

Return to Fish Lake

M 2010 1505410

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2010 SEP 15 AM 9:37  
PAPUS  
SECRETARY'S BUREAU

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PPL WRAP REVIEW  
(M-2010-1505410) and (C-2010-2181518)  
At the PA PUC

SEP 15 2010

PA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
SECRETARY'S BUREAU

The purpose of this report is to note problems of waste, fraud and mismanagement which were observed from Spring 2006 to Fall 2007 by a PPL subcontractor for Inspections and Home Energy Audits in PPL's WRAP program. When I started this job I thought it was great. I was paid very well, and I thought I was doing some good. But I came to believe that I was stealing from my community and participating in waste so egregious as to be fraud or worse. I also came to believe I was working with and for people who did not care about the health of the participants or workers and who only cared about the money, hiding behind a veneer of public relations.

One example is when a contractor signs up to teach a seminar at an ACI Conference and in the audience are people he/she would be competing against for business. Now the contractors in the audience have to pay for their \$30,000.00 investment of tools and equipment, not to mention vehicles and their repair and replacement. But the lecturer gets it all for free from a public utility which gets the money for those tools from the very same contractors in the audience. At that same conference, a PPL employee skipped out to look at the local sites. I do not know if their way was paid by the company or by WRAP program funds.

This report would not be written if PPL funded WRAP on its own. But because it takes money from rate payers without their permission (many people still do not know that they fund it) it would be unethical as a citizen not to write and try to submit this report to all parties concerned.

- 1- Participants did not seem to be income qualified. Many of the application forms were filled out by the same person. Someone had just purchased and installed a 14,000 gallon swimming pool and had the pump running 24/7 but did not (*not can't*) pay their bill, they qualified. A person who had a display room for over 200 hats, an Indian Artifact collection, a prehistoric fossil collection, (they were in negotiations with the state for a sale) and an Arboretum, he qualified because he could (did) not pay his bill. A person had recently finished their attic space with walls and carpet, and was in the process of installing cabinets and ceramic tile in the kitchen, well, she qualified. On an ancillary subject, people who run businesses out of their homes qualified, although it is a *residential program*. So a B&B, a daycare center, and an apartment above a grocery store would be a gray area. Also, contractors and subcontractors decide if, after driving for some distance to conduct an Audit and finding a FOR SALE sign on the lawn, they want to do it and get paid for fruitless work (since measures was usually scheduled weeks out and in this time frame houses were selling) or not to do it and drive back. My instructions were to, "do it if you want to get paid" (this would mean that the contractor was also paid her share).
  
- 2- There is a culture of "Spend the money, spend the money, spend the money! The PUC is counting." This is a quote from Linda Melenchek at the Hazelton Contractor Conference in 2006 urging the contractors to use up the WRAP funds for that year. Public Relations stated that refrigerators in the program were "Energy Efficient" but they had tags saying they were the "least Efficient" (18 cu. ft. GE models). Any sign of rust was enough to exchange a Water Heater. But kWh use was not impacted by this- (see PPL's own report). Changing out washers and dryers occurred before my time, but I found it hard to fill out the form for a free bed in exchange for a water bed.

- 3- People who had 'beer' refrigerators in their garages had them replaced. People who had \$5,000.00 in unpaid bills were allowed in the program. People who had a freezer in the basement, one in the garage, or maybe 2 in the basement, and a refrigerator or 2 upstairs, or a small one in the bedroom – had all of them replaced, if they qualified. We were supposed to try to convince them to downsize if for example their kids had moved out or if they just were not putting anything into the 'extra' ones. But they could and did have them all replaced.
  
- 4- Landlords who had not: insulated their attics or basement ceilings, installed doors and windows with a proper fit, repaired roofs or windows or doors, had very old refrigerators, or serviced their furnaces or air conditioners (or had old ones) had *all* of that work done and the older appliances replaced for *free*. There were homes where the landlord (relative) was the only person around and the tenant was never seen. Visualize mail on the floor and nothing in the refrigerator. The cost of repairing and replacing all these items would easily go over \$4,000.00 at many of the homes inspected. Other programs have caps or share the cost with the landlord. The WRAP program should only do work on a home if the bill payer owns it. What stipulation exists to stop someone from buying a home in south Lancaster with the intention of putting an older relative in it or moving tenants around in order to have it upgraded for free by WRAP? *Why should people who pay their bills subsidize 'shumlords' and those who won't pay?*
  
- 5- If the work was not done according to 'Specs' the contractor was not supposed to be paid. In many cases the contractor was a County Community Action Program, and in this county the workers were not trained or even given access to the Specs until Fall 2007. The same mistakes showed up over and over, month after month. This only changed because I got tired of seeing the repeated errors when there was no viable reason for them. Many times work was not finished or material was left behind. This did occur with Met Ed but nowhere near the level of PPL's contractors. How many times did I go back to do a 2<sup>nd</sup> Inspection? When was the work completed on all those failed homes? Was it ever completed? Were those invoices paid or not? Who has the authority to check?
  
- 6- These records are available by accessing my calendar and cross referencing the names and dates with Tamasin Sterner's (Pure Energy) computer records, which she shares with PPL. And they are also in the records of the Lancaster Weatherization Office. *Please note-* When that office moved to Mount Joy in the Fall of 2007 all records were shredded up to 2005. We emptied the warehouse and loaded a 'shredding truck' for hours. We shredded all the records there, all the invoices, paperwork, and magazines, (why?) *all* the documents except the charter for the Solar Project (I also saved the seal).
  
- 7- When the move for the Weatherization Center took place, no work was getting done and most of the workers could not drive the 12 miles out there; there was no bus (bus line stopped at Sheetz). The men were not allowed to talk to "Kip" (John Adams) who was the former Manager who did the Audits. He had a contract with PPL and walked with it and some equipment rather than stay and give up the contracts. He was still doing the Audits, but no one there was allowed to talk to him. PPL did "not care who else he worked for" when he was paid by the County at the same time he was doing Audits for his PPL contract. So he was paid twice for the same work.

- 8- I quit working for Tamasin and PPL (I earned >\$63,000.00 from 01/07 to 10/07) and went to CAP because I thought I could help and be in a more honest position. I was fired for complaining about the new Director, Theresa Ditzler. She was moving the office to the warehouse of a friend; had not thought it through; had brought a feral cat into the new offices and allowed it to defecate and urinate on the new carpets; threw a phone across the office in a fit of rage; threatened to fire people every day, and created a climate of fear in the office. Several persons were hired and fired before she was eventually fired. I was number three. I never got a job description, and I have often wondered what it was they wanted me to do there, since I was never given any instructions except to help with the move out and the shredding. Maybe they hired me to stop all of the failed inspections. According to PUC documents, Ms. Ditzler now works for Ms. Sterner, but they may be in error.
  
- 9- There are many invoices for the over 1,400 homes I personally entered. Some of the work out of that total was for Met Ed. Please note I am not complaining about their program. Some invoices will show pricing such as \$179.00 for 5 light bulbs. I myself was paid \$5.00 for every bulb I replaced. I was instructed to do it myself because it was discovered that when the CAP crews left bulbs for the WRAP participants they frequently did not install them. There was no limit to the number they could say they needed. Met Ed had a limit. I got \$3.00 a bulb the first year. Ms. Sterner created my invoice and set the prices, and I worked for no other person during my time with her. My invoice for 2/12/07 shows (on the CFLs Installed line alone), \$1005.00 for 187 bulbs. The total invoice was for \$4285.17 so ~25% of my pay was going to install light bulbs. If the participants were not going to take this small step on their own, then why were they in the WRAP Program? Think of the savings.
  
- 10- I wanted to have my own house checked with an Energy Audit so I asked a contractor whose company worked for the WRAP program and who was given jobs by Ms. Sterner to come over to my house and run a Blower Door test. He came over and we ran the test and he used an InfaRed Camera to help locate any problem areas. I was later given that same camera and told to go out and use it with the Blower Door and the other tools she had given me and work "on my own" so she would "not be my sole employer". I have the receipt from that man's visit, but will not use it because this is not about him. ***Contractors in the WRAP Program should be told they have to supply their own tools. They make well over \$100,000.00/year.*** That way we won't have the PUC spending 2 years and 10 months to get PPL to amend their contract to include subcontractors in the clause about keeping the tools inside the program. See Settlement Point 1 in M 2010- 1505410. *There is no way PPL or anyone can monitor tool use.*
  
- 11- Contractors are now forced to take training and pass a test from BPI to be placed on PPL's Website as "certified" Energy Auditors. This means that anyone who calls them can get a \$250.00 discount and have access to special rates with loan programs. But this also means that a used car salesman can sit for a week, pay his fee, take the test and be "qualified" to go out and do a Blower Door test and immediately proceed to try and sell Solar panels - and this is called an Energy Audit. Meanwhile, a person teaching Weatherization for more than a decade at an accredited college can not be listed or offer those loan rates and can give no discount because he is not as "qualified" as the man who sold used cars for 20 years. I saw this happen with my own eyes.

- 12- *BPI is a private company and has no business being the sole monopoly for training in a PA Public Utility program much less being in control of access to customers and loans. People have to pay to take that training, and the test, and pay every 3 years. But it was OK for years and years not to have this requirement.*
- 13- There are other more involved nuances to this story but it is not possible to go into all of them without this becoming a research paper or a book. See RESNET, PSD Consulting, and the link between them and Green Homes and West Penn Power and the Audit software required. You will have to explore the link between KEEA and ACI and Pure Energy and PPL and APPRISE. It is a complicated net of connections and 'alliances' which is hard to explain to anyone, but if the Federal Dept. of Energy's Inspector General's Office point man in Pittsburgh (or any other government official) does not know what a Blower Door is- well, that makes it all the more difficult to talk about any of these issues.
- 14- The people who would actually qualify for a Program like WRAP would benefit more from Energy Education than anything else. But PPL benefits by reducing the number of write offs and by reducing the KWh usage under the timeline of Act 129. That is why it pushes to keep WRAP going. But is so wasteful in that it encourages work to be done for the slightest of reasons and pays a small group of people an inappropriate amount of money. They are not going to do much complaining if they earn over \$100,000.00/yr. in cash and this is a conservative estimate based on my rate of pay as a subcontractor.
- 15- Contractors who work for PPL are flown to Austin out of HIA and put up at the Austin Hilton, 1 per room. I have pictures of my room. I also went to Atlantic City and Cleveland, all paid for by WRAP. But of the three men Tamasin took with her in 2006 how many worked in the WRAP Program? Why were the other two there? Why did WRAP money pay for them to have a week at the ACI Conference and all the perks, music, per diem, hotel, and airline tickets that went with it? Are those contractors still using WRAP funded tools in other utility programs in other states? Who is going to check on something like this? How could they even if they had the authority.
- 16- On top of that subcontractors worked for years without anyone thinking of instituting a safety program or even mentioning the risks of asbestos, insulation, filth and mold. What should a contractor do if he has to cross a kitchen floor covered with dog excrement – cover his boots with plastic grocery bags and continue?
- 17- And no one has ever addressed the lack of protocols when child abuse is observed. What *does* the PUC want PPL's contractors to do if they see a baby in diapers on South Franklin Street covered with cat feces? *How can a program run by a public utility intentionally neglect to protect children?* This was one of the final straws for me.

PS

There is no way PPL can know if a contractor goes all the way to the end of an attic that's 120 degrees F and full of kicked up insulation micro-particles. If you take pictures you can prove you were there. But if you say you were there and you say the work was OK, no one but you and the crew will know if it was really done or *not*. There is no way PPL can know if the Inspection is comprehensive and that the Inspector went into all the nooks and crannies, unless there are before and after pictures detailing the work space.

If the workers screw the trap door shut and seal it with caulk, the Inspectors will not open it and were instructed to indicate "not seen, hatch screwed shut" on the Inspection Sheet. This continued to happen even after we asked that the crews not do this.

If a crew leaves a site because it's time to go home and 20 minutes more could finish the job, why not stay? If a crew does not want to drag extra, unused insulation out of a building because it's too much trouble then there are two problems. One, they can't measure for what they need, and two, they are lacking in rudimentary motivation. But if someone screamed at them every day, and threatened to fire them everyday and no one trained them for years, and they had to swim through cellulose in zip suits and masks in very, very hot attics in July, maybe they would not be as motivated because of those factors.

\$8,000,000.00 is a lot to pull out of the economy right now to spend on a program with so many questionable practices. PPL should fund this program itself. It is private, for-profit company and does not deserve to be allowed to *take* this money from its customers against their will.

I am sorry if I left anything out, but these are complex issues with many connections and I am sure that no one at the PUC understands it all. I wish they did.

*by phone to you + other side*

I withdraw my complaint-C-2010-2181518

*Consider the PUC*

*to be a non functioning public entity*

- you lost my 1st class signed for mail*
- you lost my FedEx signed for package*
- you say you want my credit card in country - why - you'd just lost it for*

*→ I received how glowing and golden the wording was by PPL about the PUC*  
*in M 2010 1505410 — you two*  
*none like each other —*

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