Heat-pump contractor accused of ‘staggering fraud’ of nearly $8 million from Mass Save

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A South Shore heating and air conditioning contractor is accused of defrauding Massachusetts ratepayers of nearly $8 million in Mass Save funds by improperly pocketing rebates for heat pumps that were never installed, installed improperly, or installed and later removed.

The utilities that manage Mass Save, the energy-efficiency program mandated by state law, filed suit in Plymouth Superior Court on Monday, seeking to recover the money from MWD Heating & Air Conditioning and its owner, Mark Dyszczyk of Rockland.

Mass Save, one of the most ambitious programs of its kind in the country, is funded by surcharges added to Massachusetts ratepayers’ utility bills. With a budget of more than $1 billion a year, it offers home and business owners rebates and discounts to make buildings more energy-efficient and convert from heating systems that use greenhouse gases to cleaner energy.

Dyszczyk, whose company primarily worked with commercial customers, did not respond to requests for comment. When a Globe reporter knocked on the door of his Rockland home on Wednesday, his wife answered and said they declined to comment.

Inconsistencies with the company’s work were discovered in April, and program administrators halted payment on the rebates and suspended the contractor the next month, according to the complaint. In the following months, the utilities conducted an investigation, inspecting 220 sites where the contractor claimed to have installed heat pumps and submitted associated rebate applications.

In one instance, the owner of a car wash in Weymouth told inspectors Dyszczyk arrived at his business at 5 one morning with a crane to remove the heating equipment without the owner’s consent, according to the lawsuit. The owner told inspectors he “believes he was misled and scammed," and that he never signed any paperwork after Dyszczyk said the units would be installed at no cost.

In another case, the complaint states, MWD applied for a $61,875 rebate for a heat-pump installation at a liquor store in Brockton, where nine heating units had been confirmed installed in an April inspection. But an inspector returned two weeks later and found that five of the units had been removed, the complaint states.

The lawsuit did not give an explanation for why the heat pumps were removed in either case, nor did it identify the businesses or their owners by name.

It is unclear how long the alleged fraud was occurring before it was detected. It's also unclear how many of the project sites were inspected by the program's overseers before rebates were paid out. Issues were found at dozens of MWD's projects, according to the complaint. A table appended to the complaint says that less than 10 percent of the company's work was done according to specifications.

Even after the utilities informed Dyszczykin May and he and his company were suspended pending an investigation, he and his wife created or operated six other companies to bypass the suspension, according to court documents, and continued to apply for Mass Save rebates in both the residential and commercial programs.

The suit was filed by five of the six companies whose coalition runs Mass Save — Eversource Energy, Liberty Utilities, National Grid, Unitil, and Cape Light Compact JPE.

"We have zero tolerance for bad actors who exploit these programs, and will take decisive action to hold them accountable, protect customers, and preserve the integrity of Mass Save programs," Mass Save administrators Eversource, National Grid and Cape Light Compact JPE said in a statement.

On Wednesday, the utilities also announced new efforts aimed at preventing fraud in Mass Save, especially involving heat-pump installations. They include a new statewide board to strengthen oversight, enhanced vetting of heat-pump contractors, improved standards and accountability for installation of heat pumps, and new resources for consumer protection, according to a presentation made by National Grid executive Amy Vavak to the Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Advisory Council, which guides the development of Mass Save.

There have been two other major fraud cases involving the Mass Save program in recent years, with federal law enforcement taking action on both. In November 2024, brothers Joseph Ponzo of Stoneham and Christopher Ponzo of North Reading pleaded guilty to a bribery and kickback scheme in which they made tens of millions of dollars from Mass Save for electrical and air-sealing work. In April, they lost an appeal over their sentencing and a forfeiture order totaling nearly $17 million.

Separately, Daniel Cleggett Jr. of Kingston, a notorious operator of sober homes with a lengthy criminal history, pleaded guilty in December 2024 to fraud and other charges related to four separate schemes, including one in which he took in millions of dollars for Mass Save insulation work. In January, Cleggett was sentenced to six years in prison.

Only civil action is being taken against Dyszczyk at this time, though the utilities' complaint accuses him of fraud and theft. Officials from the US attorney's office and the attorney general's office would not comment. Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz did not return a request for comment.

Mass Save spending has soared in recent years, as it began trying to fulfill the state's environmental mandate of lowering greenhouse gas emissions by converting the state's old building stock from gas and oil to electric heat pumps. With energy prices skyrocketing, House lawmakers voted earlier this year to slash spending on the program. The measure has not yet been reconciled with a competing version that passed the Senate and would maintain current spending.