

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DG 26-050

LIBERTY UTILITIES (ENERGYNORTH NATURAL GAS) CORP. d/b/a LIBERTY

Winter 2026/2027 Cost of Gas and Summer 2027 Cost of Gas

**COMMENCEMENT OF ADJUDICATIVE PROCEEDING
AND NOTICE OF HEARING**

On September 2, 2026, Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty (Liberty) filed a petition requesting that the Commission approve its proposed Winter Period 2026-2027 and Summer Period 2027 cost of gas (COG) rates. In addition to this request, Liberty's petition also includes: (1) a proposal to allow the company to adjust its Summer Period 2027 COG rates in the spring based on updated forecasts after a hearing; and (2) a plan to temporarily address an ongoing service moratorium in several towns in the Lakes Region, which are within Liberty's franchise area, by contracting for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) trailer to be placed in the region to serve new customers.¹

In support of its petition, Liberty filed the direct testimony of Mark J. Summerfield, Senior Manager, Energy Procurement, Robert Garcia, Senior Manager, Rates and Regulatory Affairs, and Adam R.M. Yusuf, a rates analyst, all of whom are employed by Liberty's affiliate service company. Liberty also filed attachments supporting its witnesses' testimony. In addition to Liberty, both the New Hampshire Department of Energy (DOE) and the Office of the Consumer Advocate (OCA) have filed appearances in this docket. All docket filings, other than

¹ Liberty did not include a specific request in its petition to approve this proposal. However, in their pre-written testimony, Liberty's witnesses represent that the company is seeking approval of this proposal through the COG filing.

any information subject to confidential treatment, are available on the Commission's website at www.puc.nh.gov.²

I. BACKGROUND AND PETITION

The COG is a rate mechanism through which Liberty recovers the cost of supply from its customers, which primarily includes the cost of natural gas and associated transportation costs. *See* Docket No. DG 25-057, Order No. 28,192 (October 29, 2025). The costs of commodities and transportation are largely unregulated and market based. *Id.* Liberty is authorized to pass these market costs directly onto its customers but cannot mark up the prices to derive a profit. *Id.* The purpose of the COG mechanism is to allow Liberty to pass on increases and decreases in the cost of supply quickly, without undergoing an extensive distribution rate proceeding. *Id.* Liberty sets its COG rates in two seasonal, six-month periods, one for the summer (from May to October) and one for the winter (from November to April). As the purpose of the COG rate is to pass on the cost of supply to ratepayers, the Commission has historically authorized Liberty to make monthly adjustments to its COG rate to reflect changes in the natural gas market. *Id.* Thus, Liberty sets an initial COG rate at the start of each period and is authorized to adjust its COG rate at the beginning of each month without further Commission approval. *Id.* While Liberty may decrease its rates as much as necessary to account for declining market costs, it cannot raise its rates more than 25 percent above the initial rate without seeking Commission approval. *Id.*

Liberty has three COG rate classes: a Residential Heating class, and two C&I classes based on usage, the C&I – HLF and C&I – LLF classes. *Id.* In addition, through the gas assistance program (GAP), Liberty also offers a discounted gas rate for residential customers

² Liberty also requested approval of a procedural schedule for this docket. The DOE filed an exception and made several requested changes to the schedule. While the Commission sets the hearing date in this order, the Commission will address the full schedule in a separate procedural order.

who meet certain income thresholds during the winter months. *Id.* Under Liberty's current tariff, the GAP rate is based on the approved Residential rate and is thus not separately reviewed. *Id.* In addition, for the winter period only, Liberty offers a limited number of customers the opportunity to enroll in the fixed-price-option rate on a first-come, first-served basis during the winter months. The fixed-price-option rate is \$0.02/therm higher than base COG rates but remains constant during the rate period and thus provides customers with a fixed price for natural gas for the entire season.

In this year's filing, Liberty has proposed COG rates for both the Winter Period 2026-2027 Period and the Summer 2027 Period. The proposed Winter Period 2026-2027 rates are as follows:

**LIBERTY COG RATES (\$/THERM)
WINTER PERIOD 2026-2027 (PROPOSED) VS. WINTER PERIOD 2025-2026 (INITIAL).**

Class	Proposed Rates Effective November 1, 2026	Rates Effective November 1, 2025	\$ Change	% Change
Residential	\$0.8319	\$0.9162	(\$0.0843)	(-9%)
Residential (GAP)	\$0.4575	\$0.5039	(\$0.0464)	(-9%)
C&I – LLF (High winter use)	\$0.8318	\$0.9163	(\$0.0845)	(-9%)
C&I – HLF (Low winter use)	\$0.8322	\$0.9166	(\$0.0844)	(-9%)
Residential FPO	\$0.8519	\$0.9362	(\$0.0843)	(-9%)
Residential FPO (GAP)	\$0.4685	\$0.5149	(\$0.0464)	(-9%)
Transportation	\$0.0046	\$0.0029	\$0.0017	59%

See Testimony of Robert Garcia and Adam Yusuf at 6–7.

As demonstrated by this table, with the exception of the Transportation class, the proposed COG rates for Winter Period 2026-2027 are slightly lower than the Winter Period 2026-2027 rates that the Commission approved in Docket No. DG 25-057. However, Liberty's witnesses noted that the proposed COG rates are significantly lower than the actual average COG rates in effect over the Winter Period 2025-2026 Period because: (1) Liberty consistently increased its COG rates every month to account for higher-than-project supply costs; and (2) the Commission granted an emergency motion filed by Liberty to adjust the COG rates above the 25% cap for the months of March and April 2026 to avoid a large projected over-collection. *See* Testimony of Robert Garcia and Adam Yusuf. For example, the actual average Residential COG rate for the Winter 2025/2026 Period was \$1.845/ per therm, whereas the proposed Residential rate is more than a \$1/ therm less. *Id.*

Liberty's witnesses account for the lower COG rates for several reasons. The primary reason for the lower rates this upcoming period is the lower under-recovery during the Winter Period 2025-2026 compared to the Winter Period 2024-2025, which Liberty's witnesses attributed in part to the emergency increase in COG rates last winter. *Id.* In addition, Liberty's witnesses noted that there is a slight decrease in the forecasted cost of gas supply this year as compared to last year. *Id.*

In his testimony, Mr. Summerfield stated that, due to capacity constraints, Liberty has imposed a "growth moratorium" in certain areas of its franchise around the Lakes Region. *See* Testimony of Mark Summerfield. In his testimony, Mr. Summerfield laid out a temporary plan to address this capacity constraint and alleviate potential pressure issues and increase the resiliency of the distribution system by contracting for an LNG "Queen" storage trailer that will be located

in the Laconia area. *Id.* According to Mr. Summerfield, once the trailer is in place, Liberty will be able to add new customers to connect to the system incrementally on a case-by-case basis. *Id.*

With respect to the Summer Period 2027, Liberty proposed the following rates:

LIBERTY COG RATES (\$/THERM)

SUMMER PERIOD 2027 (PROPOSED) VS. SUMMER PERIOD 2026 (INITIAL).

Class	Proposed Rate For Effect May 1, 2027	Rates Effective May 1, 2026	\$ Change	% Change
Residential – R3	\$0.3653	\$0.3621	\$0.0032	1%
C& I - G41	\$0.3653	\$0.3621	\$0.0032	1%
C&I - G42	\$0.3653	\$0.3621	\$0.0032	1%
C& I - G52	\$0.3654	\$0.3622	\$0.0032	1%

See Testimony of Robert Garcia and Adam Yusuf at 20.

The proposed rates for the Summer Period 2027 are one percent (1%) higher than the rates in effect at the start of the Summer Period 2026. According to Liberty’s witnesses, these rates are consistent with the forecasted cost of supplying natural gas for the Summer Period 2027. That said, Liberty’s petition includes a proposed schedule for reviewing and adjusting the proposed rates in April 2027 based on forecast updates if appropriate.

II. ISSUES PRESENTED

The filing presents, inter alia, the following issues: whether Liberty correctly forecasted and factored the relevant elements into its proposed COG rates; whether Liberty’s proposed COG rates were properly calculated; whether Liberty should be allowed to adjust its Summer Period 2027 rates in the spring of 2027 to better reflect market forecasts; whether Liberty’s proposed use of LNG and an LNG “Queen” storage trailer to temporarily service its franchise area during the Winter Period 2026-2027 and Summer Period 2027 is consistent with Good

Utility Practice and is in the public interest;³ and whether Liberty's proposed COG rates are just and reasonable, as required by RSA 374:2, RSA 378:5, and RSA 378:7. Accordingly, an adjudicative proceeding will be convened to hear, consider, and adjudicate 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, and RSA 378:7, 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 October 22, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Three hours shall be allotted for this hearing; and it is

³ Except for the questions of Liberty's use of LNG and an LNG "Queen" storage trailer to temporarily service its franchise area during the Winter Period 2026-2027 and Summer Period 2027, all other issues concerning Liberty's distribution system, including Liberty's self-imposed service moratorium, will be heard, considered, and adjudicated in Liberty's pending Distribution Rate Case (natural gas). *See* Prehearing Order at 4, *Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. (Request for Change in Rates)*, [Docket No. DG 26-037](#) (Sept. 24, 2026) [[Tab No. 21](#)].

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 RSA 541-A:32, Puc 204.08, and Puc 203.06, 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 October 15, 2026. 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 204.08; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party objecting to a petition to intervene make said objection on or before October 19, 2026; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that the 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 in accordance with the Commission's administrative rules. 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 www.puc.nh.gov/about-us/contact-us. 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 Puc 204.04, 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 October 15, 2026. 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 October 2026.



Christopher J. Ellms, Jr.
Chairman



Mark W. Dell'Orfano
Commissioner

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#: 26-050

Printed: 10/1/2026

Email Addresses

Adam.Yusuf@Libertyutilities.com
amanda.o.noonan@energy.nh.gov
anthony.j.leone@energy.nh.gov
Ashraful.Alam@energy.nh.gov
ClerksOffice@puc.nh.gov
donald.m.kreis@oca.nh.gov
Energy-Litigation@energy.nh.gov
gary.m.cronin@energy.nh.gov
Ian.Harmon@libertyutilities.com
Joshua.Tilbury@libertyutilities.com
karen.sinville@libertyutilities.com
Marc.H.Vatter@oca.nh.gov
Mark.Summerfield@libertyutilities.com
mary.e.schwarzer@energy.nh.gov
michael.sheehan@libertyutilities.com
Michele.J.Roberge@energy.nh.gov
ocalitigation@oca.nh.gov
paul.b.dexter@energy.nh.gov
regulatory.nh@libertyutilities.com
Robert.Garcia@libertyutilities.com
Robyn.I.Sarette@energy.nh.gov