



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

DOCKET NO. 17-12-03RE05

PURA INVESTIGATION INTO DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM PLANNING OF THE
ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES – INNOVATION PILOTS

NOTICE OF STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP
(April 8, 2021)

AND

NOTICE OF ISSUANCE OF INNOVATION PILOTS FRAMEWORK STRAW
PROPOSAL

AND

NOTICE OF WRITTEN COMMENTS
(April 23, 2021)

On October 8, 2019, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (Authority or PURA) established the above-cited docket to identify a prospective structure that can support the ongoing development of innovative technology applications and programs that have the potential to provide net positive benefits to all electric customers, in accordance with the Framework for an Equitable Modern Grid detailed in the Interim Decision dated October 2, 2019, in Docket No. 17-12-03, PURA Investigation into Distribution System Planning of the Electric Distribution Companies. Specifically, this proceeding is examining potential mechanisms for establishing a regulatory sandbox, or Innovation Framework, that provides an opportunity to test innovative products and services, while establishing common-sense guardrails to ensure consumer protection and ratepayer benefits and leveraging the lessons learned through the implementation of the Connecticut Electric Efficiency Partners (EEP) Program. Key principles of the Innovation Framework will be to encourage competition, minimize ratepayer exposure, and to further Connecticut's public policy goals.

On December 22, 2020, the Authority issued its Regulatory Sandbox Strategic Vision Document (Strategic Vision Document) and Notice of Written Comments in the above-cited docket. The Strategic Vision Document contained a proposed roadmap of concepts, best practices, and design principles to be considered in establishing an Innovation Framework in Connecticut. On January 14, 2021, the Authority received written comments from nine participants in response to the Strategic Vision Document.

The Authority is providing as Attachment A its straw proposal for a regulatory sandbox program (Straw Proposal), termed an Innovation Pilots Framework. PURA intends to provide multiple opportunities to solicit feedback and input from stakeholders on the proposed structure outlined in the Straw Proposal. Specifically, the Authority will host a workshop on April 8 to provide an overview of the Straw Proposal, solicit input, and, to the extent possible and appropriate, address questions from stakeholders. Following the workshop, the Authority will accept written comments on the Straw Proposal until April 23, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

While the Authority welcomes any stakeholder feedback on the Straw Proposal, PURA specifically requests input on the questions included below to ensure successful design and implementation of a regulatory sandbox program. The second set of questions included below are intended to solicit feedback from *potential project innovators* to ensure that the proposed approach is both accessible to encourage robust and diverse implementer participation and appropriately robust to ensure successful deployment.

Questions for All Stakeholders:

1. Do stakeholders believe that the proposed approach for the Innovation Pilots Framework provides a suitable mechanism to source and launch new and innovative customer solutions consistent with the strategic objectives laid out in the Innovation Pilots Framework Strategic Vision? If not, where do stakeholders believe that there are opportunities to improve upon the approach that has been laid out here? Why do stakeholders believe that the proposed improvements will better support the objectives of the Innovation Pilots Framework?
2. Are there any specific metrics that stakeholders believe that the Authority should include in project selection and evaluation? Why should the Authority consider these metrics and what value do stakeholders believe that these metrics would add? Are there any metrics currently under consideration that stakeholders believe would not be useful or informative?
3. Are there any portions of the proposed process where stakeholders have greatest interest in participation or engagement opportunities? Why? How do stakeholders believe that inclusion in this portion of the proposed process would materially increase transparency and beneficial outcomes?
4. Do parties believe that the proposed structure provides an appropriate balance between customer protections and project innovator cost certainty? Are there any other mechanisms that the Authority should consider including that might help manage that balance? How would the proposed mechanisms improve either or both customer protections and reasonable project innovator cost recovery? Are there any trade-offs or compromises that might accompany these mechanisms?

Questions for Potential Project Innovators (Third Parties & Electric Distribution Companies):

1. What kind of information do innovators believe could be reasonably included in the concept proposal phase to help the Authority and other decision-makers understand the high-level scope and intention of a proposed project? Are there any pieces of information that might be unreasonably burdensome to include? Why?
2. What level of additional detail could reasonably be provided as part of the second, more detailed round of project review? Are there cases where differing levels of rigor should be requested or allowed for proposals? Why?
3. What are key considerations that the Authority should include when balancing project progress tracking while minimizing burdensome obligations? Are there any tracking and reporting requirements that would be especially burdensome, and why? Are there any elements of project tracking and reporting that could be more easily offered to support project oversight?
4. Do innovators believe that there are any instances where projects or participation pathways should have unique performance or tracking metrics, and why?
5. Does the proposed window of approximately 12 months for pilot deployment provide sufficient opportunity for innovators to launch and collect project performance data? If not, how much time would innovators need for deployment, and what customer cost protections could be added to appropriately balance the potential for increased costs and inefficiencies?
6. Are there any specific elements of pre-application outreach and education that should particularly be considered to support innovators? Why, and what value-add would come from those outreach approaches?

The Authority hereby notifies all docket Participants and interested stakeholders that a Stakeholder Workshop will be held on **Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.**, via remote access, to discuss the Straw Proposal.

Remote attendee access:

Docket Participants and interested stakeholders may register through the web links below to listen or to participate in the meeting:

https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYtd-6hrTloG9f14mXp4j_6K-sCGURCL3jt

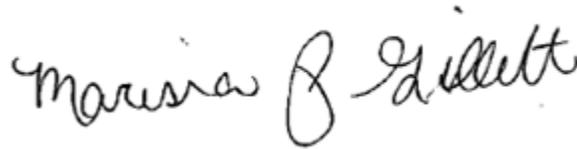
Meeting ID 920 0793 9213

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting

All persons interested in this matter are hereby requested to file written comments addressing these issues by 4:00 p.m. on **April 23, 2021**. Documents must be filed with the Executive Secretary of the Authority in electronic form pursuant to instructions on the Authority's website.

Dated at New Britain, Connecticut, this 29th day of March, 2021.

PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marissa P. Gillett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Marissa P. Gillett
Chairman