

Detail of the Eversource and United Illuminating Charging Incentive Suspension

Incentive Suspension

This game of chicken that Eversource and UI are playing with the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority has now gotten to the point that EV charging incentive programs are being suspended.

Eversource and UI have essentially the same program whereby they subsidize the purchase and installation of charging equipment. These funds are recovered from ratepayers. EV owners who take advantage of the incentives are required to participate in a managed charging program that pays them to shift their charging to avoid high demand periods. This suspension is not only disruptive for consumers and businesses, it is self-defeating for the larger picture of using demand levers to improve the efficiency of utilizing the grid.

Timing

The UI incentives are already suspended.

Eversource has suspended the Level 3 DC fast charging program. Applications for the Level 2 incentives remain open through May 22nd. After that point, any submissions go on a wait list.

If you are in the process of buying and installing a new charger, the installation must be complete and paperwork filed by May 22 to avoid being waitlisted.

Those who install residential chargers in this pre-suspension period have until June 22 to complete their managed charging enrollment to finalize their eligibility.

New and existing participants in the managed charging program will continue to be paid through the end of the year.

We will provide updates as they become available.

One final note – There are a few municipal utilities in the state that offer incentives for EV charging. These utilities are not regulated by PURA and have nothing to do with the actions of Eversource and UI. The incentive programs at these other utilities tend to be simpler in design, usually covering the charging hardware and installation, but without the managed charging component.

Eversource and UI's Sad Suspension of EV Charging Incentives

What Is Behind This Extreme Action by Eversource and United Illuminating

The largest electric distribution company, EDC for short, (a.k.a. utility) in the state, Eversource, announced last week that it would suspend its participation in the EV charging incentive program. As reported in the [Hartford Business Journal](#), Eversource will stop taking applications after May 22

for residential and commercial level 2 charging incentives and will not award level 3 DCFC incentives in 2024.

Eversource cites “uncertain regulatory treatment,” and complains they are not getting timely funding. This comes one day after it was awarded an 18.7% rate hike. PURA responds in part that Eversource has not yet received cost recovery because it did not ask for it by filing the required distribution rate amendment application.

Senator Norm Needleman, in a statement made to CT Public Radio, characterized Eversource’s actions as “threatening, vindictive, and irresponsible,” and disrespectful of ratepayers who are facing a substantial increase in their bills.

Not to be outdone, United Illuminating, which also recently received a rate increase, announced an immediate suspension of the EV charging incentive (as of April 12th). New applications are not being accepted. Applications submitted prior to April 12th but not yet approved will be placed on hold. UI will payout the incentives for approved projects, but there is no timeline for the payments to be made.

Our Take

This occurs against a backdrop of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, PURA, trying to shift the nature of the regulation to incentivize the EDCs to support transitioning CT to a greener, more resilient, and more affordable grid, known as the **Equitable Modern Grid Framework**. Changing the nature of the regulation would not reduce the rate of return for the EDCs; they would have to direct their efforts differently and would have different performance metrics.

These PR wars tend to be one-sided. The EDCs can say whatever they want, but as noted in the HBJ article, PURA is constrained from speaking about the substance of an open

motion. In an indirectly related action, the legislature last year passed a law that makes CT the third state to ban the EDCs from using ratepayer dollars to pay for lobbying expenses. According to the detailed reporting on this by the [CT Mirror](#), utilities around the country use these funds to block climate action and pressure policymakers to let them hike up energy bills.

PURA established the following objectives for its Equitable Modern Grid Framework:

1. Support (or remove barriers to) the growth of Connecticut's green economy;
2. Enable a cost-effective, economy-wide transition to a decarbonized future;
3. Enhance customers access to a more resilient, reliable, and secure commodity; and
4. Advance the ongoing energy affordability dialogue in the State, particularly in underserved communities.

If you would like to learn more about this effort, we recommend two resources that are easy to consume. One is an [e-magazine](#) based on a virtual "fireside chat" with PURA Chair Marissa Gillett and Representative Jonathan Steinberg that was prepared by PACE (People's Action for Clean Energy). The other is an interview of Chair Gillett by David Roberts on his [Volts](#) podcast.

The EV Club thinks these charging incentives are important, not only to reduce the financial barriers to EV adoption, but in the service of grid resiliency. Consumers who take the incentives are required to participate in a managed charging program, which pays them up to \$200 annually to charge during off-peak times. The flexibility inherent in when an EV can be charged is a benefit to the grid as peak load is reduced and the charging can help load-balance during periods of low demand. The slide at the top of the post is from the presentation given by UI at our conference demonstrating the

impact of managed charging with optimization.

We are critical of the EDCs resorting to these scorched-earth tactics to further a political agenda. It will only sow confusion in the marketplace and slow EV adoption. Also, from the perspective of the EV Club, we have invested considerable time and effort to support both Eversource and UI in educating consumers and promoting the incentive. We have had them present at multiple meetings, speak at our conference, gave them feedback on the registration and implementation process, and published a considerable amount of content. It feels like an act of bad faith. Get with the program, guys!