

H.739

An act relating to energy productivity investments under the self-managed energy efficiency program

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 30 V.S.A. § 209 is amended to read:

§ 209. JURISDICTION; GENERAL SCOPE

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(j) Self-managed energy efficiency programs.

(1) There shall be a class of self-managed energy efficiency programs for transmission and industrial electric ratepayers only.

(2) The Commission, by order, shall enact this class of programs.

(3) Entities approved to participate in the self-managed energy efficiency program class shall be exempt from all statewide charges under subdivision (d)(3) of this section that support energy efficiency programs performed by or on behalf of Vermont electric utilities. If an electric ratepayer approved to participate in this program class also is a customer of a natural gas utility, the ratepayer shall be exempt from all charges under subdivision (d)(3) of this section or contained within the rates charged by the natural gas utility to the ratepayer that support energy efficiency programs performed by or on behalf of that utility, provided that the ratepayer complies with this subsection.

(4) All of the following shall apply to a class of programs under this subsection:

(A) A member of the transmission or industrial electric rate classes shall be eligible to apply to participate in the self-managed energy efficiency program class if the charges to the applicant, or to its predecessor in interest at the served property, under subdivision (d)(3) of this section were a minimum of:

(i) \$1.5 million during calendar year 2008; or

(ii) \$1.5 million during calendar year 2017.

(B) A cost-based fee to be determined by the Commission shall be charged to the applicant to cover the administrative costs, including savings verification, incurred by the Commission and Department. The Commission shall determine procedures for savings verification. Such procedures shall be consistent with savings verification procedures established for entities appointed under subdivision (d)(2) of this section and, when determined to be cost-effective under subdivision (L) of this subdivision (4), with the requirements of ISO-New England for the forward capacity market (FCM) program.

(C) An applicant shall demonstrate to the Commission that it has a comprehensive energy management program with annual objectives. Achievement of certification of ISO standard 14001 shall be eligible to satisfy the requirements of having a comprehensive program.

(D) An applicant eligible pursuant to subdivision (A)(i) of this subdivision (j)(4) shall commit to an annual average ~~energy efficiency~~ investment in energy efficiency and energy productivity programs and measures during each three-year period that the applicant participates in the program of ~~not less than \$1 million.~~ An applicant eligible pursuant to subdivision (A)(ii) of this subdivision (j)(4) shall commit to an annual average investment in energy efficiency and energy productivity programs and measures during each three-year period that the applicant participates in the program of not less than \$500,000.00. To achieve the exemption from energy efficiency charges related to natural gas under subdivision (3) of this subsection (j), ~~the~~ an applicant shall make an additional annual energy efficiency investment in an amount not less than \$55,000.00. As used in this subsection (j), “energy productivity programs and measures” means investments that reduce the amount of energy required to produce a unit of product below baseline energy use. Baseline energy use shall be calculated as the average amount of energy required to make one unit of the same product in the two years preceding implementation of the program or measure.

(E) Participation in the self-managed program includes efficiency and productivity programs and measures applicable to electric and other forms of energy. A participant may balance ~~efficiency~~ investments in such programs and measures across all types of energy or fuels without limitations.

(F) A participant shall provide to the Commission and Department annually an accounting of ~~energy~~ investments in energy efficiency and energy productivity programs and measures and the resultant energy savings in the form prescribed by the Commission, which may conduct reasonable audits to ensure the accuracy of the data provided.

(G) The Commission shall report to the General Assembly annually ~~by~~ on or before April 30 concerning the prior calendar year's class of self-managed energy efficiency programs. The report shall include identification of participants, their annual investments, and resulting savings, and any actions taken to exclude entities from the program.

(H) Upon approval of an application by the Commission, the applicant shall be able to participate in the class of self-managed energy efficiency programs.

(I) On a determination that, for a given three-year period, a participant in the self-managed efficiency program class did not meet or has not met the commitment required by subdivision ~~(4)(D)~~ of this ~~subsection~~ subdivision (j)(4), the Commission shall terminate the participant's eligibility for the self-managed program class.

(i) On such termination, the former participant will be subject fully to the then existing charges applicable to its rate class without exemption under subdivision (3) of this subsection (j), and within 90 days ~~of~~ after such termination shall pay:

(I) the difference between the investment it made pursuant to the self-managed energy efficiency program during the three-year period of noncompliance and the full amount of the charges and rates related to energy efficiency it would have incurred during that period absent exemption under subdivision (3) of this subsection (j); and

(II) the difference between the investment it made pursuant to the program within the current three-year period, if different from the period of noncompliance, and the full amount of the charges and rates related to energy efficiency it would have incurred during the current period absent exemption under subdivision (3) of this subsection (j).

(ii) Payments under subdivision ~~(4)(I)(i)~~ of this ~~subsection (j)~~ subdivision (4)(I) shall be made to the entities to which the full amount of charges and rates would have been paid absent exemption under subdivision (3) of this subsection (j).

(iii) A former participant may not reapply for membership in the self-managed program after termination under this subdivision (4)(I).

(J) A participant in the self-managed program class may request confidentiality of data it reports to the Commission if the data would qualify for exemption from disclosure under 1 V.S.A. § 317. If such confidentiality is requested, the Commission shall disclose the data only in accordance with a protective agreement approved by the Commission and signed by the recipient of the data, unless a court orders otherwise.

(K) Any data not subject to a confidentiality request under subdivision ~~(4)~~(J) of this ~~subsection~~ subdivision (4) will be a public record.

(L) A participant in the self-managed program class ~~may~~ shall work with the Department of Public Service to determine whether it is cost-effective to submit projects to the independent system operator of ISO-New England, including through recognized independent aggregators, for payments under that operator's forward capacity market the FCM program, and shall invest such payments in electric or fuel efficiency.

(i) As used in this subdivision (L), "cost-effective" requires that the estimated payments from the FCM program exceed the incremental cost of savings verification necessary for submission to that program.

(ii) If the Department determines the submission to be cost-effective, then an entity appointed to deliver electric energy efficiency services under subdivision (d)(2) of this section shall submit the project to the FCM program for payment and any resulting payments shall be remitted to the Electric Efficiency Fund for use in accordance with subdivision (e)(1)(A) of this section.

(M) A participant in the self-managed program class may receive funding from an energy program administered by a government or other entity ~~which~~ that is not the participant ~~but~~ and may ~~not~~ count such funds received as part of the annual commitment to its self-managed energy efficiency program.

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Sec. 2. ENERGY SAVINGS ACCOUNT PARTNERSHIP PILOT

(a) Definitions. As used in this section:

(1) "ACCD" means the Agency of Commerce and Community Development under 3 V.S.A. chapter 47.

(2) "Commission" means the Public Utility Commission under 30 V.S.A. § 3.

(3) "Customer" means a commercial or industrial electric customer that is located in a service territory in which Efficiency Vermont delivers energy efficiency programs and measures and that does not qualify for SMEEP.

(4) "Customer EEC Funds" means a customer's EEC payments during the period of the ESA partnership project.

(5) "Department" means the Department of Public Service under 3 V.S.A. § 212 and 30 V.S.A. § 1.

(6) "EEC" means an energy efficiency charge on a customer's retail electric bill under 30 V.S.A. § 209(d).

(7) "Efficiency Vermont" or "EVT" means the EEU whose appointment under 30 V.S.A § 209(d)(2) includes the delivery of programs and measures to customers of multiple electric distribution utilities.

(8) "Energy efficiency utility" or "EEU" means an entity appointed to deliver energy efficiency and conservation programs and measures under 30 V.S.A. § 209(d)(2).

(9) “Energy productivity measures” means investments that reduce the amount of energy required to produce a unit of product below baseline energy use. Baseline energy use shall be calculated as the average amount of energy required to make one unit of the same product in the two years preceding implementation of the program or measure.

(10) “ESA” means an energy savings account under 30 V.S.A. § 209(d)(3)(B).

(11) “ESA Partnership Pilot” means the three-year pilot program established by this section.

(12) “Regulated fuel” shall have the same meaning as in 30 V.S.A. § 209(e).

(13) “SMEEP” means the self-managed energy efficiency program established under 30 V.S.A. § 209(j).

(14) “Standing committees of jurisdiction” means the House Committee on Energy and Technology and the Senate Committees on Finance and on Natural Resources and Energy.

(15) “Unregulated fuel” shall have the same meaning as in 30 V.S.A. § 209(e).

(b) ESA Partnership Pilot; establishment. On or before July 1, 2019, the Commission by rule or order shall establish a three-year pilot program for customers to self-direct the use of their Customer EEC Funds, working with EVT. The total amount of Customer EEC Funds available in the pilot program



each year shall not exceed \$2 million. The pilot program established under this section shall be an expansion of the ESA option under which:

(1) Notwithstanding any contrary provision of 30 V.S.A. § 209(d)(3)(B), the customer shall continue to pay its EEC and be able to receive an amount equal to 100 percent of its ESA account balance to pay for the full cost of projects that are eligible under subdivision (3) of this subsection; for technical assistance and other services from Efficiency Vermont; and for evaluation, measurement, and verification activity conducted by the Department or EVT.

(2) The customer may receive payments in advance of project completion from EVT based on the energy management plan submitted under subsection (e) of this section, estimated project costs, and projected energy savings. However, a customer shall not receive advance payments from EVT that exceed the amount of Customer EEC Funds the customer has already paid.

(3) Notwithstanding any contrary provision of 30 V.S.A. § 209, the Customer EEC Funds may be used for one or more of the following: electric energy efficiency, thermal energy and process-fuel efficiency for unregulated fuels, energy productivity measures, demand management, and energy storage that provides benefits to the customer and its interconnecting utility. In addition, for a customer who is a manufacturer and whose purchases of regulated fuel exceeded 600,000 thousand cubic feet (MCF) in 2017, the Funds may be used for thermal energy and process-fuel efficiency for regulated fuels, and any regulated fuel savings attributable to investment of Customer EEC

Funds through the pilot program shall be counted towards EVT's performance indicators. EVT may allocate the cost of the pilot across regulated and unregulated fuel funding sources in a manner that avoids or reduces the need to adjust savings goals approved by the Commission.

(c) Methodology for evaluation, measurement, and verification. In its rule or order under subsection (b) of this section, the Commission shall establish a methodology for evaluation, measurement, and verification of projects implemented under the pilot that is consistent with the requirements of 30 V.S.A. § 218c and that includes cost-effectiveness screening that values energy savings across the customer's energy portfolio and non-energy benefits such as economic development. As used in this subsection, "economic development" includes job creation, job retention, and capital investment.

(1) This methodology may be considered for future establishment of EEU performance criteria under 30 V.S.A. § 209(d).

(2) EVT and the Department shall evaluate and verify the electricity savings of each project funded under the ESA Partnership Pilot with no less rigor than is required by ISO-New England for its Forward Capacity Market (FCM) program.

(d) Competitive solicitation. A customer shall apply to participate in the ESA Partnership Pilot through a competitive solicitation process conducted jointly by EVT, the Department, and ACCD.

(1) Promptly after the Commission's rule or order under subsection (b) of this section becomes effective, EVT, the Department, and ACCD shall establish criteria for customer selection that are consistent with that rule or order and that take into account energy efficiency and economic development.

(2) On establishment of the selection criteria, EVT, the Department, and ACCD jointly shall issue a request for proposals (RFP) from customers seeking to participate in the ESA Partnership Pilot.

(3) EVT, the Department, and ACCD jointly shall select customers to participate in the ESA Partnership Pilot from among the customers that timely submit proposals in response to the RFP and shall notify the Commission of the selected customers.

(4) If EVT, the Department, and ACCD are unable to resolve an issue arising under this subsection, they shall bring the issue to the Commission for resolution.

(5) Customer selection under this subsection shall be completed before July 1, 2019.

(e) Energy management plans. Working with EVT, each customer selected for the ESA Partnership Pilot shall develop an energy management plan for the three-year period of the pilot with projects to be implemented, energy savings targets, and a timeline for projects and investments. A copy of each plan shall be submitted to the Commission, the Department, and ACCD.

(f) Other EEU services. A customer that participates in the ESA Partnership Pilot shall not be eligible for other EEU services, except for an EEU appointed to deliver natural gas efficiency programs and measures.

(g) Other funding. A customer that participates in the ESA Partnership Pilot may receive funding from an energy program administered by a government or other person that is not the participant, including an EEU appointed to deliver natural gas efficiency services, but shall not count such funds as part of the investment commitment of the ESA Partnership Pilot.

(h) Unused funds. At the end of the ESA Partnership Pilot, any Customer EEC Funds that have not been expended or committed under the pilot shall revert to use for systemwide energy efficiency programs and measures.

(i) Annual reports. On or before each November 1 from 2020 through 2022, the EVT and the selected customers jointly shall submit written progress reports to the Commission, the Department, and the standing committees of jurisdiction that include projects under the ESA Partnership Pilot and their associated energy and cost savings. A customer's projects under the pilot and the associated data and results shall be made public through this report. However, a customer may request that the Commission order customer-specific data to be used in preparing a report under this subsection be kept confidential if the data would qualify for exemption from disclosure under 1 V.S.A. § 317. If the Commission issues such an order, the data subject to the order shall be disclosed only in accordance with a protective agreement

approved by the Commission and signed by the recipient of the data, unless a court directs otherwise.

(j) Evaluation; recommendation. On completion of the ESA Partnership Pilot, the Commission shall conduct or shall have a third party conduct an independent evaluation of the ESA Partnership Pilot.

(1) The evaluation shall analyze and compare, among pilot participants and companies of similar size outside the pilot: job creation and retention, energy savings, total energy cost reductions, energy productivity measures, amount of capital applied and leveraged, greenhouse gas reductions, and other criteria as defined by the Commission. The evaluation shall also study the effects of the pilot on other ratepayers.

(2) The evaluation shall provide electric system results for the ESA Pilot Program and compare them to the electric system results that would have been obtained had the Customer EEC Funds been expended pursuant to the electric energy efficiency programs otherwise authorized under 30 V.S.A. § 209(d). In this subdivision (2), “electric system results” means: total electric energy savings, total avoided cost of purchasing power, total avoided costs of transmission and distribution improvements, and resulting FCM program revenues.

(3) After considering the results of that evaluation, the Commission shall submit a written recommendation to the standing committees of jurisdiction on whether to continue the program conducted under this section

and, if so, under what recommended conditions and revisions, if any. The Commission shall submit this recommendation to the General Assembly on or before January 15, 2023.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.