

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**DE 21-069
DE 20-183**

UNITIL ENERGY SYSTEMS, INC.

**Petition for Approval of Rate Recovery Mechanism for Property Taxes
Reliability Enhancement Program and Vegetation Management Program Plan FY 2021**

ORDER OF NOTICE

On March 29, 2021, Unitil Energy Systems, Inc. (Unitil) filed a petition for approval of a rate recovery mechanism for property taxes, along with supporting testimony and attachments. Unitil's petition proposed a new property tax recovery mechanism for the recovery of the increase in property taxes associated with a change in RSA 72:8-d and 72:8-e. Unitil stated that RSA 72:8-d and 72:8-e require the Commission to establish by order a rate recovery mechanism for the property taxes paid by a public utility. In its petition, Unitil proposed new language to be included in its External Delivery Charge (EDC) tariff, Schedule EDC, if the Company's proposed methodology is approved by the Commission. The Commission docketed this request in Docket No. DE 21-069.

The EDC includes costs associated with transmission, including: third-party transmission provider costs; regional transmission and operating costs; transmission-based fees and assessments; and various administrative, consulting, and legal costs. Unitil also includes in its EDC rate other costs and credits including the rebate of excess Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative auction proceeds, and over- or under-collection associated with the reliability enhancement and vegetation management programs, and the recovery of displaced distribution revenue associated with net metering for 2020. On November 16, 2020, Unitil filed its

Reliability Enhancement Program and Vegetation Management Program Plan for fiscal year 2021, which the Commission docketed in Docket No. DE 20-183.

As shown in its filings in Docket No. DE 21-121, Unitil calculated a vegetation management program reconciliation balance of negative \$179,614, as filed in Docket No. DE 20-183, for effect May 1, 2021, plus a property tax reconciliation of \$173,418, as filed in Docket No. DE 21-069, effective January 1, 2021. Unitil calculated a transmission-only factor charge of 3.113 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh), and a non-transmission factor of negative 0.135 cents per kWh. The proposed total EDC rate of 2.978 cents per kWh represents a decrease of 0.635 cents per kWh, as compared with August 2020 through July 2021.

The petitions and subsequent docket filings, other than any information for which confidential treatment is requested of or granted by the Commission, will be posted to the Commission's website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2021/21-069.html> and <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2020/20-183.html>, respectively.

These filings raise, *inter alia*, issues related to whether Unitil's Property Tax Adjustment Mechanism is consistent with RSA 72:8-d and 72:8-e; whether Unitil appropriately calculated the various rates and adjustment factors; whether Unitil's reliability enhancement and vegetation management programs are cost effective; and whether the calculations and proposals will result in just and reasonable rates, as required by RSA 374:2, and RSA 378:5 and :7. Each party has the right to have an attorney represent the party at the party's own expense.

With the expiration of the declared State of Emergency, the Commission must now comply with all requirements of RSA chapter 91-A, including the requirement that a quorum of a public body must be physically present at the location specified as the location of the public meeting in the meeting notice. The Commission is aware that not all parties, including regulated

utilities, have returned to full in-person work environments. Therefore, for the foreseeable future, the Commission intends to provide a hybrid approach to hearings to accommodate those who are remote and those who are physically present. A quorum of commissioners will be physically present within a hearing room for all Commission hearings beginning June 14, 2021. In order to facilitate the hybrid approach, all parties participating in the hearing room will continue to participate on the web-enabled platform. Parties and the public may continue to participate in hearings remotely using the Commission's web-enabled platform.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

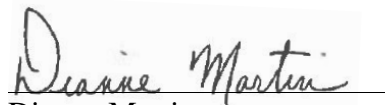
ORDERED, that the Commission will hold a hearing on the merits of the issues presented in Unitil's petitions at its offices located at 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire, on July 23, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. Commissioners will be present in the hearing room and will use a web-enabled platform to conduct the hearing. Members of the public who wish to access the hearing may do so by [clicking here](#). **If you have any difficulty obtaining access to this remote event, please notify the Commission by calling (603) 271-2431 as soon as possible.** Parties and members of the public wishing to attend the hearing in person are encouraged to register in advance, on or before July 21, 2021, by calling (603) 271-2431; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.12, Unitil shall notify all persons desiring to be heard at this hearing by publishing a copy of this order of notice on its website no later than one business day after the date of issue, such publication to be documented by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before July 21, 2021. In addition, the Clerk shall publish this order of notice on the Commission's website no later than one business day after the date of issue; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that, consistent with N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.17 and Puc 203.02, any party seeking to intervene in the proceeding shall file with the Commission a petition to intervene with copies sent to Unitil and the Office of the Consumer Advocate on or before July 22, 2021, such petition stating the facts demonstrating how its rights, duties, privileges, immunities, or other substantial interests may be affected by the proceeding, consistent with N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.17. Pursuant to the secretarial letter issued on March 17, 2020, which is posted on the Commission's website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Secretarial%20Letters/20200317-SecLtr-Temp-Changes-in-Filing-Requirements.pdf>, any party seeking to intervene may elect to submit this filing in electronic form; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party objecting to a petition to intervene make said objection on or before July 23, 2021.

So ordered, this nineteenth day of July, 2021.


Dianne Martin
Presiding Officer
Chairwoman

Individuals needing assistance or auxiliary communication aids due to sensory impairment or other disability should contact the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, NHPUC, 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire 03301-2429; 603-271-2431; TDD Access: Relay N.H. 1-800-735-2964. Notification of the need for assistance should be made one week prior to the scheduled event.

Service List - Docket Related

Docket# : 21-069

Printed: 7/19/2021

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