1		STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE	
2		PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION	N
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4	January 13, 2 Concord, New	2020 - 1:09 p.m.	PUC ZECNYZEWCELL
5	Concord, New	TIGHT DITTE	
6	RE:	DE 19-203	
7		ELECTRIC RENEWABLE PORTFOI STANDARD: Adjustment to F	
8		Portfolio Standard Class I Requirements.	III
9		(Hearing to receive public	c comment)
10			
11	PRESENT:	Cmsr. Kathryn M. Bailey	Presiding
12		Cmsr. Michael S. Giaimo	
13		Doreen Borden, Clerk	
14			
15	APPEARANCES:	(No appearances taken)	
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23	Court Repo	orter: Steven E. Patnaude	e, LCR No. 52
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## PROCEEDING

CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. We're here this afternoon in Docket DE 19-203, which is the adjustment to the Renewable Portfolio Standard Class III requirements matter. We're here to consider and take public comment on possible adjustments to the Renewable Portfolio Standard for Class III.

We have, just so everyone knows, set up a call-in number for this proceeding to give people the opportunity to listen in.

Individuals on the line are listening in only.

And, if you want to make public comment, you should file written public comment. So, please make sure your phones are on mute.

Mr. Wind, any preliminary issues?

MR. WIND: Sure. Thank you. I will kind of set the stage here.

My name is Eric Wind, and I'm representing Commission Staff. I am joined with Karen Cramton and David Wiesner.

So, we are here to hear from interested parties, to address whether or not the Commission should modify the Class III

Renewable Portfolio Standards requirement for the 2019 calendar year. The Commission may modify the Class III requirement percentage so it equals an amount between 85 and 95 percent of the reasonably expected potential annual output of available eligible sources.

The Commission Staff, based on information from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, suspects that output is lower than previous years, due to suspension of operations by several Class III eligible facilities. So, unlike similar proceedings in the past, this is not about the demand side of the market and how it interfaces with other states. It's more about supply side, which is why we're here today.

So, as far as Staff goes, we are interested in receiving comments that relate our understanding of the supply implications within the market, in addition to any comments as to whether or not the Commission should exercise its authority to modify the percentage, and, if so, by how much.

We did want to acknowledge

Whitefield, Springfield, and Bridgewater for sharing their generation output. That was a key piece of information that we were looking for. So, thank you for your written comments there.

And, to accommodate similar submissions, we are requesting that the docket remain open for written comments for one week. So, comments would be filed by the end of the day Monday, January 20th, 2020. And, to that end, if any --

I'm sorry, I'm just going to cut in.

Someone who just joined on the phone line,

you're not on mute. So, if you could please

mute your call.

If anyone is worried about sharing confidential or commercial or financial information, they may request confidential treatment of their written filings under Puc 203.08.

So, with that said, I will turn it over. And we look forward to hearing from the stakeholders here today.

CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Thank you. And I

1 would just note that Monday, the 20th, is a 2 holiday. And, so, we will leave the record open until Monday, the 20 -- I mean "Tuesday", 3 the 21st. 4 5 Okay. So, it looks to me like we 6 have about five people who wanted to speak 7 today. And I'll go through them in the order of who signed up. Mr. Monahan, did you want to 8 9 speak? If you're here? There you are. 10 MR. MONAHAN: Yes. Thank you. I 11 think the fact that you keep the record open 12 for a week is sufficient. So, I don't need to 13 speak today. 14 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you. 15 All right. I'm just going to read 16 the first three, so people know what order 17 we're going in. Dan Allegretti will be first. 18 Timothy McLaughlin -- no, sorry, you're not 19 speaking. Jessica Chiavara will be second. 20 And Carleton Simpson will be third. 21 So, we'll get started with Mr. 22 Allegretti, if I'm saying that right. 23 MR. ALLEGRETTI: You are, indeed. 24 Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. My name

is Dan Allegretti. I'm with Sigma Consultants.

I'm here today on behalf of Constellation New

Energy. I do want to make clear that I'm here

today as a witness, not as counsel.

Constellation New Energy is one of the largest load-serving entities in New England. It is a licensed competitive retail electric supplier, and it does business in the business-to-business market here in the State of New Hampshire. Constellation has participated in proceedings similar to this one before this Commission in prior years, where the Commission has considered exercising its authority under RSA 362-F:3 to make modifications to the RPS requirements, particularly in circumstances where the market has been in shortage.

With me today is Dan Heim, who is an actual REC trader. He is perhaps the largest buyer of renewable energy certificates in New England, and participates frequently in the marketplace.

Based on the experience of the trading desk that he operates for

Constellation, it's their belief that the market for 2019 New Hampshire Class III renewable energy certificates is currently in shortage. Prices in that marketplace toward the end of summer were in the \$20 to \$25 range. More recently, beginning in the fall, they began trading at or just slightly below the \$55 alternate compliance payment in New Hampshire. There is -- there is reason to believe, therefore, that the increase in prices is due to a constrained supply. Obviously, as the Commission put

Obviously, as the Commission put forward in their notice, there are changes, fundamental changes, in the supply of New Hampshire Class III RECs due to the retirement of certain facilities. We've also observed, on the Constellation trading desk, that the forward market for 2020 Class III RECs is currently trading above the alternate compliance payment, further indicating a market expectation that there will be a constrained supply for the foreseeable future with regard to those renewable energy certificates.

We think that it is appropriate,

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1
         consistent with past practice at the
 2
         Commission, to consider making a modification
 3
         under its authority to reduce the requirement
 4
         to approximately 85 percent for the reasonably
 5
         expected potential annual output of available
         eligible resources, after taking into account
 6
 7
         demand for programs in other states.
 8
                   We would note that there is demand
 9
         for these RECs in other states, particularly in
10
         Connecticut, where there is a higher ACP.
11
         would result in a payment of ACP in New
12
         Hampshire, and the likely submission of actual
13
         renewable energy certificates into Connecticut.
14
         We think that the state would be better served
15
         by making a reduction to the RPS requirement
16
         for 2019. And, therefore, we would encourage
17
         you to consider doing so.
18
                    Thank you very much.
19
                   CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Thank you. Okay.
20
         We will move on to Ms. Chiavara.
21
                   MS. CHIAVARA: Hello. Good
22
         afternoon. Oh. Okay.
23
                   Yes. My name is Jessica Chiavara.
         I'm counsel --
24
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CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: I'm sorry, I said that wrong.

MS. CHIAVARA: Oh, it's -- most people do. That's fine.

I'm counsel for Public Service

Company of New Hampshire, doing business as

Eversource Energy. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I'd like to provide Eversource's position regarding the

Class III purchase requirement and our current market position, and its relevance to the matter at hand, and whether or not the

Commission should modify that same purchase requirement for the 2019 compliance year.

I won't go into the background and the listing of the issues, as Staff and parties in their written comments at the end of last week have already gone over those. And, yes, I will go straight to our points.

Eversource is in a comparable

position to Unitil, which, in its comments last

Friday, stated they have met their current

8 percent purchase requirement for compliance

year 2019. While Eversource comprises over 35

percent of the total New Hampshire demand market for the Class III RECs, we, too, have nearly met our purchase requirement. We have, to date, filled 7.9 out of the 8 percent purchase requirement, which is 98 percent compliance. In terms of RECs, that comes out to 262,848 credits, which were all purchased by the end of November 2019, at an average price of \$46.42 per credit, and the most recent credits purchased at \$52. The total dollar amount of purchased RECs totaling \$12.2 million for Class III. Eversource's remaining purchase obligation to reach the 8 percent is 4,311 Class III RECs.

position, and this may likely apply to many of the New Hampshire market participants, if the Commission were to reduce the purchasing requirement now or later in this current compliance year, it would be difficult to offset some costs by reselling the already purchased RECs, as a reduced compliance standard, combined with other market participants possibly selling off their excess

RECs due to the same reduction by the Commission, would give our excess RECs very little market value, and that might apply even if we go outside of -- tried to go outside of New Hampshire to resell them.

Additionally, by having this hearing halfway through the compliance year, Eversource has considered pausing our purchasing until the outcome of this proceeding is known.

But what is particular -- of
particular interest and importance to
Eversource are bills that are currently in
front of the Legislature right now, namely HB
1364, that would reduce or eliminate Class III
RECs altogether, and HB 1518, that would change
the alternative compliance payments, or ACP.
If either or both of these bills pass, in the
face of the Commission reducing the current
compliance year's purchasing requirement, any
of these already purchased \$12.2 million in
RECs by Eversource will likely surely be made
worthless, by eliminating our option to either
carryover to future compliance years or resell
in future compliance years the excess RECs that

would be caused by the relaxation of the purchase requirement this year.

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Given these reasons, Eversource's recommendation is that the Commission takes no action to reduce the 2019 REC Class III purchase requirement. Given the reduction in supply, it is likely to be an ongoing issue, and, in some cases, permanent reduction in So, if the Commission wishes to supply. examine reducing the requirement in future compliance years, Eversource respectfully suggests that the Commission takes action, that factors in the current legislative position towards compliance on this issue, which would provide an additional benefit to market participants of greater advance notice, prior to partial or total compliance fulfillment.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Thank you.

Commissioner Giaimo has a question.

CMSR. GIAIMO: Forgive my ignorance, but I think I know the answer. Would you be able to bank any credits for 2019 for 2020?

MS. CHIAVARA: Well, that depends on

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1
         what happens largely with these two bills.
                                                      So,
         let's say -- so, it was HB -- let me get the
 2
 3
         right bill number -- HB 1364, that could
 4
         possibly do away with Class III RECs
 5
         altogether, in which case banking would be a
 6
         nonissue, would be moot at that point.
 7
                   CMSR. GIAIMO: Okay. But, absent any
         legislative change in 2020, you would still
 8
         have the ability to bank in 2019?
9
10
                   MS. CHIAVARA: If there were no
11
         changes at all? Yes, we would.
12
                   CMSR. GIAIMO: And will you be
13
         advocating at the Legislature some sort of
14
         grandfathering provision with respect to the
15
         two bills you heard? To be determined? You
16
         don't have to answer that.
17
                   MR. FOSSUM: That's fine. I can.
18
         And, just for the record, this is Matthew
19
         Fossum, also with Eversource.
20
                   I don't believe the Company has, at
21
         least not publicly, a position on either of
22
         those bills. I think we are just here today to
23
         note that, that the outcome of those bills for
24
         2020 and beyond is interesting and should be of
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But, for 2019, we don't see there being 1 a pressing need to modify the requirements. 2 3 CMSR. GIAIMO: Thank you. 4 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you. 5 We're going to move on to Carleton Simpson, and 6 that will be followed by Mark Dean. 7 Mr. Simpson. MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Chairwoman 8 9 Martin, Commissioner Bailey, Commissioner 10 Giaimo. 11 My name is Carleton Simpson. I'm an 12 attorney here for Unitil Energy Systems. I am 13 joined today with Jeff Pentz, who's a Senior 14 Energy Analyst in our Energy Contracts group. 15 We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments 16 regarding Class III Renewable Portfolio 17 Standard. We filed written comments with the 18 Commission. So, I'll keep my verbal statements 19 brief. 20 Due to market changes, we do 21 encourage the Commission to exercise its 22 authority under RSA 362-F to adjust the Class 23 III RPS requirements. This would appropriately

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balance supply and demand changes in the market

1 due to the recent changes. It's expected that 2 electricity suppliers in New Hampshire will be 3 unable to purchase sufficient Class III certificates. While we have met our compliance 4 5 requirement of 8 percent, we do believe that 6 there will be a lack of supply in the market. 7 With that being said, I'll let our written comments speak for themselves. And we 8 9 are happy to take any questions. 10 Thank you. 11 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you. 12 Commissioner Bailey has a question. 13 CMSR. BAILEY: Do you think that you 14 would be able to sell your RECs? Are you 15 concerned about the pending legislation that 16 Eversource mentioned? If we --17 I'm sorry, that wasn't a very well 18 formulated question. But, if we reduce the 19 requirement, and you've already purchased all 8 20

I'm sorry, that wasn't a very well formulated question. But, if we reduce the requirement, and you've already purchased all 8 percent of yours, you acknowledge that you think there's going to be a shortage in the market, do you think you would be able to sell the RECs that you don't need this year, and is that what you would plan to do?

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1
                   MR. PENTZ: Hi, Commissioner Bailey.
 2
         This is Jeff Pentz, for Unitil.
 3
                    So, that's something we would have to
 4
         explore.
                   I know there are other markets, such
         as in Connecticut, where these RECs can be
 6
                That's something we will -- we will look
 7
         into, but we have not made an assessment yet as
         to whether that's feasible at this time.
 8
9
                   CMSR. BAILEY: Thank you.
10
                   MR. SIMPSON:
                                  Thank you.
11
                   CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Thank you.
12
         going to Mark Dean, who will be followed by
13
         Eric -- now I'm afraid I'm saying names
14
         wrong -- Maher.
15
                   Okay. Mr. Dean.
16
                   MR. DEAN: I'll begin standing, just
17
         so you know where the voice is coming from.
18
                   CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Thank you.
19
                   MR. DEAN: My name is Mark Dean.
20
         an attorney here in Concord, and I represent
21
         the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative.
22
                    I won't repeat the facts concerning
23
         the marketplace that have already been
24
         expressed, but will outline the Co-op's
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position.

The Co-op's goal in RPS compliance is to fully comply, and to do so in the most cost-effective way for its members. And we believe the Commission using its authority to reduce the 2019 requirement would be in accordance with that goal, to achieve compliance in the most cost-effective manner.

The Co-op has purchased enough RECs to be compliant in 2019. It purchases its RECs much like its underlying power supply arrangements, in a portfolio-managed arrangement. So, some of those RECs will have been purchased in previous years, from various sources. The Co-op has taken advantage of carryforward provisions, and expects that it would be able to do so from 2019 to 2020, if the Commission institutes a reduction of any kind.

I have appeared in I'm not quite sure how many of these hearings each spring, and the Co-op's position has consistently been that, where you can anticipate and reasonably expect there will be a shortage, that we urge you to

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1
         reduce the requirement to the greatest extent
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         that the statute permits you. I don't really
 3
         have any factual information to give you about
 4
         what that reasonable expectation should be,
 5
         unfortunately. But, from the buyer's side of
 6
         the marketplace, that information really isn't
 7
         available.
                   So, it's the Co-op's urging is that
 8
9
         you consider reducing to 85 percent of the
10
         amount you reasonably anticipate will be
11
         available for the 2019 year.
12
                   CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Thank you. Okay.
13
         No questions.
14
                   Moving on to Mr. Maher.
15
                   MR. MAHER: And that is the right way
16
         to pronounce it.
17
                   CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Good.
18
                   MR. MAHER: Good afternoon,
19
         everybody. Eric Maher, of Donahue, Tucker &
20
         Ciandella. I'm here on behalf of the
         Bridgewater Power Company. With me is Michael
21
22
         O'Leary, who is the manager of that facility.
23
                   The Bridgewater Power Company is the
24
         owner of a 15-megawatt biomass plant in the
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Town of Bridgewater, the output of which qualifies for Class III RECs. Historically, that facility has an anticipated output of 125 megawatt-hours per year, without a market -- market-derived suspension of operations.

In 2019, the plant had 81,644 megawatts of qualified generation, largely this was due to a temporary shutdown during the months of April, May, and June of 2019.

Just by background as to the circumstances that brought this up in a little bit more detail, specifically as experienced by the Bridgewater Power Company, this year has seen REC prices fluctuate between a low of \$14.40 per megawatt, up to a high of approximately \$50 per megawatt. The low prices, as has been noted, is largely due to the temporary and permanent shutdowns of other biomass facilities.

It's important to note that, as a result of the Governor's veto of House Bill 183, biomass facilities are more reliant on REC revenues, well, not than what it's been in the

1 past, but they are reliant upon REC revenues at 2 this period of time to maintain operations. 3 Partially due to the compliance period, which 4 gives load-serving entities the entire year to 5 purchase their REC requirements, there's been a 6 squeezing on generators in the earlier months, 7 which has, in turn, led to generators having to shut down in the earlier months. What this 8 9 causes is a shortage of qualified generation 10 availability for RECs. So, what I mean by 11 "squeezing" is load-serving entities in the 12 earlier months are offering an amount that is 13 not sufficient to justify continued operation, 14 which has resulted in temporary suspensions, 15 or, in the case of two facilities, permanent 16 suspension of operations. 17 And because of the compliance year, 18 the load-serving entities don't need to 19 actually purchase their RECs until a later 20 period in time. 21 With this backdrop, the Bridgewater

Power Company opposes a proposal that would result in a reduction in the purchase requirement of Class III RECs. We do not

22

23

with the purpose of the RPS. And, as recently as 2018, when the -- when New Hampshire

Legislature enacted Senate Bill 365, there has been a well-documented support from the

Legislature for the continued operation of biomass facilities, such as that owned by the Bridgewater Power Company.

It's a matter of public record the public good that these facilities provide, not just in terms of providing a source for renewable energy, but also for its assistance in sustainable forestry and the forest industry.

We believe that a reduction in the REC purchase requirement not only establishes a precedent that will result in further stoppages and further suspensions of operation in subsequent compliance years, but it may result in the permanent closure of other biomass facilities due to prolonged inability to maintain and sustain operations.

These further closures stand to create -- have an impact, not just in the New

Hampshire marketplace, but in the regional marketplace, as many of these facilities have multiple qualifications in other states, such as, as one speaker commented, Connecticut.

And as has been previously noted, this is very different from other prior dockets, in which, because of higher ACP or REC prices in other jurisdictions, there is a shortage in the state, but to which the generators largely did not oppose. Here, in this instance, there will be an adverse impact to generators, particularly because it will not establish the required incentive to maintain and continue operations.

In the alternative, because there is a recognition, and there's also a concern in doing this in the middle of the compliance year, particularly there has already been a noticed impact upon the REC market upon the opening of this docket. When this docket was -- or, prior to this docket being opened, the market reflected a REC price in and around \$50 a megawatt-hour. Shortly thereafter, the price has dopped to approximately, I believe,

\$38 per megawatt-hour, and at a time when it would not be expected to see such dips. We do believe that it is because of the uncertainty associated with the purchase requirements that has created a downward pressure upon REC prices, again, to the detriment of these biomass facilities.

And a further concern is the ability to bank RECs into subsequent compliance years. We've heard that three of the larger electric distribution entities in the state have already met their REC requirement, which means that a reduction in the purchase requirements is going to potentially lead to a banking of those RECs, which will create further negative downward pressure upon REC prices and an upset of the supply — of the demand side in subsequent compliance years. So, ultimately, it may result in further suspension of operations, because the price may not be as high because the demand is not going to be as high.

There are certain alternatives that Bridgewater Power would like this Commission to consider. Most of which would involve

investigation and proposal of legislative changes to the RPS. That includes a consideration of alteration of the compliance period. Part of this is because of the ability to obtain RECs throughout the year and reach compliance throughout the year, there is a lack of parity in terms of bargaining leverage. So, the alteration away from a year-long compliance period into potentially compliance quarters may resolve that, and ultimately establish greater parity amongst generators and load-serving entities.

Another would be to potentially change the purchase of the Renewable Energy Fund, to allow for the use of monies received by the Renewable Energy Fund for the purposes of rate mitigation, so as to reduce any adverse impact upon ratepayers.

Further would be to establish load-serving entities prior to approving a purchase requirement adjustment, to demonstrate that, in periods of suspensions or stoppages, that they have offered a price for RECs at least comparable to the market or sufficient to

allow for generators to operate, to again address this squeezing phenomenon that generators have been experiencing.

And, lastly, the board -- the Company is concerned that, if there were a decision to adjust the purchase requirement down, that the Commission would utilize the methodology similar to that in the prior dockets, where they looked at historic actual output, and use that as a basis for the 85 to 95 percent adjustment. We believe that, because of market impacts have caused temporary shutdowns, that that, the actual output in 2019, is not reflective of the potential output had these facilities not suspended the operations, either on a temporary or a permanent basis.

So, I'll take what questions the Commission has. And I thank -- I and Mr. O'Leary thank the Commission's careful deliberations and opportunity to speak.

CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Thank you.

Commissioner Bailey has a question.

CMSR. BAILEY: You went through some numbers really quickly in the beginning. You

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1
         said "Bridgewater Power Company has a
         15-megawatt Class III facility". You can
 2
         "generate 125 megawatt-hours per year"?
 3
                   MR. O'LEARY: 125,000.
 4
 5
                   MR. MAHER: 125,000.
                   CMSR. BAILEY: Okay. That's what I
 6
 7
         was missing. All right. Thank you. And then,
         in 2019, so far you've generated "81,644"?
 8
                   MR. MAHER: Yes, that is --
9
10
                   CMSR. BAILEY: That's megawatt-hours?
11
                   MR. MAHER: Megawatt-hours, that's
12
         correct.
13
                   CMSR. BAILEY: Okay. Thanks.
14
         are you -- is the facility operating now?
15
                   MR. MAHER: That's my understanding.
16
                   MR. O'LEARY: It is, but it's 2020.
17
                   CMSR. BAILEY: Oh, it's 2020.
                   MR. MAHER: Yes. It's 2020.
18
19
                   CMSR. BAILEY: Okay. So, we know
20
         that you generated 81,000 --
21
                        [Court reporter interruption.]
                   CMSR. BAILEY: Sorry. We know that
22
23
         you generated 81,644 megawatt-hours in 2019?
24
                   MR. O'LEARY: Yes.
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1
                   MR. MAHER: That is correct.
 2
                   CMSR. BAILEY: Thank you very much.
 3
                   CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Commissioner
 4
         Giaimo.
                   CMSR. GIAIMO: Mr. O'Leary, let me
 6
         start by thanking you for being here. It takes
 7
         a lot to get away from the plant. So, thank
         you for that.
 8
                   Mr. Maher, you said that the cost,
 9
10
         when the docket opened, was "$50", more or
11
         less?
12
                   MR. MAHER: Yes. That's correct.
13
                   CMSR. GIAIMO: And now it's $36?
14
                   MR. MAHER: I believe 38.
15
                   CMSR. GIAIMO: Thirty-eight. So, is
16
         that $12 reduction simply a function of this
17
         docket or was it something else? I just want
18
         to make sure I appreciate --
19
                   MR. MAHER: We believe it's the
20
         docket. We don't know of any other factors
         that would have caused that.
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22
                   CMSR. GIAIMO: All right. Thank you.
23
                   CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you.
24
         That's all I have for folks who signed up to
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1
         speak today.
 2
                    Is there anybody else who did not
 3
          sign up who would like to speak?
                         [No indication given.]
 4
                    CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. If not,
 5
 6
         Mr. Wind, do we have anything else we need to
 7
         cover?
 8
                    MR. WIND: No, ma'am.
 9
                    CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right. Well,
10
         thank you, everybody, then for coming today,
11
         for your comments. We appreciate them. And we
12
         will issue an order to the extent that we need
13
         to. And we're adjourned.
14
                         (Whereupon the hearing was
15
                         adjourned at 1:40 p.m.)
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