

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DG 26-052

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

Keene Division Winter 2026/2027 Cost of Gas

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

On September 9, 2026, Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty (Liberty Keene) filed a petition to set its cost of gas (COG) rates for the Winter Period 2026-2027 Period for customers in its Keene Division. In support of its petition, Liberty Keene filed the direct testimony of Mark J. Summerfield, Senior Manager, Energy Procurement, Robert Garcia, Senior Manager, Rates and Regulatory Affairs, and Ian Harmon, a rates analyst, all of whom are employed by Liberty Keene's affiliate service company. All docket filings, other than any information subject to confidential treatment, are available on the Commission's website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov>.

I. BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Liberty Keene is a public utility that provides gas service to customers in the Keene area. *See* Docket No. 25-062, Order No. 28,190 (October 31, 2025). Liberty Keene supplies its customers using both compressed natural gas (CNG) and propane. COG proceedings allow gas utilities, like Liberty Keene, to recover their gas-supply costs from their customers without a full distribution-rate proceeding. *Id.* Although gas utilities, such as Liberty Keene, may recover market-based gas-supply costs directly from their customers, they are not authorized to derive profits by marking up those costs. *Id.* Thus, COG proceedings allow gas utilities, such as Liberty

Keene, to quickly recover their gas-supply costs of service (e.g., Liberty Keene's market-based propane and CNG purchase costs and associated transportation costs) under the Commission's rate supervision, with less recoverable expense than typically incurred in distribution-rate proceedings. *Id.*

Gas utilities petition the Commission biannually to set their COG rates for each of two seasonal, six-month periods—a summer period and a winter period. Liberty Keene's summer period runs from May through October of the same year, and its winter period runs from November of the current year through April of the following year (e.g., November 2026 through April 2027). *Id.* To reflect the periodic fluctuations in the gas-supply markets during any given six-month period in COG rates, the Commission typically authorizes gas utilities to make monthly adjustments to their COG rates such that utilities can decrease their rates as needed to account for declining market costs, but cannot raise their rates more than twenty-five (25) percent above the initial rate without first seeking authorization from the Commission. *Id.* Thus, the Commission approves a gas utility's initial COG rate at the start of each period, and the utility may adjust its COG rate at the beginning of each month without Commission approval unless the utility wishes to increase the COG rate more than twenty-five (25) percent above the initial rate. *Id.*

Liberty Keene has a single base COG rate for both residential and commercial and industrial customer classes. However, during the winter period, it also has a discounted gas rate for residential customers who meet certain income thresholds through the gas assistance program (GAP). *Id.* In addition, during the winter period, it offers a limited number of customers the opportunity to enroll in the fixed-price option rate on a first-come, first-served basis. *Id.* The

fixed-price option rate is \$0.02/therm higher than base COG rates but remains constant throughout the six-month period. *Id.*

Liberty Keene has proposed the following COG rates for its Winter Period 2026-2027:

**LIBERTY KEENE 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	\$1.4425	\$1.4808	(\$0.0383)	(3%)
Residential (GAP)	\$0.7934	\$0.8144	(\$0.0210)	(3%)
C&I – LLF (High winter use)	\$1.4425	\$1.4808	(\$0.0383)	(3%)
C&I – HLF (Low winter use)	\$1.4425	\$1.4808	(\$0.0383)	(3%)
Residential FPO	\$1.4625	\$1.5008	(\$0.0383)	(3%)

Petition at 2.

As shown *supra*, the proposed rates for the Winter Period 2026-2027 are approximately three percent (3%) lower than the rates the Commission approved for the Winter Period 2025-2026. *See* Testimony of Robert Garcia, Mark Summerfield, and Ian Harmon at 16 (outlining the reasons for the differences in rates between Winter Period 2025-2026 and Winter Period 2026-2027)

II. ISSUES PRESENTED

The filing presents, *inter alia*, the following issues: whether Liberty Keene correctly forecasted and factored the relevant elements into its proposed COG rates; whether Liberty Keene's proposed COG rates were properly calculated; and whether those 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 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, 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 1:00 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 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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris Ellms Jr.", written in black ink.

Christopher J. Ellms, Jr.
Chairman

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mark W. Dell'Orfano", written in black ink.

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#: 26-052

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