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May 5, 2021

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY [Luly.Massar@puc.ri.gov]:

Luly E. Massaro
Commission Clerk
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, Rhode Island 02888

RE: Office of Energy Resources' Comments re. Block Island Utility District's 2021 Demand Side Management Plan (Docket No. 5013)

Dear Ms. Massaro:

Enclosed for filing on behalf of the Office of Energy Resources ("OER") is a PDF copy of OER's comments in strong support of the Block Island Utility District's 2021 Demand Side Management Plan.

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Albert J. Vitali III, Esq.

AJV/njr

Enclosure

c. Docket List: 5013



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
**OFFICE OF
ENERGY RESOURCES**

May 6, 2021

Chairperson Ronald T. Gerwatowski
Commissioner Abigail Anthony
Commissioner John C. Revens, Jr.
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, Rhode Island 02888

Re: Docket #5013 – Block Island Utility District 2021 Demand Side Management Plan

Dear Commissioners:

The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) respectfully submits these comments in strong support of Block Island Utility District's (BIUD) 2021 Demand Side Management Plan (2021 DSM Plan) that was filed with the Commission on March 30, 2021 under Docket #5013. OER encourages the Commission to approve the 2021 DSM Plan as filed.

BIUD's proposed 2021 DSM Plan continues the work laid out in the utility's first formal, island-wide energy efficiency program approved in 2020. OER supports BIUD's proposed continuation of energy assessments, weatherization, HVAC, and lighting incentives for residential and business customers. These incentives will facilitate customer investments in cost-effective energy efficiency projects that help reduce local customer energy costs and foster a cleaner, more affordable, and reliable energy system consistent with state energy policy goals and BIUD's mission.

Working in collaboration with BIUD, OER allocated \$180,000 in Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) auction proceeds (2015 and 2018-B RGGI Allocation Plans)¹ to be leveraged with utility dollars to develop and scale Block Island's DSM program. Due to COVID-related delays, this funding is now expected to be disbursed over four years (through 2023) to allow for continued customer education and outreach, program growth, and the development of a more robust pipeline of projects.

Like the 2020 DSM Plan, the 2021 Plan remains focused on delivering high quality, effective energy efficiency measures and providing robust tracking and reporting on programmatic efforts. BIUD has been working with its efficiency consultant to leverage their technical expertise on

¹ 2015 RGGI Allocation Plan:

<http://www.energy.ri.gov/documents/rggi/2015%20Plan%20Items/2015%20RGGI%20Allocation%20Plan.pdf>

2018-B RGGI Allocation Plan: <http://www.energy.ri.gov/documents/rggi/2018%20Plan%20Items/2018-B%20Final%20RGGI%20Allocation%20Plan%208-30-2018.pdf>



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program development for this proposed plan and to develop program impact metrics. The reporting and data collection facilitated by the consultant have given BIUD insights into program performance and customer preferences that influenced this proposed plan and will meaningfully enhance future DSM plans. OER remains committed to working collaboratively with BIUD staff and their vendors on program development and monitoring processes to ensure efficient and effective implementation and steady program growth.

As the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue, BIUD is well positioned to support returning residents and re-opening businesses with the identification and implementation of cost-saving efficiency projects. If authorized, BIUD plans to conduct targeted marketing to the island's business community to increase traction in that sector. Additionally, BIUD will follow up with residential customers who received assessments in the initial program year to encourage and support additional efficiency work, such as weatherization and HVAC upgrades. Lastly, BIUD and its efficiency consultant will coordinate with local philanthropic efforts to leverage additional funding streams and, ultimately increase the adoption of heat pumps across the island.

OER is committed to its collaboration with BIUD and applauds the utility's commitment to sustain a strong DSM program for its customers. We are confident that New Shoreham residents and businesses will realize substantial economic, energy, and environmental benefits as a result of the initiatives proposed. For this reason, we urge the Commission to approve BIUD's 2021 DSM Plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicholas S. Ucci
Commissioner