

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**Inter-Department Communication****DATE:** March 28, 2018**AT (OFFICE):** NHPUC

FROM: Rich Chagnon
Utility Analyst – Electric Division



SUBJECT: Docket DE 16-308, Joint Petition of New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, Inc., and Eversource Energy to Alter Their Franchise Areas in Nottingham, New Hampshire

TO: Commissioners
Debra A. Howland, Executive Director

CC: Tom Frantz, Director, Electric Division
Amanda Noonan, Director, Consumer Services and External Affairs
Les Stachow, Assistant Director, Electric Division
David Wiesner, Staff Attorney

On September 8, 2016, the Commission issued Order No. 25,941 approving a joint petition filed by the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, Inc. (NHEC), and Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource), in which they requested an alteration of their respective franchise areas in Nottingham, New Hampshire. The franchise boundary change was proposed to accommodate the request of the developer of the new "Maple Ridge" residential subdivision, located between Friar Tuck Lane and Oak Ridge Road in Nottingham, to have NHEC provide electric service to all of the lots in Phase I of that subdivision.

Staff recommended approval of the proposed franchise area alteration, but identified reasons why it might be desirable for a single electric utility to provide service to customers in all three development phases of the Maple Ridge subdivision. Staff recommended that the Commission require NHEC and/or Eversource to seek Commission approval at such time as development work begins for Phase II and/or Phase III of the subdivision, and prior to the installation of any utility facilities, so that the Commission may consider any further changes to franchise boundaries at that time.

The Commission granted the request of NHEC and Eversource for alteration of their respective franchise areas in Nottingham so that NHEC would serve all customers in Phase I of the Maple Ridge residential subdivision. Commission Order No. 25,941 directed Eversource to submit a proposal regarding service to customers in Phase II and/or Phase III of the Maple Ridge subdivision prior to its commencement of any work related to service to customers located within either of those development phases.

On March 12, 2018, Eversource filed the compliance proposal required by that Order, stating that it had been informed that the remaining phases of the Maple Ridge subdivision are ready for development and the developer is seeking to have electric service installed as soon as possible. The entirety of Phase II and Phase III are located within Eversource's existing franchise area and no franchise line adjustment is necessary. There is also a wetlands area that creates a natural buffer between Phase I and Phases II and III of the subdivision.

To address Staff's original concern that homes within the Maple Ridge subdivision would be served by different utilities, potentially resulting in customer confusion, Eversource asserted that "such concerns are unfounded in this case," because

it is common throughout the state to have adjacent or nearby homes served by different utilities and Eversource is not aware of any issues of customer confusion that would require differing treatment in this case. Also, that if the franchise line was redrawn to permit NHEC to serve all of Maple Ridge Road, there would still be adjacent properties served by different companies. Eversource would continue to serve the homes along Friar Tuck Lane adjacent to those on Maple Ridge Road. Separating the utility service areas by using a naturally occurring buffer is the most reasonable course in this case.

Eversource further maintained that there are no special construction issues associated with the proposed extension, and "by having Eversource extend its facilities from the north, it avoids either utility having to place facilities within the wetlands buffer area."

Staff has reviewed the compliance proposal and attached map filed by Eversource, along with the documentation from the original request to alter NHEC's and Eversource's respective franchise areas. Staff is aware that it is common throughout the state to have adjacent or nearby homes served by different utilities. Staff also recognizes that the existing wetlands buffer located between Phase I and Phases II and III provides a natural and reasonable point of demarcation between the homes in each of those phases to be served by separate electric utilities, and the Eversource construction plan would minimize adverse impacts in that wetlands buffer area.

For the reasons stated above, in the particular circumstances of this subdivision development, Staff recommends that the Commission approve the compliance proposal as submitted by Eversource. No franchise line adjustment is necessary because both Phase II and Phase III are located within Eversource's existing franchise area.

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.

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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
NH PUC
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.