Eric McConaghy
Sustainability, City Light, Arts and Culture Committee
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Amendment 2 Version 2 to RES 32139 - SCL 2025–2030 Strategic Plan Update

Sponsor: Councilmember Moore

Reporting on Increasing Utility Discount Program Enrollment

Effect: This amendment would request that Seattle City Light (SCL), in cooperation with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), the Human Services Department (HSD), and other City departments as appropriate, conduct a thorough review of the City's activities intended to increase enrollment of eligible customers in the Utility Discount Program (UDP). Further, the amendment would set deadlines for the initial and complete reports of the review on December 31, 2024, and April 1, 2025, respectively.

Among the assistance programs, the UDP is the most significant means to assist income-qualifying customers with their utility costs. To be eligible for the UDP, the total household income for the low-income customer must not exceed 70 percent of the current state median income. Enrolled UDP customers receive a 60 percent discount on SCL bills and a 50 percent discount on SPU bills.

The latest reported data show that UDP enrollment increased from approximately 17,000 in 2014 to over 36,000 in 2024. There are about 82,000 UDP-eligible households within the City of Seattle, and about 126,000 UDP-eligible households within SCL's entire service territory. SCL and SPU may propose raising the threshold on the UDP program to 80 percent of area median income consistent with energy assistance provisions of Washington State's Clean Energy Transformation Act as soon as the first quarter of 2025. The change would require Council's approval by ordinance.

Add a new Section 3 to RES 32139 as follows:

Section 3. With the intent to achieve full enrollment by all income-eligible customers who wish to participate in the Utility Discount Program (UDP) by December 31st, 2027, the City Council requests that Seattle City Light (SCL), in partnership with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), the Human Services Department (HSD), and other City departments as appropriate, conduct a thorough analysis of the City's activities intended to increase enrollment in the UDP. The reporting from the UDP analysis should at a minimum: document the City's performance in enrolling income-eligible customers in the UDP over the past five years; recommend modifications to the City's UDP implementation activities and eligibility qualifications intended

to increase enrollment; estimate staffing changes and budgetary impacts; and forecast enrollment increases that could result from near-term changes to the City's UDP enrollment activities by June 1, 2025, and June 1, 2026. Furthermore, Council requests that the reporting quantify the staffing changes and budgetary impacts estimated for each ten-percent increase in UDP enrollment from current enrollment to full enrollment.

SCL should file an initial report on the UDP analysis with preliminary findings with the City Clerk no later than December 31, 2024. Council recognizes that SCL, SPU, HSD, and other partner departments intend to complete a workplan to increase UDP participation by the end of 2024. Council requests that SCL file the expected workplan with the City Clerk either simultaneously with or as a part of the initial report on the UDP analysis. SCL should file the final, comprehensive report with the City Clerk no later than April 1, 2025.