

EXHIBIT

N.H.P.U.C. Case No. DE 11-250

Exhibit No. 22

Witness John J. Reed

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Rebuttal Testimony of John J. Reed

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
BEFORE THE
NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

REBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF JOHN J. REED

DOCKET NO. DE 11-250

July 11, 2014

1 I. **Introduction and Executive Summary**

2 Q. **Please state your name and business address.**

3 A. My name is John J. Reed. My business address is 293 Boston Post Road West, Suite
4 500, Marlborough, Massachusetts 01752.

5 Q. **By whom are you employed and what is your position?**

6 A. I am the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Concentric Energy Advisors, Inc. and
7 CE Capital Advisors, Inc. (together "Concentric") (<http://www.ceadvisors.com/>).

8 Q. **On whose behalf are you appearing in this proceeding?**

9 A. I am appearing on behalf of Public Service Company of New Hampshire ("PSNH").

10 Q. **Please describe Concentric.**

11 A. Concentric is an economic advisory and management consulting firm, headquartered in
12 Marlborough, Massachusetts, which provides consulting services related to energy
13 industry transactions, energy market analysis, litigation, and regulatory support. CE

1 Capital Advisors is a FINRA-member securities firm that provides financial services
2 regarding energy industry mergers and acquisitions.

3 **Q. Please describe your educational background and professional experience.**

4 A. I have more than 35 years of experience in the energy industry, having served as an
5 executive in energy consulting firms, including the position of Co-Chief Executive
6 Officer of the largest publicly-traded management consulting firm in the United States
7 and as Chief Economist for the largest gas utility in the United States. I have provided
8 expert testimony on a wide variety of economic and financial issues related to the energy
9 and utility industry on numerous occasions before administrative agencies, utility
10 commissions, courts, arbitration panels and elected bodies across North America.
11 Attachment JJR-1 to this testimony provides my background and a list of prior
12 engagements in which I have provided expert testimony.

13 **Q. What is the purpose of your testimony in this proceeding?**

14 A. The purpose of my testimony is to respond to the testimony of other parties to this
15 proceeding relating to the prudence of PSNH regarding its Merrimack Station Scrubber
16 Project (the “Project”), as well as to testimony suggesting that PSNH had viable
17 alternatives to pursuing the Project. I specifically discuss the testimony of Dr. Elizabeth
18 Stanton, submitted on behalf of the Conservation Law Foundation, and Mr. Michael
19 Hachey, submitted on behalf of TransCanada, regarding their analyses and
20 recommendations pertaining to PSNH’s cost recovery for the Project. In my testimony I:
21 i) Review the appropriate prudence standard that should be applied in this
22 proceeding;
23 ii) Apply this prudence standard to assess the actions of PSNH and offer my
24 opinion regarding the prudence of these actions;

- iii) Review the options available to PSNH when it considered the installation of the scrubber at Merrimack Station;
 - iv) Discuss the likely timeline and process in the event that PSNH sought permission to divest Merrimack Station;
 - v) Discuss the likely impact of the scrubber mandate on the price a willing buyer would likely have paid in a divestiture;
 - vi) Discuss the option of retiring Merrimack Station in light of various orders in this docket;
 - vii) Discuss my concerns with the intervenors' quantifications of a disallowance; and
 - viii) Present my conclusions regarding the prudence of pursuing the installation of the scrubber at Merrimack Station in light of the options available to PSNH.

What relevant experience do you have regarding the issues which form the purpose of your testimony in this proceeding?

I have managed numerous engagements involving the definition and application of the prudence standard in public utility ratemaking, beginning with major nuclear construction projects almost thirty years ago. I have provided expert testimony on this issue in regulatory proceedings across North America, on projects such as Florida Power & Light's \$20 billion nuclear construction program, Ontario Power Generation's \$10 billion Darlington Refurbishment Project, and similar engagements involving gas pipelines, local distribution companies and coal-fired power projects. In these matters, I have worked on behalf of utilities, utility regulators and utility customers. In addition, I have a substantial amount of experience in managing divestiture processes for utilities seeking to sell electric generating assets. I have managed several such sales in New England, including multiple sales for operating units of Northeast Utilities, EUA, Bangor Hydro, and others. I have also worked on several buy-side engagements for purchasers of



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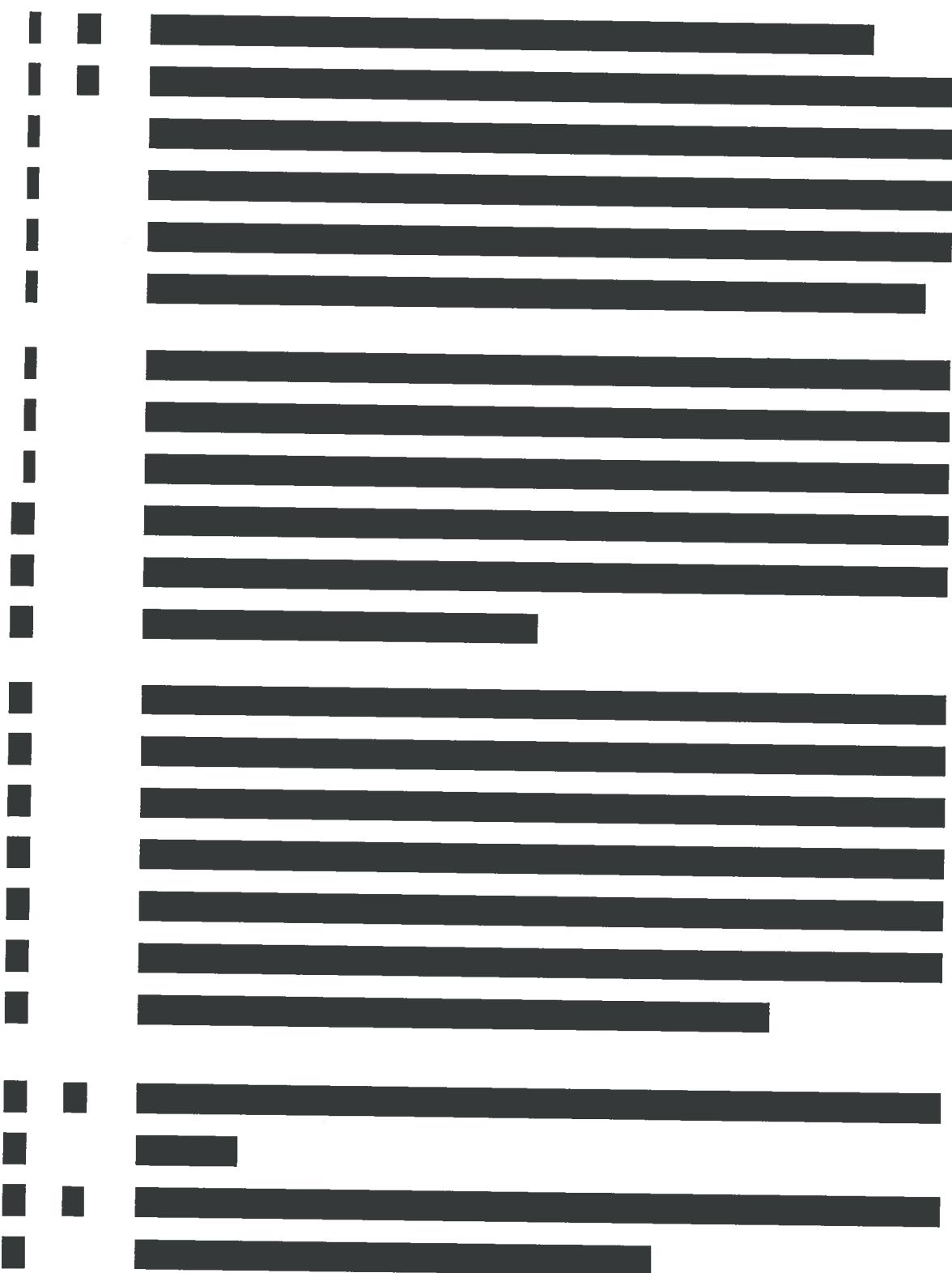
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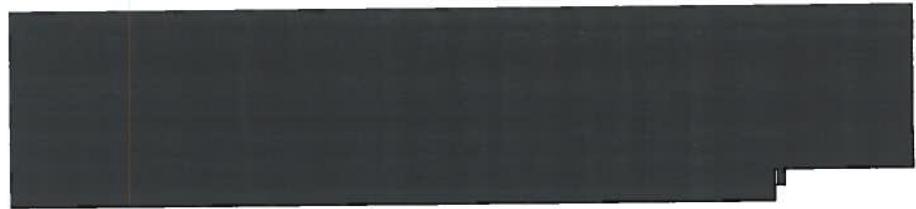
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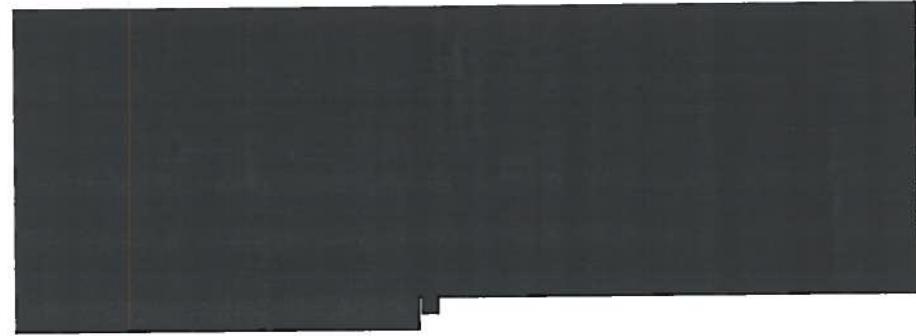
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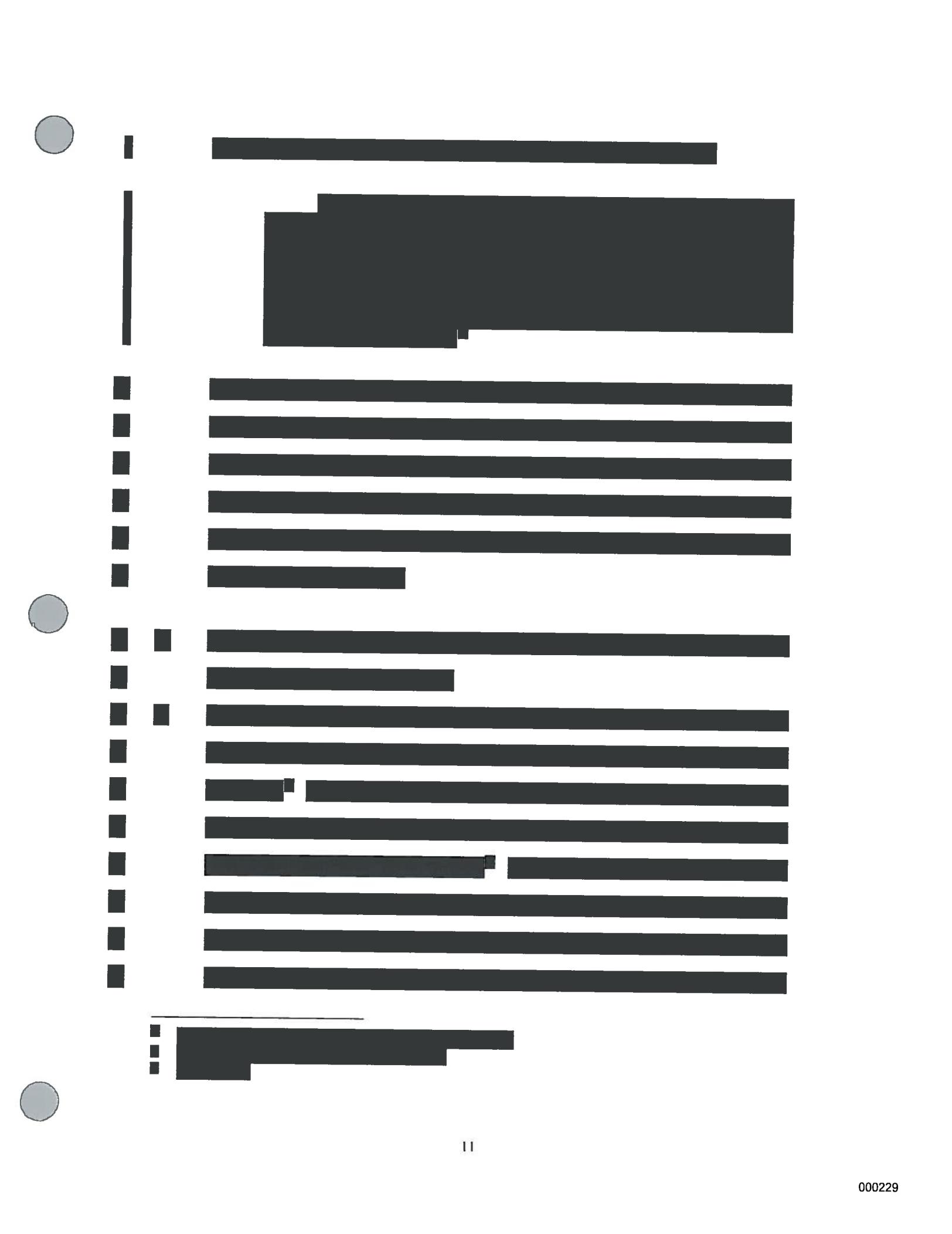


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1 reassessed continually throughout the planning and construction of the project in order to
2 determine whether, given changing economic conditions or cost estimates, canceling or
3 redesigning the project would be more beneficial to ratepayers.”

4 **Q. Do you agree with Dr. Stanton’s definition?**

5 A. No, I do not. Prudent decisions cannot be evaluated based on whether they were
6 expected to, or in fact did, provide a “benefit to ratepayers.” First, whether a project or
7 decision produces “benefits” to ratepayers can only be determined after the fact.
8 Therefore, the use of a standard of achieving actual benefits violates the widely-held
9 principle and specific Restructuring Settlement definition that prudence reviews should
10 avoid any reliance on hindsight and focus exclusively on what was known or knowable at
11 the time the decision was made. Second, the existence of “benefits” may be a subjective
12 matter that is not capable of being examined based on a factual inquiry limited to
13 information that was available at the time to the decision maker. For example, utilities
14 “choose” to pay federal income taxes because the law requires that they do so. The
15 decision to comply with this law may not be one that some, or even most ratepayers
16 believe produces “benefits” for them. However, it would be quite unreasonable to
17 conclude that a utility’s decision to pay such taxes is imprudent or unreasonable. It
18 would similarly be quite unreasonable to conclude that PSNH is imprudent for complying
19 with the statutory mandate requiring installation of the scrubber, even if one did not
20 consider that to be beneficial.

21 The determination of whether a decision is prudent needs to be addressed *solely* based on
22 an analysis of whether that decision was within, or outside, a defined range of reasonable
23 behavior. It is not related to costs, or benefits, or any other consequence of that decision
24 as it turned out. It is also not enough to conclude that another reasonable decision maker

1 may have come to a different conclusion or made a different decision. Reasonable
2 people can differ and still be within the range of what is considered reasonable.

3 Rather, actions are evaluated as prudent or imprudent based on an established range of
4 acceptable actions and the measured against the minimally prudent action. The
5 determination of prudence must be based on a comparison of the action taken to the
6 minimally acceptable action. Compliance with the law undoubtedly falls within the
7 range of acceptable actions.

8 In addition, while I agree that prudence is a continuing obligation, this standard does not
9 require a continual re-evaluation of a decision until all costs are “sunk” as Dr. Stanton
10 suggests. This suggests that in order to be prudent, PSNH should have re-evaluated the
11 installation of the scrubber up until all costs had been incurred. This is unreasonable and
12 assumes that PSNH had options other than installing the scrubber. PSNH re-evaluated
13 the scrubber project in September of 2008 at the request of the Commission and
14 discussed the revised project estimate with the Legislature in early 2009. Ultimately, the
15 Legislature reinforced the mandate requiring installation of the scrubber. The re-
16 evaluation of decisions only makes sense if there are viable alternatives that can still be
17 pursued. In this case, once the legislature made it clear that the law was not going to
18 change, the alternatives became non-viable.

19 Q. **Please describe the factors the Commission should consider in a proper prudence
20 review.**

21 A. In determining whether a utility’s decision-making process is found to be imprudent, the
22 Commission should begin by defining a range of acceptable behavior, determining what a
23 “minimally prudent” action would have been, and measuring the actions taken against the
24 minimum of the range. An assessment of prudence cannot be based solely on a single

1 behavior, but rather on a range of acceptable behavior. Second, the Commission should
2 take into consideration only what the utility could have known at the time it was making
3 the decision to proceed with the scrubber installation and avoid using hindsight in
4 determining the prudence of actions. Third, the Commission must not base a prudence
5 finding solely on whether the action or alternative actions resulted in customer benefits.
6 A determination of prudence based solely on customer benefits ignores important factors
7 that must be taken into consideration in determining the prudence of actions under the
8 circumstances in which decisions had to be made.

9 **III. Summary of Intervenor Witness Positions**

10 Q. **Please summarize the positions of Dr. Stanton and Mr. Hachey to which you will be**
11 **responding.**

12 A. Dr. Stanton concludes that out of the \$422 million of project costs that PSNH has
13 requested to include in rate base for the Project, only \$23 million, plus penalties for
14 cancellation set out in the “major scrubber contracts” (an amount Dr. Stanton does not
15 provide) should be considered to have been prudently incurred and included in rate base.
16 She reaches this conclusion by examining a “cash flow” analysis in which she attempts to
17 recreate what she believes a reasonable utility should have done in 2008 and 2009 to
18 reexamine the economics of the Project. She concludes that in four out of her five
19 scenarios the Project was likely to be “uneconomic,” and, therefore, by no later than
20 March 2009 PSNH should have cancelled the Project.

21 Mr. Hachey recommends that PSNH’s recovery in rate base be limited to \$10 million,
22 based on his conclusion that the Project should have been cancelled on or before
23 September 2008. His allowance of \$10 million is based on what had been spent as of
24 September 2008, without regard to cancellation costs of commitments as of that date. He

1 reaches his conclusion that the Project should have been cancelled by September 2008
2 based on factors that he believes PSNH should have taken into consideration in 2008.
3 His primary area of disagreement with PSNH's analysis is in the area of gas price
4 forecasting, which is an issue that is addressed in the testimony of Dr. David Harrison, Jr.
5 and Dr. Noah Kaufman of NERA. For my purposes, it is important to note that Mr.
6 Hachey's position is essentially that PSNH's gas price forecasts were outside of any
7 range of reasonable expectations, that reliance on these forecasts was unreasonable, that
8 this reliance led to the decision to continue with the Projects, and that "but for" these
9 unreasonable actions, the costs to ratepayers would only have been \$10 million, not the
10 \$422 million that PSNH is seeking. Unfortunately, Mr. Hachey did not provide much of
11 the relevant information regarding the price forecasts he references; therefore, it is
12 impossible to fully evaluate or reply to Mr. Hachey's contentions.

13 I will respond to each of these positions from the perspective of what I believe a proper
14 framework is for examining whether PSNH's actions were prudent, why I do not believe
15 that either witness has adhered to a proper framework for examining this issue, and why
16 neither has conducted the correct analysis for quantifying a disallowance associated with
17 any allegedly imprudent actions.

18 IV. **Consideration of PSNH's Options**

19 Q. **Please provide a brief description of the Merrimack generating plant.**

20 A. Merrimack Station is a 432 MW coal-fired generation facility located on the Merrimack
21 River in the Town of Bow, New Hampshire. The plant consists of two coal-fired units
22 and two oil-fired combustion turbines. Unit 1 was placed into commercial operation in
23 1960, and Unit 2 was placed into commercial operation in 1968. Merrimack Station
24 makes up approximately 36% of the capacity PSNH's generating portfolio.



7 Q. **What was the initial estimated amount for the scrubber installation and what was
8 the basis for this budget?**

9 A. The initial \$250 million cost estimate of the project was based on a Sargent and Lundy
10 estimate performed in 2005. Sargent & Lundy's effort culminated in a report dated March
11 2006 filed in Docket No. DE 08-103. The cost estimates provided by Sargent & Lundy
12 relied on past installations of flue gas desulphurization systems and limited consideration
13 of Merrimack Station specific site conditions. During the development of more detailed
14 pricing of the scrubber system, Sargent & Lundy and PSNH found that flue gas
15 desulfurization suppliers were unwilling to provide mercury reduction guarantees in
16 conjunction with equipment pricing guarantees. Therefore, the \$250 million estimate
17 contained no specific mercury reduction guarantee since it was not available at the time
18 from suppliers. Jacobs Consultancy included a thorough review of this issue in its
19 prudence report.

20 Q. **Was this estimate revised prior to the installation of the project?**

21 A. Yes. In the fall of 2007, PSNH entered into a contract with Washington Group
22 International (later URS) as the Project Program Manager for the scrubber project. URS

¹⁵ RSA Section 125-O:11, Section I and II.

¹⁶ RSA Section 125-O:13, Section I.

1 worked with PSNH to develop a detailed overall project scope, design basis, and final
2 cost estimate in 2008. As noted by Jacobs Consultancy in its report and the testimony of
3 Messrs. DiPalma and Dalton, this effort provided the technical basis for the scrubber
4 installation and the detailed project estimate of \$457 million. PSNH provided this project
5 estimate to the NHPUC on September 2, 2008, in Docket No. DE 08-103.

6 **Q. When did the scrubber installation commence and when was it placed into service?**

7 A. The physical construction of the scrubber began on March 9, 2009, and the scrubber was
8 placed in service on September 29, 2011.

9 **Q. Did the Clean Power Act allow alternatives to the installation of the scrubber?**

10 A. No. The Clean Power Act allowed for limited circumstances under which the owner of
11 Merrimack Station could request a variance from the mercury emission reduction
12 requirements prescribed in the legislation. These circumstances included: i) a variance in
13 schedule for compliance, or ii) a variance in the emissions reduction requirement based
14 on an energy supply crisis, a major fuel disruption, an unanticipated or unavoidable
15 disruption in the operation of the plant, or technological or economic infeasibility.

16 While PSNH also could have sought approval for a divestiture of Merrimack Station, this
17 would not have invalidated the requirement to install the scrubber. A divestiture, even in
18 the event it was approved and a willing buyer was found, would simply have shifted the
19 burden to install the scrubber from PSNH to the new owner. As discussed later in my
20 testimony, this also would not have benefitted PSNH's customers.

21 **Q. Please provide an overview of the timeline of the Project.**

22 A. The following is a timeline of relevant dates and activities leading up to the installation
23 and completion of the scrubber at Merrimack Station.

DATE	ACTIVITY
4/20/2006	House Bill 1673 is passed requiring the installation of scrubber technology at Merrimack Station no later than July 1, 2013. The law became effective June 8, 2006.
6/6/2007	PSNH submits a Temporary Air Permit application for the scrubber project, within the one-year deadline set by RSA 125-O:13, I.
8/22/2008	In response to NU's 8/7/2008 10-Q, which quotes an elevated cost estimate for the scrubber, the PUC opens an inquiry into the status of PSNH's efforts to install the scrubber, the costs of the technology, and the effect installation would have on energy service rates for PSNH customers. Commission instructs PSNH to file a report by 9/12/08.
9/02/2008	PSNH files a status report on its installation plans, a detailed cost estimate for the project of \$457 million, analysis of the anticipated effect of the project on energy service rates, and an analysis of the effect on energy service rates if Merrimack were not in the mix of fossil and hydro facilities operated in NH.
12/31/2008	PSNH executes more than \$225 million of the \$340 million in contracts for the scrubber project.
3/09/2009	N.H. Department of Environmental Services issues Temporary Permit TP-0008 for the Project and PSNH begins construction immediately.
6/30/2009	Per RSA 125-O:13, IX, PSNH provides its annual update on the Project to the Legislature Oversight Committee on Electric Utility Restructuring as well as the House Science, Technology, and Energy Committee and the Senate Energy and Economic Development Committee.
3/31/2010	PSNH holds an information session to discuss current information on the project status and costs.
5/19/2010	PSNH reports that the scrubber will be operational sooner than the 7/1/2013 deadline, thus achieving the "Economic Performance Incentives" a year sooner than required.
10/15/2010	This report is an update of the one submitted on 9/2/08. It includes a comprehensive status report on installation progress; a cost estimate; an analysis of the anticipated effect of the Project on service rates; an analysis of the effect on energy service rates if Merrimack were not part of the mix of fossil and hydro facilities operated by PSNH; the current state of the electric power markets and PSNH's forecast of power market prices.
9/28/2011	Scrubber placed in service.

1 **Q. During what timeframe do the other witnesses claim PSNH could have reasonably
2 considered alternatives to building the scrubber?**

3 A. Dr. Stanton contends that, due to a number of uncertainties, PSNH should have
4 reevaluated the project in late 2008 and early 2009 to determine if the project still
5 provided net benefits to customers.

6 In addition, Mr. Hachey asserts that the critical timeframe in which PSNH should have
7 reevaluated the scrubber project in order to decide whether to proceed was in the 2008
8 timeframe.

9 **Q. Why do these witnesses choose these timeframes in which they assert that PSNH
10 should have reconsidered the scrubber project?**

11 A. Dr. Stanton states that both natural gas prices and wholesale energy prices, as well as
12 trends in national income that can impact customer demand were in a great deal of flux
13 during this period. She maintains that a thorough cash flow analysis “was required for
14 prudence” in March 2009, “before beginning construction on the scrubber.”¹⁷

15 Mr. Hachey asserts that during 2008, changes in forecasted natural gas and coal prices,
16 environmental regulations, customer migration, project cost increases, and the economic
17 recession were all factors a prudent utility should have considered in deciding whether to
18 proceed with the project. He goes on to state that additional analysis done in the summer
19 of 2008 would have shown that the scrubber project would have resulted in significant
20 risks for ratepayers.

21 Before examining each of these witness’s assertions, it is important to recognize that each
22 of them started from what I believe was a flawed perspective: they have assumed that it

¹⁷ Direct testimony of Elizabeth A. Stanton, pg. 7.

1 was only prudent for PSNH to have proceeded with the scrubber project if that
2 represented the least-cost means of meeting the state's generation requirements. As
3 discussed at length in my testimony, the legislature created a mandate that the scrubber
4 be installed. That decision was reached after the legislature considered the evidence it
5 heard regarding the benefits of the project in terms of environmental improvements,
6 energy market diversity, and reliability; the legislature subsequently reconsidered and
7 ratified its initial decision, opting for economic stimulus at a time of deep economic
8 recession with full knowledge of the project's cost. I have found no evidence to suggest
9 that achieving the "least-cost" solution was what motivated the legislature. Clearly, the
10 mandate was created based on broader public interest desires, and to judge it now based
11 solely on whether it was the least-cost solution for electric consumers is inappropriate
12 revisionism.

13 **Q. Did PSNH reassess the scrubber project during this timeframe?**

14 A. Yes. In its Secretarial Letter dated August 22, 2008 in Docket No. DE 08-103, the
15 Commission notified PSNH that it was conducting an inquiry into the status of PSNH's
16 efforts to install the scrubber technology at Merrimack Station. The Commission
17 directed PSNH to file, by September 12, 2008:

- 18 • a comprehensive status report on its installation plans;
- 19 • a detailed cost estimate for the project;
- 20 • an analysis of the anticipated effect of the project on energy service rates; and
- 21 • an analysis of the effect on energy service rates if Merrimack Station were not in
22 the mix of fossil and hydro facilities operated by PSNH.

23 In this report, PSNH concluded that the pursuit of the scrubber installation would allow
24 Merrimack Station to continue to be a cost-effective base-load resource with the added

1 benefit of being among the cleanest coal-burning plants in the nation. See the testimony
2 of Messrs. Large and Vancho for more detail on the analyses performed by PSNH.

3 Q. **Does Mr. Hachey acknowledge that this analysis was done in the timeframe that he**
4 **highlights?**

5 A. Yes, he does. However, he states that PSNH imprudently relied upon an inappropriate
6 methodology for projecting gas prices to justify its expenditure on the scrubber project.

7 Specifically, Mr. Hachey asserts that the analysis presented in the September 2, 2008,
8 report was outdated since the analysis contained in the report was based on June and July
9 2008 fuel prices. He also asserts that PSNH should have relied on gas forecasts and not
10 NYMEX futures to analyze the economic benefits of the project.

11 Q. **Does Mr. Hachey's opinion regarding the methodology and sources of data meet the**
12 **definition of imprudent action?**

13 A. No, it does not. An assessment of prudence cannot be based on a single benchmark for
14 what constitutes acceptable behavior, but rather must consider the range of behavior that
15 reasonable individuals would have undertaken. A differing view on the future of gas
16 prices, or sources of forecasts, does not constitute imprudent behavior. The fact that
17 PSNH relied on particular sources of data, or an alternate view of the future of gas prices
18 in New England, does not render its actions unreasonable or not in the interest of
19 ratepayers. In fact, PSNH performed its analysis in the summer of 2008 based on
20 assumptions known and knowable at the time. By any definition, this action would be
21 considered as having been within an acceptable range.

1 Q. **Regardless of the opinions of other witnesses in this case, during what timeframe**
2 **could PSNH have reasonably reconsidered the installation of the scrubber at**
3 **Merrimack Station?**

4 A. New Hampshire passed the amendment to the Clean Power Act in 2006, ordering that a
5 wet scrubber be installed at Merrimack Station. After passage of that law mandating the
6 installation of the scrubber, a change in the law would have been required to terminate
7 the legal requirement to install scrubber technology at Merrimack Station.

8 PSNH received its temporary air permit from the NHDES in March of 2009 and began
9 construction that month. Therefore, the most reasonable timeframe during which the
10 Legislature could have re-considered installation of the scrubber would have been after
11 the passage of the amendments to the Clean Power Act and prior to the receipt of permits
12 and the commencement of construction. In 2006 and 2007, the industry was
13 experiencing a relatively stable period. In 2008, the industry was entering a state of rapid
14 flux where technological advancements were unlocking domestic gas supply and spot and
15 futures prices were beginning to reflect this increased supply. Therefore, the most
16 reasonable timeframe in which the Legislature could have reviewed its decision to require
17 installation of the scrubber would have been in the 2008/early 2009 timeframe.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1 Q. **What options could PSNH have considered in assessing whether to move forward
2 with the installation of a scrubber at Merrimack Station?**

3 A. The owner of Merrimack Station was mandated by law to comply with the stated
4 environmental reduction requirements through the installation of a scrubber at Merrimack
5 Station by July 2013. One of the most fundamental concerns that I have with the
6 analyses and conclusions offered by Dr. Stanton and Mr. Hachey is that there was no
7 option available to PSNH to simply walk away from the Project (just as PSNH could not
8 simply walk away from payment of taxes or any other requirement of law). During the
9 2008/early 2009 timeframe, other parties claim that PSNH could conceivably have
10 exercised the following options: i) sought a variance under the Clean Power Act; ii)
11 pursued authority for divestiture of Merrimack Station and transfer the responsibility to
12 install the scrubber to the new owner -- assuming there was a willing buyer, or iii)
13 pursued authority for retirement of Merrimack Station. I will evaluate each of these three
14 options in the following sections of my testimony.

15 V: **Variance Option**

16 Q. **Please explain the variance provision under the Scrubber Law.**

17 A. Under RSA Section 125-O:17 of the Clean Power Act, the owner of Merrimack Station
18 had an ability to seek a variance in accordance with the following provisions:

19 The owner may request a variance from the mercury emissions reduction
20 requirements of this subdivision by submitting a written request to the
21 department. The request shall provide sufficient information concerning the
22 conditions or special circumstances on which the variance request is based to
23 demonstrate to the satisfaction of the department that variance from the
24 applicable requirements is necessary.

25 I. Where an alternative schedule is sought, the owner shall submit a
26 proposed schedule which demonstrates reasonable further progress
27 and contains a date for final compliance as soon as practicable. If the
28 department deems such a delay is reasonable under the cited
29 circumstances, it shall grant the requested variance.

1 II. Where an alternative reduction requirement is sought, the owner
2 shall submit information to substantiate an energy supply crisis, a
3 major fuel disruption, an unanticipated or unavoidable disruption in
4 the operations of the affected sources, or technological or economic
5 infeasibility. The department, after consultation with the public
6 utilities commission, shall grant or deny the requested variance. If
7 requested by the owner, the department shall provide the owner with
8 an opportunity for a hearing on the request.”¹⁸

9 **Q. Based on these provisions, under what circumstances could PSNH have sought a**
10 **variance?**

11 A. Based on this language, PSNH could have sought a variance only in the “schedule” or
12 “reduction requirements.” In Order No. 25,506 issued on May 9, 2013, at page 17, this
13 Commission has expressly held that the variance provision may not be “interpreted . . . to
14 allow retirement of Merrimack Station rather than installation of the scrubber technology
15 as a method of meeting the emissions reduction requirements.”

16 **Q. Would a request to delay or cancel the project on the basis of cost have met the**
17 **definition of a variance under the Clean Power Act?**

18 A. Not as I read the language of the Act. The Clean Power Act describes a means to obtain
19 a “variance”, and not a “waiver” of the scrubber installation mandate. The Act does not
20 provide a basis for the owner of Merrimack station to elect to not construct the scrubber.

21 **Q. Do you take exception to the idea that the “economic infeasibility” language in the**
22 **Act could have been exercised as an option by PSNH to cancel the scrubber project**
23 **as suggested by Mr. Hachey?**

24 A. Yes, I do. Under the Act, the owner of Merrimack Station was permitted to seek a
25 *variance* in the scrubber emissions reduction requirement due to economic

¹⁸ RSA Section 125-O:17, Sections I and II

1 infeasibility. Economic infeasibility is mentioned only in subpart II of RSA 125-O:17.
2 Thus, by this definition, the only way that PSNH could have sought permission to
3 effectively cancel the scrubber project would have been to seek a change in the mercury
4 reduction requirement from the 80 percent prescribed in the Clean Power Act to zero
5 percent (the Act did not provide any provisions for a waiver, only variances in the timing
6 and level of compliance). This would have effectively amounted to a repeal of the Act,
7 since Merrimack was the only plant that was subject to this Act. It defies logic to
8 believe that NHDES had the authority to repeal the law and that PSNH could have
9 received approval to eliminate the mercury reduction requirement in its entirety
10 considering the support that the Clean Power Act had from the Legislature, the Governor,
11 and NHDES itself, and it is extraordinary to suggest that the *minimally prudent* decision
12 on the part of PSNH was to delay the project in order to seek, and to successfully secure,
13 such a ruling.

14 **Q. In your opinion, was it imprudent for PSNH to not seek a variance under the Clean**
15 **Power Act to delay or cancel the scrubber project?**

16 A. No, it was not. The variances that were permitted under the Act would not have
17 materially affected the cost of the Project, and PSNH was prudent in not pursuing a
18 cancellation or delay under the variance provision of the scrubber law.

19 **Q. Wasn't it also possible for PSNH to seek to have the Clean Power Act repealed once**
20 **PSNH knew the full expected cost of the Project?**

21 A. I would find it to be an extraordinary and untenable position to conclude that the *only*
22 prudent course of action would have been to seek a repeal of the law. But in this case, as
23 I indicated earlier, the Legislature *did* reconsider the scrubber law and chose *not* to
24 change the mandate requiring installation of the scrubber. Indeed, as Mr. Smagula

1 discusses in his testimony, in early 2009 the Legislature's majority committee report
2 expressly noted its concerns over any "pause in or cancellation of the project."¹⁹ At this
3 time, the viable alternatives to proceeding with the project were reasonably understood to
4 have been foreclosed.

5 **VI: Divestiture Option**

6 **Q. Please provide a brief description of the state of the New England wholesale market**
7 **in the 2008/2009 timeframe.**

8 A. Looking back, it is now evident that beginning in the fall of 2008 and spring 2009, gas
9 prices began dropping and as a result, wholesale electric prices in New England were also
10 dropping. This emerging phenomenon began putting a great deal of pressure on profit
11 margins for coal and nuclear plants in the region.

12 **Q. Did the state of the wholesale market affect the value the market was placing on coal**
13 **assets?**

14 A. Yes. Subsequent to the initial drop in gas prices, in the 2010 timeframe when the
15 decrease in gas prices was expected to be longer term, these assets began realizing very
16 low prices and, at times, no interest from prospective buyers. In addition, coal plants
17 faced additional financial pressure with looming environmental regulations that could
18 potentially require large capital investments for compliance. Indeed, the premise of
19 TransCanada, CLF, the Sierra Club and OCA is that PSNH should have known that the
20 value of Merrimack Station was not enough to support the installation of the scrubber.

²⁴ "Majority Committee Report" finding H.B. 496 "inexpedient to legislate," dated March 19, 2009, issued by the House Committee on Science, Technology and Energy.

Q. Were there coal plants that were bought or sold in New England or in the Northeast region during this timeframe?

3 A. Yes. There was one coal fired generating facility in New England, the Mount Tom
4 Generating Facility in Holyoke, MA, that was sold as a part of a larger portfolio of gas
5 and hydroelectric assets. The sale price of the coal asset was not disclosed.

6 Q. What was the state of coal-fired generating facility transactions nationally during
7 the timeframe Merrimack Station might have been divested?

8 A. At the time gas prices began dropping in later 2008 and early 2009, it was impossible to
9 know if the decrease in prices was sustainable over the long term. By 2010, it became
10 clear that technology advances in gas fracking were fundamentally affecting the supply of
11 gas and that low prices were actually sustainable. During this time period (2010), it was
12 extremely difficult to sell coal plants due to lower gas prices and environmental
13 compliance concerns. A report by Credit Suisse in September of 2010 stated:

If the EPA rules were not bad enough for coal generators, we think a large chunk of the US coal fleet is vulnerable to closure simply due to crummy economics where we see coal pricing at a premium to natural gas out the forward curve when adjusting on an electricity equivalent basis. Awful energy margins suggest to us that owners should be reevaluating their coal fleets due to pure energy economics before even taking on the burden of a capex for environmental control equipment.²⁰

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power also announced in October of 2009 that it would eliminate the purchase of coal power over the next ten years. In addition, in April of 2010, Southern California Edison announced its intent to divest its 48 percent share of Four Corners Power Plant by the end of 2016. According to an article in New

²⁰ Credit Suisse 23 September 2010 Americas/United States Equity Research Electric Utilities (Regulated Utilities/Independent & Integrated Power)

1 American Media: “the trend shows utilities are increasingly seeing coal as a bad business
2 decision.”²¹

3 Furthermore, in September of 2010, Duke announced a review of its Ohio strategy related
4 to the ownership of coal plants in that region. Duke wrote down the value of its 7,700
5 megawatts of wholesale plants in the region in the second quarter of 2010 by \$660
6 million to \$3.84 billion. The company stated that the write down was due to lower prices
7 and the potential costs of complying with tighter air pollution regulations.²² Power prices
8 in the region fell by 40% from 2008 to 2010, placing enormous pressure on profit
9 margins for the assets.

10 Finally, in a recent report on the future viability of Bridgeport Harbor Station in
11 Connecticut prepared by the Institute for Energy Economic and Financial Analysis
12 (“IEEFA”), the IEEFA noted that falling natural gas prices since 2008, the increase in the
13 price of delivered coal from 2002 to 2011 and the increased generation of renewables has
14 driven the retirement of more than 13,000 MW of the country’s aging coal fleet from
15 2009 – 2012.²³

16 Clearly, by the time any divestiture process for Merrimack Station could have gone to
17 market, (i.e., the 2010 time frame) it would not have been possible for such a divestiture
18 to produce any benefit for customers.

²¹ <http://newamericanmedia.org/2010/04/socal-edison-bails-out-of-coal-plan> April 7, 2010

²² <http://www.bloomberg.com> September 22, 2010

²³ <http://www.iefa.org/press-release-connecticuts-last-coal-fired-power-plant-is-in-critical-financial-condition-community-needs-to-plan-for-transition/>

1 Q. **Is it reasonable to assume that inclusion of a long term power purchase agreement
2 was the only viable way to attract buyers' interest in a coal-fired generating facility
3 at that time?**

4 A. Yes. Low gas prices and uncertain environmental regulations had a negative effect on
5 the value and viability of coal-fired generation. To increase the market value of these
6 assets, sellers could offer power purchase agreements as part of the sale process.
7 However, in most cases, these PPAs did not offer sufficient value to induce buyers to
8 purchase weak-performing or high-risk plants.

9 Q. **Is it likely that in late 2009 or 2010 PSNH would have had to include a power
10 purchase agreement with a prospective buyer had PSNH chosen to divest of
11 Merrimack Station?**

12 A. Yes, PSNH would almost certainly have had to sign a long term power purchase
13 agreement to purchase output from Merrimack in order for a merchant generation buyer
14 to have any interest in buying this plant. A reasonable buyer in that time frame would
15 likely have required an above-market PPA in exchange for the risk it was incurring in
16 purchasing the plant; *i.e.*, a merchant owner would have required a PPA locking PSNH
17 into buying the entire output of Merrimack Station at a price that covered all of its
18 operating expenses – including the scrubber – at a merchant rate of return, and not the
19 lower regulated rate of return that PSNH is allowed to earn. This not only would have
20 negated any benefit to ratepayers of selling the plant – it would have raised the costs
21 ultimately borne by ratepayers.

1 **Q. If PSNH had pursued a divestiture, would the process have allowed PSNH or**
2 **another owner to comply with the scrubber mandate under the Clean Power Act by**
3 **July 2013?**

4 A. It is unlikely that a divestiture process would have allowed the scrubber to be installed by
5 the July 2013 deadline if PSNH had delayed the scrubber project in order to try to shift
6 that responsibility to a purchaser of the plant. First, under New Hampshire law, PSNH
7 does not have the unilateral authority to divest or retire any of its generating assets. RSA
8 369-B:3-a as then in effect read:

9 The sale of PSNH fossil and hydro generation assets shall not take place before
10 April 30, 2006. Notwithstanding RSA 374:30, subsequent to April 30, 2006,
11 PSNH may divest its generation assets if the commission finds that it is in the
12 economic interest of retail customers of PSNH to do so, and provides for the cost
13 recovery of such divestiture. Prior to any divestiture of its generation assets,
14 PSNH may modify or retire such generation assets if the commission finds that it
15 is in the public interest of retail customers of PSNH to do so, and provides for the
16 cost recovery of such modification or retirement.²⁴

17 To divest, PSNH would have had to petition the NHPUC to make a determination
18 whether “it is in the economic interest of retail customers of PSNH to do so.” Such an
19 adjudicative proceeding would likely have taken a year or more to complete. In an
20 October 25, 2013 letter, the Chair of the NHPUC told the Chair of the Electric
21 Restructuring Legislative Oversight Committee:

22 What we cannot accomplish before April 1, 2014, is to conduct the adjudication
23 required to make a Commission finding concerning whether it is in customers’
24 economic interest for PSNH to divest its generation assets. That adjudicatory
25 process requires time for parties to submit competing expert testimony and
26 evidence, to have discovery on those facts, to rule on discovery disputes, to hold
27 evidentiary hearings and to issue a Commission order. This litigated phase
28 would typically follow the initial staff report and would take six months or more,
29 barring appeals or other similar judicial remedies.²⁵

²⁴ RSA 369-B:3-a.

²⁵ October 25, 2013 letter from Chair of the NHPUC.

1 If “the litigated phase” of an RSA 369-B:3-a hearing would take “six months or more,”
2 the entire process would likely have taken at least a year. Assuming that PSNH received
3 approval to divest, the divestiture process alone would have taken anywhere from ten to
4 eighteen months depending on the interest in the asset, the type of sale process, and
5 required negotiations, assuming there was even interest in the plant. Therefore, even if
6 PSNH had decided to pursue a divestiture in the fall of 2008, the entire approval and sale
7 process would have resulted in a sale completion date in mid to late 2010 under a best
8 case scenario.

9 **Q. Would a delay of the scrubber project until after the completion of divestiture**
10 **process have placed the sale process at risk?**

11 A. Yes. The Clean Power Act stated that “the owner shall install and have operational
12 scrubber technology to control mercury emissions at Merrimack Units 1 and 2 no later
13 than July 1, 2013.” Any reasonable buyer would have determined that the law required
14 them, as owner, to install and operate the scrubber no later than July 1, 2013.
15 Furthermore, any reasonable seller would not expect to sell an asset burdened by an
16 environmental compliance mandate with a date certain without being confident that the
17 prospective buyer could meet the prescribed compliance date. The completion of a
18 divestiture process in the fall of 2010 would have left only two and a half years at best for
19 a new owner to permit and install the scrubber equipment. This would have negatively
20 affected interest in Merrimack Station and jeopardized the ability to sell the plant.

- 28 Q. **How would a potential buyer have likely factored the scrubber project into its bid**
29 **price?**
- 30 A. If, as has been suggested by PSNH's opponents in this docket, the low price of natural gas
31 and lower electric demand was reasonably known in the late 2008-early 2009 timeframe,
32 every potential buyer would have included those factors in their bids, resulting in low or
33 nonexistent value for Merrimack Station before even considering the costs of the

scrubber. But, as indicated earlier, due to the long time period before a divestiture process could begin, the actual time when bidders would be doing their analyses was closer to 2010. By then, the impact of gas fracking was better known and the value of Merrimack Station would have been lower. In my opinion, based on my experience of having sold numerous power plants, and having failed to sell others, it would have been virtually impossible for a divestiture process in this time frame to have produced benefits for PSNH's customers.

Furthermore, while Dr. Stanton asserts that it would have been prudent to consider divestiture prior to commencing major construction, this would not have led to a more favorable outcome. First, while Dr. Stanton acknowledges that PSNH had incurred \$23 million in engineering and planning expenses by March of 2009, she fails to recognize that PSNH had already contractually committed to \$225 million of the \$340 million in contracts for the scrubber project by the end of 2008; as Mr. Smagula notes in his testimony, nearly \$150 million of "sunk" costs were invested by the end of the first quarter of 2009. If a divestiture process had taken place after the \$457 million firm estimate was available, but before construction started, a buyer would not have been certain of what the final cost would be and would face the risk of construction delays, weather, labor difficulties, unforeseen conditions, materials delays, re-engineering requirements, and the potential that the scrubber might not meet emissions standards. Any reasonable buyer would have priced all of these risks into its bid.

Based on my experience in asset transactions and given the size, complexity, site conditions and technology risks, I believe that any reasonable hypothetical buyer would have included a project cost contingency into any bid on top of PSNH's estimate. This would have resulted in a "scrubber cost" included in the divestiture process in the range of \$500 million or more. That is, absent a full cost-of-service based long term power

1 purchase agreement, once a buyer had established a fair market value for the plant, they
2 would have subtracted \$500 million from that price. This would clearly have meant that
3 in the 2010 time frame that PSNH would have had to pay a prospective buyer to take
4 Merrimack Station, and the scrubber mandate, off of PSNH's hands.

5 **Q. Would a utility such as PSNH be prudent in continuing with a large environmental
6 compliance project such as the scrubber project during an extended divestiture
7 process?**

8 A. Yes. The law had a date certain for completion. In addition, there were far too many
9 uncertainties facing PSNH to just stop the project. What if the PUC said divestiture was
10 not appropriate after a year plus-long proceeding? What if there was a divestiture
11 process, but no bidders? What if bids came in too low to justify a sale? A delay in the
12 Project would have required re-bidding the Project, potentially at a higher cost later,
13 losing positions in manufacturing schedules, causing further delays, and forfeiture of the
14 incentives for early emissions reductions included in the scrubber law at RSA 125-O:16.
15 A prudent utility would have continued with the project with or without a divestiture
16 process. This is exactly what PSNH did.

17 **Q. Did customers benefit from PSNH prudently deciding to complete the scrubber
18 installation before making any decisions about the future of Merrimack Station?**

19 A. Yes. Clearly, by delaying any potential divestiture process until the scrubber was
20 completed, operating, and meeting emissions requirements, the risks enumerated above
21 faced by prospective buyers were eliminated. Not only were the risks of compliance
22 eliminated, but the final cost of the scrubber installation was \$422 million which was \$35
23 million below the final project estimate. Therefore, not only were risks eliminated,

1 thereby eliminating their corresponding risk premiums, but there was an economic
2 benefit associated with achieving resolution of this issue at a lower cost than projected.

3 **Q. Do you believe that PSNH was prudent in deciding to complete the installation of**
4 **the scrubber?**

5 A. Yes. Even in light of the Legislature's recent decision to require this Commission to
6 consider divestiture of PSNH's generating assets, the best course of action for ratepayers
7 was in fact exactly what PSNH did – to continue building the scrubber. This prudent
8 course of action minimized the cost and the risk to any potential buyer in the future.

9 **VII: Retirement Option**

10 **Q. Was the retirement of Merrimack Station a viable option under the Clean Power**
11 **Act?**

12 A. No. That option was not viewed as viable at that time. Early in the scrubber project,
13 prior to the start of construction in September 2008, this Commission itself noted that
14 retirement of Merrimack Station was not a viable option under law:

15 Nowhere in RSA 125-O does the Legislature suggest that an alternative to
16 installing scrubber technology as a means of mercury compliance may be
17 considered, whether in the form of some other technology or retirement of the
18 facility.²⁶

19 The PUC ratified that decision five years later in May of 2013, after construction had
20 been completed and the scrubber placed into operation.²⁷

²⁶ Order No. 24,898, Sep.19, 2008 at 12. In that Order, the Commission also expressly held that, "the Legislature intended its findings in RSA 125-O:11 to foreclose a Commission proceeding pursuant to RSA 369-B:3-a" – the statute governing the Commission's authority to approve retirement of one of PSNH's generating assets. *Id.* at 10.

²⁷ Order No. 25,506 dated May 9, 2013, at p. 17.

1 New Hampshire's Revised Statutes Annotated ("RSA") section 369-B:3-a expressly
2 states that PSNH may retire its generating assets only "if the Commission finds it is in the
3 public interest of retail customers of PSNH to do so." Clearly, under the law, PSNH does
4 not have the unilateral right to "elect" to retire any or all of its generating assets. In fact,
5 the law forbids such retirement unless the Commission makes the requisite finding – in
6 this case a finding that installation of the scrubber was not in the public interest.

7 In addition to these legal barriers to retirement, the analysis performed by Drs. Harrison
8 and Kaufman of NERA indicates that in the majority of scenarios modeled by them,
9 neither divestiture nor retirement of Merrimack Station were economic choices. Given
10 the scrubber law's express public interest finding in RSA 125-O:11, VI – that "The
11 installation of such [scrubber] technology is in the public interest of the citizens of New
12 Hampshire and the customers of the affected sources," it is inconceivable that this
13 Commission would have concluded that the public interest mandated that PSNH retire
14 Merrimack Station. That, coupled with the Commission's 2008 decision that retirement
15 of Merrimack Station was not a viable option under the scrubber law, and the economics
16 discussed in NERA's analyses, would eliminate retirement as an option that any prudent
17 utility manager would consider.

[REDACTED]

8 **VIII: Intervenors' Quantification of a Disallowance**

9 **Q. How does Dr. Stanton calculate what she considers to be PSNH's prudently
10 incurred costs associated with the installation of the scrubber?**

11 A. As I noted earlier, Dr. Stanton believes that the \$23 million spent by PSNH prior to
12 March 2009, plus all penalties for cancellation under the executed contracts, are prudent
13 costs that should be recovered by the utility. She goes on to state that any additional
14 costs spent by PSNH on the scrubber after March 2009 were imprudent and should not be
15 recoverable.

16 **Q. How does Mr. Hachey calculate what he considers to be PSNH's prudently-incurred
17 costs associated with the installation of the scrubber?**

18 A. Mr. Hachey believes that the PSNH should have realized that it was uneconomic to
19 proceed with the scrubber no later than September of 2008. He concludes that expenses
20 incurred beyond this date were imprudently incurred and should not be recoverable. As a
21 result, he recommends that the NHPUC should only approve what PSNH had spent on

²⁸ Science, Technology and Energy Committee, "Majority Committee Report" finding H.B. 496 "inexpedient to legislate," on March 19, 2009.

1 the project as of that date, or \$10 million based on PSNH's September 2, 2008, filing in
2 DE 08-103.

3 **Q. If, for the sake of argument, you accepted these witnesses' conclusions that PSNH's**
4 **decision to continue with the Project was imprudent, do you agree with these**
5 **witnesses' positions on the determination of PSNH's prudently-incurred costs?**

6 A. No, I do not. A determination of prudently-incurred costs begins with the establishment
7 of a range of conduct, the determination of a minimally prudent course of action and then
8 the examination of the associated cost consequences. Both Dr. Stanton and Mr. Hachey
9 fail to establish a range of conduct, fail to identify a minimally prudent action and ignore
10 the required nexus between the minimally prudent course of action and a recommended
11 disallowance.

12 For example, Dr. Stanton presents an analysis using information available as of March of
13 2009 that she claims shows that in the five scenarios she examined, only one produced a
14 net benefit for PSNH customers based on an installed cost of the scrubber of \$457
15 million. She then leaps to the conclusion that PSNH should have halted the scrubber
16 project in March of 2009 and should only be allowed what was spent on the scrubber
17 project as of that date. Mr. Hachey makes a similar determination, without any economic
18 analysis, that the project should have been halted in September of 2008 and therefore the
19 expenses incurred as of that date are the only prudently-incurred costs.

20 Both of these witnesses fail to understand a basic aspect of a prudence determination, *i.e.*,
21 the establishment of a minimally prudent course of action and the definition of prudently
22 incurred costs as the delta between what did occur – the installation of the scrubber – and
23 this established minimally prudent course of action. In order to do this, both Dr. Stanton
24 and Mr. Hachey would have had to determine the cost at which the scrubber would have

1 been prudent to install and established this as the minimally prudent course of action.
2 But neither of these witnesses conducted such an analysis. If one were to conclude that
3 PSNH was imprudent, the difference between the costs associated with the action taken
4 and the minimally prudent action would provide the basis for determining prudently
5 incurred costs and the cost consequences of imprudence.

6 **Q. Can you illustrate this point with an example?**

7 A. Yes. Let's assume that as of the key decision date, PSNH had incurred no costs
8 whatsoever, and that it had a choice of installing the scrubber or simply walking away
9 from the Project (contrary to the facts). Let us also assume that, as Dr. Stanton claims,
10 spending \$457 million on the scrubber would have been uneconomic. However, let us
11 also assume that if the scrubber's cost estimate had only been \$375 million, everyone
12 would have agreed that it made sense to go forward. Under these circumstances, one
13 would have to conclude that PSNH is entitled to recover \$375 million, because that was
14 within the bounds of a reasonable decision. This also reflects the fact that, at that level,
15 the Project would have benefitted customers. Yet, under Dr. Stanton's and Mr. Hachey's
16 methodologies, no recovery would be permitted because they claim the Project never
17 should have proceeded. Those positions are fundamentally at odds with the fact that the
18 project was built, the plant is producing benefits for customers, and those benefits are
19 passed on in the form of lower rates. Every hour that the plant is dispatched it produces
20 an economic margin and that margin would not have been created if the scrubber had not
21 been installed and the plant had instead been retired. Therein lies the fundamental flaw in
22 the disallowance methodologies of Dr. Stanton and Mr. Hachey; they are not derived
23 from a comparison to the minimally prudent course of action, and they fail to consider the
24 actual benefits produced or anticipated to have been produced.

1 **IX: Conclusion**

2 **Q. Based on an appropriate definition of prudence and a proper prudence review, was
3 PSNH's conduct concerning the installation of the scrubber at Merrimack Station
4 prudent?**

5 A. Yes, PSNH's actions were prudent. It is clear that the Clean Power Act, when combined
6 with changing conditions in power and gas markets, created a dilemma for PSNH. On
7 the one hand, the Act's requirements were clear, and the Legislature's objectives in
8 reaffirming the requirements of the Act in 2009 were equally clear. The Act's
9 requirements could have been fulfilled by a subsequent owner of Merrimack, but the
10 Act's requirements also made it highly likely that no other owner would have been
11 willing to buy the plant, or at least that such a sale would have increased costs to PSNH's
12 customers. Dr. Stanton and Mr. Hachey both claim that the installation of the scrubber
13 was unequivocally uneconomic and PSNH should not have pursued the project and
14 instead could have pursued divestiture. As discussed above, that would likely have led to
15 even higher costs for PSNH's customers.

16 Even more certainly, one cannot reasonably conclude that ignoring the scrubber mandate
17 or pursuing divestiture were the only prudent courses of action. Mssrs. Large and
18 Vancho present testimony demonstrating that PSNH performed real-time analyses that
19 supported the Scrubber Project. The expert testimony submitted by Drs. Harrison and
20 Kaufman, which I have also reviewed, demonstrates that based upon economic analyses
21 alone, PSNH's pursuit of the Scrubber Project was well within a range of reasonableness.
22 Their analyses show the Scrubber Project was the low-cost alternative for ratepayers for
23 various plausible future scenarios as of both analysis dates. PSNH's conduct must be
24 deemed "prudent" if it meets the standard of care which qualified utility management

1 would be expected to exercise under the circumstances that existed at the time the
2 decision in question had to be made. Based on the results of the analyses performed by
3 PSNH itself, as well as analyses of its expert witnesses, one must conclude that
4 construction of the Scrubber Project was prudent. It follows that the Commission should
5 conclude that proceeding with the Scrubber Project was a prudent decision.

6 Given the dilemma created by the Scrubber Law, which expressly mandated installation
7 and operation of the Scrubber by someone, I believe that PSNH pursued the course of
8 action that reasonable electric utility managers would have pursued under the same
9 circumstances: it obeyed the law and proceeded with construction and installation of the
10 scrubber. I recognize that with the benefit of hindsight, this action may not have
11 produced all of the economic benefits that it was expected to produce. However, that fact
12 should not be allowed to color the Commission's judgment regarding the fundamental
13 question before it: was PSNH's decision outside the range of what reasonable managers
14 would have done at the time? I have seen no evidence to convince me that PSNH's
15 decision even approached that level of unreasonableness or indefensibility.

16 **Q. Does this conclude your Rebuttal Testimony?**

17 A. Yes, it does.