

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

NHPUC 25JAN'19×8:23

January 8, 2019 - 1:36 p.m

Concord, New Hampshire AFTERNOON SESSION ONLY

RE: DG 18-094

NORTHERN UTILITIES, INC.: PETITION FOR AUTHORITY TO

OPERATE IN THE TOWN OF EPPING

(Hearing on the Merits)

PRESENT: Chairman Martin P. Honigberg, Presiding

> Commissioner Kathryn M. Bailey Commissioner Michael S. Giaimo

Sandy Deno, Clerk

APPEARANCES: Reptg. Northern Utilities, Inc.:

Patrick H. Taylor, Esq.

Representing Town of Epping:

John J. Ratigan, Esq.

Representing Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp.:

Michael J Sheehan, Esq.

Reptg. Residential Ratepayers:

Brian D. Buckley, Esq.

Office of Consumer Advocate

Reptg. PUC Staff:

Lynn Fabrizio, Esq.

Stephen Frink, Dir. Gas & Water Div.

Court Reporter: Susan J. Robidas, NH LCR No. 44

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(Hearing resumed at 1:36 p.m.)
3	CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Good
4	afternoon, everyone. Please be seated. Mr.
5	Ratigan, I understand that before you call
6	your next witness there's something you want
7	to do before that?
8	MR. RATIGAN: Yes, I'd like to
9	CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Could you make
L0	sure your microphone is on.
L1	MR. RATIGAN: Yes, it is. I'd like
L2	to recall Mr. Munguia for just one question.
L3	CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: For what
L4	purpose?
L5	MR. RATIGAN: Well, the data
L6	requests that are Exhibit 13 at this point
L7	incorrectly state that the answer to
L8	question, looks like 4D, is "Yes" when it's
L9	clearly been elicited and we agreed that the
20	answer is "No." So I'd like to have him
21	correct that on the record so there will be
22	no ambiguity about that.
23	MR. TAYLOR: I object. It has not
24	been clearly elicited as to Mr. Ratigan just

said. The testimony in the data request speaks for itself. The Town and other parties have had now lunch to sit and decide that they want to say something else. The Town had every opportunity before redirect when Mr. Munguia was on the stand, and so I object to him going back up.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right.

Mr. Munguia's testimony is done. He was excused. And Mr. Ratigan, why don't you, if you want to preserve the record, make an offer of proof what Mr. Munguia would testify to if he were recalled.

MR. RATIGAN: Thank you very much.

(Discussion off the record.)

MR. RATIGAN: Exhibit 13, Data
Request 4D, the question states: Has the
Town sought and will it be seeking
reimbursement from Liberty for any of its
legal or other costs, including, but not
limited to, costs for engineers, other
professionals or witnesses incurred as a
result of the Town's intervention,
participation and submission of testimony in

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         New Hampshire PUC Docket DG 18-094.
         answer is "Yes." At the end of the hearing,
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         before he was dismissed, while we were
3
         concentrating on breaking for lunch, I was
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                   It didn't occur to me that I should
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         remiss.
         have gone over this question again and asked
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         Mr. Munquia whether he has a correction that
         he would like to offer to his prefiled
8
         testimony on this issue. And that's the sole
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         purpose for which I offer his testimony.
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                    CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG:
                                        And what
         you're saying then is if he were recalled to
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         testify and asked that question, he would
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         change the answer to "No"?
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                    MR. RATIGAN:
                                  That's correct.
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                    CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG:
                                         All right.
         Your offer of proof is made.
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                    MR. RATIGAN:
18
                                  Okay.
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                    CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG:
                                         All right.
                                                      So
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         you're ready to call your next witnesses?
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                    MR. RATIGAN:
                                  That's correct.
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                    MR. TAYLOR:
                                 Commissioner, I will
23
         note in the -- may I speak?
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                    CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG:
                                         Absolutely.
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MR. TAYLOR: Thank you. In Exhibit 13, there was another subpart to that question, where after he said yes, we do intend -- we have and do intend to submit the bills for legal expenses to Liberty for reimbursement, there was an attachment that is referenced. We have that attachment here today if that would be something that would be useful to the Commission for it to make its own decision as to whether the substance of those bills are or are not in fact related to this proceeding.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: We'll leave it to the parties to decide what's significant for us to see. You all have made your decisions about what we need to see. I am not going to second-guess you.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, I guess when I decided not to introduce that in the first place, the answer to the question was "Yes" and not "No."

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: And I think the record is what the record is with an offer of proof regarding some additional

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information that would be provided if a
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         witness who's not being allowed to testify
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         were to testify. So I think maybe you should
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         quit while you're ahead on this one.
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                    MR. TAYLOR: Fair enough. Thank
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         you, sir.
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                    CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG:
                                          So, Mr.
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         Ratigan, why don't you call your next
9
         witnesses.
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                    MR. RATIGAN:
                                  Yes.
                                         Thank you, sir.
11
         George Sansoucy and Andrea Curtis as a panel.
                (WHEREUPON, GEORGE E. SANSOUCY AND
12
13
                ANDREA CURTIS were duly sworn and
14
                cautioned by the Court Reporter.)
15
                GEORGE E. SANSOUCY, SWORN
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                ANDREA CURTIS, SWORN
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                     DIRECT EXAMINATION
    BY MR. RATIGAN:
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    0.
         Would each of you please state your name,
20
         address and employment capacity.
21
    Α.
         (Curtis) My name is --
22
                (Discussion off the record)
23
         (Curtis) My name is Andrea Curtis.
                                               I work
         for George Sansoucy, P.E., LLC, as an
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- analyst, mostly financial analyst. And my home address is in Jefferson, New Hampshire.
- A. (Sansoucy) I am George Sansoucy. I own

 George Sansoucy, P.E., LLC. And Ms. Curtis

 works for me as an MBA analyst also.
- Q. Could each of you please describe your
 background and experience in matters relating
 to utilities.
- 9 A. (Curtis) I've worked for Mr. Sansoucy for 10

 10 years doing analysis on utility property

 11 appraisal, regulatory analysis, financial

 12 analysis, that type of thing.
- Q. Have you presented testimony to other administrative boards or bodies?
- 15 A. (Curtis) No, sir, not in this capacity.

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A. (Sansoucy) I think the answer, John, is she hasn't testified in person. But Ms. Curtis has worked with me. And we do a significant amount of regulatory work in addition to our valuation engineering work, especially for the Michigan Environmental Council, where we testified prefiled testimony before the Michigan Public Utilities Commission. And Andrea's been involved in that extensively in

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1 providing testimony with me to the State of
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- Michigan, as well as other testimony in past
- 3 cases here, Northern Pass, and for years
- 4 before the New Hampshire Public Utilities
- 5 Commission.
- 6 Q. And before you, you have a portion of what is
- 7 Exhibit 4, which is your prefiled testimony
- and the report that you prepared for the Town
- 9 of Epping; is that correct?
- 10 A. (Curtis) Yes.
- 11 Q. And do you have any changes or corrections to
- make to your prefiled testimony or to your
- 13 report?
- 14 A. (Curtis) Yes, sir.
- 15 Q. Could you please explain to the Commission
- 16 what those changes might be.
- 17 A. (Curtis) Sure. On Page 30, the seventh
- 18 bulleted item.
- 19 Q. Is that your prefiled testimony or your
- 20 report or --
- 21 A. (Curtis) It's in the report, sir.
- 22 O. Okay.
- MR. TAYLOR: I'm just going to
- object. The report is not something that's

before the Commission for adjudication or assessment. It's something that was provided to the Town and that the Town relied upon to provide an opinion in this case. So, treating the report as though it's testimony

is not appropriate.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Overruled.

They can correct what they need to correct in the report. So we're on Page 30 of 66?

WITNESS CURTIS: Yes, sir.

- A. (Curtis) The seventh bulleted item that says,

 "The total revenues for transmission of gas
 for others per decatherm is \$2.06 for NU and
 \$2.36 for LU." The second sentence is
 backwards. It should indicate "LU's
 indicated rate for this customer class is
 nearly 15 percent more than NU's rate." And
 that's the only change that I'm aware of.
- Q. And if you were asked the questions that are presented today in your prefiled testimony, would they be the same as the answers that you provided in the testimony?
- A. (Sansoucy) Yes, they will be.

MR. RATIGAN: All right. I have

1 nothing further.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Sheehan,

do you have questions for the witnesses?

4 MR. SHEEHAN: I do not. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Buckley.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr.

7 Chairman.

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CROSS-EXAMINATION

BY MR. BUCKLEY:

free to do so.

- Q. Just one or two brief questions here. And
 I'll address them to the panel, and whoever
 feels comfortable answering them can feel
- If you had to describe the two largest reasons the RFP results swayed in Liberty's favor, what would those be?
 - A. (Sansoucy) First of all, the RFP results that
 we received are completely factual if you
 read through our report, and they are based
 on the actual publicly reported documents
 from the Company and the publicly reported
 costs -- rate cases documents from the PUC.
 They were not swayed in either direction, so
 I would quibble with your question to that

extent. But what appears to us as analysts and engineers -- as an engineer and Andrea as an MBA is that on a factual basis, for our client, the Town of Epping, the better choice would be the Liberty proposal over the NU proposal based on the facts presented by the companies in the RFP, and based on I think five years -- correct me if I'm wrong, Andrea -- of their financial reporting records to the New Hampshire PUC.

- A. (Curtis) I can just add to that, that we did an analysis of the two proposals that were submitted, and then we based our recommendation on the four items that are listed in our report as being important to the Town. And the two that were most favorable or that drove the recommendation was the cost of service and then Liberty's commitment to serve more of the customer base that would be in Epping. They identified a larger group of people that they were going to serve in the community than Northern put forth.
- Q. And as far as the -- and I'll touch on both

of those. But as far as the first one, the cost of service, when doing your analysis to determine which rates were more favorable for the customers in your franchise territory in Epping, did you look at all at forward-looking cost of service? You mentioned that there has been some review of historical documents. But did you look at all at forward-looking cost of service? I'm thinking largely of the costs associated with either the Granite Bridge Project required to serve Epping or the expansion associated with Northern Utilities required to serve Epping.

A. (Sansoucy) I think you've got a number of questions there and you've mixed two different utilities, if I might say. Let's start with Liberty Utilities, all right.

We looked at and reviewed the current rate cases and the rates going forward, but we truncated our review at the reported information and the reported rates which are the going-forward rates until the future rate case for the existing company. Now, that's true of NU and it's true of LU. In both

cases we looked at the Contribution In Aid of Construction analysis and criteria for NU and LU, and they both subscribe to CIAC, or Contribution In Aid of Construction principles. Although, albeit the calculation is different, the principle is the same, where expansions into whether it was Brentwood, Epping, or for the case of Liberty Utilities, outside of the Merrimack Valley into Epping, that they would not unduly harm outside other customers, per se. Liberty, did offer as part of their proposal a financial assistance program above and beyond the current state program for conversions to gas that Northern Utilities did not offer, and that did enter into our decision-making process.

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Now, the second part of your question related to Granite Bridge. Granite Bridge, I studied the Granite Bridge proposal. I'm fully aware of it. But at this time we believe that it is too speculative and premature on a tariff basis to determine how much impact Granite Bridge is going to have

1 on individual ratepayers within the Liberty Utilities franchise service territory --2 i.e., specifically how much federally 3 tariffed gas storage capacity might be sold 4 in addition to what's used by Liberty 5 Utilities to raise additional cash flow 6 7 funds, et cetera. So we believe that's too speculative, and we did not take that into 8 account in our recommendation. 9

Q. But you did review the Granite Bridge petition as proposed; is that true?

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(Sansoucy) We reviewed -- I reviewed the Α. petition in general as proposed. I didn't get into big weeds on it, but I did review it as proposed. I do reasonably understand what it is. But at this point it has not gone through the PUC here. It has not gone through the Site Evaluation Committee. So I believe at this point we don't have the tariffs, the ultimate final tariffs, and then how much of it is going to be income in addition to use by Liberty Utilities, which might help reduce the cost of gas for the Liberty ratepayers.

Q. So you mentioned federally tariffed gas that
might add a degree of uncertainty regarding
rate impacts that would be associated with --

- A. (Sansoucy) Well, I think there is a degree of uncertainty, because my understanding from the proposal is that it will be New Hampshire tariff, and that New Hampshire tariff will be reviewed at the federal level so that sales or tariffs that would be covered under a federal tariff can also be made with those assets, and those are automatically tariffed by FERC as well as tariffed by New Hampshire PUC. So the influence of, No. 1, the transmission line down Route 101, and second, the storage tank can be reached outside of the borders of New Hampshire and the New Hampshire PUC on a positive basis.
- Q. And is this federally tariffed impact, is this included in the current Granite Bridge petition?
 - A. (Sansoucy) The Granite Bridge, my
 understanding of Granite Bridge is that it
 will be tariffed here in the state of New
 Hampshire, and that tariff would likely be

- submitted to FERC for FERC review so that it can be used as a federal tariff also. That's my understanding of the proposal.
 - Q. And just how does that create uncertainty?

 Is there some sale and interstate commerce
 that ratepayers will be reimbursed for?

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(Sansoucy) No. The uncertainty is very Α. simple, it's that right now we're looking at NU and LU, the two franchise natural gas retail distribution utilities in New Hampshire, for all practical purposes competing for franchise in Epping. of Epping has asked us to provide them with an independent, objective analysis of these Now, clearly there is a proposal in front of LU to construct additional facilities that will have a statewide impact. And the speculative item is that we did not create and build a model of what we thought the cost of the transmission line and the cost of the tank would be and how that would influence the future rates of Liberty Utilities. That's the speculation. It's way too early to determine or even begin to

- estimate what that might be. And we did not put that into the RFP, and we did not put that into this report. This report's based on current information and current rate cases.
- Q. And the proposal in front of LU you
 mentioned, can you describe that for me?

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- (Sansoucy) LU has a proposal in front of them Α. to build Granite Bridge. Liberty Utilities. Granite Bridge is a property that will have statewide and region-wide impacts. question about it. It's a significant amount of stored gas, peak capacity availability, and it will have a transmission line to reinforce the gas transmission line in the Merrimack Valley from the seacoast and the seacoast transmission lines that no longer create dependence of Liberty Utilities on interferences with Dracut. And that's all very positive. Going down 101, it's all very positive. But we don't know what the future impact on the retail rates are going to be.
- Q. You mentioned that you had been through the Granite Bridge petition. Does that petition

include projected impact on retail rates?

- (Sansoucy) I don't recall everything that's 2 included. It has been a while, so I don't 3 want to tell you what it includes and doesn't 4 I reviewed elements of it. 5 include. I did not review the entire docket for this 6 7 development of this proposal. So I would defer answering that without reviewing the 8 petition at this time because that has been a 9 10 while since I have done this analysis. 11 did make the decision not to include it in this analysis. 12
- Q. If rate impacts associated with the Granite

 Bridge happened to be significant, would you

 revise your analysis?

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A. (Sansoucy) We do not -- when you say if rate impacts -- you're basically saying, asking me to speculate that there will be rate impacts, positive, negative -- positive or negative or neutral, and if they are, what would I do with those. Right now, this proposal is before the Town of Epping. This is a current, real-time proposal. I did not do a rate impact. We don't have rate impacts.

And I don't believe Liberty Utilities can tell us exactly what the rate impacts are going to be because they do not have their

- 4 regulatory approvals yet.
- Q. Did the uncertainty associated with the
 Granite Bridge Project which you have
 accounted for in your analysis of rates, did
 that impact --
- 9 A. (Sansoucy) Have accounted or have not?
- 10 Q. Let me rephrase that.
- 11 A. (Sansoucy) Yeah.
- 12 Q. I thought I heard earlier that you decided to
 13 truncate your rate analysis based on
- 14 historical rates partly because of
- uncertainties associated with the Granite
- 16 Bridge Project. Is that correct?
- 17 A. (Sansoucy) We did not go forward with rates.
- We did not speculate on NU's future rate
- cases and rates, and we did not speculate on
- 20 LU's future rates. We presented rates in
- real time under the current rate cases and
- 22 rate relief.
- Q. And did that same motivation enter into your reasoning regarding the certainty of Liberty

being able to provide a franchise, being able
to provide service from the franchise?

A. (Sansoucy) Well, Liberty is very clear that their proposal is contingent upon Granite Bridge being approved. So they have an off-take. They have a transmission line. They have an off-take. They've been very clear about that. And our proposal is based on them at some point getting approved and building out their distribution system that they propose to build out for this franchise.

As Mr. Ratigan pointed out, it has been decades. There's never been a gas franchise in Epping. And all of a sudden the emergency to do it is not lost on the Town. And, you know, the proposal from LU is contingent upon events happening. The proposal by NU is not. And it's that simple, and that's stated in our report.

- Q. So I'll move on to that second factor. Can you just repeat to me what the second factor was?
- 23 A. (Sansoucy) Well, the second factor to which?
 - Q. I asked you earlier in this discussion what

were the two largest motivating factors --

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- A. (Curtis) The other one was the number of customers that each company was proposing to serve in the community.
 - Q. And would how would you describe the type of customers that would be incremental under the Liberty proposal? Can you give me generally what class they would be?
 - (Sansoucy) Yes. If you go to the report, our Α. report, and you look at the pull-out charts where we plotted the pipes in color so that you could see the proposals, the difference between the proposals, Liberty's proposal starts with the western side of Epping and anticipates largely picking up small commercial and residential throughout the western part of Epping. But it also is situated so that it's going to be capable of picking up the Wal*Mart distribution center in Raymond right over the western border of Epping. It then moves east, and that's Phase 1. Now, Phase 1 opens up access to a significant amount of residential neighborhoods in West Epping where you now

have a distribution pipeline at the street level. And we have charts showing in pink in our colored maps the amount of new customer base potential that is added, starting on Figure 8, that is added by, for example, Western Epping Phase 1 proposal, the number of streets and community neighborhoods with direct access to the Phase 1 distribution pipes. So that is -- that's Phase 1. Then the same occurs for Phase 2 and then Phase 3, I believe, for Liberty.

A. (Curtis) If I may? So Northern Utilities had estimated about 300 customers in the service territory that they had identified being a mix of commercial and residential. And if I recall correctly, I think they said they weren't confident that all of the potential customers would subscribe that was the customer base they were seeking. Liberty had a base of I believe 3,000, the majority of which would be residential, and I think probably around 400 were identified as commercial. So Liberty was proposing to reach a bigger part of Epping over I think

what Mr. Sansoucy was saying, the three
phase --

- 3 A. (Sansoucy) Over three phases.
- A. (Curtis) Three phases, and geographically reaching a larger customer base.
- Q. Have either of you had the opportunity to review Liberty's franchise petition?
- 8 A. (Sansoucy) It just came in, and I have -9 have you read it?
- 10 A. (Curtis) I have not, no.
- 11 A. (Sansoucy) We have been on some other

 12 deadlines. No, I have not read their

 13 franchise petition that came in here two days

 14 ago.
- 15 Q. So we spoke a little bit this morning about
 16 the economics of a project and how that
 17 shakes out for whether a franchise being
 18 granted impacts existing customers. Were you
 19 present for that discussion?
- 20 A. (Sansoucy) Yes, we were.
- Q. In the instance of Northern's petition, do
 you recall the analysis that was done, or are
 you privy to the analysis that was done
 regarding the economics of their expansion?

- 1 (Sansoucy) Their petition -- or their RFP Α. response which is included their petition 2 outlined a cost. At that time, for the RFP 3 response it was limited to the railroad which 4 had changed -- or the cost had changed 5 slightly to basically pick up the heavy 6 7 commercial district of Route 125 in the first phase and then nibble down towards Brentwood 8 and pick up their Brentwood expansion on 125 9 10 in what would be the second phase and go up 11 slightly 125, but basically serve what we all know as the 125/Route 101 intersection, 12 Wal*Mart and various box stores that are 13 there, and for a price of some \$2 million 14 15 plus. And then the development of that 16 particular portion would be reliant upon the their current tariffs. 17 That's what we heard. They would be tariff-based. And if CIAC was 18 required or a contribution from a particular 19 20 owner, then it would be required based on the 21 way they do their analysis.
 - Q. Do you recall a representative of Northern saying this morning that they would also be interested in some manner of expansion if it

23

1 were economic?

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- A. (Sansoucy) I heard that, yes.
- Q. Do you have any reason to believe that either
 Liberty Utilities or Northern Utilities would
 be more likely to expand to residential
 customers, given the discussion from this
 morning?
- (Sansoucy) Is it Mr. Taylor? What I have is 8 the fact base and fact set that we developed 9 from actual activity and actual facts, 10 11 whether they are orders from the PUC, tariffs, or what they told the Town of Epping 12 in the RFP. Northern Utilities did not 13 propose an expansion outside of the 14 Route 101/125 corridor in its RFP. 15 Liberty 16 Utilities did. Now, on a factual basis in 17 our report, you'll find we did state that -and we developed the fact that Northern 18 Utilities has a tendency to be higher 19 20 industrial commercial utility as a percentage 21 of their sales than Liberty. Liberty has a 22 higher percentage of residential customers in 23 their franchise territories, even though they serve Nashua, Concord, Manchester, et cetera. 24

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They do have a tendency to have a greater percentage of residentials. From that, Liberty's proposal was very clear that it intended to serve residential communities and residential streets in their RFP to the Town. And Northern Utilities largely did not; it served the commercial area. And that is commensurate with their current levels of commercial revenue and gas sales versus residential, where Liberty has far more residential.

Q. And one final question here just to follow up on that. Did either Liberty or Northern Utilities provide the type of underlying economic analysis that showed a franchise expansion to more residential areas would be economic?

A. (Sansoucy) They did not provide an economic analysis to serve every single road. They provided their proposal that they would build out in phases. They provided their tariffs and they provided their Contribution In Aid of Construction criteria, and they made representation to the Town of Epping that

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         they wanted -- Liberty wanted to build three
         phases for the entire town, and Northern
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         Utilities wanted to build essentially a
3
         couple phases that took in the
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         Route 101/Route 125 intersection area.
5
         Liberty, in addition to that, offered
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         financial assistance to help the conversion
         of residential, or any conversion.
8
                                               I don't
         believe, subject to check, that it was
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10
         limited just to residential, but conversion
11
         to gas for customers.
                    MR. BUCKLEY:
12
                                  Thank you.
                                               No
13
         further questions.
14
                    CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG:
                                          Ms. Fabrizio.
15
                    MS. FABRIZIO: Thank you, Mr.
16
         Chairman.
17
                      CROSS-EXAMINATION
    BY MS. FABRIZIO:
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19
    0.
         I just have a few follow-up questions for
20
         clarification in my mind here.
21
               First of all, how do the anticipated tax
22
         revenues estimated in both Liberty and
23
         Unitil's responses to the RFP, the tax
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revenue estimates from their expansion plans,

1 how do those two compare?

- A. (Curtis) Well, we didn't take that into account in our analysis. You're talking about in addition to their tax base?
- 5 Q. Yes.

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- (Sansoucy) We did not -- what Andrea is 6 7 saying is we did not create a forward-looking DCF or forward-looking rate structure. 8 took existing rates up to current time and we 9 10 took the existing rate case. So if you 11 had -- if you have expansion and you have capital improvements, in other words, you add 12 plant to base, then you're going to add plant 13 and you're going to add taxes at the same 14 15 ratio that currently exists. So it would 16 have no more impact than it would otherwise have right now based on the amount of 17 property taxes and the amount of net plant or 18 gross plant, whatever is added. 19 That tax load is built into the rates now and will be 20 21 built into a future rate case because --
 - Q. Excuse me. I'm sorry. I may have been confusing in the way I asked the question.

Did you take into account the potential

tax revenues of each company for the Town,
revenues that the Town would receive in taxes
from each of the utilities in your
consideration?

- A. (Sansoucy) When you say "take into account,"

 if they build plant, they're going to produce

 taxable revenue, and that additional -- that

 revenue to the Town is expense for the

 utility. We were analyzing the utility. It

 goes without saying that in New Hampshire

 they will pay taxes on their property.
- 12 Q. Okay. Thank you. Let's see.

And could you explain -- you've mentioned a couple times now financial assistance that Liberty offered to assist in the conversion to gas in its RFP submission. Could you explain that assistance, please, and tell us how that factored into your selection with Liberty.

- A. (Sansoucy) Yes, we will. Let us find it.

 (Witness reviews document.)
- A. (Curtis) If you refer to Table 11 on Page 28 of 66 of our report, part of the request in the RFP asked for each company to identify

any financial assistance. Liberty identified
a \$500,000 fund that would help residents of
Epping switching over to natural gas for
their heating needs, and that's what he's

- 5 referring to.
- Q. And this was factored into your consideration of the two submissions; is that correct?
- 8 A. (Curtis) Yeah, we identified this. Yes.
- 9 Q. Thank you.

10 I'm curious. Did your review of the RFP

11 responses include an opportunity for the Town

12 to talk directly with each of the companies?

- 13 A. (Sansoucy) If the Town talked directly with 14 the companies --
- 15 Q. Or your team.
- 16 (Sansoucy) From our perspective, we did not Α. 17 talk directly with the companies. We stayed strictly with the data, the information and 18 the public filings here at the PUC, the 10Ks 19 20 and everything else. The Town may or may not 21 have communicated directly with the different 22 companies. But we worked on the objective 23 presentation of the numbers as presented in the RFP and the numbers that had been 24

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previously presented to this Commission, rate
orders, rate cases, testimony by company
officials and their experts in the rate cases
here in New Hampshire, and that's what we
reported in our report. We did not go back
and forth between the two companies.
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- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. (Curtis) It was based on public information
 9 and the proposals that were submitted
 10 strictly.
- 11 Q. Thank you very much.
- MS. FABRIZIO: I have no further questions.
- 14 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Taylor.
- 15 CROSS-EXAMINATION
- 16 BY MR. TAYLOR:
- 17 Q. Good afternoon.
- 18 A. (Sansoucy) Good afternoon, Mr. Taylor.
- Q. Just have a couple brief questions, although
 I think Mr. Buckley said the same things, so
 no promises.
- 22 (Mr. Taylor distributes documents.)
- 23 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: So the next
- 24 two are 17 and 18.

Q. Mr. Sansoucy, both of my questions are for you in regard to Exhibit 17, which is the Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes dated April 23rd.

5 A. (Sansoucy) Yes, sir.

Q. Okay. And if you can look at the back side of that exhibit. And I will just state for the record that there's some highlighting on this exhibit that I put in there that's not part of the original document.

So, Mr. Sansoucy, at the top it says that you joined this meeting and wanted to talk about utilities, especially as it relates to Liberty Utilities. Do you recall that?

- A. (Sansoucy) Yes, I do. I was asked to -- I
 was asked by the Town Manager to do an update
 presentation to the Town of Epping on the
 utilities, their cases. I have represented
 Epping on their utilities for more than 20
 years, and especially Liberty and the
 proposal for Granite Bridge. That's correct.
- Q. Okay. And just looking at the highlighted sentence, it says that you said that what

Liberty was proposing was a good idea in your opinion.

- 3 A. (Sansoucy) Yes, I did say that.
- 4 Q. Okay. If you could look at Exhibit 18. And
- if you look down a bit, you will see an entry
- on October 10th, 2018.
- 7 A. (Sansoucy) Yes.
- 8 Q. And it says "Review draft RFP report"?
- 9 A. (Sansoucy) Yes.
- 10 Q. Then the next entry, which is October 16,
- 11 says "Review and annotate draft October 2018
- 12 GES RFP analysis."
- 13 A. (Sansoucy) Yes.
- 14 Q. Is it fair to say, then, you provided your
- 15 draft report to town council on or about
- 16 before October 10th for review?
- 17 A. (Sansoucy) It appears to say that, yes. I
- don't know the -- I don't remember the exact
- 19 date. But that was what it appears when Mr.
- 20 Ratigan reviewed it. I don't know the date
- 21 that we gave it to them.
- 22 Q. Okay.
- 23 A. (Sansoucy) Yeah.
- MR. TAYLOR: I have no further

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1 questions.
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- 2 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Commissioner
- 3 Bailey.
- 4 INTERROGATORIES BY COMMISSIONERS:
- 5 BY COMMISSIONER BAILEY:
- Q. Mr. Sansoucy, can you tell me -- over here on the Bench. Hi.
- 8 A. (Sansoucy) Sorry. Good afternoon,
- 9 Commissioner.
- 10 Q. Good afternoon.
- 11 A. How are you?
- 12 Q. I'm well. How are you?
- 13 A. Good, thank you.
- Q. Can you tell me how the idea to issue an RFP came up?
- 16 A. (Sansoucy) I brought it up. And part of this
- 17 discussion about utilities, this particular
- 18 discussion, Epping was involved in the Public
- 19 Service cases at the Board of Tax and Land
- 20 Appeals. So we were talking about all
- 21 utilities. We were talking about the tax
- cases with Fairpoint, and the exceptions and
- everything else, and we talked about Liberty.
- 24 And we talked about the request -- the

franchise issue with Liberty and with, well, 1 with NU. And I brought up the point that 2 there will be only one franchise issued if 3 the request is for the whole town. It's not 4 5 necessarily exclusive. But from a practical point of view, it is monopolistic. 6 7 not going to build two pipes unless it's a huge industrial complex. And that they had 8 two companies in the state of New Hampshire 9 10 and that it might be in the Town of Epping's 11 best interest to actually talk -- issue an RFP to both companies to see what they 12 thought, the Town fathers thought would be 13 the best fit for the Town of Epping. 14 It is 15 their streets and it their rights-of-way and 16 it is their land. And I brought that issue 17 up, and I'm the one that proposed that they consider issuing an RFP for the two companies 18 to see what both companies wished to offer. 19

- Q. Did you write the RFP?
- 21 A. (Sansoucy) Yes, I drafted it. Yes, I did.
- 22 Q. Did Liberty help you?
- 23 A. (Sansoucy) No, it did not.
- 24 Q. It had no input?

- 1 A. (Sansoucy) It had no input.
- Q. Okay. Can you show where in the RFP in each
- of the tables you asked the companies to
- 4 provide a price that they would offer the
- 5 service at?
- 6 A. (Sansoucy) A price they would offer the
- 7 service at?
- 8 Q. Yeah.
- 9 A. (Sansoucy) You mean their tariffs?
- 10 Q. No, not their tariffs. I mean when you issue
- an RFP, you're asking a company to give you a
- 12 service for a price. So did you assume that
- the price would be the tariff price?
- 14 A. (Sansoucy) Yes, we did assume that the price
- would be the tariff price.
- 16 Q. Okay. So you didn't ask them if they would
- 17 give commercial and industrial customers or
- 18 the Town a better price.
- 19 A. (Sansoucy) No. We asked them what incentives
- or what they would do to enable the
- 21 penetration of natural gas as a energy source
- 22 to a new franchise area.
- 23 Q. So you were more focused on who was going to
- 24 provide broader service in the town?

(Sansoucy) Well, our first focus -- yes, we

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were. But our very first focus was which
company -- what's the profile of each
company, which company in the long run may be
better suited for the Town of Epping. And a
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- good portion of our analysis was the
- 7 financial characteristics and the operating
- 9 Q. What do you mean by "financial characteristics"?

characteristics of both.

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- 11 A. (Sansoucy) Well, a good example is in the

 12 rate structures, the rates for Liberty

 13 Utilities are fundamentally lower than the

 14 rates in some categories or some components

 15 of the rates than Northeast Utilities.
- 16 Q. Did you take into consideration the charge
 17 that residential customers pay in Liberty's
 18 tariff to connect to new mains?
- 19 A. (Sansoucy) Yes, we did. And we actually did
 20 a profile of the residential and the
 21 commercial customer in our analysis between
 22 the two.
- 23 Q. Can you show me where that is?
- 24 A. (Sansoucy) Yes. That would be, I believe,

1 Appendix E in the report. Is that correct,

- 2 Andrea, or is it F?
- 3 A. (Curtis) It's F.
- 4 A. (Sansoucy) F, the rate analysis?
- 5 A. (Curtis) Yeah, our rate analysis was
- 6 residential.
- 7 A. (Sansoucy) So it's residential winter rates
- 8 for Liberty and residential winter rates for
- 9 Northern Utilities.
- 10 Q. Okay. So show me where on the Liberty page
- 11 you include the -- no. There's a charge when
- 12 Liberty -- it's like a CIAC. When Liberty
- 13 connects customers to new gas service, they
- pay for, I don't know, a certain number of
- 15 years.
- 16 A. (Sansoucy) Liberty -- okay. We'll find --
- 17 there's two charts. Actually, there's their
- 18 pipe cost charts that they provided to us and
- 19 then there's their CIAC charts that --
- 20 Q. Yeah, show me where the CIAC is.
- 21 A. (Sansoucy) What's that?
- 22 O. Show me where the CIAC is. It's not called
- 23 CIAC, but it essentially means CIAC.
- 24 A. (Sansoucy) Right.

- 1 A. (Curtis) I think it's Table 7.
- 2 Q. Table 7 in the report, not the appendix?
- 3 A. (Curtis) In the report. Yes, ma'am.
- 4 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Give us a
- page.

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- 6 WITNESS CURTIS: Oh, I'm sorry.
- 7 Page 26 of 66.
- 8 A. (Curtis) This is talking about the density
 9 requirements and minimum developed density to
 10 initiate service. I think this is where
 11 you're referring to.
 - (Sansoucy) The question on Table 7 was Α. Question 3-f in the RFP. And the request was the density requirements, minimum developed density to initiate service for residential, commercial or industrial customers. That question was asked to each one of them. each one of them responded on Table 7 with their two different responses. They are different between the two of them. We did not then calculate a sample or average residential customer assuming 200 feet of service or something like that. We didn't do

that calculation. They both are providing

some type of CIAC calculation.

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Q.

- Well, Liberty said -- I mean Northern's 2 response appears to say that if the net 3 present value comes out above zero using 4 residential for 20 years, that there is no 5 CIAC. And Liberty appears to say if it's 6 7 within eight years, there is a CIAC. isn't it likely that Liberty will have to 8 charge a CIAC? 9
- 10 (Sansoucy) It says in the middle -- I'll read Α. 11 it from Liberty. "Customers that require a main extension and a service line extension, 12 Liberty has a tariff containing a service and 13 14 main extension policy that compares the cost 15 of building the new main and services with the expected revenue received from the 16 17 customers. This is eight years for residential and six years for commercial. 18 Ιf 19 revenues are expected to be greater than 20 the" -- "If revenues are expected to be 21 greater, payment is not required. 22 less, the customer would need to make a 23 Contribution In Aid of Construction payment."

Ιf

All right. Let me stop you there.

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1 Liberty uses an 8-year lookout for
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- 2 residential customers and Northern uses a
- 3 20-year lookout for residential customers,
- 4 isn't it more likely that Liberty's
- 5 residential customers would have to pay a
- 6 CIAC?
- 7 A. (Sansoucy) No, because NU is using a
- 8 discounted cash flow --
- 9 Q. They're both using a discount cash flow. One
- uses 8 years and one uses 20.
- 11 A. (Sansoucy) I guess I'll have to ask, Madam
- 12 Commissioner, that do they -- they don't say
- 13 that -- Liberty doesn't say it's using a DCF;
- it's just using eight years of payments.
- 15 Q. Okay. All right.
- 16 A. (Sansoucy) Where we do know in fact that NU
- is using a 20-year DCF. If they used the
- 18 weighted cost of capital on that, they might
- 19 well be at 40 percent in 8 years of the value
- of that contribution.
- 21 Q. All right. Let me ask you another question.
- 22 A. (Sansoucy) Sure.
- 23 Q. Look at the next box under Liberty. This is
- the provision I was thinking of. "Liberty

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offers a rate design called Managed Expansion
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- 2 Program. This rate structure allows
- 3 customers to pay 30 percent higher
- 4 distribution rate for 10 years instead of
- 5 paying CIAC." So if they to pay 30 percent
- 6 higher distribution rates over 10 years, did
- 7 you take that into account?
- 8 A. (Sansoucy) No, we do not -- no, we did not.
- 9 Q. Can you go to the next page of your report,
- 10 Page 27.
- 11 A. (Sansoucy) Yes.
- 12 Q. Here you compare the costs that Liberty told
- 13 you they would incur to the costs that
- 14 Northern told you they would incur.
- 15 A. (Sansoucy) Yes, that's what they told us.
- 16 Q. And you said in your engineering -- as an
- 17 engineer, you looked at Liberty's history and
- their last rate case; correct?
- 19 A. (Sansoucy) Yes.
- 20 Q. Did you happen to notice that some of their
- 21 cost projections were orders of magnitude off
- of what it really cost them to build things?
- 23 A. (Sansoucy) In their rate case?
- 24 Q. Yes.

1 A. (Sansoucy) I did not notice that.

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- Q. Oh. So if they told you that a 2-inch main
 was going to cost \$40 a foot, and it actually
 cost \$80 a foot, would your analysis be the
 same?
- (Sansoucy) It would be because I think that's 6 Α. 7 what they provided to us as average costs. We do know in New Hampshire that we can have, 8 depending on the amount of ledge, the amount 9 10 the rock or the amount of interference, 11 police protection, et cetera, that we can have vastly different pipe costs because 12 we're working underground. 13
 - Q. No, I'm asking you -- assume with me, hypothetically, that their actual cost came out to \$80 a foot for a two-inch main, and it came out, you know, twice as high for each one of these in reality.
- A. (Sansoucy) If that was the -- if their
 average pricing turned out to be twice as
 high as this, we would have put in twice as
 high. But we didn't have that information.
 - Q. Okay. But it would change the outcome -- would it have impacted who you selected as

- 1 the better provider?
- 2 A. (Sansoucy) I don't know the answer to that
- 3 because it's one of many components we
- 4 considered. But it would be a negative
- 5 component in the consideration if it was
- 6 substantially greater than Northern Utilities
- and the pipe was the same, if it was the same
- pipe and the same quality, the same vetting.
- 9 Q. Can you go to the second page of your
- 10 testimony. The pages aren't numbered. But
- the top of the page says, "Were you engaged
- by the Town of Epping to advise..."
- 13 A. (Sansoucy) Yes, I'm there.
- 14 Q. Okay. Can you read -- on Line 14 it says it
- was suggested that an RFP for natural gas
- service could be a good mechanism to allow
- 17 the selectmen to receive competing proposals.
- 18 And I was confused when I read "it was
- 19 suggested."
- 20 A. (Sansoucy) Yes.
- 21 Q. Sounds like somebody else suggested it.
- 22 A. (Sansoucy) No, I did.
- 23 Q. All right. Thank you.
- 24 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: That's all I

- 1 have.
- 2 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Commissioner
- Giaimo.

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- 4 OUESTIONS BY COMMISSIONER GIAIMO:
- 5 Q. Good afternoon.
- 6 A. (Sansoucy) Good afternoon, Commissioner.
- Q. In your expert opinion, both companies have the financial, managerial and technical expertise to possess a franchise?
- 10 A. (Sansoucy) Yes, they do. No question.
- 11 Q. In factoring what is most important and why
 12 you supported Liberty's proposal, is it the
 13 number of customers served? Is it the rate
 14 structure? Is it the estimated customer
 15 bills? What is it? What was the most
 16 important factor?
 - A. (Sansoucy) We prepared a bullet of the most important factors, and we related those factors to the request by the Town. In other words, the Town of Epping identified the priorities that it identified relative to natural gas service, and those priorities are shown on Page 33, Items 1 through 4. Now, based on that instruction from our client, we

prepared the bullets shown on Page 30 of our

work as two, four, six, eight, nine bullets.

Those nine bullets express the quantitative

differences between the two companies that

5 lead to our conclusions.

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- Q. So there's no one specific factor, per se, that is most important.
- (Sansoucy) No, there's not one that's most 8 Α. important. But I think from a practical 9 10 perspective, Mr. Commissioner, if you look at 11 the four considerations, the extent of the commitment to serve the Town, both its 12 residential and its commercial, is very 13 important, and that could be considered the 14 15 overriding one from the selectmen's 16 perspective, keeping in the mind that our analysis of Northern Utilities was that they 17 were more prone to have industrial and 18 commercial sales over residential. 19
 - Q. Okay. I'm glad you brought that up. So help me understand why that is the case. The infrastructure that Northern is utilizing would be to the east of Epping, and they would then proceed to build from east to west

1 to the 101/125 corridor.

- A. (Sansoucy) They're coming in from Exeter and coming up from Brentwood, so that's going to be east to west. It is down the 101 corridor. So the first stop was the 125 intersection.
 - Q. Okay. And presumably there's not a lot of residential customers, or there are not a lot of residential customers in that path; right?
 - A. (Sansoucy) There's a slug of them due north off of 125 to the west that I think, subject to check, I think was a portion of Phase 2.

 They had one of the small -- one loop on one of the roads for that group, and that was it.
 - Q. Okay. And when you juxtaposition that with what Liberty was suggesting, which is infrastructure from the west to the east, are there more residential communities along that path to the 101/125 corridor which allows them to access more residential customers?
 - A. (Sansoucy) Yes, that is correct.
- Q. So servicing of customers is a function of the geography of the town and accessing the commercial, industrial sector at the 101/125

1 intersection.

- A. (Sansoucy) The proposal by Liberty is the three phases that go from west to east and they follow the geography. Northern

 Utilities had the opportunity to propose how it would serve west Epping, and it's elected not to. It only provided the piping systems within that area and made no further representations for the Town to rely upon.
- Q. Okay. That's helpful. I'm going to ask you to speak for your client, but only because I'm referring to your report on Page 33. I just need help understanding what made, in my mind at least, a disconnect between Recommendation 2 and Recommendation 4 and how you contemplated what may be a disconnect.

So the fourth recommendation says that time is NOT of the essence. But then the second bullet says the Town would like to avoid a situation in which a company is selected, holds the franchise and then neglects to serve the community. There's a delay there, too. I'm struggling to see how you resolve that potential conflict.

(Sansoucy) In our discussions with the 1 Α. Town -- and this is just, you know, having 2 discussions with the selectmen -- on gas 3 service and what it means what it's going to 4 mean to the Town of Epping -- and we had 5 these conversations, some of them very 6 7 public, the public could listen in -- was that there was a bit of a gold rush going on 8 with Kinder Morgan's proposal with the notion 9 10 of expanding liquified natural gas, not 11 propane like Keene, but liquified natural gas in the -- up in the Dartmouth area, et 12 cetera, and that grabbing the franchises, but 13 14 not necessarily coming up with adequate plans 15 to penetrate the use and getting -- you know, 16 going after the, quote, colloquial, "going 17 after the juice, going after the big boys, and then if the residentials come, that's 18 If a developer comes, that's fine, you 19 fine. 20 know, we'll serve them, as opposed to put 21 your boots to the ground, your feet to the 22 fire and let's get some gas service into the 23 residential community so there's choice. all know that gas is likely to stay down for 24

a long time in relative price, and it's a very clean, somewhat carbon-free fuel. And we don't have a lot of it in New Hampshire. We all basically know that.

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So, one is the commitment. We've seen franchises that have been issued. We've seen them unissued. We've seen nothing happen to them. And, you know, the Brentwood franchise, for example, really -- guess it served a couple of big customers. But it hasn't gone much beyond that in real terms. So that was a concern. I raised it. selectmen raised it as one of their issues. And we had questions in the RFP regarding that. It was crystal clear what we were asking. We weren't hiding anything there.

Now, the time is not of the essence.

That came out directly from Northeast

Utilities making an argument here that they had to move quickly because the highway department was going to close the road, they couldn't build in 2019, so we had to have a franchise right now to get the pipe in the ground. We went to the highway department,

and they said, "What are you talking about? We don't have this on our list to close. This is, like, 2019. But we're not going to open this road this year and close it up for the winter." We suspected that that was a response to the fact that we publicly were having a discussion, my client, on utilities. We were having a public discussion, including Public Service and a bunch of other stuff, but regarding the notion of a competing request for the franchise and that it was a rush to judgment to get this application here before you and set up the request to the franchise. That was our thought process because it happened like that. And we wanted to -- the selectmen, not "we." The selectmen wanted to deliver the message in this report that there hasn't been a franchise ever. There hasn't been gas in Epping, to the best of their knowledge, since maybe the Coke days, and that time, one year, two years, three years, is not of the essence; that they want a deliberate review, study, thoughtful analysis on issuing the franchise in their

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streets, because the reality of it is it's
going to be there for at least a hundred
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- years. That's the purpose of those two.
- 4 Q. Thank you for explaining that.

My last question, similar to the
question I asked the town manager -- the Town
Selectmen. If Liberty's proposal did not
exist and you were asked to advise your
client whether or not you'd recommend the

- Northern project, would you?
- 11 A. (Sansoucy) Yes. Absolutely. If they were 12 the only game in town, absolutely.
- 13 Q. Thank you.
- 14 A. (Sansoucy) You bet.
- 15 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: I have no questions that have not already been
- answered.
- Mr. Ratigan, do you have any
- 19 follow-up for the panel?
- MR. RATIGAN: Just one.
- 21 REDIRECT EXAMINATION
- 22 BY MR. RATIGAN:
- Q. Mr. Sansoucy, turning your attention to

 Exhibit 17, which is the April 23rd meeting

minutes, on the back side of which is the
highlighted quotation that you responded to a
question from Mr. Taylor.

- 4 A. (Sansoucy) Yes, sir.
- In this it says "Mr. Sansoucy said that 5 Q. Liberty was proposing" -- "that what Liberty 6 7 was proposing was a good idea in his opinion." what were you talking about? 8 you talking about Granite Bridge? Were you 9 10 talking about Liberty's distribution proposal 11 for gas in town? Or were you talking about both of them? 12
- 13 A. (Sansoucy) If you read the next paragraph in
 14 the notes, this was entirely a discussion of
 15 Granite Bridge, both the tank and the
 16 pipeline --
- 17 O. And not about --
- 18 A. (Sansoucy) -- not about franchise
 19 distribution of gas.
- MR. RATIGAN: Okay. Thank you.
- 21 Nothing further.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right.

Thank you, Mr. Sansoucy and Ms. Curtis. You

can return to your seats.

WITNESS SANSOUCY: Thank you very
much for the opportunity.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Ms. Fabrizio,

I think we're ready for Mr. Frink.

MS. FABRIZIO: Yes, I'd like to call Mr. Frink to the stand, please.

(WHEREUPON, STEPHEN P. FRINK was duly sworn and cautioned by the Court Reporter.)

10 STEPHEN P. FRINK, SWORN

11 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Ms. Fabrizio.

MS. FABRIZIO: Thank you.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

14 BY MS. FABRIZIO:

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- 15 Q. Mr. Frink, could you please identify yourself
 16 for the record by stating your name and the
 17 position you hold with the Commission.
- A. My name is Stephen Frink, and I'm the
 Director of the Gas and Water Division here
 at the PUC.
- Q. And what are your responsibilities in your position as Director of the Gas and Water Division?
 - A. I oversee all utility matters related to

natural gas, particularly as they pertain to 1 2 rates.

- And what is your role in this docket? 3
- I have evaluated the financial analysis of 4 Α. Northern's petition, and I filed discovery 5

and filed Staff's recommendation.

- 7 Thank you. I'd like to direct your attention 0. to testimony filed by Staff on November 15th, 8 2018, in this docket which you should have 9 before you. We premarked this for 10 11 identification as Exhibit 3. Do you have that before you?
- I do. 13 Α.

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- Thank you. Can you identify this document, 14 Q. 15 please?
- 16 This is the Testimony of Stephen P. Frink Α. that was filed on behalf of Staff. 17
- And did you prepare this testimony yourself? 18 Q.
- Yes, I did. 19 Α.
- 20 And if I were to ask you the questions 21 contained in this testimony marked as 22 Exhibit 3, would your answers be the same as 23 those contained therein today?
- There is one Q and A that I would change. 24 Α.

Q. And could you elaborate, please.

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2 Α. If you'd please turn to Bates Page 8, starting on Line 5, the very last word on 3 Line 5 reads, "The potential G-42 customer 4 5 located in Epping makes up approximately [sic] 90 percent of the estimated additional 6 7 annual sales and is expected to be a transportation customer. As such, that 8 customer would not be purchasing natural gas 9 from Northern and have very little impact on 10

Also above that, as a consequence of
that, on Line 4 where it reads, "The proposed
line extension represents less than one half
of one percent," that should be
"approximately 2 percent." So, delete "less
than one half of one" and replace that with

Northern's supply resources." That should be

deleted. That customer is expected to take

21 Q. Sorry. What page are you on?

"approximately two."

firm sales service.

- 22 A. That would be Bates Page 8, and that would be Line 4, that last correction.
 - Q. Okay. Thank you.

And do you have any further corrections to your testimony?

A. I do not.

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- Q. And do these corrections affect the conclusions and recommendations contained in your testimony?
- 7 They do not. The profitability of the Α. project is based on base revenues. So the 8 fact that the gas resources might be 9 10 different than what was originally 11 anticipated if that customer had been a transportation customer really has no bearing 12 on the financial analysis that Liberty has to 13 14 support this project. And also based on what 15 Northern said this morning, my own analysis, 16 this incremental load that's being added even with that customer being a firm sales 17 customer will not stress Northern's supply 18 19 resources or impact the cost of gas rates. 20 So it won't increase rates, delivery rates, 21 and it shouldn't increase their gas rates.
 - Q. Okay. And are you familiar with the document that's marked "Confidential" that Staff has premarked as Exhibit 8?

1 A. Yes, I am.

- O. And what is that document?
- A. This document is an updated discounted cash flow analysis. So when Northern made their initial filing, they had proposed going down the rail trail with their mains to serve the Epping franchise. And ultimately they were not granted permission to use that route, so they changed the route. And that had a small impact on the cost of the project, maybe \$200,000, and it did shorten the distance a little bit. But that's -- but because this wasn't in the record, we admitted this as evidence.

Also in my testimony I state that the Project still produces a positive net present value over 10 years. And this exhibit, if you turn to the third page and go up approximately six lines, you can see that second block, first column, provides the net present value of this project over 10 years. And down below there's another net present value analysis that gives you the net present value over 20 years. So for purposes of my

testimony, my recommendation is based on the 1 2 10-year analysis.

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- And a question that is somewhat relevant and related to your response just now, in follow-up to Commissioner Bailey's question regarding whether 20 years is still viable for the DCF analysis, do you have any comments on that?
- So the Company, when it files for a Yes. Α. franchise request, does a 10-year net present value, and that's positive. So even though when they do a test, a revenue test for a customer requesting a service, if it's a commercial customer, it's 10 years; if it's a residential customer, it's 20 years. But the 16 overall project only looks at the revenues and costs for the 10-year period.
 - Thank you. Now, your direct testimony was Q. filed prior to the Town of Epping's testimony in this proceeding. Does the Epping testimony in any way influence your conclusions and recommendations?
 - No, it doesn't change the -- I respect Α. Epping's desire to see that the Town's

interests are addressed. And I have no doubt that Epping will be well served by Northern and that Northern's expansion will benefit current and future customers throughout its entire service territory. I do question some of the assertions in the Sansoucy analysis.

For instance, on his recommendation, he suggests that Liberty is going to serve 3,000 customers. I would note that Liberty/EnergyNorth serves 30 communities, and in those 30 communities there are only 5 in which they serve more than 3,000 customers. And those five communities all have a population in excess of 25,000, whereas Epping is a rural community with a population of 7,000. So it's hard to envision the utility being able to economically serve 3,000 customers in Epping.

I'm also concerned with his analysis
that only looks at current rates. As he
stated, he didn't take into account what the
Granite Bridge Project, which is necessary to
serve Epping, is going to do to Liberty's
rates. And I expect that will have a

substantial impact. I know Mr. Sansoucy's analysis looks at the return on equity and the capital structure of the utilities.

Again, when you're increasing rate base for Granite Bridge, which is almost 150 percent increase in rate base, that's going to have to be financed. And what those costs to finance are going to be, how that's going to compare to what Northern's most recent financing was, we don't know. Right now it seems interest rates have climbed, so it's likely to be higher.

So I think when you're forward-looking for a project, to take that one point in time and not look at what a major project that is absolutely necessary to providing service is going to do to the rates I think is a mistake.

And I would also mention that Northern has completed its program, whereas Liberty has a cast iron/bare steel replacement program in place that provides for annual rate increases. And they still have -- in Mr. Sansoucy's testimony, he mentioned the

fact that I believe there's approximately 110 miles that have been replaced, and there's still maybe 70 miles to go. So it's a very -- that has an impact on rates, too. Because it wasn't forward-looking, it isn't accounted for. So I'm a little skeptical of an analysis that suggests that going forward, if Liberty began service in 2022 or 2023, somewhere in the future, that their rates are going to be 16 percent less than what it would be under Northern.

So, again, that testimony really doesn't influence my position. This is a good project for Northern, and the Epping customers that will be served by Northern will be well served.

- Q. Thank you. Are you familiar with the petition that Liberty has filed for expansion of franchise authority into the Town of Epping before the Commission in another docket? This petition was filed on December 24th.
- A. I have seen that filing and I have started a review of that filing. It's been very

preliminary. That filing was made on

December 24th. So, other than reading

through it, I haven't -- that's about as far

as I've gotten.

- Q. And does your preliminary review influence your conclusions and testimony in this docket at all?
- A. It does not. It does -- there are some significant issues that are going to need to be addressed in that proceeding. And when we get to a prehearing conference, assuming we do, I will raise those issues.

I can give you a few now. The most important one is Liberty does not currently have the facilities to serve Epping. So that kind of needs to be resolved before they can be able to provide service. Cost projections in the Liberty analysis appear low. I haven't -- and I would ask the Safety Division to assist, as they did in the Northern filing, to review the cost estimates. We do have -- the Northern cost estimates were vetted in great detail, and we're comfortable that those are reasonable

estimates. I would note that those costs are considerably higher per mile of main than what is in the Liberty petition for their franchise. And that concerns me, especially where Liberty has to build a take station and is planning to install a 12-inch main versus 8-inch main for Northern. Again, it's a very preliminary analysis, but it will require an in-depth review of costs that's going to take some time.

And then also another major issue that I anticipate getting into will be the half-million-dollar conversion fund that Liberty has proposed to make available to Epping at shareholders' expense. Now, we're concerned with Liberty's rates, but we're also concerned with Liberty's overall financial health. And I remember in the rate case that Liberty was quite concerned with not getting the revenue requirement they were seeking, and they testified to certain measures, cost-cutting measures they were going to take. And to give away a million dollars in this proposal, it raises a

1 question as to what impact that might have on the utility's operations, even though it's 2 not going to be recovered from ratepayers. 3 So those are three big issues that are 4 before the Commission in that proceeding. 5 There are undoubtedly more, but again, it's 6 7 just been a preliminary review. Thank you. And do you have any other 8 Q. comments on the testimony that you have heard 9 10 today that --11 No, I don't. Α. Thank you. 12 Q. 13 MS. FABRIZIO: Those are all the questions I have for Mr. Frink. 14 15 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Ms. Fabrizio, 16 let's talk about Exhibit 8 for a moment. Ιt has confidential information on it, I 17 understand. 18 19 MS. FABRIZIO: Yes. 20 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: How do you 21 want to deal with that? Do you want to 22 reserve 19 for a redacted version of 8?

spoken with Mr. Taylor, who agreed to provide

MS. FABRIZIO: Yes.

And I have

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a redacted version of that exhibit. And I

also spoke to Mr. Sheehan and assured him

that he would get a copy of the redacted

4 version.

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5 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: So we'll

6 reserve 19 for that redacted version of 8.

Mr. Sheehan, do you have questions

8 for Mr. Frink?

MR. SHEEHAN: I do have a couple.

CROSS-EXAMINATION

- 11 BY MR. SHEEHAN:
- 12 Q. Mr. Frink, there was an exchange between the
- 13 Commissioners and Mr. Sansoucy about what was
- in Liberty's tariff as far as cost to connect
- 15 new customers. Do you recall that?
- 16 A. Yes, I recall that.
- 17 Q. Can you explain? As you know, Liberty has a
- 18 revenue test for new customers: Six years
- 19 for residential and eight years for
- 20 commercial customers. You're aware of that
- 21 test?
- 22 A. I believe it's six years for residential and
- eight years for commercial.
- 24 Q. And there was also discussion of the Northern

test, which is a DCF that's been spoken about a few times today.

- 3 A. That's correct.
- Q. Can you explain the difference between those two tests, the revenue test and the DCF?
- Well, so the Liberty revenue test at the time 6 Α. it was implemented, was representative of a 7 DCF result that would result in a payback of 8 20 years for residential and 10 years for 9 10 commercial industrial customers, but it was 11 just done -- it had -- Liberty -- or EnergyNorth, as part of Liberty acquisition, 12 had a revenue test, just a nice, 13 14 straightforward, this many years of revenue 15 would require this. So that's still 16 basically how it works. But it's premised on 17 producing a result that's somewhat similar to what Northern does. 18
 - Q. So if I understand what you just said, the six- and eight-year tests are simplified versions, if you will, of a 10- or 20-year DCF.
- 23 A. Correct.

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24 Q. And they, in effect, come up with similar

results as a 10- and 20-year DCF.

- 2 A. They should.
- Q. And as an aside, we did change our tariff
 recently to include DCF for larger projects.
- 5 A. For projects over a million dollars, yes.
- Q. And the other question I had for you: You told us you'd taken a brief review of
 Liberty's Epping filing, and you gave us your preliminary comments. But you reached no conclusions with regard to that?
- 11 A. Correct.

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- Q. And it's possible that your conclusion is
 that the Liberty proposal is a better
 proposal than the Northern proposal for the
 amount of build-out and the cost impacts to
 customers.
 - A. Well, at this point I would be -- typically when I review a franchise request, I review it on a stand-alone basis and the merits of each proposal. I don't envision making a recommendation as to one over the other. If it's a good -- if Northern made a filing as they have that is good for the Company and good for customers and in the public

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interest, I'll put in testimony to that
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- effect, which is what I have done. I'll do
- 3 the same thing with the Liberty filing.
- 4 Q. So your testimony today is that the
- 5 Liberty -- the Northern proposal, standing
- alone, meets the usual test for a franchise
- 7 expansion.
- 8 A. That's correct.
- 9 Q. And with Liberty you may come to that same
- 10 conclusion or may come to a different
- 11 conclusion. Time will tell.
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. Thank you.
- MR. SHEEHAN: That's all I have.
- 15 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Ratigan,
- 16 you have questions for Mr. Frink?
- 17 MR. RATIGAN: Just a couple. Thank
- 18 you.
- 19 CROSS-EXAMINATION
- 20 BY MR. RATIGAN:
- 21 Q. Mr. Frink, are you aware that the Town of
- 22 Epping Selectmen have asked the Commission to
- defer decision-making on these franchise
- 24 applications until such time as they've had

an opportunity to review them both?

- 2 A. I'm aware of that, yes.
- Q. And do you think that's a reasonable way to proceed?
- 5 A. I do not. I say that Northern is ready to
 6 commence service this summer, and I don't
 7 know that Liberty will ever be able to
 8 commence service. It's dependent on Granite
 9 Bridge being built. So I don't feel that
 10 proposal is ripe.
- 11 Q. And are you offended by the fact that the
 12 Town of Epping Selectmen have sought to get
 13 competing proposals from two gas service
 14 suppliers?
- 15 A. Oh, absolutely not. I respect their involvement.
- Q. And do you think that it is reasonable for
 the Commission to listen to the Town of
 Epping's request to consider what is in its
 best interest?
- 21 A. Absolutely, as I did.
- Q. And of course no one would be able to reach conclusions about these two applications until they're completed; isn't that true?

- 1 A. No. You can reach conclusion on the Northern
- petition, as I have, based on what they filed
- and based on our review.
- 4 Q. The question was no one will be able to reach
- 5 conclusions about these two applications
- 6 until their review is concluded.
- 7 A. Okay. So you're right. The Commission could
- 8 not reach a conclusion on the Liberty
- 9 petition until it has completed its review.
- 10 Q. And nor can you.
- 11 A. Nor can I. That's correct.
- 12 Q. Thank you.
- MR. RATIGAN: Nothing further.
- 14 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Buckley.
- 15 CROSS-EXAMINATION
- 16 BY MR. BUCKLEY:
- 17 Q. Mr. Frink, if you could please just briefly
- 18 for me explain the risk-sharing mechanism
- 19 that has been approved in settlement
- 20 agreements in previous dockets and contrast
- it with the protections you have built into
- your testimony for existing ratepayers.
- 23 A. Okay. I think the Liberty petition for the
- 24 Pelham and Windham franchises is probably a

good example that was filed as a request for both at the same time. We created a -- the Commission approved a sharing mechanism for Pelham and did not require one for the Windham expansion. And it comes down in my mind to the risk associated with the projects. So the Pelham project first had more costs, and there were more concerns. One thing, if I recall correctly in the Windham proceeding, there was a proposal for a large, new development. And if you have a large, new development, and they put in a gas main, all those homes are going to be served with natural gas. We also looked at the percentage of homes and premises that were served using propane as its energy source. There's a much greater opportunity to convert propane customers to natural gas than there is for oil customers. So that factored into So Windham, similar to Northern's Epping it. proposal, that seemed -- there was much greater assurance that Liberty would achieve the expected revenues. And the costs themselves were simply a normal extension of

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an existing main into Windham from an adjoining town. So that was fairly straightforward, similar to this.

And in this Northern proposal, the customers they're targeting are largely propane customers, certainly the largest load. So there's a high level of confidence that they will achieve the expected revenues.

So in the franchises where there have been a sharing mechanism -- Lebanon and Hanover is a good example -- there's a lot of uncertainty both in cost and in revenues. So that was the primary purpose behind the sharing mechanism.

- Q. And in your testimony, have you proposed a mechanism which provides a degree of accountability relative to the projected net present value and what its actual net present value potentially might be?
- A. My testimony does not suggest that, does not explicitly state that. But my testimony does ask -- recommend some filing requirements that will allow us to review what the actual costs were and what the revenues generated

from this project will be when Northern files So if we look at this, its next rate case. if Staff and the OCA or any party reviews this and says, well, the costs were way underestimated, their revenues were way overestimated, we would have the opportunity to argue that there should be full recovery at that point in time. So even though it's not -- there's no sharing mechanism and no explicit requirement that there be an adjustment that could easily be identified if this project -- if this analysis turns out to be a very poor analysis, there's no opportunity for anybody to object to recovery of the full costs or a part of the costs in this project.

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Q. We heard Commissioner Giaimo raise the idea of "you'll know it when you see it," as far as a variance from the projected net present value that unfairly burdens existing ratepayers. Can you provide me with a greater degree of specificity as far as how much of a variance would be too much of a variance?

A. I want to make sure I understand your question. You're talking about a variance in the analysis or a rate impact? What is it exactly? Across subsidization in general?

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- Q. Yes, yes. So the projections of the project, if they had been off to the degree that the existing ratepayers might unfairly have to carry the burden of a project, can you give me a sense of the order of magnitude that such projections would have to be on?
- I really can't because, for instance, in the Α. Liberty rate case, I took exception to the --I recommended there not be a consolidation of the Keene rates in the EnergyNorth rates because even though the magnitude of the impact was small, it was -- there were a number of issues I explained in my testimony as to why I didn't think it was appropriate. So it may be that subsidization shouldn't be based on the magnitude of the project. again, it could be a small project that's way off, so the impact on rates may be very small. But if the underlying analysis was horribly done, then I think that's

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         inappropriate. Even though it's maybe a
         small subsidy, I think it shouldn't be
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                   If there's a large project that may
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         allowed.
         have a small subsidy but has a bigger impact
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         on rates than a small project, but, you know,
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         it's within a reasonable -- the estimates
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         weren't bad, the revenues were close, I
         wouldn't seek a disallowance.
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                                         So it really
         comes down to the circumstances of any one
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         particular subsidy that might be identified.
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- Q. Thank you, Mr. Frink. No further questions.
- 12 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Taylor.
- MR. TAYLOR: I have no questions.
- 14 Thank you.
- 15 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Commissioner
- 16 Bailey.

- 17 INTERROGATORIES BY COMMISSIONERS:
- 18 BY COMMISSIONER BAILEY:
- 19 Q. Good afternoon.
- 20 A. Good afternoon.
- Q. Are the conversion rates that Northern used in their net present value analysis for the percent of customers that are expected to
- 24 convert to gas reasonable?

A. Yes, they are.

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- Q. And can you tell me how you know that the G-42 customer or customers are now expected to take gas that you revised in your testimony?
- Actually, before I put it in my testimony, I had through an e-mail to the Company asked what the expectation was. I was aware of who the customer is. And it's a large customer with many box stores in New Hampshire. And those types of customers typically will use transportation service because they have a lot of bargaining power, and the marketers certainly pursue those customers. The Company got back to me after I filed my testimony and told me that even though it was somewhat of a surprise to them looking at they serve that customer in other franchises, and they said they take firm service inside their other franchise territory and their existing franchise territory, so the expectation was that they would do that here. So that's -- it was just a timing issue. filed my testimony before I got confirmation,

so that's why I corrected it here.

- Q. Thank you. Are we being asked to approve a franchise for Northern for the entire town of Epping or just the portion that they're agreeing to serve now?
- A. You would be approving the franchise for all of Epping. That's the request.
 - Q. Okay. And if Liberty came in and asked for a franchise, is there anything preventing us from also granting them a franchise? I suppose that's a legal question, not fair to ask you.
 - A. Well, putting the legal question aside, I've had discussions with Safety on this. And they prefer and strongly recommend that a single franchise in an entire town be awarded to one utility because it makes it easier for Dig Safe purposes and for other safety reasons. So, putting the legal issue aside, which, right, I'm not the person to answer that question, there are Staff concerns regarding safety that it could involve. So if Liberty were to come in and make a request for a section of the town, I don't know what

Staff's position would be on that. We'd have to do the financial analysis and consider the operating issues and safety issues.

- Q. Based on what you know about Northern, do you think it's likely that they will expand beyond what they have in Phase 1 and Phase 2 within the town of Epping, or will they just serve Phase 1 and Phase 2?
- Northern's tariff provisions for Α. Contributions In Aid of Construction are more restrictive than Liberty's, and Northern abides by their tariff as they're required So it's hard to imagine that extending further into a rural residential area is going to be economically viable. So I would be surprised if they go beyond what they're currently envisioning up Route 27 towards Manchester, along the route that Liberty's petition is offering to actually pass this through. So I know the Northern filing has some confidential information about future plans, but those plans I think are -- don't take them in that direction.
 - Q. Okay. Thank you.

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1 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: That's all I

- 2 have.
- 3 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Commissioner
- 4 Giaimo.
- 5 QUESTIONS BY COMMISSIONER GIAIMO:
- 6 Q. Good afternoon, Mr. Frink.
- 7 A. Good afternoon.
- 8 Q. I just want to touch on the last topic that
- you were talking about. You said the Safety
- 10 Division strongly recommends one utility in a
- 11 town and not two?
- 12 A. That's correct.
- 13 Q. Are there situations in New Hampshire where
- there are multiple utilities with a franchise
- in the same town? Are you aware?
- 16 A. Not for the gas division.
- 17 O. Not for gas but for other utilities?
- 18 A. Yes, I believe that's correct.
- 19 Q. All right. Thanks.
- 20 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: I have no
- 21 questions for Mr. Frink that haven't already
- 22 been answered.
- Ms. Fabrizio, do you have any
- follow-up for Mr. Frink?

1	MS. FABRIZIO: I do not. Thank
2	you.
3	CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Frink, I
4	think you can return to your seat.
5	There are no other witnesses;
6	correct?
7	[No verbal response]
8	CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right.
9	Without objection, we will strike I.D. on
10	Exhibits 1 through 10 and 12 through 18.
11	We're holding 11 and 19, 11 for response from
12	Northern and 19 for some document from Staff
13	on Northern related to a redacted version of
14	Exhibit 8.
15	At a hearing like this, there is an
16	opportunity for public comment. People have
17	alluded to the one letter that we've
18	received. Are there any members of the
19	public here who wish to provide public
20	comment on Northern's petition to provide gas
21	service in Epping?
22	[No verbal response]
23	CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Seeing none,
24	the last thing that we need to do is allow

the parties to make closings. What we'll do is we will go essentially in the order that we've been doing: Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Ratigan, Mr. Buckley, Ms. Fabrizio and then Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Sheehan.

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CLOSING STATEMENTS

MR. SHEEHAN: Thank you. And thank you for accommodating us today. Liberty does not challenge Northern's technical, managerial or financial ability to develop the Epping franchise as stated in its petition and during today's hearing. Liberty, Northern has been successfully and safely operating its business for years. However, Liberty does object to the Commission awarding the Epping franchise to The statutory standard that the Northern. Commission must apply in deciding whether to award a new franchise requires more than having the technical, managerial and financial ability. Those requirements are actually not in the statute. They are PUC orders saying this is how we can help

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determine whether an entity is appropriate to have a franchise. The controlling statute requires that the Commission find it to be in the, quote, public good, close quote, before awarding a franchise. And that's really the only standard in the statute. And that of course is 374:22 and 26. Under the specific circumstances of the Epping franchise, the public good standard requires that the Commission review more than just the technical, managerial or financial ability, and that's what's occupied most of the time today.

As you all well know, Liberty has also requested a franchise to provide gas service to Epping. Liberty also has the technical, managerial and financial ability to operate the Epping franchise, and we believe that will be satisfactorily proven through our docket. Thus, we need a tie breaker, as I mentioned earlier. The tie breaker from our perspective is for the Commission to decide which proposal better serves the public good. It is a broader

question than the technical, managerial and financial condition. We obviously think, due to the opportunities provided by the unique Granite Bridge Project, that Liberty can win the tie breaker. As highlighted during this case, Liberty can serve West Epping and many, many more residential customers than That is not Northern's fault. Northern. Ιt is just the geography of where Northern's coming from compared to where Liberty will come from and the location of particular customers. As we know from the Northern filing, they are extending their existing mains into the commercial center of Epping. Northern -- I mean Liberty will start at its proposed LNG facility quite a ways west. so the cost to run east into that same commercial district, which Liberty will have the same success in converting, goes by many more residential neighborhoods. So, again, it's a function of geography. Plus, as someone testified today, the Wal*Mart distribution center is just to the west of our proposed LNG site which, while not in

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Epping, but it would support financially an extension there, again running by many more residential areas in Epping. So at the end of the development of Epping, simply by a matter of geography of where we're starting from and where Northern would start from, we can simply serve more customers. And as Mr. Frink just summarized, our tariff is actually slightly more favorable to allow to pick up residential customers. So the number may not be 3,000 as Mr. Sansoucy said, but it's certainly more than Northern will go by.

Second, Liberty's residential rates are lower than Northern's. It is a fair question to ask what impact Granite Bridge will have on those rates. It is premature to judge that question now. Yes, Granite Bridge will cost money. But yes, Granite Bridge will also save money. The whole concept of Granite Bridge is to provide cheaper winter gas for our customers. And overall, we believe it would be a cost savings.

Third, we have -- the shareholders have offered the conversion fund.

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And fourth, and not to be understated, it is the Town's preference, and they are the ones who will be living with whichever utility serves Northern -- serves Epping for decades.

So we recognize that the Commission could disagree with that, and that's why we asked that the Commission not make a ruling in this docket until it has a chance to consider Liberty's. It would be unfortunate, for lack of a better word, to grant Northern the franchise and in hindsight say, Oh, it would have been better if we had let the Liberty case run its course and we would have learned X, Y and Z.

The delay for Northern is minimal.

An order in the Liberty docket could be six months off. We are roughly six months since Northern filed its petition. A lot of the work in our petition is overlapped with what we're talking about today. So there's no reason we couldn't be at a hearing on Liberty's petition later this spring. And if we lose, we're done. Northern starts

building the summer of '19.

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That's all I have. So we respectfully ask that you withhold ruling on this petition until you have a chance to consider Liberty's and then issue orders on both at roughly the same time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Thank you, Mr. Sheehan.

Mr. Ratigan.

MR. RATIGAN: Respectfully, the Town of Epping joins in the request that's been made by Liberty to defer action. Municipalities build infrastructure for the Infrastructure is very important long term. for municipal development. We've seen, you know, the troubles that exist in New Hampshire when there's not Internet in rural The prospect that there could be more areas. service throughout all of Epping, including West Epping, is an important development for the municipality in the long term. allow for commercial and residential development in areas that might not otherwise be served by gas. And the selectmen think

that is an important thing. We believe that, as Liberty has said, the Selectmen would like to see both of these proposals considered, and then we respect your decision-making authority. But we also think that to be able to have both of these proposals considered and concluded for a judgment to be made, we think you may very well reach the same conclusions that the Town has reached, that infrastructure in the larger area of town serves the public good more than a smaller area of town. And should the Committee decide not to approve this, we will have service by Northern Utilities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Buckley.

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr.

Chairman.

Based on what the OCA has heard at today's hearing from Northern Utilities regarding the Company's willingness to serve residential customers should expansion to those customers be economic and not unfairly shift costs of expansion to existing customers, and what we see as a fatal flaw in

the analysis provided by the Town of Epping's expert witness -- that is, the lack of accounting for the rate and bill impacts associated with the Granite Bridge facility, which happens to be a prerequisite of serving the franchise area -- we are not convinced Epping's request that the Commission review both franchise applications in tandem should be granted.

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We're also satisfied with the response from Mr. Frink regarding the likelihood of disallowances in light of a project's NPVs which might vary from what the Company had projected and promised to zealously advocate based on reporting requirements Mr. Frink has suggested in his testimony for a disallowance in any instances where Northern's expansion in Epping proves to unfairly burden Northern's existing ratepayers. In light of this, we do not object to the Company's request for a franchise, so long as the Commission accepts the conditions described by Mr. Frink's testimony. Thank you.

1	CHAIRMAN I	HONIGBERG:	Ms. I	Fabrizio.
2	MS. FABRI	ZIO: Thank	you,	Mr.

Chairman.

issue an order approving Northern's petition for franchise authority to serve natural gas in the Town of Epping without delay based on the Company's petition filings, as well as the testimony provided in today's hearing. Staff has reviewed all financial filings accompanying the petition, as well as clarifications and further information provided in response to discovery. Based on its review, Staff believes Northern has the requisite financial, engineering and managerial capability to operate in the service territory of Epping as proposed in its petition.

The results of the discounted cash flow analysis conducted by Northern indicates that the proposed expansion will benefit existing customers through lower rates. As Staff has testified, Northern already provides service to the adjacent town of

Brentwood within a mile of the town of Epping boundary, and the Company expects to be able to offer service to a significant number of large commercial customers that are currently using propane. Those customers are likely to realize substantial energy savings from converting to natural gas, which is expected to be available to them this coming winter. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Taylor.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you.

As demonstrated in Unitil's petition and in Staff's recommendation that the Commission approve Unitil's petition granting Unitil's franchise rights to operate in the town of Epping is in the public good. The Company's expansion into Epping represents the natural and incremental growth of its natural gas distribution system which Unitil has been steadily expanding westward in the vicinity of Routes 27 and 101.

Following the Commission's grant of a franchise in Brentwood in 2014, Unitil expanded service, such that its main is now

one mile from the Epping town line -- in other words, Northern is at the front door, prepared to commence work and begin serving Epping customers this year. Its ability to serve Epping is not contingent upon any approval, regulatory or otherwise, other than the one requested by the Commission in this docket.

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There's no question that Unitil has the requisite financial, engineering and managerial capability to operate in Epping, and we appreciate that others have said the The Company has a strong record of providing safe and reliable service to its customers at just and reasonable rates and expects to do so in Epping, which has experienced significant growth in recent years and will benefit from the introduction of natural gas service to its businesses and residents. At least one owner of a retail center with 26 potential commercial customers has supported Unitil's proposal on behalf of its tenants, all of which are currently using The prompt extension of Unitil's propane.

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distribution system to these and other customers in Epping so they can realize the cost savings associated with converting to natural gas is in the public good.

The Company's steady but conservative approach to its natural gas distribution system and service territory has enabled the Company to extend its reach in the seacoast area to customers who desire to use natural gas without imposing undue financial risk upon the Company or its ratepayers.

Unitil is now ideally situated to serve the town of Epping, as its main in Brentwood is located only a mile from the Epping town line, and there are a significant number of potential new customers, including many commercial customers, who will have an interest in and benefit from the customers [sic] services now. Unitil's petition clearly meets the public good standard, and the Company respectfully respects [sic] the Commission issue an order on the merits of the petition as soon as practical so the

Company can proceed to obtain all necessary permits, begin construction and commence service this year.

4 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Thank you, Mr. 5 Taylor.

MR. TAYLOR: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm not done.

8 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: And another 9 thing...

MR. TAYLOR: I should be careful with my pauses.

CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: It sure sounded like a wrap-up right there.

MR. TAYLOR: Tragically, not so.

I'll try to get there as soon as I can.

I do want to make the point that jurisdiction to grant a franchise lies solely within the New Hampshire Public Utilities

Commission. Unitil looks forward to partnering with the Town of Epping to expand service within the town to customers who would like to realize cost savings and other benefits associated with conversion to natural gas. And while the Company obviously

values input of the communities into which it extends its systems, as evidence by Unitil's outreach to Epping officials in advance of filing its petition, it respectfully notes that the jurisdiction to grant a franchise to operate in the town lies solely with the Commission. That authority is set forth in RSA 374, and particularly subsections 22 and 26, and the Commission must grant a franchise when it will be for the public good, and not otherwise.

The record demonstrates that the Town's recommendation to the Commission and its participation in this docket, while likely well-intentioned, must be viewed in light of the Host Community Agreement between Liberty and Epping, and the Town's understanding that Liberty would pay for all work associated with the RFP. Indeed, the Town has forwarded Mr. Sansoucy's bill to Liberty and instructed payment -- instructed Liberty to pay Mr. Sansoucy directly.

It is not possible to consider the Town's recommendation in this case as an

impartial one. The sense that the Town's recommendation was something of a foregone conclusion is borne out by the fact that the criteria upon which the report are based were provided to Mr. Sansoucy on October 22nd, as was discussed today, and he provided his draft report to the Town on or about October 10th for the criteria actually communicated to him. So, again, the Company doesn't doubt the Town's good intentions. However, the jurisdiction to grant a franchise belongs only to this Commission. To the extent that the Commission is inclined to consider the Town's input in this case, it should also consider the potential impact of the financial arrangement between the Town and Liberty Utilities.

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Finally, the Commission should not delay the orderly and prompt conduct of these proceedings by indefinitely delaying an order or consolidating this docket with Liberty's franchise docket. Unitil filed its franchise petition in June of 2018. The Commission has now conducted a final hearing on the

Company's petition, and Unitil has a right to a timely decision and an order on the merits so it can plan its 2019 construction accordingly or, if necessary, redirect its capital elsewhere.

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Liberty and the Town of Epping is suggesting the Commission delay issuance of an order in this docket until the Commission has evaluated the proposal submitted by Liberty in Docket DG 18-194. The Company believes this would be manifestly unjust and unfair to Unitil. It would clearly impair the prompt and orderly disposition of this matter, and we think it would set a dangerous precedent going forward. Liberty's petition, as has been addressed by other parties, is not ripe because the Company has acknowledged that it can only maybe be able to or it could only begin construction in 2022, more than three years in the future. By law, a franchise must be exercised within two years of being granted or it becomes invalid pursuant to RSA 374:27. Thus, any order granting a franchise to Liberty could not be

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issued until sometime in 2020 at its earliest if it's going to be exercised by Liberty. Liberty's suggestion that the docket can be wrapped up within six months is not really correct because Liberty could not exercise any franchise that it's granted in 2019 by its own acknowledgment. Even then, Liberty's ability to serve Epping is entirely contingent upon the Commission's approval of the Granite Bridge Project, as well as the Site Evaluation Committee's approval of the The NHPUC docket is nowhere near close same. to completion, and in fact the procedural schedule is currently suspended, and the application to the SEC has yet to be filed.

Unitil's ability to serve Epping is not contingent upon any regulatory approvals other than the one that we now ask for. Its gas distribution infrastructure is built up to a point just outside of Epping, and the Company can begin construction and commence service this year. The Company should promptly -- the Commission should promptly grant Unitil the requested franchise and

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          issue an order as soon as practicable.
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         you.
                    CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Now, Mr.
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         Taylor?
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                    MR. TAYLOR: That is the end of my
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         presentation.
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                    CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG:
                                          Thank you very
                 Thank you all for your presentations
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         much.
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         today.
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                    With that, we will close the
         hearing and record, except for Exhibits 11
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         and 19, take the matter under advisement and
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          issue an order as quickly as we can.
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                (Hearing concluded at 3:38 p.m.)
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1 CERTIFICATE

I, Susan J. Robidas, a Licensed
Shorthand Court Reporter and Notary Public
of the State of New Hampshire, do hereby
certify that the foregoing is a true and
accurate transcript of my stenographic
notes of these proceedings taken at the
place and on the date hereinbefore set
forth, to the best of my skill and ability
under the conditions present at the time.

I further certify that I am neither attorney or counsel for, nor related to or employed by any of the parties to the action; and further, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed in this case, nor am I financially interested in this action.

Susan J. Robidas, LCR/RPR
Licensed Shorthand Court Reporter
Registered Professional Reporter
N.H. LCR No. 44 (RSA 310-A:173)

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