

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DE 22-018

LIBERTY UTILITIES (GRANITE STATE ELECTRIC) CORP. d/b/a LIBERTY

**Petition for Approval Annual Retail Rate Adjustment and
Property Tax Adjustment Mechanism**

COMMENCEMENT OF ADJUDICATIVE PROCEEDING AND NOTICE OF HEARING

On March 22, 2022, Liberty Utilities (Granite State Electric) Corp. d/b/a Liberty (Liberty or the Company) filed a petition for approval of annual retail rate adjustments. Liberty calculated that the net impact of the rate changes for a residential customer using 650 kilowatt hours (kWh) per month would be a monthly bill decrease of \$0.26, a 0.17 percent decrease from current average monthly bills. The decrease is due primarily to decreases in Liberty's transmission costs. Liberty's petition also requested approval of its Property Tax Adjustment Mechanism (PTAM) and the first reconciliation under the PTAM.

In support of its petition, Liberty prefiled the direct testimony and schedules of John D. Warshaw and the direct testimony and schedules of Heather Tebbetts and Adam Hall. The petition and subsequent docket filings, other than any information for which confidential treatment is requested of or granted by the Commission, are available on the Commission's website at www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2022/22-018.html.

I. BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

In its petition, Liberty stated that its annual retail rate filing adjusts rates to reconcile a number of "pass through" costs and revenues. Specifically, Liberty seeks changes to the following inputs to its retail rate: (1) a decrease of \$0.00329 per kWh to the Transmission Charge; (2) a decrease of \$0.00276 per kWh to the Transmission

Service Cost Adjustment Charge; (3) a net increase of \$0.00029 per kWh to the charges associated with the Stranded Cost Charge and Stranded Cost Adjustment Factor; (4) a decrease of \$0.00180 per kWh to the customer credit associated with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) Auction Proceeds Refund; and (5) reconciliation of the net metering lost revenue adjustment mechanism (LRAM) for the first six months of 2021, resulting in no change to the current charge of \$0.00048 per kWh. Direct Testimony of Heather Tebbetts and Adam Hall (Tebbetts and Hall Testimony) at Bates page 28.

In addition, Liberty seeks approval of a PTAM pursuant to RSA 72:8-e and to include the PTAM as a part of its annual retail rates filing. Liberty stated that its proposed PTAM is effectively the same as mechanisms the Commission approved for Unitil Energy Systems, Inc., Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy, and Liberty's natural gas affiliate, EnergyNorth. Liberty proposed an initial PTAM charge rate of \$0.00036 per kWh. Tebbetts and Hall Testimony at Bates 40. Liberty requested the Commission approve its petition by April 26, 2022, to allow time for rates to be implemented in the Company's billing system for effect on May 1, 2022.

II. ISSUES PRESENTED

The filing presents, *inter alia*, the following issues: whether Liberty appropriately calculated the various rates and adjustment factors; whether Liberty's proposed PTAM is permitted by RSA 72:8-e; whether Liberty appropriately calculated the unrecovered increase in municipal property taxes paid and the proposed increases in customer charges; and whether the calculations result in just and reasonable rates, as required by RSA 374:2, RSA 378:5, and RSA 378:7. Accordingly, an adjudicative proceeding will be convened to address these issues.

The Commission will be conducting any hearings scheduled in this matter in person. The Commission will consider requests to conduct hearings using a hybrid format to permit remote participation by a specific individual only if the Commission has determined that a sufficient reason has been provided for why that individual would be unable to attend in person. Any party requesting that a specific individual be permitted to participate remotely should file a written request with the Commission's Clerk's Office no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing date. If the Commission determines that one or more individuals will be permitted to appear remotely, then individuals in the Commission's hearing room, including the Commissioners, will be broadcast on a web-enabled platform.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED, that an adjudicative proceeding be commenced for the purpose of reviewing and resolving the foregoing issues pursuant to RSA chapter 541-A, RSA 374:2, RSA 378:5, RSA 378:7, RSA 72:8-e, and the Commission's procedural rules; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that the Commission will hold a hearing in this matter at its offices located at 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire, on April 19, 2022, at 1:30 p.m. Three hours shall be allotted for this hearing; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any entity or individual may petition to intervene and seek to be admitted as a party in this proceeding. Each party has the right to have an attorney represent the party at the party's own expense; and it is,

FURTHER ORDERED, that, consistent with N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.17 and Puc 203.02, any entity or individual seeking to intervene in the proceeding shall file with the Commission a petition to intervene with copies sent to Liberty and any other parties on the service list, on or before April 8, 2022. The petition shall state the facts

demonstrating how the petitioner's rights, duties, privileges, immunities, or other substantial interests may be affected by the proceeding, consistent with N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.17; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party objecting to a petition to intervene make said objection on or before April 18, 2022; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that parties shall file any proposed exhibits, written testimony, motions, or other documents intended to become part of the record in this proceeding with the Commission. Pursuant to the secretarial letter issued on March 17, 2020, which is posted on the Commission's website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Secretarial%20Letters/20200317-SecLtr-Temp-Changes-in-Filing-Requirements.pdf>, all Commission rules requiring the filing of paper copies are suspended until further notice. Parties may elect to submit any filing in electronic form unless otherwise ordered by the Commission. Filings will be considered filed as of the time the electronic copy is received by the Commission; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that routine procedural inquiries may be made by contacting the Commission's Clerk's Office at (603) 271-2431 or ClerksOffice@puc.nh.gov. All requests to the Commission should be made in a written pleading filed with the Commission. Unless otherwise authorized by law, *ex parte* communications are prohibited; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.12, Liberty shall notify all entities and individuals desiring to be heard at this hearing by publishing a copy of this order of notice on its website no later than two business days after the date of issue, such publication to be documented by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before April 7, 2022. In addition, the Clerk shall publish this order

of notice on the Commission's website no later than two business days after the date of issue; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any hearings in this matter shall be conducted in accordance with the attached hearing guidelines.

So ordered, this first day of April, 2022.



Daniel C. Goldner
Presiding Officer
Chairman

Individuals needing assistance or auxiliary communication aids due to sensory impairment or other disability should contact the NHPUC, 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire 03301-2429; 603-271-2431; TDD Access: Relay N.H. 1-800-735-2964. Notification of the need for assistance should be made one week prior to the scheduled event.

Service List - Docket Related

Docket# : 22-018

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