

Kathleen Beckett
97 Hanover Street
Apt. 301
Lebanon, NH 03766

Via email to executive.director@puc.nh.gov and puc@puc.nh.gov

Debra Howland
Executive Director and Secretary
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301

**RE: DG 17-198 Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty Utilities
Petition to Approve Firm Supply, Transportation Agreements and the Granite Bridge Project**

Dear Ms. Howland:

This is a request for information pursuant to Puc 104 and Puc 201.07. Please file this letter as a public comment.

I am writing as a concerned citizen who supports forward-thinking solutions to our climate crisis. Clearly, energy choices are key to solving urgent climate problems worldwide and as a New Hampshire citizen, I have a responsibility to do my part to support clean energy choices in our state. The state of New Hampshire has a responsibility to do its part as well.

I also have a personal concern regarding Liberty Utilities' proposed Upper Valley Project in Lebanon, West Lebanon, and Hanover. I live on the Liberty Utilities' proposed natural gas pipeline route in Lebanon. My neighbors and I have many concerns regarding this proposed venture, including strong environmental concerns. It is difficult to understand why the New Hampshire PUC would approve such projects when our energy future clearly depends on renewables. We are proud that the City of Lebanon has made commitments to move in that direction.

Related to Liberty Utilities Upper Valley Project is the concern that Liberty has requested a protective order in its Granite Bridge petition. Clearly, the public deserves unredacted copies of such documents in order to have citizen input to such decisions. So I ask that the motion for a protective order be denied and that unredacted copies immediately be made available to the public regarding this project.

Public access to information is also a concern in Liberty's proposed Upper Valley Project. Over the years, I have been following with deep concern Liberty's attempt to extend its gas franchise into Lebanon, West Lebanon, and Hanover. However, it is just recently that I have become aware of the company's practice of claiming protection of information that should be made available to the public. Citizens deserve information needed to assess the risks and possible benefits of such proposals. I applaud the efforts of *pro se* intervenors Ariel Arwen and Jonathan Chaffee in DG 16-852 in this regard. I am aware that they were able to demonstrate that some of the redacted information in the company's

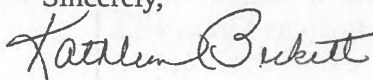
pre-filed testimony was actually already in the public record. It was discovered that the Commission's practice is to refrain from ruling on a company's motion for protective order or objections to that order from intervenors until after the final order is issued, thus denying citizens pertinent information and the opportunity to fully weigh in on such decisions. This is clearly a disservice to our communities and to the people of New Hampshire.

I am aware that on April 3, 2017 Ariel Arwen and Jonathan Chaffee filed an objection to Liberty Utilities' motion for protective order and asked that redacted information be made public. The commission denied the request to have the redacted information released to the public but otherwise deferred a ruling on the objection.

It has been eleven months since that objection was filed and about six months since the hearing on the petition case. Meanwhile, the citizens of the Upper Valley are denied information and so are denied an informed voice in a decision that is vital to our communities. It is clear to me that releasing such information is consistent with the New Hampshire Supreme Court's interpretation of provisions of RSA 91A, the Right-to-Know Law "with a view to providing the utmost information in order to best effectuate the statutory and constitutional objective of facilitating access to all public documents." *Professional Firefighters of New Hampshire v. New Hampshire Local Government Center*, 163 N.H. 613, 614 (2012).

Therefore, I ask the Commission to remedy the current obstruction of public information in Liberty Utilities' Granite Bridge petition and its proposed Upper Valley Project petition through the immediate release of unredacted documents to the public.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Beckett

cc: D. Maurice Kreis, Consumer Advocate donald.kreis@oca.nh.gov