

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

February 5, 2015 - 2:14 p.m.
Concord, New Hampshire

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RE: DE 09-054
ELECTRIC UTILITIES:
Residential Renewable Energy Generation
Incentive Program.
(Hearing to receive public comment.)

PRESENT: Chairman Martin P. Honigberg, Presiding

Sandy Deno, Clerk

APPEARANCES: (No appearances taken)

Court Reporter: Steven E. Patnaude, LCR No. 52

ORIGINAL

I N D E X**PAGE NO.****STATEMENTS BY:**

Mr. Wiesner 3, 5, 8

Ms. Bernstein 6

Mr. Button 8

QUESTIONS BY CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG

7, 9

P R O C E E D I N G

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Good afternoon. We are here in Docket DE 09-054, Residential Renewable Electric Generation Incentive Program. We are here for public comments on a new process for filing applications. I know we don't have a very large crowd, which is interesting.

Mr. Wiesner, is there a scene-setting exercise you can go through or --

MR. WIESNER: Yes. With me today -- I'm Dave Wiesner, Staff attorney with the Commission. And, with me today are Barbara Bernstein and Jon Osgood from the Sustainable Energy Division. I think Barbara would like to lead us off with a little bit of background on the initiative that we're looking at today for on-line application processes. And, this is -- I think we see this as the first step in an initiative to move some of the paper application processes for REC applications and rebate applications to an on-line platform. And, we identified the Residential Renewable Rebate Program as the most likely candidate for the first step in that process.

Because the original program was approved by a Commission order, and a paper application process and forms of application were approved in that

1 initial order, it is necessary to have this further
2 process, notice, hearing, and further order of the
3 Commission in order to modify the program.

4 So, with that brief introduction, I'll
5 turn it over to Barbara.

6 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Well, actually,
7 before Ms. Bernstein starts, can I confirm that there's no
8 one on the phone?

9 MR. WIESNER: We disconnected it.

10 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Okay. Because no
11 one called in, right?

12 MR. WIESNER: So, I can answer that
13 definitively.

14 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Okay.

15 MR. WIESNER: But no one had called in,
16 and we had it open for about ten minutes before the
17 beginning of the hearing.

18 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Sir, you're the
19 only member of the public here. Are you going to be
20 interested in speaking and providing public comments
21 today?

22 MR. BUTTON: Just to answer direct
23 questions.

24 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Would you identify

1 yourself for the record then.

2 MR. BUTTON: Yes. My name is Paul
3 Button. I'm a small businessman in Manchester, New
4 Hampshire. My company name is "Energy Audits Unlimited".

5 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: And, there's a
6 technical session scheduled for 3:00, correct?

7 MR. WIESNER: That's correct. And, one
8 more thing, Mr. Chairman. This hearing was originally
9 scheduled for last Tuesday, which was the day of the big
10 blizzard, when State offices were closed. So, the hearing
11 was postponed until today. In the original Order of
12 Notice, a date of February 4th had been set to receive
13 written comments. And, the secretarial letter that went
14 out last week neglected to extend that date. So, I think
15 that we would propose to receive written comments from any
16 interested parties until a date next week, and I was going
17 to propose February 11th or 12th. So, we could issue
18 another -- we'll ask the Executive Director to issue a
19 secretarial letter this afternoon that will extend that
20 deadline.

21 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: That makes sense.
22 I will also note for the record that Commissioner Scott is
23 not here, unfortunately. He is very much under the
24 weather. But he will be reviewing the transcript and

1 whatever written comments are made. So, he apologizes for
2 not being here. Off the record.

3 (Off the record.)

4 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right. So,
5 Ms. Bernstein, with that, I think we'll turn it over to
6 you.

7 MS. BERNSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
8 This process basically started because we were getting so
9 many REC applications that it was bogging down our
10 docketbook. And, the Commission started to take a good
11 look at what we should be doing for a REC process. And,
12 we went to a LEAN training to try to work on that. And,
13 in the process, they said, you know, "where is the first
14 time that people enter their information into the PUC's
15 programs?" We realized that that was -- the Step 1 is
16 solar PV application, and that they had to put their name
17 in for -- on the Step 1, and then they had to put it in
18 for the Step 2. When that application came into the PUC
19 then, it went -- Diane would put it into a database or Jon
20 would put it into a database, and we had a lot of
21 redundancy.

22 And, then, when they came back for the
23 REC application, first, Jody put it into her system -- or,
24 Jody and Clare put it into her system, and then it went

1 into yet another database. And, we realized that this was
2 just not an efficient use of time.

3 So, we're here today to sort of start
4 this process. We're hoping that we can move all of the
5 REC applications to an on-line process, as well as all the
6 rebate applications. We realize it's going to take us a
7 while to get there. But we do have Jan Gugliotti, who is
8 actually in a meeting in the next room, who is really
9 guiding us in all this and doing a fabulous job.

10 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: What's your
11 expectation as to how long it will take to be done with
12 what you're planning? You said a "multi" -- a "long"
13 process.

14 MS. BERNSTEIN: I'm not sure. It's
15 going much faster than I would have thought, let's put it
16 that way. Jan has got applications together for the solar
17 and for the REC. And, she's also -- we're also hoping to
18 coordinate with the utilities on an electronic
19 interconnection agreement. So, those things are all sort
20 of "balls in the air" at the same time. So, we'd like to
21 get the electronic PV application up and going within, I
22 would say, within the next month.

23 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Okay. Anybody
24 else?

1 (No verbal response)

2 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Button, do you
3 want to -- do you have any comments or are you going to
4 just hang out until the technical session?

5 MR. BUTTON: Well, like I said, I would,
6 you know, prefer to answer direct questions, but I
7 don't -- I test drove the -- I don't know if it was
8 prototype or beta, whatever it was.

9 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: How did it work?

10 MR. BUTTON: And, it went fairly
11 smoothly. I didn't see any major technical problems. It
12 was very unconfused. You know, step-by-step, just answer
13 the next question.

14 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Is there anything
15 else we need to do or is there anything else we can do?

16 MR. WIESNER: No. I was just going to
17 confirm that the extent here is not to change the terms
18 and conditions of the program, just to move the
19 application process on-line. So, the criteria for
20 qualification are going to stay the same, but we're going
21 to move from a paper application -- a paper application
22 process solely to one that would primarily focus on
23 on-line applications. I don't think it's the current
24 intent to do away entirely with the paper application

1 option, at least for some period of time. That's an issue
2 that people might have spoken to, if anyone had appeared.
3 But I think we do believe that there is some value to
4 maintaining the option to submit a paper application.
5 There may be some folks who have already started an
6 application, and we wouldn't want to discontinue that at a
7 time and force them to redo everything on-line, even
8 though we expect that to be easier in the long run.

9 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Will the
10 information in paper applications be entered into a
11 system, so that all of the applications will be searchable
12 and reports that are generated would include all the
13 information from the paper applications as well?

14 MR. WIESNER: Right. Exactly how this
15 magic works, I'm not sure. Jan could address that, and
16 she's in another meeting. But my understanding is that,
17 when the information is entered into the database, it will
18 eventually generate a *pdf* document that will be posted on
19 the Commission's website under the -- well, I'm now
20 jumping ahead to the REC application process, forgive me.
21 But, when we get to the point where the rebate application
22 feeds into the REC application, the REC application
23 process will generate a document that will be posted on
24 the Commission's website, much like the current process,

1 but it will not have been a paper document that was filed
2 with the Clerk's office. And, the rebate application will
3 also generate data that can be reduced to a written form
4 or a *pdf* document that can be stored, as well as resting
5 in a database, which can then populate other applications
6 or reports internally or externally.

7 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: So, we'll be moving
8 -- we'll be moving fully into the 21st century at this
9 point?

10 MR. WIESNER: Yes. It took 15 years,
11 we're getting there.

12 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: I have a feeling
13 there's not much else that I can do right now. And, I
14 think that we're in a position to close this part of the
15 record, understanding that we'll be issuing a secretarial
16 letter to invite further written comments for another
17 week, and we'll go from there. Is that right?

18 MR. WIESNER: Yes. That's correct, Mr.
19 Chairman.

20 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right. Well,
21 with that, I will close the hearing. I thank you all for
22 the work you've done so far. And, I hope you have a
23 successful technical session.

24 MS. BERNSTEIN: Thank you very much.

1 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: And, we are
2 adjourned.

3 (Whereupon the hearing was adjourned at
4 2:23 p.m.)