

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

BEFORE THE

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. DG 17-___

**PETITION OF NORTHERN UTILITIES, INC. FOR LICENSE TO CONSTRUCT AND
MAINTAIN A DISTRIBUTION GAS MAIN ACROSS PUBLIC WATERS**

Northern Utilities, Inc. (“Northern”) respectfully petitions the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) pursuant to RSA 371:17 for a license to construct and maintain a natural gas distribution main under public waters owned by the State of New Hampshire. In support of this Petition, Northern states as follows:

1. Northern is a public utility providing natural gas service to customers in twenty (20) municipalities in the southeastern and seacoast regions of New Hampshire. Specifically relevant to this petition, Northern owns and operates natural gas distribution facilities regulated by the Commission within franchise areas previously approved by the Commission, including the Town of Exeter (“Exeter” or the “Town”).

2. The Town of Exeter is planning on replacing a bridge and culvert structure that crosses Little River in Exeter and carries the river under Court Street (the “Court Street Culvert”). See Town of Exeter Capital Improvement Plan (Relevant Excerpt), attached hereto as Attachment A; see also New Hampshire Wetlands Bureau Standard Dredge and Fill Permit Application (Relevant Excerpts), attached hereto as Attachment B. The Court Street Culvert was built in 1965, comprises three metal arch culverts, and has a total length of 85 feet measured along the road. See Attachments A and B. The Town intends to replace the Court Street Culvert with a single span bridge. See Attachment B.

3. Based on reference to the Official List of Public Waters maintained by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Water Division, Little River in Exeter is a Public Water of the state.

4. Northern has coordinated with the Town of Exeter to replace the Company's existing natural gas distribution main that currently crosses over Little River through the Court Street Culvert in connection with the Town's project to replace the culvert with a bridge.

5. Northern will install the new main underneath Little River by way of a Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) process. HDD is a trenchless method of installing pipeline or main that is accomplished in multiple stages, including site preparation, equipment setup, pilot bore, reaming, pulling the pipeline through the drilled bore, and site restoration. The Company's design for the Court Street HDD is attached hereto as Attachment C.

6. The total length of the directional drill will be approximately 450 feet, though the total length passing underneath Little River will be approximately 150 feet. The new gas main to be installed underneath the river will consist of 4" diameter HDPE SDR-11 plastic carrier pipe inserted into 8" diameter HDPE-SDR-17 plastic casing pipe. By installing carrier pipe inside of a casing pipe, the Company can conduct any necessary maintenance on the main by removing the carrier pipe from the casing without any disruption to the river above. The top of the 8" diameter casing pipe will not be less than twelve (12) feet below the bed of Little River, which is between five (5) to six (6) feet below existing grade. The minimum HDD depth shall be not less than eighteen (18) feet below grade.

7. The construction of a permanent gas distribution main underneath the Little River in connection with the Court Street Culvert replacement project is necessary for the continued provision of safe natural gas service to customers in Exeter. The Company's existing main across

Little River is contained within the Court Street Culvert, which will be replaced by a new single span bridge that cannot accommodate the main. Thus, the Company must construct the new main underneath the river to continue providing natural gas service to customers on both sides of the waterway.

8. Northern believes that the Commission license requested above will be exercised without substantially affecting public rights in affected waters. The new main will not present any impediment to foot or automobile traffic across the new bridge or marine traffic on the river. The new gas main will not impose any additional burden upon the public interest and it will allow Northern to continue to provide the natural gas service that it already provides to customers on both sides of the Little River.

9. Northern wishes to commence construction of the Court Street HDD under Little river in mid-April, as the construction of the new bridge across Little River is tentatively scheduled to begin in May 2017. As such, Northern respectfully requests that the Commission grant the requested licenses on an expedited basis.

WHEREFORE, Northern respectfully requests that the Commission:

- A. Find that the license for construction and maintenance of a natural gas main under the Little River in Exeter may be exercised without substantially affecting public rights in State waters;
- B. Grant Northern a license to construct and maintain a permanent natural gas main under the Little River in Exeter; and
- C. Issue an order *nisi* and orders for its publication.

Dated at Hampton, NH on this 7th day of March, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Northern Utilities, Inc.

By Its Attorney,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. H. Taylor', written over a horizontal line.

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