Advisory Council to the Center for Public Utilities at New Mexico State University.

Armstrong, Anne (LARA) -- We are working on the process of mapping energy burden and uptake of energy assistance by county.

Armstrong, Anne (LARA) -- We will have more in-depth information on the federal LIHEAP funds, including LIHEAP Direct Support at our September meeting.

Sylvia Orduño -- Commissioner, that funding you note isn't thru SER is it? (SER applications for arrearage are such a struggle.)

Armstrong, Anne (LARA) -- There will be additional SER funding, pending legislative approval after Labor Day. However, the LIHEAP Direct support is a direct pay program for customers of participating utilities who match to receiving cash and food assistance. Please email if you would like additional information and we will have more in September.

Matthew Bandyk (CUB) -- Commissioner Phillips, can you say more about the timeline and next steps for the ratemaking updating the service quality standards?

Regiana (I&M) -- Anne, I am interested in the American Rescue funds. Is that going to be part of the September meeting?

Armstrong, Anne (LARA) -- Regiana, we will be talking about the ARP funds and touch on the rental and homeowner assistance as well.

Sylvia Orduño -- Thanks Anne. I ask because DHHS' new LIHWAP policy doesn't allowed for arrearage payments with matching SNAP cases and goes back to pre-pandemic application requirements -- wholly the wrong approach needed while we're still in the pandemic, and also against what community and water sector advocates strongly called for in public comments (i.e., similar to SB 690 implementation)

Rittenhouse, Amy (LARA) -- BIO

Al Freeman, Assistant to Electric Resources Division Director
Michigan Public Service Commission

Al has worked at the Michigan Public Service Commission for over 12 years. In his tenure, he has worked in the energy markets area representing the Michigan PSC at FERC, MISO and PJM. Additionally, he spent time as an executive adviser to the Commissioners. Currently, Al works in the Electric Resources Division as an assistant to the Division Director. Al has a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and both a JD and a Masters from the University of Pittsburgh.

Rittenhouse, Amy (LARA) -- BIO

Joe Magee, Energy Policy Manager
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

Joe has over 16 years of experience working in programs serving low-income households, including eight years working with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. Joe has previously worked as a policy analyst for Pennsylvania's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Since 2013, he has advised the PA PUC on utility universal service program issues as both a policy analyst and the manager of the Energy Policy

Unit in the PUC's Bureau of Consumer Services. Joe has a bachelor's degree in English and a Master's Degree in Public Administration, both from Penn State University.

Armstrong, Anne (LARA) -- Sonia, yes the program requirements may be different from LIWAP and LIHEAP. I will make sure your comments get to the policy experts at MDHHS.

Rittenhouse, Amy (LARA) -- BIO

Gabe Dusenbury, Section Head

Rate Financial Analysts

Colorado Public Utilities Commission

Gabe has been with the Colorado PUC for 10 years, working on a range of matters including transportation, water, gas, and electric rate cases and infrastructure riders. More recently he has been involved in a triennial review of the PUC's low-income Percentage of Income Payment Programs (PIPP); an emergency rule making to allow greater PIPP participation for a jurisdictional Commission utility; and a permanent rulemaking in light of the triennial review recommendations and legislation passed by the Colorado legislature during the 2021 session.

Armstrong, Anne (LARA) -- PIPP = Percentage of Income Payment Plan

Annika Brindel -- FPL = Federal Poverty Level

Annika Brindel -- SMI = State Median Income

Jill Steiner -- How did the utilities or commissions come up with the percentages for the PIPP programs?

Rittenhouse, Amy (LARA) -- BIO

Kurt Cooper, Regulatory Consultant Principal

Indiana Michigan Power

Kurt has been employed at I&M Power for 27 years. In 2010 he joined Regulatory Services where he has worked for the past 11 years. He has been involved in several MPSC sponsored workshops and work groups including those dedicated to updating the Technical Standards and Billing Practice Rules. Kurt resides in Fort Wayne, Indiana with his wife Tara and two children.

Goldberg, Laura -- For CO/Gabe - how is CO Commission energy burden cap principle implemented/tracked?

Armstrong, Anne (LARA) -- Electric Cooperatives and Municipal utilities in Michigan are also not regulated by the MPSC. Customers of any utility in Michigan, including those who use propane and deliverable fuels can access the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) which includes the State Emergency Relief, Home Heating Credit and some weatherization. All customers can access the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP). However customers of non-participating utilities can only access MEAP from April 1 to Oct 30.

Sylvia Orduño -- Offered to "Michigan seniors," typo?

Armstrong, Anne (LARA) -- Indiana Michigan Power services multiple states, this particular senior rate is only offered for their Michigan customers.

Sylvia Orduño -- Instead, what is the IN-MI Power service area?

Freeman, Allan (LARA) -- [MPSC - Electric Utility Service Area Map \(michigan.gov\)](#)
MPSC - Electric Utility Service Area Map

Aimee Gendusa-English -- Does this senior tariff consider energy use intensity factors or does it only look at gross consumption? Low income seniors tend to have high EUI despite being below average consumers overall.

Kurt Cooper -- Answer from I&M regarding Aimee Gendusa question on energy use intensity factor...The rate design for the RS-SC Tariff is based on consumption only. It's not a complex rate design, just intended to give a break to senior citizens with average to lower energy usage.

Armstrong, Anne (LARA) -- The brochure and tariff are in the appendix at the end of the slide deck which will be uploaded to the website this week.

Freeman, Allan (LARA) -- How does your Commission/utility interact with the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)?

Freeman, Allan (LARA) -- How does your Commission/utility approach energy efficiency programs in regards to energy affordability?

Jill Steiner -- Thank you!

Magee, Joseph -- PA PUC November 2019 Order Amending the CAP Policy Statement
<https://www.puc.pa.gov/pcdocs/1643025.docx>

Mary A Wilkins -- What methods are utilized for validating customer income?

Gabe Dusenbury -- Hi Mary, speaking for Colorado, the LEAP program handles income validation (also EOC for their own grants). The utilities, as a general rule, don't want to deal with gathering and storing income information themselves.

Magee, Joseph -- Hi Mary, In Pennsylvania, utilities generally use the same income documentation requirements used for LIHEAP. Please see the section beginning on page B-16 of the PA LIHEAP State Plan: [State Plan 20-21.pdf \(pa.gov\)](#)

Julie Cassidy, MLPP -- To Sylvia's point and the issue of power outages within the larger housing context: <https://preservationdatabase.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Taking-Stock.pdf>

Braunschweig, Elaina (LARA) -- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VX7758X>
EAAC Subgroup Sign-up, Take this survey powered by surveymonkey.com if you want to sign up for any subcommittee

Rittenhouse, Amy (LARA) -- BIO

Amy Bandyk, Executive Director
Citizens Utility Board of Michigan

Amy Bandyk joined CUB of MI at its inception in 2018 and is passionate about energy affordability and supporting the transition to clean, renewable energy for her family and fellow Michigan residents.

Amy was born and raised in Michigan and moved to Washington, D.C. shortly after graduating from Michigan State University with high honors and a B.A. in communication. There, she joined a strategic communications firm where she worked for government, non-profit, trade association and corporate clients on many different issues affecting consumers. She then went to work for a telecommunications trade association as the Director of Advocacy Communications. She earned her M.A. in communication from Johns Hopkins University in 2013. She then became the executive director of an animal rescue non-profit organization.

Rittenhouse, Amy (LARA) -- BIO

Mary Wilkins, Program Consultant
The Salvation Army

Mary Wilkins is a social service professional with more than 30 years' experience serving the needs of low-income households. Ms. Wilkins earned a bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Hope College and a Master's in Social Work from Western Michigan University. For more than half her career she has been directly involved with The Salvation Army's state-wide Energy Assistance Services in Michigan as well as overseen housing, SUD treatment, financial assistance, food security and other programs as a Divisional Social Services Director. During her tenure she had been an active participant in the Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm, participated in Senator Caswell's low-income energy work group, and most recently has served on the executive committee of the National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC). Ms. Wilkins currently serves as a Program Consultant for The Salvation Army from her home in northern Michigan.