



March 18, 2020

Debra A. Howland
Executive Director
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301-2429

Re: DE 17-136 – Temporary Suspension of Certain Program Offerings

Dear Director Howland:

In light of the ongoing pandemic concerns and state of emergency related to COVID-19, and in order to protect the health and safety of our customers and vendors, Liberty Utilities (Granite State Electric) Corp. d/b/a Liberty Utilities; New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, Inc.; Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy; Unitil Energy Systems, Inc. (UES); Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp d/b/a Liberty Utilities; and Northern Utilities, Inc. (Northern) (collectively, “the NH Utilities”) hereby notify the NH Public Utilities Commission (the “Commission”) that, after careful consideration, we plan to temporarily suspend certain program offerings.

Through implementation of the 2018-2020 Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plan, the NH Utilities are committed to providing our customers with outstanding energy efficiency services and helping our state achieve its energy goals. Energy efficiency is one of the most cost-effective means to lower customers’ energy usage and improve customers’ quality of life. While energy reductions achieved by the New Hampshire energy efficiency programs help improve long-term public health, the emerging COVID-19 pandemic concerns facing the citizens of New Hampshire must take precedence in the short term.

In the past week, the number of presumed positive cases of COVID-19 has increased, and the contagious and potentially fatal nature of the disease has prompted Governor Sununu to declare a state of emergency and other related actions (see Executive Order No. 2020-04 and Emergency Orders No.1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). The NH Utilities have been closely monitoring the situation and reviewing guidance from the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Governor’s Office, in order to protect the health and safety of our customers, contractors, and employees.

In light of this guidance, the NH Utilities have been implementing policies to limit gatherings of employees, suspend in-person trainings, provide guidance to contractors, and minimize contact with potentially ill individuals to help stop the spread of COVID-19. As noted by many of the health organizations, one of the most important factors for minimizing the risk of spreading the infection is limiting in-person activities. Given the wide-scale nature of on-site assessments, evaluation activities, and other person-to-person contractor and customer services,

there is a potential risk of unknowing transmission between our customers, vendors, and employees. Accordingly, the NH Utilities plan to temporarily suspend on-premise services, including energy efficiency assessments, incentives for direct install services, and in-building evaluation activities, as well as any other in-person activity deemed to create an unnecessary risk of exposure effective no later than March 19, 2020. The NH Utilities anticipate the temporary suspension period lasting through at least April 6, 2020 but will continuously reevaluate.

During the temporary suspension of on-premise services, the NH Utilities plan to continue all other energy efficiency services, upstream offerings, retail rebates, active demand, and behavior offerings, as well as some emergency on premise services (such as low-income replacement of failed heating system) and in-progress work. Customers that are actively in the process of installing energy efficient upgrades will still be eligible for incentives. Please note that this temporary suspension of limited energy efficiency services does not impact core utility functions.

The NH Utilities greatly appreciate the disruption that such a suspension may have on customers, but we feel that such action is prudent in light of the continuing pandemic. We are also very concerned about the impact of the suspension on our vendors, including home performance contractors, many of whom own or work for small businesses. These individuals and businesses are essential to serving customers and sustaining the successful energy efficiency programs in the State now and in the future. The NH Utilities are working to identify actions to mitigate the potential adverse impacts on our contractors and partners.

The NH Utilities will provide periodic updates to the Commission regarding this matter, including the strategy and timeline for resuming full services.

Together we hope to help stem the spread of this virus and return to full program offerings as soon as possible. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

The NH Electric and Natural Gas Utilities

_____/s/_____
Kate Peters
Supervisor, Regulatory
Eversource Energy

_____/s/_____
Carol Woods
Energy Solutions Executive
New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, Inc.

_____/s/_____
Cindy L. Carroll
Vice President, Customer Energy Solutions
Unitil Service Corp.

_____/s/_____
Eric Stanley
Manager, Energy Efficiency and Customer
Programs
Liberty Utilities

cc: DE 17-136 Service List