

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Inter-Department Communication

DATE: October 1, 2019

AT (OFFICE): NHPUC

FROM:  Rich Chagnon
Assistant Director – Electric Division

SUBJECT: Docket No. DE 19-087
Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. and Vermont Transco LLC

Petition for Approval of Assignment of Certain Easement Rights from Vermont Transco LLC to Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy

TO: Commissioners
Debra Howland, Executive Director

CC: Tom Frantz, Director, Electric Division
Randy Knepper, Director, Safety Division
Suzanne Amidon, Staff Attorney

On April 29, 2019, Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. and Vermont Transco LLC (jointly, VELCO) filed a petition pursuant to RSA 374:30 for the approval of an assignment of easement rights to Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy (PSNH or Eversource). VELCO requested that the Commission find the assignment to be in the “public good” as required by RSA 374:30.

The petition states that Vermont Transco LLC is a limited liability company organized and existing under the laws of the State of Vermont and engaged in the transmission of electric energy within the State of Vermont and the State of New Hampshire. Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. is a public utility corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Vermont and engaged in the management of the transmission of electric energy within the State of Vermont and New Hampshire. Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. is the manager of Vermont Transco and manages all of Vermont Transco’s assets, including its transmission lines and easements located in the State of New Hampshire.

In 1957-1958, VELCO acquired easements for, and constructed, a 115 kV transmission line that runs from VELCO's Ascutney substation in Weathersfield, Vermont. The line runs approximately one mile and taps into a line owned by the New England Power Company (NEPCO), currently affiliate of National Grid USA. The portion of the right-of-way (ROW) at issue in this petition is this one-mile right of way (Claremont ROW). VELCO constructed its transmission line on the southern side of the Claremont ROW.

In 1967, VELCO and PSNH agreed that, as part of a power purchase arrangement from the PSNH's Merrimack generation station, PSNH would build a 115 kV transmission line in the northern half of the Claremont ROW, extending from the NEPCO line to VELCO's Weathersfield substation. At the time, an agreement was reached in principle that VELCO would assign half of its rights in the Claremont ROW to PSNH for purposes of building the PSNH line. PSNH constructed the line in 1967, but the parties never formalized the assignment of the Claremont ROW at that time. The Commission's approval of this petition would allow the parties to formalize the agreement.

VELCO's petition states that the parties have worked cooperatively in the maintenance of the Claremont ROW and operate their separate lines to support the safe and reliable transmission service. VELCO stated that PSNH has agreed to pay \$35,000 for the assignment, which is the amount it agreed to pay in 1967, inflated to the current value of money.

On August 23, 2019, Eversource filed a letter stating its agreement with the requested relief, and said that the assignment of the portion of the ROW as described in the petition is in the public good. Eversource asserted that formalizing the agreement will allow VELCO and Eversource to continue to provide safe and reliable transmission services by formalizing an arrangement the companies have successfully operated under for over 50 years. Eversource attached a map of the subject ROW to its letter.

Recommendation

Staff reviewed the petition and letter. Based on the facts as stated above, and its review of the relevant documents, Staff recommends that the Commission approve the petition and find that the assignment of the easement rights as proposed is in the public good. Staff recommends that the Commission issue an order *nisi* to formalize its approval.

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