New Massachusetts Utility Discounts Ruling

I copy below a recent ruling from Karen Robinson, head of the DPU's Consumer Division, which instructs electric and gas customers that they must place applicants for the discount rate onto the rate as soon as the customer requests. Companies can no longer delay placing customers onto the discount rate while the company goes about verifying the customer's eligibility.
Please spread the word far and wide, this is a very helpful ruling!

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Dear Utility Manager:

Pursuant to G.L. c. 164, §1F (ii), as recently amended by the Chapter 169 of the Acts of 2008, known as the "Green Communities Act," residential customers eligible for the low-income discount rate shall receive the discount "on demand."
Therefore, rather than delaying enrollment in the discount until the company has verified eligibility, utility companies should enroll a consumer on the discount rate on the date that the consumer asserts his or her eligibility.
The company may then proceed to verify the consumer's income eligibility.
Allowing eligible consumers to take advantage of the discount rate at the earliest opportunity alleviates some of the financial strain that the discount rate is intended to address.

Please feel free to contact me at (617) 368-1121 if you have any questions.
Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Karen A. Robinson
Director, Consumer Division