

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ON INNOVATION PROGRAM TOPICS

The Efficiency Maine Trust (the Trust) seeks input from stakeholders on topics, measures, technologies, and strategies the Trust could target with its Innovation Program this fiscal year.

SECTION 1 – INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

1.1 Designated Contact Person

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1.2 Key Dates

Release Date – September 6, 2016
Responses Due – November 1, 2016

1.3 How to Submit a Response

Responses must be emailed to the designated contact person by the due date above and follow the guidelines below:

1. Cover Letter (1 pages maximum)
 - Briefly describe your organization, its qualifications, and the areas in which it operates.
2. Response (3 pages maximum)
 - Summarize your understanding of the RFI.
 - Describe the topic, measure, technology, and/or strategy that is the subject of your response. **Note:** Responses can address more than one topic but the respondent must stay within the page limit.
 - Answer the questions listed in section 3.2.
3. Appendices
 - Respondents are encouraged to attach relevant reports, published within the past 3 years, related to topics covered in the response. Please provide URLs where the relevant reports may be accessed on-line; where on-line access is not possible, please provide electronic copies in the response email, provide a list of the submitted reports that includes the report title, author, publication date, and URL (or filename if provided as an attachment) for accessing the report.

SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Efficiency Maine Trust

The Trust is the independent administrator for energy efficiency programs in Maine. The Trust's mission is to lower the cost and environmental impacts of energy in Maine by promoting cost-effective energy efficiency and alternative energy systems. The Trust does this primarily by delivering rebates on the purchase of high-efficiency lights and equipment to help customers save electricity, natural gas and heating fuels throughout the Maine economy. The Trust is governed by a stakeholder Board of Trustees with oversight from the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

Additional information is available on the Trust's website: <http://www.energymaine.com/>

2.2 Innovation Program Background and Context

The Trust's Innovation Program provides funding to conduct pilot projects. The Trust intends for these projects to demonstrate new types of energy efficiency, conservation, or alternative energy measures, or new strategies for promoting such measures. The program focuses on measures that show significant potential to be cost-effective and to provide energy savings or greenhouse gas savings but are not yet well understood or established in the Maine marketplace. The measures piloted may or may not prove to be cost-effective or popular in the Maine marketplace. Part of the purpose of the Innovation Program is to use smaller pilot projects to generate findings of cost-effectiveness and market demand before making larger investments on incentives and program delivery.

The Trust has three primary objectives for the Innovation Program during the Third Triennial Plan:

- Conduct pilot projects testing emerging technologies, models, systems, or strategies to determine their potential for advancing the Trust's purpose and goals as described in the Triennial Plan and the program descriptions therein.
- Increase consumer awareness of cost-effective options for conserving energy or reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Create more favorable market conditions for the increased use of energy-efficient products and services.

SECTION 3 – REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

3.1 Request for Information Overview

The Trust allocates approximately 1% of its total program budgets to the Innovation Program. The Trust's goal is to issue one or more solicitations annually to target specific opportunities and needs for demonstrating new efficiency measures and strategies. The Trust also targets opportunities by self-administering initiatives under the Innovation Program.

This RFI is an opportunity for stakeholders to provide input into the design and implementation of the Innovation Program. The Trust will review all information submitted in response to this RFI before making a decision on what topics to address with the program this fiscal year.

Examples of prior initiatives under the Innovation Program include:

- **Measures and Technologies:** The Trust has used the Innovation Program to investigate the energy savings potential of smart thermostats and preheating water with commercial heat pump water heaters.
- **Program Strategies:** The Trust has used the Innovation Program to test the accuracy of virtual audits using interval data versus on-site audits and to research the effectiveness of pay for performance incentives as a program strategy.

3.2 Questions

Responses should answer the following questions about the topic (or concept) described in the RFI:

- Why should the topic be investigated by the Trust's Innovation Program?
- How does the topic address the objectives of the Innovation Program outlined in section 2.2?
- What market sectors (residential / commercial / industrial) or customer types does the topic serve?
- What efforts relating to the topic have been done in other states?
- Is the topic established in marketplaces outside of Maine?
- What information can you share at this time about costs, and what is the range of costs that would be needed for a useful pilot project relating to the topic?
- What is the recommended scope of a pilot study to provide actionable results?
- What is the expected cost effectiveness of the topic?

3.3 Suggested Topics

The Trust is interested in and welcomes stakeholders' thoughts about any topics or concepts that are consistent with the goals, objectives and general program descriptions contained in the Third Triennial Plan. The Trust has indicated an interest in exploring three topics in particular through the Innovation Program. These topics are highlighted below. Respondents are encouraged to provide information in these areas.

Distributed Energy Resources (DERs): An area of opportunity for the Trust is to explore what it can do to better help Maine's electricity consumers cost-effectively meet their energy needs at lower cost through the increased use of DERs, especially when these resources are coupled with Maine's smart grid capabilities. The Trust has a long history of promoting traditional efficiency measures, such as retrofitting old lights. It also has a track record of encouraging certain distributed generation resources, operating "behind the meter," such as combined heat and power projects and rebates for solar systems. However, the Trust is less familiar with the development and deployment of distributed resource projects such as demand response and energy storage that can also provide savings. Demand response and storage offer the opportunity, on their own or paired with energy efficient systems or distributed renewables, to cost-effectively lower energy costs, reduce line losses, lower emissions, and enhance grid reliability.

Electric Vehicles: If the market penetration of EVs increases significantly, this could have potential implications for the grid's distribution costs and reliability, energy storage and demand response, and

greenhouse gas emissions in Maine. The Trust is interested in better understanding how choices of charging infrastructure and vehicle types can impact energy consumption and greenhouse gases and how it might design programs to benefit the policy objectives in Maine law, including the Efficiency Maine Trust Act and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Low Income Replacement Housing Strategies: The Trust is considering exploring pilot projects that could demonstrate novel ways to achieve significant, persistent, incremental energy savings in low income homes, whether through new construction opportunities, replacement or retrofits of existing homes, or through new strategies to deploy existing programs. Generally, the Trust is interested in ideas that are easily scalable and could theoretically be widely deployed and achieve significant savings within a 10-year period. The Trust is equally interested in low-tech and high-tech materials or solutions. Responses that incorporate the use of non-profit or vocational building programs to assist local community programs in providing efficiency housing options for low income residents are also of interest.

3.4 Confidential Information

Respondents should be aware that information received in response to this RFI may be used to design future RFPs and/or be made publically available. All confidential information provided in response to this RFI should be clearly labeled "Confidential Information." See <http://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/35-A/title35-Asec10106.html> for more information on confidential information.

3.5 Disclaimer

This RFI is not a Request for Proposals (RFP), Request for Qualifications (RFQ), or Program Opportunity Notice (PON). Responding to this RFI does not constitute a formal proposal; do not submit any bid pricing. Any information submitted in response to this RFI will be used by the Trust for planning and implementing the Innovation Program.

By issuing this request the Trust is not making a commitment to issue a specific RFP, RFP, or PON based on or related to responses to this RFI. Responding to this RFI does not provide any advantage or disadvantage to proposals submitted in response to a RFP issued by the Trust.