

For Immediate release - October 02, 2012



PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION TO INVESTIGATE GRID MODERNIZATION POLICIES

Exploring enhanced technologies and practices for costs savings and reliability

Boston – Tuesday, October 2, 2012 - The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) today announced it will launch an investigation in an effort to ensure that electric distribution companies adopt grid modernization technology and practices that will enhance electric service reliability and empower customers across the Commonwealth to better manage their use of electricity so that they can save money on their electricity bills.

“We are committed to looking at policies and practices across the board to ensure that utilities are taking every opportunity to reduce costs and improve reliability for customers in Massachusetts,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rick Sullivan.

“Grid modernization will give customers the opportunity to gain more information and control over their electricity usage and save money on their electricity bills,” said DPU Chair Ann Berwick. “Developing policies that will take full advantage of a modern grid will also allow DPU to continue fulfilling its mission of service reliability to residents across the Commonwealth.”

Modernizing the electric grid will reduce the frequency and duration of customer outages due to storms and other events. DPU will also examine how electric grid modernization can lower overall costs of electricity and improve service to customers.

In addition, the investigation will explore the potential for the deployment of technologies such as advanced meters, cell phone applications, and smart appliances, which will enable customers to respond to changes in the price of electricity throughout the course of a day. Equipped with real-time price information and technologies, customers can alter their use of appliances such as dishwashers and washing machines from high-price periods to low-price periods.

DPU will form a Grid Modernization Stakeholder Working Group to assist in developing a roadmap for advancing grid modernization in the Commonwealth. The process will begin with a public workshop on November 14, 2012.

In 2008 and 2012, respectively, Governor Patrick signed into law the Green Communities Act, and An Act Relative to Competitively Priced Electricity in the Commonwealth to significantly enhance the development of energy efficiency, demand response, and distributed generation. Consistent with these statutes, grid modernization is a vital component of the DPU’s on-going efforts to promote clean energy resources and a more efficient and reliable electric system.