

Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board Meeting

via Zoom

August 6 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm

[Recorded via Zoom](#)

Attendance: Claire Coleman, Nora Duncan, Lydia Santiago, Jaime Soto, Theresa Washington, Kathleen Wasilnak, Brittany Wyman, Kimberly White, Gannon Long, Nicole Lawton Matthew Hellman, Matthew Dillon, Christian Herb and Nickey Kollie, La'Mont Stevenson, Bonnie Roswig, Shayleen Alfieri, Rhonda Evans, Jannine Tarantello, Cassandra Norfleet-Jonson and Danielle Palladino.

Absent: Joanne Whistnant, Michelle Royce Williams, Greg Kirschner, Angel Battle, Victoria Hackett.

Chairwoman Claire Coleman called the meeting to order at 1:32pm and noting Connecticut Network (CT- N) also broadcasting live.

1. Roll Call	(Min: 0:45- 4:21) Completed by Secretary, Yessenia Santiago-Bejarano
2. Approval of May 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes	(Min 4:23-6:44) Chairwoman Coleman called for Approval of May 21,2025, Minutes. Objection by Gannon Long indicating grammatical error in Generation Power member. Chairwoman Coleman called to renew the motion of approval with the amendment to correct the grammatical error. Motion by Matthew Dillon, Second by Jaime Soto. Minutes approved as amended. Abstentions: Nora Duncan and Kathleen Wasilnak.
3. Public Comments	(Min.6:56) None.
4.New Business	a. (Min. 8:45-33:43) Katrina Metzler presented on the current policy and fiscal status of Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program on a national level. This program helps low-income families pay their energy bills, fix heating or cooling equipment, and stay safe during extreme weather. It is funded by Congress each year, through appropriations process, and it is not an entitlement program. Once the budget has been exhausted, families must wait until next year to receive assistance. Advocacy is critical, program leaders and supporters must regularly educate lawmakers about LIHEAP's impact and needs. LIHEAP faces key challenges, such as funding drops. The extra pandemic funds have ended, and another \$100 million will end next year. Rising Costs: Electricity prices have gone up 22% in the last decade, but funding hasn't kept up. Political Risks: the presidential budget proposals have at times aimed to eliminate LIHEAP. However, there is bipartisan support in Congress, the Senate has
a. Status of LIHEAP Presentation by Katrina Metzler, Executive Director of the National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC)	
b. Presentation and Discussion of DSS Proposed LIHEAP Allocation Plan that will be considered before the relevant committees of the Connecticut General Assembly on August 7 beginning at 10 a.m., with LIHEAP/CEAP scheduled to be reviewed at 1 p.m.	

Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board Meeting

via Zoom

August 6 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm

[Recorded via Zoom](#)

proposed an increase in LIHEAP funding of \$20 million dollars, a total budget of \$4.045 billion dollars. CT LIHEAP Highlights: over 100,000 households helped in 2024, with an average heating benefit of \$475.00. Seventy-three (73) % of households served had a vulnerable member (elderly, young child, or someone with health issues). One in four eligible Connecticut households received help, this is better than the national average. August is LIHEAP Action Month, we are encouraging outreach, storytelling, and social media campaigns to raise awareness.

Questions and Answers:

(Min. 34:06-46:01) Period of Question and Answers presented by Chairwoman Coleman, Christian Herb, and public stakeholders.

b. (Min. 47:42-56:03) LIHEAP Allocation Plan presented by DSS, Peter Hadler. Connecticut's LIHEAP program helps low-income households, especially those with elderly, disabled members, or young children, pay for heating costs. Families qualify if their income is at or below 60% of the state's median income. The program works mainly through nine community action agencies, in partnership with local governments, human service providers, and energy companies. Benefits include basic heating assistance, rental assistance for those whose heat is included in rent, and crisis assistance for households using deliverable fuel.

For the upcoming year, the state expects level federal funding compared to last year, though the overall budget is smaller because pandemic-era and federal infrastructure funds have ended. Connecticut will rely on its main federal block grant plus some carryover funds from the previous year. The projected caseload is about 100,000 households, a 5% increase from the recent average. The state has increased the basic benefit by \$115.00 for all households and slightly raised the crisis benefit by \$15.00 per delivery, with up to three crisis deliveries allowed.

The maximum possible benefit for the most vulnerable households using deliverable fuel could be \$1,920 in the coming year. The program also includes funding for heating system repairs, weatherization

Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board Meeting
via Zoom
August 6 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm
[Recorded via Zoom](#)

	<p>barrier work, and technology upgrades. Changes this year include new pricing options for deliverable fuel vendors to better match regional market conditions and continued efforts to ensure quick payments to vendors and timely processing of applications.</p> <p><u>Questions and Answers:</u></p> <p>(Min. 56:32-1:00) Period of Q&A by members Theresa Washington and answered by Peter Hadler.</p>
<p>5. Energy Assistance Program Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DSS b. Operation Fuel c. Eversource d. Avangrid e. Connecticut Water Company 	<p>a. (Min. 1:02-1:03) DSS presented by Cassandra Norfleet Johnson, the final CEAP data was presented. DSS will follow up with the board to provide 2024 performance measure data and written comments to the LIHEAP Allocation Plan and the utilities companies supplemental payment will be published and circulated sometime this month in August.</p> <p><u>Questions and Answers:</u></p> <p>(Min. 1:03-1:07) Period of Q&A by Chairwoman Coleman, Christian Herb and answered by Cassandra Norfleet Johnson.</p> <p>b. (Min 1:08-1:13) Generation Power dba Operation Fuel, presentation by Gannon Long. Operation Fuel has rebranded as Generation Power CT, though its legal name remains the same. The organization served 5,665 households in fiscal year 2024–2025, helping 13,775 residents with over \$2.6 million in energy assistance. Many of the households served included vulnerable members, such as those with medical needs, disabilities, or older and younger residents. Assistance was also provided for water bills through partnerships with Connecticut Water, Aquarion, and MDC, though MDC funds have already run out for the year. The group is focusing on supporting those with the greatest need, especially in medical crisis situations.</p> <p>To manage growing demand, the program will now operate in four application cycles each year—September, November, January, and March—each lasting 9 days. Applications will be prioritized for households facing emergencies such as shutoffs,</p>

Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board Meeting

via Zoom

August 6 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm

[Recorded via Zoom](#)

medical vulnerabilities, or age-related risks. Those not in high-priority situations may be denied and asked to apply in the next cycle. Generation Power CT will continue to accept online applications and work with a network of in-person “application support centers” to help people apply. The goal is to make the process more predictable and transparent for those seeking help.

Questions and Answers:

(Min. 1:14-1:18) Period of Q&A by board members Thresa Washington and Bonnie Roswig and answered by Gannon Long.

c. (Min. 1:18-1:22) [Eversource presentation](#) by Theresa Washington. The New Start program is no longer offered, but some customers are still finishing it under the old program rules. Most are moving to the new Matching Payment Program, which gives customers a dollar-for-dollar match on payments they make toward their bills. Eversource also changed its discount rate structure in June, moving from two tiers to five tiers, which changes how savings are applied to enrolled customers. More details about this change will be shared in the upcoming technical session by Public Utilities Regulatory Authority.

Enrollment in the Matching Payment Program has grown to over 40,000 customers, partly because people can now sign up year-round instead of in limited phases, and because it is now open to customers who don’t heat with the utility. This change, along with an auto-enrollment earlier in the year, greatly increased participation compared to last year’s structure. The program helps reduce customer balances while keeping accounts active, we expect high participation to continue.

d. (Min. 1:24-1:26) [Avangrid presentation](#) by Jaime Soto. Avangrid, which includes CNG, SCG, and UI, has a little over 47,000 customers enrolled in the Matching Payment Program (MPP), with total balances of about \$132 million. The Bill Forgiveness Program (BFP) for UI still has over 14,000 customers with nearly \$22 million in balances. Across the three companies, more than 16,000 customers are on flexible payment arrangements, owing just under \$15

Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board Meeting
via Zoom
August 6 2025, from 1:30 - 3:00 pm
[Recorded via Zoom](#)

	<p>million. UI is still using a two-tier discount rate structure but plans to move to a five-tier system next year. Currently, over 68,000 customers receive Low-Income Discount Rate (LIDR) benefits, totaling more than \$3 million in credits as of the end of June.</p> <p>e. CT Water Company data was previously circulated and tabled for another meeting as CT Water was not present.</p>
6. PURA Docketed Matters Updates and Legislative Updates	<p>(Min. 1:22-1:23) PURA updates presented by Brittany Wyman: The upcoming technical meeting for docket 25-05-01 will be held tomorrow at 10 a.m., with the agenda already issued by the authority. Two other relevant dockets are the active rate cases: UI's rate case (24-10-04) and Yankee Gas's rate case (24-12-01). For UI's case, all briefs have been submitted, and the next step is the draft decision, though the date for that is not yet known. For Yankee Gas, reply briefs are due early next week, marking the final stages of the proceeding.</p> <p>The energy affordability docket is highlighted as particularly important for the group. Participants can find more details by using the docket search tool on PURA's website, entering the relevant docket numbers to access associated documents and updates.</p>
7. Public Comments	(Min.1:27) None.
8. Adjournment 2:59pm	(Min 1:28-1:29) Chairwoman Coleman called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Motion by Nora Duncan and second by Christian Herb.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule:

October 1, 2025
December 3, 2025