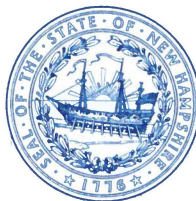


STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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June 13, 2017

13 JUN '17 PM 3:54

Ms. Debra A. Howland
Executive Director
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 18
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: Docket No. DE 15-464, Public Service Company of New Hampshire
Petition for Approval of Lease Agreement with Northern Pass Transmission LLC

Dear Ms. Howland:

I write, briefly, in response to the pleading filed today in the above-referenced proceeding by the petitioner, Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSNH), in response to the Hearings Examiner's Report of June 8, 2017. The Hearings Examiner recommended the Commission approve a procedural schedule proposed by the Staff of the Commission, discussed by the parties at a June 8 scheduling conference, and agreed to by all parties except PSNH and its lease counterparty, Northern Pass Transmission LLC (Northern Pass).

What PSNH objects to is two rounds rather than one round of written discovery. As PSNH notes, the Office of the Consumer Advocate (OCA) has been among the most vocal in calling for this degree of information exchange because, in our judgment, this is an unusual case in which the interests of residential utility customers are distinctly implicated. Matters related to real estate valuation are complex, technical, and infrequently litigated at the Commission. PSNH's claim – that "this case is not so complex or novel in terms of Commission practice as to justify departure from typical procedure," PSNH Response at 2 – both ignores the reality that two rounds of discovery *are* "typical procedure" in significant cases and leaves PSNH vulnerable to speculation about what it hopes will remain undiscovered about the affiliate transaction, into which it entered without anything resembling a competitive bidding process, that is under review in this docket.

PSNH professes solicitude for the Commission's expressed desire to resolve this case by the end of 2017, but the Company does not explain why it rather than the Commission's Staff, or its General Counsel (in her capacity as the Hearings Examiner recommending a procedural schedule that includes two rounds of discovery), is the appropriate protector of whatever internal work processes would best accomplish the Commission's objective. Indeed, if this case is as un-novel and routine as PSNH claims it is, then the procedural schedule recommended in the Hearings Examiner's report should be more than sufficient to allow the Commission to draft an order between the proposed merits hearing in late November and December 31, 2017.

The Office of the Consumer Advocate takes particular exception to the claim in the PSNH pleading that a truncated and expedited schedule is appropriate for this docket because the parties have had 20 months to

prepare discovery. PSNH is well aware that this docket has been on hiatus for most of that 20 months, for reasons not attributable to the parties. Judging by the number of PSNH employees who routinely attend meetings related to Commission matters – I personally attended a meeting in Hearing Room A earlier today at which no fewer than six PSNH representatives were present and a seventh was participating by telephone – it may be difficult for PSNH to understand that other parties to this case do not have the kind of infinite resources that allow active pursuit of cases that are on hold.

We support and are committed to assisting the Commission with achieving the objective of resolving this case by the end of 2017. For this reason, and for the reasons explained above, we respectfully ask that the Commission approve the procedural schedule proposed on June 8 by the Commission's General Counsel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Maurice Kreis", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

D. Maurice Kreis
Consumer Advocate

cc: Service List