

# STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

## Inter-Department Communication

DATE: November 12, 2015

AT (OFFICE): NHPUC

FROM: Rich Chagnon  
Utility Analyst – Electric Division



NHPUC 12NOV15PM4:29

SUBJECT: DE 15-467 Public Service of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy  
Proposed Tariff Amendment to Loss of Service Investigation Charge

TO: Debra A. Howland  
Executive Director

### Summary

On October 26, 2015, Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource) filed a proposal to amend its tariff to eliminate the Loss of Service Investigation Charge for customers in rate classes Residential Rate R, Residential Time-of Day Rate R-OTOD, General Service Rate G and General Service Rate G-OTOD. Under Eversource's proposal, customers who receive Delivery Service under Primary General Delivery Service Rate GV, Large General Delivery Service Rate LG or Backup Delivery Service Rate B will continue to be assessed charges based on the total cost incurred to investigate the loss of service.

Staff supports Eversource's request to amend its tariff to eliminate the Loss of Service Investigation Charge for customers in rate classes Residential Rate R, Residential Time-of Day Rate R-OTOD, General Service Rate G and General Service Rate G-OTOD. Staff believes that the elimination of these charges will benefit customers and improve on the timely reporting of power outages by customers without the requirement to accept charges prior to utility crews investigation of the reported loss of service. Due to Eversource's newly established troubleshooter program, costs incurred when the issue is determined to be on the customer side of the meter will be very small.

### Background

Eversource will investigate any loss of electrical service upon request of a customer. When the reason for the loss of the service is the failure of Eversource's equipment<sup>1</sup> or some malfunction of its system, Eversource will perform the repair and restore power without a Loss of Service Investigation charge. When the loss of service is occasioned by

---

<sup>1</sup> Eversource's responsibility includes the service line to the premises and any other equipment up to and including the meter.

the failure of the customer's equipment or facilities, Eversource bills the customer a loss of service charge. Customers billed under Rates GV, LG or B are billed the actual cost of responding to the customer's request. Customers billed under Rates R, R-OTOD, G and G-OTOD are billed a flat charge. In accordance with its tariff, Eversource charges \$125 for investigations performed during normal work hours and \$250 for investigations performed outside of normal work hours. The higher cost of the after-hours investigations is attributable to the fact that employees responding after hours are paid a "call-out premium" when called back to work after the end of their normal work schedule.

In 2014, Eversource implemented a troubleshooter program on a pilot basis. In 2015, the decision was made to make the program permanent and to fund it as part of the reliability enhancement program. The trouble shooter program provides 24/7 coverage for responding to outage and trouble calls as well as to emergency calls from municipal partners.

Eversource asserts that this proposed tariff amendment which eliminates the loss of service investigation charges for the two residential and two general service customer rate classes is supported by the implementation of the troubleshooter program. As the program provides 24/7 coverage for responding to outage calls, the need for a loss of service investigation charge is significantly diminished and the impact on revenue is minimal. In addition, eliminating the loss of service investigation charge will streamline the process through which Eversource handles its non-electric billing by reducing a redundant charge for a loss of service investigation. It will also eliminate the possibility that customers may delay reporting outages out of a concern that they may incur an additional cost.

### **Recommendation**

Staff agrees with the elimination of the loss of service investigation charge for the two residential and two general service customer rate classes. Currently when a customer calls Eversource to report a loss of electrical service and Eversource is unaware of a power outage in the customer's geographical service area, the customer must accept the charges prior to a request to investigate is issued to a line crew. While the customer is only charged the service charge when the Eversource representative has determined that the service loss was caused by the failure of the customer's equipment or facilities, Staff agrees that this may act as a deterrent to timely reporting of power outages.

With the rollout of Eversource's new troubleshooter program, designed to provide complete (24/7) coverage to respond to outage and trouble calls, the loss of service investigation charge would need to be reduced to reflect that staffing is in place to respond to outage and trouble calls and would not require calling a lineworker at home after their normal working hours to conduct an investigation. In filing this proposed tariff amendment to eliminate the loss of service investigation charge for residential (Rate R) and small commercial (Rate G) customers, the Company reported in Attachment CJG-1 that for the last four years (2012-2015) it has billed an average of 300 customers annually for this service. The annual average charges for the same four year period are

approximately \$56,844. Based on the 24/7 staffing provided by the troubleshooter program, there would no longer be a “call-out” premium associated with loss of service investigation which occurred outside of normal business hours. This reduction alone could result in approximately a fifty-percent reduction in the service charge for customer calls outside of normal working hours based on the annual average calls and service charges that the Company has report for the four year period referenced above. This change potentially reduces the annual average revenue effect from approximately \$56,844 to approximately \$37,396 going forward.

As customers taking service under Primary General Delivery Service Rate GV, Large General Delivery Service Rate LG or Backup Delivery Service Rate B tend to have the resources necessary to investigate internal electrical issues before calling Eversource for assistance, Staff supports Eversource’s request that these customers continue to be charged for the actual costs incurred in responding to Loss of Service Investigations.

Staff recommends that this request be approved. The revenue impact on Eversource is minimal, the troubleshooters program provides 24/7 coverage for response to outage and trouble calls, and this change will also eliminate the possibility that customers may delay reporting outages out of a concern that they may incur an additional cost.

**SERVICE LIST - EMAIL ADDRESSES - DOCKET RELATED**

---

Pursuant to N.H. Admin Rule Puc 203.11 (a) (1): Serve an electronic copy on each person identified on the service list.

Executive.Director@puc.nh.gov  
amanda.noonan@puc.nh.gov  
leszek.stachow@puc.nh.gov  
matthew.fossum@eversource.com  
ocalitigation@oca.nh.gov  
richard.chagnon@puc.nh.gov  
suzanne.amidon@puc.nh.gov  
tom.frantz@puc.nh.gov

Docket #: 15-467-1      Printed: November 12, 2015

**FILING INSTRUCTIONS:**

- a) Pursuant to N.H. Admin Rule Puc 203.02 (a), with the exception of Discovery, file 7 copies, as well as an electronic copy, of all documents including cover letter with:

DEBRA A HOWLAND  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
NHPUC  
21 S. FRUIT ST, SUITE 10  
CONCORD NH 03301-2429

- b) Serve an electronic copy with each person identified on the Commission's service list and with the Office of Consumer Advocate.
- c) Serve a written copy on each person on the service list not able to receive electronic mail.