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May 27, 2016

Ms. Debra A. Howland  
Executive Director  
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission  
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10  
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Director Howland:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on Docket DE 16-384. The Jordan Institute and Resilient Buildings Group would like to express deep concern about the inclusion of a new rate class proposed by Unitil Energy Services (Unitil) in its April 29, 2016 Request for a Change in Rates. Called Domestic Distributed Energy Resources (DDRE), this new class will have a special distribution charge billed each month explicitly to address net-metered energy systems of less than 100kW. While the concerns, rationale, and solutions proposed by Unitil in this docket – otherwise focused on ratemaking – are interesting and may have some merit, we argue that this discussion should be made in Docket DE 16-576 which specifically addresses net-metering tariffs for Unitil, Liberty, and Eversource.

The Jordan Institute and Resilient Buildings Group believe that it would be in the Public's best interest to eliminate this component of Unitil's proposal from this docket and consider their arguments within DE 16-576 for numerous reasons, including:

1. The PUC recently issued its order to open DE 16-576 at the direction of the General Court in an expedited legislative effort and with input from hundreds of people including homeowners, business owners, utilities, municipalities, and others. As a rate-making case, DE 16-384 will include hundreds of hours of attention to crucial details which are not directly relevant to net metering; the Commission and interested parties may not have the bandwidth or resources to provide quality intervention for both dockets. Furthermore, the opportunity is ripe for inconsistent determinations to be made between the dockets. It will be a far more efficient use of time and resources if the net-metering question is consistently resolved in one docket that affects the majority of NH's ratepayers.
2. The Commission is in the process of hiring technical support to work through myriad issues related to net metering, the value of solar and other distributed energy resources, rate making, policy

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initiatives, and stakeholder input. Numerous interested parties expect to participate in this docket. We are not aware of PUC resources being dedicated to address parallel questions in DE 16-384.

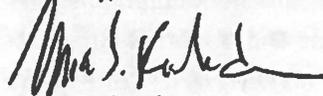
3. DE 16-384 circumvents the process laid out in both House Bill 1116 and Senate Bill 333 to develop a tariff fair to both net-metered customers and those who do not expect to participate in net metering. Moreover, DE 16-576 will address net metering tariffs for those with systems up to 1 MW, as opposed to Unitil's proposal which only appears to address a tariff for systems up to 100 kW.
4. DE 16-384 sets a dangerous and opaque precedent in that Unitil is only seeking to modify its distribution rate for systems of <100kW in size. Will they amend their request at a later date to include systems 100kW–1 MW? Would Commission approval of such a scenario inspire other Utilities to pursue similar new charges?
5. Albeit transparent within regulatory rules, the \$5.32/kW/month rate determination and argument of maintaining 1:1 net metering, even if it is appropriate, should be vetted in a more transparent process by experts with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. How was this rate determined? What other utilities use that rate? Why are systems <100kW included and not other systems? We were pleased to see both the bill insert and newspaper announcement that Unitil provided as part of their proposal, although we doubt that this "transparency" was understood by the general public. We saw no evidence that Unitil reached out to the developers of such systems to alert them or their customers of this impending possible change. Frankly, this would have been a much more effective educational method about Unitil's plans, although it surely would have instantly created push-back from those developers and their customers.
6. We sense that there is a likelihood that the current 1:1 net metering ratio will change through DE 16-576, would Unitil then modify its DDER tariff? How would the other Utilities respond?

In closing, HB1116 and SB333, the companion net-metering bills in the 2016 legislative session, received tremendous visibility through the media and among the hundreds of participating stakeholders. The overwhelming consensus was that the Commission should determine how net metering should be valued going forward. We encourage the Commission to focus its efforts regarding net metering entirely on DE 16-576 and settle the issue statewide. As a mandatory party in DE 16-576, Unitil's ideas will surely be of interest and Unitil will be provided the venue to explain their ideas and the logic that led them to the \$5.32/kW/month charge.

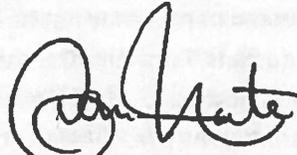
The Jordan Institute and Resilient Buildings Group do not plan to intervene on DE 16-384 at this time. We hope and expect that the Commission will consider the arguments we have made here, in conjunction with concerns raised by other stakeholders, and request that Unitil amend their proposal. However, we do reserve the right to request late intervention status if it appears that the DDER component of Unitil's rate case remains as proposed.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to share our comments and concerns.

Sincerely,



Laura Richardson  
Executive Director  
The Jordan Institute



Dana Nute  
General Manager  
Resilient Buildings Group