

Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board Meeting

via Zoom

May 21, 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm

Recorded via Zoom [Link](#)

Attendance: Claire Coleman, Lydia Santiago, Jaime Soto, Joanne Whistnant, Frank Augeri, Jr. and Brittany Wyman, Kimberly White, Gannon Long (designee for Perkin Simpson), Jannine Tarantello, Matthew Hellman, Matthew Dillon, Shayleen Alfieri, Evannie Bocachica, Michelle Royce Williams, Bonnie Roswig, Rhonda Evans, Cassandra Norfleet-Jonson and, Zani Imetovski

Absent: Nora Duncan, Theresa Washington, Kathleen Wasilnak, Nicole Lawton, Christian Herb, La'Mont Stevenson, Greg Kirschner, Angel Battle, Victoria Hackett

Chairwoman Claire Coleman called the meeting to order at 1:32pm. Chairwoman Coleman noted during our last meeting the Trump Administration laid off the Federal LIHEAP staff, currently there is budget proposal to eliminate all LIHEAP funding. Senator Murphy and Senator Blumenthal met last Friday advocating LIHEAP funding to our federal legislators. The Chair thanked all that joined the advocacy efforts last Friday.

1. Roll Call	(Min 0:46.) Completed electronically via Zoom Chat.
2. Approval of April 2, 2025, Meeting Minutes	(Min 3:19) Chairwoman Coleman called for Approval of April 2, 2025, Minutes. Motion by Joanne Whistnant, Second by Jaime Soto. No Objections or abstentions. Minutes approved.
3. Public Comments	(Min 05:39) Gannon Long, Op. Fuel: The CT Mirror published an article today covering the draft legislative bill proposal SB 4, a comprehensive energy bill. The draft has changes to the population served under LIEWAB, shorter periods for winter protection period, changes to medical protections in the length of time the individual is protected from a shut off. We have questions on how this bill will impact the Low-Income Discount Rate docket, the Annual Affordability Docket, and Performance Based Revenue dockets that are currently ongoing. In addition, there are some charges shifted to bonding, Op. Fuel, SBC funds have been flat since 2015, in the last ten years, we are educating and advocating with legislators to increase this fund which would be less than three dollars a year for ratepayers.
4. Energy Assistance Program Updates (presented reports vary from the Agenda at Chairs request and board approval) a. DSS b. Operation Fuel c. Connecticut Water Company	(Min 10:35-15:29) In the interest of time Chairwoman noted that as the reports were previously distributed, Agency representatives can provide a highlight of their reports. a. DSS by Cassandra Norfleet Johnson- see CEAP Report here . There is an overall decrease in applications from year to date (YTD) 2024-2025 in

Amended and approved on August 7th, 2025, Meeting

/ysb

Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board Meeting
via Zoom
May 21, 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm
Recorded via Zoom [Link](#)

d. Avangrid e. Eversource	<p>comparison from YTD 2023-2024 by 8.8%. The decrease may be impacted by income and people choosing not to apply and the decreased cost of home heating oil. Overall, eighty percent of the applications that have been received have been processed.</p> <p>(Min 15:30-20:50) Questions and Answers:</p> <p>Q: Brittany Wyman, E.O.E, asked questions relating to denial and appeal process for the applications.</p> <p>A: Cassandra Norfleet Johnson, DSS: Applicants will receive correspondence by email or USPS indicating application is missing information and/or denied. The applicant receives at a minimum 2 correspondences from the CAAs to: (1) provide the missing information or at (2) the time of the denial, the letter will state there is missing information. The applicant does not need to reapply if they are denied, they can simply provide the missing information, and the application will be reactivated. An applicant can appeal a denial which requires a desk review by the CAA, if the applicant is denied after a desk review, the applicant can then appeal via a DSS Hearing request.</p> <p>Q: Jaime Soto, Avangrid: Will DSS be able to offer a supplemental payment for utility heated households?</p> <p>A: Cassandra Norfleet Johnson, DSS: Based off the 10% release [of funds] we do believe DSS can offer supplemental payment for utility heated households. The amount is to be determined.</p> <p>Q: Chairwoman Coleman: Is there a time estimate for the supplemental assistance?</p> <p>A: Cassandra Norfleet Johnson, DSS: No, this will be determined after May 31st.</p> <p>b. (Min.21:01- 23:55) Operation Fuel- by Gannon Long, see report here. The data provided reflects the fall and winter seasons. Op. Fuel. serves individuals with incomes up to 75% of the State Median Income (SMI), with the average client income at 32% of SMI, indicating the severe financial challenges faced by the client base. The clientele largely consists of individuals and families experiencing financial hardship, medical vulnerability, and other critical</p>
------------------------------	--

Amended and approved on August 7th, 2025, Meeting
/ysb

Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board Meeting

via Zoom

May 21, 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm

Recorded via Zoom [Link](#)

needs. Regarding water assistance efforts, Long shared updates on ongoing collaborations, including a meeting with the consumer advocate for MDC (Metropolitan District Commission) customers, which was described as productive and promising for future engagement. The organization plans to host Aquarion Water Company at their office in June to further develop partnerships. Additionally, Long will co-present with CT Water at the upcoming NEUAC (National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition) Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, to discuss the organization's water assistance initiatives

Q&A (23:37:27:39)

Q: Kim White, OCC: How does the 32% of SMI average income interact with the 37% if the households qualified for CEAP?

A: Gannon Long: On the online application portal clients can submit income documentation, 37% of those clients may not have been CEAP recipients, however, may have qualified for CEAP benefits. CEAP award letters and/or SSI income letters are categorical income eligibility requirements.

Q: Kim White, OCC: The number of the grants approved, and discount rate appears the same in the water chart. Are clients approved of their grant and then enrolled at a discount rate?

A: Gannon Long, yes that is how it largely works.

c. (Min. 28:57-30:42) CT Water Company-Michelle Royce- see [report here](#). We have greater participation in our assistance programs this year than last year and an increase in clients enrolled in WRAP. We took clients who qualified for Operation Fuel within the previous two years and automatically enrolled into WRAP due their income eligibility being below or at 60% SMI.

d.(Min 31:09-37:36) Avangrid- by Lydia Santiago, see [report here](#)., presented on the year to date data of Matching Payment Plan (MPP), Flexible Payment Arrangements (FPR) and LIDR enrollment for April 2024 to April 2025.

Amended and approved on August 7th, 2025, Meeting

/ysb

Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board Meeting
via Zoom
May 21, 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm
Recorded via Zoom [Link](#)

	<p>Q: Chairman Coleman: It appears that number of enrollments for the arrearages has increased, is there a particular reason or trend?</p> <p>A: Jaime Soto, Avangrid. We stopped offering the Bill Forgiveness Program (a voluntary arrears program) as of Nov. 1st causing an increase in MPP and as of March 31st we did mass enrollment for anyone eligible for MPP causing an increase.</p> <p>Q: Bonnie Roswig, CT Center of Advocacy, Is there an estimate of the average monthly bill for those on LIDR?</p> <p>A: Jaime Soto: The average monthly payment for a customer enrolled in the MPP is about \$108.00 (for electric and gas) and we are gathering the information to be published in the Arrearage Forgiveness Program Plan filed with PURA.</p> <p>e. (Min 37:50- 40:59) Eversource- by Joanne Whistnant, see report here, presented on the year to date data of Matching Payment Plan (MPP), New Start (NS) and LIDR enrollment for April 2024 to April 2025.</p> <p>Comment: Kim White, OCC: It appears the number of arrearages has increased while the number of customers is the same.</p> <p>Response: The payments are a lot higher in NS program than MPP. And customers are electric and gas, not all customers are receiving energy assistance as it is no longer a requirement.</p>
<p>5.New Business</p> <p>a. Review of the LIEWAB Recommendations to DSS/OPM on 2025-26 CEAP Allocation Plan</p>	<p>a. (Min. 42:43-50:46) Chairman Coleman thanked the working group who met weekly to review the plan. The group had discussions under the challenging context of an ongoing funding uncertainty. The Chair reviewed the Allocation Plan, noting it is structured similar to last year: 1) Increase in the basic benefit was based on historical data, this increase was recommended without impacting crisis payment; 2) continuation and slight modification of the recommendation to deliver supplemental assistance earlier; 3) CEAP integration will be revisited on a</p>

Amended and approved on August 7th, 2025, Meeting
/ysb

Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board Meeting

via Zoom

May 21, 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm

Recorded via Zoom [Link](#)

	<p>year to year basis. Acknowledgement was given to DSS for successfully expanding online access to CEAP. The goal remains to increase the number of eligible households applying, with a focus on outreach methods like direct contact or text alerts to other DSS program beneficiaries. Early submission of these recommendations aims to ensure they can be incorporated into DSS's planning process. A public hearing will follow, allowing for additional feedback once DSS and the administration submit their plans to the Legislature by August 1st. The Chair requested a motion to adopt and approve the Recommendations. A motion was requested by Michelle Royce and second by Gannon Long. There were no objections or abstentions to the plan.</p>
6. PURA Docketed Matters Updates and Legislative Updates	<p>(Min 53:11-54:33)</p> <p>Chairman Coleman acknowledged that board member Frank Augeri, Jr. was honored at the New England Public Utilities Commission Symposium for amazing service over his professional career.</p> <p>PURA- Frank Augeri, Jr. : The Yankee Gas Rate Hearing will begin next week. The Affordability Docket has a technical meeting tentatively scheduled for August 7th, it will be a zoom meeting, there is not a zoom link currently.</p>
7. Public Comments	<p>(Min. 55:11) None.</p>
8. Adjournment	<p>(Min 57:19) Chairwoman Coleman called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Motion by Gannon Long and second by Michelle Williams No objections. Meeting Adjourned at 2:29PM.</p>

Upcoming Meeting Schedule:

August 6, 2025

October 1, 2025

December 3, 2025

**Amended and approved on August 7th, 2025, Meeting
/ysb**