

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DE 23-068

ELECTRIC AND GAS UTILITIES

2024 – 2026 Triennial Energy Efficiency Plan

COMMENCEMENT OF ADJUDICATIVE PROCEEDING

On June 30, 2023, New Hampshire’s joint utilities, consisting of Liberty Utilities (Granite State Electric) Corp. d/b/a Liberty; New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, Inc.; Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy; Unitil Energy Systems, Inc.; Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty; and Northern Utilities, Inc. (together, the “joint utilities”) filed a petition requesting approval of the 2024–2026 Statewide Triennial Energy Efficiency (Plan), as required by RSA 374-F:3(d)(5). The petition, Plan, and subsequent docket filings, other than any information for which confidential treatment is requested of or granted by the Commission, will be posted to the Commission’s website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2023/23-068.html>.

I. SUMMARY OF THE 2024 – 2026 STATEWIDE TRIENNIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY PLAN

The 2024–2026 Plan forecasts a total electric sector budget of \$214,930,917 and a gas sector budget of \$38,838,406, for a total 2024-2026 Plan budget of \$253,769,323. This compares to the 2021–2023 triennial planning period that was based on an electric program budget of \$189,307,092 and a natural gas program budget of \$34,437,719, for a total of \$223,744,811, representing an increase of \$30,024,512 for the 2024-2026 Plan.

The majority of the funding for the Plan is collected through non-bypassable consumption-based energy efficiency charges, which are assessed to utility customers

at a rate set and annually adjusted pursuant to RSA 374-F:3, VI-a(d)(2). Energy efficiency charges are assessed through the System Benefits Charge (SBC) for electric customers and the Local Distribution Adjustment Charge (LDAC) for natural gas customers. According to the Plan, other sources of funding include carryovers from the 2021-2023 triennial planning period, Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) auction revenues, and revenues received from the ISO-New England Forward Capacity Market (FCM).

The Plan describes an allocation of the budget to categories of expense. These categories are Rebates and Services (Customer Incentives), Administration, Implementation Services, Marketing, and Evaluation, Measurement and Verification.

The Rebates and Services (Customer Incentives) category consists of programs, each of which has a budget and forecasted energy savings for both electric and natural gas sectors. The primary programs are the Large Business Energy Solutions Program, Small Business Energy Solutions Program, Municipal Program, Home Energy Reports, Home Performance Program, Home Energy Assistance Program, Energy Star © Products Program, Energy Star © Homes Program, and Active Demand Reduction programs.

II. ISSUES PRESENTED

The filing presents whether or not the Commission should grant the joint utilities' petition. The issues involved include whether the joint utilities' Plan offers benefits consistent with RSA 374-F's policy "to develop a more efficient industry structure and regulatory framework that results in a more productive economy by reducing costs to consumers while maintaining safe and reliable electric service with minimum adverse impacts on the environment." RSA 374-F:1. In evaluating whether this policy is met, the Commission will evaluate the Plan in the context of the

interdependent policy principles of RSA 374-F:3, implementation directives of RSA 374-F:4, the energy policy statement at RSA 378:37, the Commission's general supervisory authority over the utilities at RSA 374:3, and the Commission's duty to keep informed at RSA 374:4. Particular sections of these referenced statutes include RSA 374-F:3, VI-a (b), (c), (d), and (d)(1)–(d)(5); RSA 374-F:3, X; RSA 374-F:4, VIII (e); and RSA 374-F:4, VIII-a. This evaluation will include review of year-over-year changes to budgets, programs, subsidy levels, and measures.

Review of cost effectiveness pursuant to RSA 374-F:3, VI-a (d)(4) shall include review of the Granite State Test as the primary test and the Total Resource Cost test as the secondary test, including whether application of the tests utilizes appropriate inputs and assumptions that reflect the above-cited laws and policies, and whether input or assumption updates are warranted. In so doing the Commission will reference the *New Hampshire Cost-Effectiveness Review*, October 14, 2019.¹

The Commission's review of the Plan will also address whether Eversource seeks approval of any Lost Base Revenue rates in this proceeding, and if so, whether those rates are consistent with RSA ch. 374-F, and are just and reasonable pursuant to RSA 374:2 and RSA ch. 378.

Hearings on these issues will occur within the statutory review period that expires November 30, 2023. RSA 374-F:3, VI-a (d)(5). The Commission anticipates a series of hearing sessions beginning in September and extending through October 2023 to provide adequate time for the Commission to review the record (including any potential record requests that emanate from the hearings) and the issue a timely final order. It is envisioned that hearing sessions will address separate topics, such as

¹ Available at: https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2017/17-136/LETTERS-MEMOS-TARIFFS/17-136_2019-10-31_STAFF_NH_COST_EFFECTIVENESS_REVIEW.PDF

changes to residential programming, C&I programming, incentive payment levels, market barriers, testing, etc. The Commission encourages the parties and potential intervenors to consider the sequencing of topics for hearings in developing a procedural schedule proposal to be discussed at the prehearing conference. The Commission will reserve hearing dates on September 21, 26, October 3, 10, 24, and 31 for this matter.

Each party has the right to have an attorney represent the party at the party's own expense.

The Commission will be conducting the prehearing conference and 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 at the hearings 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 the Commission will hold a prehearing conference, pursuant to N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.15, at its offices located at 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire, on July 27, 2023 at 9:00 a.m., at which each party should be prepared to address any of the issues set forth in N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.15; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that during the prehearing conference, the Commission will consider the matters listed in Puc 203.15(c) and (d), including the establishment of a procedural schedule governing the remainder of the proceeding. Parties and potential intervenors are encouraged to facilitate the development of a procedural schedule by conferring prior to the prehearing conference, so that the presiding officer can address any matters on which there is disagreement during the prehearing conference. Any procedural schedule, however, will not be approved until after the prehearing conference and after consulting the Commission's calendar; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that, immediately following the prehearing conference, the joint utilities shall make appropriate personnel available for the parties to hold a technical session to review the filing; 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 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 joint utilities and any other parties on the service list, on or before July 21, 2023. 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 Puc 203.17; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party objecting to a petition to intervene make said objection on or before July 26, 2023; 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

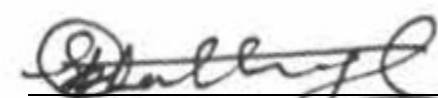
FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.12, the joint utilities shall notify all persons desiring to be heard at this hearing by publishing a copy of this order of notice on their respective websites no later than two business days after the date of issue, such publication to be documented by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before July 26, 2023. In addition, the Clerk's Office 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.

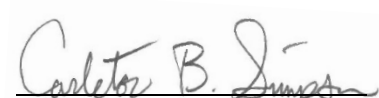
So ordered, this thirteenth day of July, 2023.



Daniel C. Goldner
Chairman



Pradip K. Chattopadhyay
Commissioner



Carleton B. Simpson
Commissioner

Individuals needing assistance or auxiliary communication aids due to sensory impairment or other disability should contact the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, 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#: 23-068

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