

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Case No. 17-3935-INV

Investigation into programmatic adjustments
to the standard-offer program for 2018

Order entered: 08/22/2017

**ORDER OPENING INVESTIGATION, ESTABLISHING SCHEDULE,
AND NOTICE OF WORKSHOP**

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 8005a, the Vermont Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) hereby opens an investigation into programmatic adjustments to the standard-offer program. The investigation will include the review of standard-offer prices and the review of the allocation of available capacity under the standard-offer program.

In this Order, we appoint a Hearing Officer to address the review of standard-offer prices and the review of the capacity allocation, including the allocation among various technology categories. In addition, we establish a schedule for the proceeding.

II. BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Section 8005a(f)(3), the Commission is required to annually review the established avoided costs under the standard-offer program. In addition, Section 8005a(c)(2) requires the Commission to allocate the 127.5 MW cumulative capacity of the standard-offer program among different categories of renewable energy technologies.

On March 1, 2013, the Commission established, pursuant to Section 8005a(f)(1), a request for proposal (“RFP”) mechanism to determine the standard-offer projects that will fill annual plant capacity available under the program, and directed the Standard Offer Facilitator,¹ by April 1 of each year, to issue an RFP to solicit standard-offer projects to meet the requirements of Section 8005a(c).² The 2013 Order also established technology-specific avoided costs to serve as caps on the standard-offer prices solicited through the RFP.

On March 2, 2017, and March 29, 2017, the Commission issued Orders³ establishing: (1) a mechanism for the allocation of available capacity for the remainder of the standard-offer program, pursuant to Section 8005a(c)(2); and (2) the avoided costs that served as price caps on

¹ VEPP Inc. serves as the Standard Offer Facilitator under contract to the Commission. The 2018 RFP will be available at: <http://vermontstandardoffer.com>.

² *Order Re Establishment of Standard-Offer Prices and Programmatic Changes to the Standard-Offer Program*, Dockets 7873 and 7874, Order of 3/1/13 (the “2013 Order”).

³ *Order Re 2017 Technology Allocation and Price Caps for the Standard-Offer Program*, Docket 8817, *Order of 3/2/17*; *Order Re Motions to Alter or Amend and Motion to Reconsider*, Docket 8817, *Order of 3/29/17*.

the standard-offer projects solicited in the 2017 RFP, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 8005a(f)(2).⁴ The March 2nd Order also determined the avoided costs that will serve as the prices for farm methane projects under the standard-offer program. Pursuant to Section 8005a(g), farm methane projects remain outside of the programmatic cap.

As part of the annual price review and based on the results of the 2017 solicitation, the decisions in the March 2nd and 29th Orders may need to be revisited going forward.

III. DISCUSSION

We are appointing a Hearing Officer to conduct a proceeding to address the review of standard-offer prices and the review of the allocation of available capacity. Pursuant to Section 8005a(f), this matter will be conducted as a non-contested case proceeding.⁵

To meet the 2018 requirements of Section 8005a(c), the Commission anticipates that it will direct the Standard Offer Facilitator to issue an RFP to solicit standard-offer projects by April 1, 2018. In recognition that the price caps and capacity allocation inform the 2018 RFP, we are establishing the following schedule with the goal to provide potential bidders with significant advance notice of the RFP parameters.

October 20, 2017	Deadline for comments and recommendations on capacity allocation and avoided-cost prices (including any cash-flow spreadsheets and any documents relied upon to support recommendations)
October 31, 2017	Workshop to discuss participants' comments and recommendations
November 14, 2017	Deadline for reply comments and any requests for hearing
Week of December 10, 2017	Tentative date for Hearing Officer's proposal for decision (assuming no requests for hearing)

The Commission will establish a service list for this proceeding, which is not a contested case. Anyone interested in participating shall contact the Clerk of the Commission.

This case is being processed in the Commission's online document management system, known as ePUC, which can be accessed at <http://epuc.vermont.gov>. Information about

⁴ The cash-flow spreadsheets used in the determination of the 2017 standard-offer prices are available at: <http://puc.vermont.gov/electric/standard-offer>.

⁵ The schedule in this proceeding will provide an opportunity for requests for hearing.

how to use ePUC, including how to make a filing and how to search for documents, is available on the Commission's website at <http://puc.vermont.gov/epuc-information>.

IV. NOTICE OF WORKSHOP

On Tuesday, October 31, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., the Hearing Officer will convene a workshop to discuss the avoided-cost prices and capacity allocation. The workshop will be held in the Susan M. Hudson Hearing Room, located on the 3rd floor of the People's United Bank Building, 112 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont. The workshop will be recorded by a court reporter.

V. ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED by the Public Utility Commission ("Commission") of the State of Vermont that:

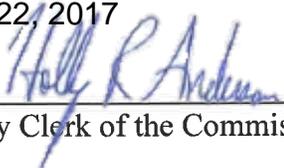
1. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 8005a, an investigation is opened into programmatic changes to the standard-offer program and the development of standard-offer prices.
2. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 8, Mary Jo Krolewski, Utilities Analyst, is appointed to serve as Hearing Officer in this proceeding.
3. The following schedule is adopted for this proceeding:
 - October 20, 2017 – Deadline for comments and recommendations on capacity allocation and avoided-cost prices (including any cash-flow spreadsheets and any documents relied upon to support recommendations).
 - October 31, 2017 – Workshop to discuss participants' comments and recommendations.
 - November 14, 2017 – Deadline for reply comments and any requests for hearing.
 - Week of December 10, 2017 – Tentative date for Hearing Officer's proposal for decision (assuming no requests for hearing).
4. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 10(c), a workshop will be held in this matter on Tuesday, October 31, 2017, commencing at 9:30 A.M., in the Susan M. Hudson Hearing Room, located on the Third Floor of the People's United Bank Building, at 112 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont this 22nd day of August, 2017.

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Anthony Z. Roisman)	PUBLIC UTILITY
)	
)	COMMISSION
Margaret Cheney)	
)	
)	OF VERMONT
Sarah Hofmann)	

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: August 22, 2017

Attest: 
Deputy Clerk of the Commission

Notice to Readers: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Commission (by e-mail, telephone, or in writing) of any apparent errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: puc.clerk@vermont.gov)

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Docket 8817

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