



September 30, 2020

Carmen D. Diaz  
Acting Secretary of the Board  
44 South Clinton Ave., 1st Floor  
Post Office Box 350  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350

*Submitted via email: board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov*

**Re: ADVANCED METERING INFRASTRUCTURE DATA TRANSPARENCY,  
PRIVACY & BILLING  
Docket No. EO20110716**

Dear Secretary Diaz:

The Energy Efficiency Alliance of New Jersey (“EEA-NJ”) thanks the Board of Public Utilities (“BPU”) for the opportunity to provide additional comments on New Jersey’s Advanced Metering Infrastructure (“AMI”) Data Access Plans (“DAPs”). EEA-NJ offers these recommendations herein to help the BPU in the establishment of the Minimum Filing Requirements (“MFRs”) to be included within the DAPs.

The Energy Efficiency Alliance of New Jersey is the trade association for the energy efficiency industry, which is composed of a diverse range of professions—from contractors and manufacturers to engineers, architects, and software developers—and a local workforce that cannot be outsourced. Together with its sister organization, the Keystone Energy Efficiency Alliance (“KEEA”), EEA-NJ represents 75 business members who provide energy efficiency products and services in support of an industry that accounts for more than 30,000 New Jersey jobs.<sup>1</sup> Our membership is large and diverse, with experience designing and implementing a variety of demand side management solutions and energy efficiency programs across the globe. Our aim is to guarantee the success of energy efficiency programs for both the businesses and the ratepayers of New Jersey—because our members’ livelihoods depend on it.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://e4thefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/New-Jersey\\_2021.pdf](https://e4thefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/New-Jersey_2021.pdf)

EEA–NJ appreciates all of its work the BPU and staff have put into developing this recommended MFR. This detailed approach makes it clear that the BPU is committed to ensuring a solid foundation to develop greater energy savings through AMI. EEA-NJ has focused our comments and recommendations on ensuring the expansion of data access that is accessible, secure, and efficient to advance energy savings for New Jerseyans.

AMI meters result in real energy efficiency savings and active demand reduction savings only when meter installation is accompanied by additional program offerings “that enable, motivate, and support customers to take actions and make changes to modify their energy use.”<sup>2</sup>

First, EEA-NJ supports customer ownership of their data and ease of customer access to energy data is critical to realizing the benefits of AMI data sharing. We are glad to see details in the recommended MFR for a coordinated process across all Electric Distribution Companies (“EDCs”), and approved by the BPU, for a standardized “one-click” web-based release form for customers to grant permission to third parties. This New Jersey Common Release Form is an important first touch point for customers and can have a significant impact on customer participation and engagement with data access.

EEA-NJ supports expanded access of data to third parties to encourage greater market innovation. It is also important to not prevent utilities from using AMI data that is critical to the implementation of Energy Efficiency (“EE”) and demand response programs that have been approved by the BPU and are already under way. More access for third parties does not require less access for utilities. EEA-NJ would ask the Staff to ensure EE programs are included in an EDC’s “core functions” under the appropriate Utility use of AMI Data. Preventing the use of AMI data for these programs would make them more expensive for utilities, less effective and accessible for customers - especially low-income customers - and would ultimately slow progress toward EE goals. Further, while fair access and solutions like Green Button Connect (“GBC”) can better enable some third parties to deliver innovative solutions for customers, the utilities contract with many other third parties to deliver key programs like EE demand response; preventing utilities from using AMI data for these programs would inadvertently also harm those third parties’ access to data and the innovative solutions they provide.

However, EEA-NJ would ask the Staff to further clarify what constitutes an EDC’s “core functions” under the appropriate Utility Use of AMI Data. Specifically, as it would pertain to the Utilities EE programs. Clarity on this matter will be important in both the updates to the New

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<sup>2</sup> Rachel Gold, Corri Waters, and Dan York, Leveraging Advanced Metering Infrastructure to Save Energy, American Council for An Energy Efficient Economy, January 2020, page iv, available at: <https://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications/researchreports/u2001.pdf>

Jersey Total Resource Cost test as this could impact how EE programs are evaluated and looking forward to the next triannual planning where the utilities will integrate Demand Response into their EE programs. With this forward-looking approach we can proactively encourage market innovation, without creating unintended consequences for the existing EE programs.

Lastly, EEA-NJ would stress the importance of integrating the AMI DAPs with the other great EE work the BPU is undertaking. An example of the integration would be matching up the AMI DAP requirements with those the Benchmarking requirements for Buildings over 25,000 square feet, just approved by the BPU. As pointed out by the BPU the benchmarking of commercial buildings' energy usage is critical to increasing the transparency of this usage and consumption and to promoting market-driven increases in energy efficiency. Through benchmarking owners and operators can then assess opportunities for performance improvements that reduce energy use and costs at their facilities. This ties in directly with what the BPU advancement of EE opportunities as the AMI DAP are developed and implemented, therefore it would only make sense to create uniformity across this program to ensure compatibility and avoid reinventing the wheel.

This is just one opportunity to integrate the States efficiency goals. Increased compatibility across programs will provide greater opportunities for all parties in the collection and dissemination of critical data. This approach can help offset potential siloing of programs or incompatible processes that will ultimately lead to great efficiency, of both energy and processes, across the State.

## **Conclusion**

EEA-NJ appreciates BPU's continued stakeholder process on the important issues and the opportunity to make these recommendations for AMI implementation that is cost effective and accelerates New Jersey's transition to a clean energy economy. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this issue and welcome future opportunities for engagement.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John M. Kolesnik', written over a horizontal line.

John M. Kolesnik, Esq.

Policy Counsel

Energy Efficiency Alliance of New Jersey