

**OCC Begins Work on National Grid-Interactive Buildings Working Group**

The Office of Consumer Counsel (“OCC”) has begun its work with the National Association of State Energy Officials (“NASEO”) and National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (“NARUC”) Grid-Interactive Efficient Buildings (“GEB”) Working Group. The group is comprised of fourteen states with goals set in the grid modernization space, and an eye on emerging technologies and applications in energy and buildings, specifically.

With Governor Lamont recently signing his first Executive Order that reinvigorates an existing energy efficiency program, Lead By Example, with a goal and focus on reducing the overall carbon footprint of buildings and vehicles in Connecticut, this work is fitting. Generally, energy policy is moving Connecticut forward with its efforts and commitments around energy and climate improvements. Some specific areas the working group will focus on include time-of-use rates, current and upcoming Demand Response (DR) programs within states, and barriers to implementing energy technologies and renewable energy offerings.

Ratepayer impact is, of course, always a top priority to OCC. This is one key element to consider when examining any step forward in modernizing the electric grid or adopting new benchmarks for buildings. Integrating EE and DR creates a “stacked” value that benefits both the customer and the utility. This may be a clear win-win, but certain elements like customer education and equity in funding are examples of areas that cannot be overlooked or undervalued in considering steps forward. Ultimately, customers need to feel comfortable with the idea to invest in a smart thermostat or opt in to a time-of-use rate. And there’s always the popular discussion around cost, incentives, and what specific impacts ratepayers will experience.

The working group plans to have a series of webinars in the coming months, followed by in-depth discussions on specific topics. It will ultimately be a tool for participating states to use while considering next steps in policy and program design, among other areas. This collaborative effort is proving already to be beneficial, and OCC is pleased to be participating.



Please visit [OCC’s website](http://www.ct.gov/occ/site/default.asp).