

South Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
27 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

October 5, 2016

Martin P. Honigberg, Chairman
Public Utilities Commission
21 Fruit Street
Concord, NH 03301

Re: DG 16-769: Concord Steam Corporation Petition for Emergency Rates and to Discontinue Service

DG 16-770: Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty Utilities and Concord Steam Corporation Joint Petition for Approval of an Asset Purchase Agreement

Dear Chairman Honigberg:

I am writing on behalf of South Congregational Church located at 27 Pleasant Street. We are a current customer of Concord Steam and have a direct interest in the above-referenced docket items currently pending before the PUC. We are requesting that the PUC require Liberty Utilities to create a fully funded grant to assist charitable organizations with the cost of conversion from Concord Steam to gas-powered boilers as a condition of approval of Liberty Utilities' purchase of Concord Steam assets.

In August 2016, South Church first learned that Concord Steam was planning on ceasing operations and selling its assets to Liberty Utilities. That gave us just nine months to make the conversion of our church facilities to another heat source. At the same time, we learned Concord Steam would be instituting a 23% rate increase for the upcoming season at an increased cost of \$5,290 to the church. Needless to say this information came as shock to our congregation. We had just been through a long budget process two months earlier and barely passed a budget that already anticipates a \$7,300 deficit due to revenue decreases.

None of these new expenses from Concord Steam were anticipated or budgeted. An unbudgeted 23% rate increase coupled with the costs of conversion will be crippling.

Less than two weeks ago, on September 21, members of South Church attended the informational meeting at Red River Theatre. We learned that Concord Steam and Liberty Utilities had made no arrangements to help its commercial and non-profit clients with the transition other than to connect them with commercial lenders. We also learned that other charitable organizations, like us, are struggling to make ends meet during this process.

When we left the meeting, we knew the PUC would be considering final approval of the agreement between Concord Steam and Liberty Utilities in less than two weeks.

Given how little information is available and how quickly the process has unfolded, our church, which is run primarily by volunteers, has been unable to formally connect with other organizations to petition the PUC for relief. For these same reasons, we have not been able to file a formal petition to intervene in these dockets.

Senator Dan Feltes, who has been in communication with many affected constituents, contacted me yesterday to inform me that he has been discussing with stakeholders the possibility of a grant funded by Liberty Utilities to assist organizations like ours through the transition. South Church enthusiastically supports this proposal for the financial reasons described above.

If the PUC is unwilling to require Liberty Utilities to fund a grant at today's meeting, South Church requests that the PUC delay final action on these agenda items to give stakeholders like South Church time to craft a proposal that would help us avoid the devastating financial impact of a rapid transition from Concord Steam to gas.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. William Delker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

N. William Delker
Church Council President
South Congregational Church

Cc: Sen. Dan Feltes
Rev. Jared Rardin
Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight
Becky Field, Past President