



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

D.P.U. 11-75

September 28, 2011

Investigation by the Department of Public Utilities on its own Motion into Distributed Generation Interconnection.

VOTE AND ORDER OPENING INVESTIGATION

I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Public Utilities (“Department”) opens this inquiry to investigate the interconnection of distributed generation in Massachusetts. This investigation will review the current standards and procedures by which distributed generation projects are interconnected to the electric distribution system. On August 18, 2011, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (“DOER”) filed a petition (“DOER Petition”) with the Department requesting that the Department open a proceeding on interconnection of distributed generation. DOER’s petition was accompanied by the Massachusetts Distributed Generation Interconnection Report (“DG Report”) prepared by KEMA, Inc. on behalf of DOER and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. The DG Report identifies various issues associated with the current distributed generation interconnection standards and application procedure (DG Report at viii). The DG Report proposes a redesign of the interconnection process in order to facilitate the growth of distributed generation in Massachusetts (DG Report at ix).¹ The purpose of this phase of the Department’s investigation is to determine the scope of our inquiry and the administrative process by which interconnection standards and procedures should be reviewed and updated.

II. REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

In 2002, the Department opened an investigation into interconnection standards and practices that reduce barriers to the installation of distributed generation. Distributed Generation, D.T.E. 02-38, at 2 (2002). The Department worked with all interested

¹ The DG Report and the DOER Petition are available on the Department’s website, <http://www.mass.gov/dpu> and at the Department’s offices, One South Station - 5th Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02110.

participants through the Massachusetts Distributed Generation Interconnection Collaborative (“DG Collaborative”), which developed interconnection standards, policies, and procedures for distributed generation.² Distributed Generation, D.T.E. 02-38-A (2002); Distributed Generation, D.T.E. 02-38-B (2004); Distributed Generation, D.T.E. 02-38-C (2005); Distributed Generation, D.T.E. 02-38-D (2007). These past efforts of the DG Collaborative have led to the implementation of a model interconnection tariff used by each electric distribution company for interconnecting distributed generation. See D.T.E. 02-38-A; D.T.E. 02-38-B; D.T.E. 02-38-C; D.T.E. 02-38-D. However, changes in the Commonwealth’s energy-related environment since the DG Collaborative disbanded in 2006 may warrant revisions to the model interconnection tariff. Legislative and regulatory changes³ have created a favorable setting for the development of distributed generation projects based on renewable technologies. As a result, there has been a marked increase in distributed generation interconnection applications submitted to the utilities over the past several years (DG Report at 2).

With the increased number of distributed generation projects seeking interconnection to the distribution system, it is necessary to revisit our current interconnection standards and procedures to determine what changes should be implemented to ensure an efficient and

² The final report of the DG Collaborative, entitled “Proposed Uniform Standards for Interconnecting Distributed Generation in Massachusetts,” is available at: <http://dg.raabassociates.org/>

³ See, e.g., G.L. c. 164, §§ 138, 139; 220 C.M.R. § 18.00 et seq.; 225 C.M.R. § 14.00 et seq.

effective interconnection process that will foster continued growth of distributed generation in Massachusetts. To this end, the Department intends to engage all interested persons in a broadly represented stakeholder process to address distributed generation interconnection issues, including those presented in the DG Report and DOER Petition. We seek comment on the appropriate scope of this proceeding, including distributed generation interconnection issues that should be addressed, including, but not limited to, those contained in the DG Report and the DOER Petition. In addition, the Department seeks comment on what procedural mechanisms are best suited to investigate such issues.⁴ Interested persons will have an opportunity to file substantive comments on distributed generation interconnection issues at a subsequent phase of this investigation.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Department invites all interested persons to participate in this investigation. Interested persons may file comments on the issues and questions discussed above. The Department anticipates that a number of persons will be interested in this proceeding. Therefore, the Department encourages interested persons to present consensus positions and submit comments jointly, when possible. Initial written comments must be filed no later than the close of business on October 28, 2011. Reply comments must be filed no later than the close of business on November 14, 2011.

⁴ The Department may use one, or a combination of administrative tools to examine interconnection issues, including those presented in the DG Report. Examples include: independent collaborative initiatives, Department-sponsored technical conferences, and adjudicatory proceedings.

Comments may not exceed 40 pages in length. All comments must be accompanied by an executive summary. One original and two copies⁵ of all comments should be filed with Mark D. Marini, Secretary, Department of Public Utilities, One South Station – 5th Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02110. All comments should also be submitted to the Department in electronic format.⁶ Comments will be available for public inspection at the Department's offices during business hours. Also, copies of comments that are filed electronically will be available on the Department's website. After reviewing the comments, the Department will determine the appropriate next steps.

IV. ORDER

Accordingly, the Department

VOTES: To open an investigation into updating distributed generation interconnection standards and processes; and it is

ORDERED: That the Secretary of the Department shall publish notice of this investigation in a statewide paper of daily circulation within the Commonwealth; and it is

⁵ Where possible, copies should be printed on both sides of each page. All copies must be three-hole punched.

⁶ All documents should be submitted to the Department in electronic format using one of the following methods: (1) by e-mail attachment to dpu.efiling@state.ma.us and Benjamin.Spruill@state.ma.us or (2) on a 3.5" disk or CD-ROM. The text of the e-mail, disk label, or CD-ROM must specify: (1) the docket number of the proceeding (D.P.U. 11-75); (2) the name of the person or company submitting the filing; and (3) a brief descriptive title of the document. The electronic filing should also include the name, title, and telephone number of a person to contact in the event of questions about the filing. All documents submitted in electronic format will be posted on the Department's website: <http://www.mass.gov/dpu>.

