

Wednesday, October 15, 2025 | 1:00 PM– 3:00 PM

Contractor Technical Advisory Committee (CTAC) Meeting Minutes

Meeting Recording

Discussion

1. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Introduction

DEEP reviewed the meeting objectives and agenda which focused on Residential and Commercial & Industrial (C&I) topics.

2. Public Comment 00:04:30

No public comments.

3. DEEP Updates 00:04:45

DEEP provided updates on federal funding and a proposed scope for a Contractor Ombudsperson position, as directed within the 2025-2027 Conservation & Load Management (C&LM) Plan Final Determination.

a. Federal Funding

DEEP continues to work on all federally funded programs that have been contractually obligated to CT DEEP as required under the terms of awards.

- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Rebates
 - DEEP submitted Blueprints to the Department of Energy (DOE) for the Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates (HEAR) program on April 30, 2025.
 - DEEP Blueprint Plans for the Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates (HEAR) program were accepted by DOE staff on July 30, 2025.
 - DOE leadership has been made aware that CT is ready to launch HEAR. DEEP is now waiting for DOE leadership authorization to launch HEAR.
 - DEEP executed a contract with Eversource for HEAR on July 11, 2025, and a contract with Avangrid on October 6, 2025. DEEP is continuing to work to execute the Home Efficiency Rebates (HER) contracts with both companies.
 - Once HER contracts are signed, DEEP will work to submit the HER blueprints to DOE as quickly as possible.
 - DEEP and the utilities are ready to launch HEAR as soon as DOE authorization is received. HER is estimated to launch several months after HEAR launches. Separately, DEEP will conduct a public process to determine how to best deliver these programs to municipal electric territories.

- New England Heat Pump Accelerator
 - Proposals for a regional implementer for the Accelerator were due on April 10th, 2025. DEEP is working with the Coalition to select and contract with a Regional Implementer as quickly as possible.
 - DEEP is aiming to have the Accelerator in place for early 2026.
- Solar for All
 - On August 7, 2025, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) contacted DEEP in an attempt to terminate the Solar for All grant. DEEP is working with the Governor's Office and the Attorney General's Office to determine next steps.
- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) Coordination
 - DEEP published the finalized cost-sharing plans on May 19th, 2025. These plans will be living documents that may be updated in the future
- While not federally funded, DEEP also provided an update on the Clean Energy, Sustainability, and Connectivity Incentives Tool
 - DEEP issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the online Incentive Tool, a centralized location for residential customers to identify the rebates and incentives available to them.
 - Proposals were due on July 11th, 2025. DEEP and the Review Committee are currently working to review proposals and select a vendor as quickly as possible.

b. Contractor Ombudsperson

DEEP's Determination on the 2025-2027 C&LM Plan included a Condition of Approval to issue an RFP to secure the services of an independent Contractor Ombudsperson.

DEEP presented a proposed scope for this position and requested feedback from program contractors. DEEP has issued a Notice of Request for Witten Comment; responses are due by October 29, 2025.

DEEP's proposed scope for the position:

- A 3-year term in alignment with the C&LM Plan.
- An individual(s) with some energy, mediation, legal, or other relevant experience.
- Residential contractor focused.
- Funded through a portion of program budgets.
- Connecticut based (preferred)
- Independent from the utilities, DEEP, and the Energy Efficiency Board (EEB).
- Shall not be a current program contractor.
- Will not be expected to achieve consensus among contractor community.

Proposed responsibilities include:

- Track, compile, and seek resolution to contractor concerns, issues, and complaints raised to DEEP and the EEB.
 - Maintaining an organized and detailed log of concerns and complaints raised up to DEEP and the EEB. DEEP also envisions that when necessary, this position could serve in a mediating role.

- Act as the primary contact between DEEP/EEB and the residential program contractors.
 - Compiling and promptly communicating with DEEP/EEB and residential contractors any new concerns or topics that arise.
- Support dissemination of information regarding EEB, EEB subcommittees, and evaluation activity to program contractors, including voting, requests for comment, and upcoming meetings and events.
 - Attending both in-person and virtual meetings to summarize findings concerning contractor interests, and relay messaging back to residential contractors.
- Provide regular updates to the EEB to convey contractor positions on various programmatic issues (will not be required to achieve consensus).
 - Requesting agenda time to provide residential contractor points of view.
- Assist in the development of formal verbal and written comments in response to requests by DEEP, the EEB, and the utilities.
- Assist in the development of CTAC meeting agendas and in-meeting facilitation.
 - Proactively soliciting agenda topic ideas from contractors prior to CTAC meeting agendas being published and affirmatively responding to DEEP's request for CTAC agenda topics.

DEEP facilitated questions and discussion 00:15:54

Discussion was opened between the Contractors, DEEP, and the Utilities. DEEP facilitated with questions regarding the proposed Ombudsperson scope and how to ensure the position is a beneficial resource to Contractors.

- Tim Fabuien, Lantern Energy, supported the ombudsperson role, emphasizing its usefulness for new contractors navigating the program's complexity. He suggested the ombudsperson could serve as a centralized point of contact to help guide contractors through issues and direct them to the correct channels.
- Becca Trietch, DEEP, clarified that the ombudsperson would not act as a liaison between utilities and contractors but would support contractor participation in DEEP and EEB functions, CTAC meetings, and evaluations. The contractor-utility relationship should remain direct and unchanged.
- Richard Faesy, EEB Technical Consultant, raised questions about the time and resource expectations for the position. Richard Faesy asked whether it would be full-time or part-time.
- DEEP responded that the role is expected to require a full-time commitment each year for the 3-year term. However, flexibility exists depending on responses to the upcoming RFP.
- Dan Robertson, Artis Energy Solutions, added that the ombudsperson should be able to build consensus, communicate effectively, and act as a "politician-like" figure to resolve miscommunications between stakeholders. He emphasized setting clear goals for the position (e.g., improving turnaround times or increasing participation).
- DEEP acknowledged that while consensus may be hard to achieve, it would still be valuable to have an organized record of diverse contractor positions.
- Amy McLean, Avangrid, asked who the ombudsperson would report to. DEEP stated it would likely be the Energy Efficiency Board (EEB), although the position would remain operationally independent.

- Marriott Dowden, Avangrid, proposed that a current program vendor could serve in the role, citing the need for someone with direct program experience.
- Becca Trietch, DEEP, responded that their current preference is for the ombudsperson to be completely independent and not an active program contractor, in order to ensure unbiased representation of contractor input.
- The discussion reinforced DEEP's emphasis on neutrality and transparency in the ombudsperson role.
- DEEP encouraged stakeholders to submit written comments by October 29, 2025.

4. **Utility Updates [Residential]** 00:24:36

- a. **Air sealing hours and approach for the Home Energy Solutions (HES)/ Home Energy Solutions-Income Eligible (HES-IE) programs**
 - Ralph Valente, Avangrid, presented the goals, process, proposed air sealing hours, and workflow.
 - Goals: Develop a plan for allocating air sealing hours based on DEEP's HES Redesign Determination. Prioritize air sealing efforts for cost effectiveness, energy savings, and impact, and preparation for insulation. Focus on completing air sealing and insulation in conjunction for an airtight building envelope.
 - Process: Ralph Valente recognized the Technical Advisory Group, who met multiple times over the course of a month and a half for about 2 hours in order to develop this process. He acknowledged the group's flexibility and commitment to deciding a model time-based approach method.
 - Items taken into consideration during these meetings included:
 - Opportunities for large homes, homes without accessible attics, and conditioned space.
 - Working through instances such as air sealing time for large homes and time spent in homes that do not have attic space.
 - The customer facing aspects of the process. Customers see the time spent on the conditioned space such as caulking windows, doing baseboards, or addressing drafty doors as contractors making a big difference.
 - Shared priorities were identified.
 - Focusing on Attic, Basement, Garage, and Conditioned space (ABGCs) of air sealing, cost effectiveness for the customer and program, preparation for insulation measures, and undisrupted scope of work delivered to the customer due to situations such as a health and safety barrier.
 - A final proposal was sent to all contractors on October 3, 2024, with responses due by October 10, 2024.
 - Spencer Hauer, Eversource, presented the HES and HES-IE Air Sealing table for technician hours. The table provides hourly maximums without additional customer contributions for a majority of Connecticut homes.
 - Utility guidance was determined by house size. The total technician air sealing hours cannot exceed 7.

Table presented by the utilities:

HES and HES-IE Air Sealing Standard Air Seal Hours for Entire Home¹ Total technician hours² can not exceed 7 hours	
Guidance for Home Size (Conditioned Square Feet) and Age	Hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≤ 1,000 square feet; or Newer homes (built 2014 and after) 	4
> 1,000 square feet	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If over 3,000 square feet we recommend completing a scope of work in advance so all air sealing can be completed in 1 visit If attic is unable to be air sealed the maximum air sealing hours are reduced by 1 	TBD Based on the Home
Additional Air Sealing Hours based on attic considerations Per Technician Discretion and Justification Examples:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 6 inches Loose Insulation > 6 inches Mix Batt & Loose Insulation Cross Batt Insulation Trust Construction Kneewall Transition 	Up to 1
Exception 1: At/Near Building Airflow Standard (BAS) ³	1
Exception 2: Modular/Prefab Home	3

1 2+unit building air sealing is based upon the total conditioned sq-ft of the building.

2 Example: A 2,000 square foot home with 6 total technician-hours = 1 technician working for 6 hours or 2 technicians working for 3 hours, or combination thereof.

3 Not a stand-alone measure. Recommend only if there is attic or basement/crawl space/rim joist insulation recommended

- Smaller homes (≤1,000 sqft) and newer homes (built 2014 or later) would be capped at 4 hours.
- Larger homes (≥1,000 sqft) would be capped at 6 hours.
- In homes ≥3,000 sqft, it is recommended to complete a scope of work with proposed hours in advance. An appropriate number of hours can then be discussed, so all air sealing can be completed in one visit. This is well suited for the two-visit model.
- If a contractor is using the single visit model, they can call the utilities to work through number of air sealing hours required.
- If a contractor is unable to air seal the attic, a cap on the hours based on square footage was applied.
 - Smaller homes (≤1,000 sqft) would be capped at 3 hours.
 - Larger homes (≥1,000 sqft) would be capped at 5 hours.
- The Technical Advisory Group recognized there are unique situations within residential homes which take additional time. In these instances, Contractors will be provided an additional hour of air sealing.
 - Smaller homes (≤1,000 sqft) + 1 Additional Air Sealing Hours, would be capped at 5 hours.
 - Larger homes (≥1,000 sqft) 1 Additional Air Sealing Hours, would be capped at 7 hours.
- Two Exceptions were provided for home(s) that are already “tight” but still need some air sealing completed.
 - At/Near Building Airflow Standard (BAS) are provided 1 hour
 - Modular/Prefab Homes are provided 3 hours

- The workflow was presented for the 2-Visit model
 - Visit #1: The scope of work and the hours are created by the Contractor on this first visit. The contractors will measure the house, assess it, determine the number of hours, and then submit the scope of work to the utilities for review and approval.
 - Visit #2: contractors return to the home and complete recommended air sealing work.
- b. DEEP Facilitated Questions and Discussion oo: 33:30**
 - Becca Trietch, DEEP, asked about real-time support for contractors using the single-visit model.
 - Spencer Hauer, Eversource, confirmed contractors can call utility contacts for guidance, but availability isn't guaranteed.
 - It was clarified that the 7 hours air sealing chart presented is not necessarily the max amount of air sealing hours, this is the max amount of fully incentivized air sealing hours through the program.
 - For homes that may require more than 7 technician hours, some level of customer co-pay may be expected.
 - When a contractor is scheduling a house with a one-visit model approach, they will be able to determine the square footage of that house. If they determine that the house is a larger square footage and may go beyond the 7 hours, they should let the customer know there might be a co-pay to fully air seal.
 - Additionally, if a contractor follows a one-visit model and realizes they will need more time on a larger house to complete the work, they can perform 7 hours of air sealing work and then submit a scope of work to the utilities requesting additional time.
 - Jordan Schellens, Eversource, added the utilities also do not want the customer to reject follow-up work in these larger homes to finish air sealing work beyond the 7 hours. Ideally, the house size will be identified before the visit, so that the vendor can go in knowing the time and the customer understands the co-pay.
 - Contractors will need to set expectations with customers ahead of time to avoid miscommunication during single-visit jobs.
 - Becca Trietch asked about the Technical Advisory Group process.
 - Spencer Hauer clarified group participants were volunteers from a prior call and future participation would also be open through public meetings.
 - Ryan Behling, New England Smart Energy, questioned if services such as shower heads, pipe wrap, or aerators, could be done on the service visit, rather than on the assessment side. The concern from the utilities in this regard would be if the second visit does not happen, then the utilities are paying for a visit that does not have energy savings, but they are open to feedback as this is rolled out, to determine best practices.
 - DEEP also acknowledged that adjustment may be needed for the program design after technicians practice these time-based models in the field. Contractors were encouraged to keep track of questions and concerns that arise.
 - Karina Gaft-Azcue, CET, inquired about braiding the new HES air sealing hours with the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), which allows 3 hours.
 - DEEP acknowledged the braiding process is still in development, and cost-sharing rules are being aligned. It was recommended to consult publicly posted cost-sharing documents for guidance.

- Amy McLean, Avangrid, added that Eversource is slightly ahead in the braiding integration process, but efforts are ongoing across all parties.

5. **Utility Updates [Commercial]** 00:44:00

a. **Proposal to reinstate incentives for commercial gas foodservice equipment**

- Mariott Dowden, Avangrid, provided background on the proposal to reinstate natural gas equipment midstream incentives for the commercial foodservice sector.
 - On September 9, 2025, the utilities [presented a proposal](#) to reinstate gas kitchen equipment, at the Commercial and Industrial (C&I) Committee Meeting of the Energy Efficiency Board. The C&I Committee subsequently voted in favor of this proposal to better serve customers.
 - Mariott Dowden explained that gas remains the standard for commercial kitchens. Switching to electric equipment is costly and brings significant infrastructure costs.
 - Removing foodservice gas incentives led to a shift back to refurbished/used gas models, due to affordability, hindering adoption of efficient electric models.
 - The request to reinstate gas incentives for high-efficiency food service equipment was made in response to declining participation in the electrification-only model.
 - On September 24, 2025, the utilities submitted a [letter of justification](#) for this recommendation.

b. **DEEP facilitated questions and discussion** 00:49:06

- Becca Trietch, DEEP, reiterated the 3 criteria of exceptions for natural gas equipment cases within DEEP's Determination on the 2025-2027 Conservation & Load Management (C&LM) Plan. (1) Electrification is not technologically feasible, (2) the customer's utility bills would increase, (3) the electrification approach is not cost effective.
- The utilities were unable to provide formal technical analysis showing that electric cooking equipment is unfeasible but noted a strong market preference for gas.
- There was also no data provided proving that electrification raises customer bills, although conversion costs are perceived to be high. No full cost-effective analysis for electric vs. gas equipment was presented.
- Becca Trietch, DEEP, expressed concern that the lack of technical or economic analysis weakens the case for an exception under the current rules, especially since electric alternatives do exist, even if they are not favored, and market transformation is a key objective of the C&LM programs.
- Becca Trietch asked if the utilities explored other explanations for the drop in participation (e.g., broader economic trends) or conducted evaluations of vendor sentiment.
- The utilities responded they had only done qualitative outreach with major distributors (not formal evaluation).
- The utilities had not taken other programmatic actions, like boosting electric incentives or additional marketing. The utilities indicated that they wanted to wait for DEEP's determination before making broader changes. The utilities also noted that constantly shifting incentive levels disrupts distributor planning and market stability.

- The utilities explained that the midstream program structure makes rapid incentive changes difficult. Some major distributors have stopped stocking high-efficiency gas equipment since rebates were removed. Now this equipment has become a special order.
- George Lawrence, EEB Technical Consultant, provided historical data:
 - For the last three years, electric food service equipment sales through the midstream program ranged from 330 to 500 units per year.
 - With the cessation of support for new gas equipment installed after January 1, 2025, the hope was that these commercial customers would switch to electric.
 - However, since the discontinuation beginning in January 2025 through August 2025, only 120 electric units were installed, showing a sharp decline, despite electric incentives remaining.
- There was general agreement between DEEP and utilities that if gas incentives return, electric incentive levels should also be re-evaluated to ensure balance and encourage electrification when feasible.
- Mike Uhl, System Smart, questioned if commercial kitchens may be re-evaluating equipment investment choices because of the broader forces in the economy, rather than simply responding to rebates.
- Discussion ensued which revolved around exploring data nationally or regionally through evaluations. Discussion also touched on the many variables customers consider when making investment decisions.
- The utilities also pointed out that initially they had identified a subset of measures to reintroduce, not all previously offered gas measures. This subset of recommended gas measures was based on overall sales.

6. Commercial & Industrial (C&I) Contractors 01:11:47

a. Commercial Contractor Consortium (CCC)

- Dan Robertson, Artis Energy Solutions, presented on behalf of the CCC, a group of 25 contractors focused on commercial energy efficiency projects.
- 2025 Q3 Business Activity
 - Lighting incentives are phasing out, forcing contractors to shift focus to weatherization and HVAC measures.
 - This shift is affecting margins and business models, with firms deciding whether to develop new capabilities in-house or through partnerships.
 - Contractors reported cash flow issues due to longer project timelines and reduced incentives.
 - Milestone payments for large projects offered by the utilities were appreciated and viewed as helpful in addressing this issue.
- Contractor and Utility Coordination
 - The utilities were commended for participating in Main Street and community programs, particularly in Environmental Justice Communities (EJCs). However, concern remains that lighting savings losses are not being fully offset by other measures.
 - The CCC supported reinstating natural gas incentives in certain cases but recommends making electric incentives more attractive overall. They support a balanced approach, where certain fossil fuel upgrades are still allowed under defined criteria.

- Observations and Comments
 - Property managers are increasingly pursuing LED-to-LED upgrades with controls, even without incentives, as they are driven by light quality and reliability rather than energy savings.

b. Barriers to weatherization projects

- Small Business Energy Advantage (SBEA) On-Bill Financing:
 - Many non-lighting projects have longer payback periods and require customers to finance more themselves, particularly in small businesses.
 - Financing limitations (e.g., 15-year payback) prevent some projects from moving forward, especially those with longer payback periods like insulation and weatherization.
 - These have been managed through milestone-based payments or financing with the Nation Energy Improvement Fund (NEIF)
- Financing Improvement Recommendations:
 - Consider raising the threshold for financing project paybacks beyond 15 years for on-bill financing.
 - CCC pointed out the benefits of showing more energy savings on the HVAC weatherization side.

c. DEEP facilitated questions and discussion

- Becca Trietch, DEEP, and Ricky Jordan, Eversource, acknowledged the challenges. Confirming that weatherization measures often have long paybacks (20–25 years).
- Ricky Jordan stated the utilities are beginning to meet internal weatherization performance metrics, but it's clear that reaching higher targets will require exploration into items such as on-bill financing improvements, increased or restructured incentives, and comprehensive program designs to support long-payback measures.
- There was also discussion regarding the need to keep costs under control through comprehensive measure mix and shorter payback periods (under 10-15 years).

7. Public Comment 01:24:42

- No public comments at this time. DEEP reminded attendees of the opportunity to submit written comments regarding the Contractor Ombudsperson position.

Announcements

1. The 2025-2027 Conservation & Load Management (C&LM) Plan was filed on February 28, 2025. T
 - a. On February 28, 2025, the utilities submitted the March refiling of the [2025-2027 Plan Update](#) as a budget reconciliation filing with 2024 year-end results. This included [attachments](#) to the 2025 Program Savings Document (PSD) and Parts A & B of the Optimization Plan.
2. On May 9, 2025, DEEP filed the [Final Phase 1. Determination for the 2025-2027 C&LM Plan HES & HES-IE Program Redesign](#)

3. On September 9, 2025, DEEP filed the [2025-2027 C&LM Plan Final Determination](#). DEEP will draft a separate determination on The Optimization Plan.
4. The [CTAC Question & Answer Tracker](#) is up on the [CTAC website](#), which will be updated following each meeting.
5. Contractor Ombudsman Written Comments can be submitted electronically by October 29, 2025 at 4:00pm EST to DEEP.EnergyBureau@ct.gov.
6. The next CTAC meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2025, at 1:00pm.