



March 21, 2022

By Electronic Mail Only

Clerk's Office
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301-2429

**Re: Docket No. DG 21-104, Northern Utilities, Inc., Request for Change in Rates
Second Request for Hybrid Hearing Format**

To the Commission Clerk:

In accordance with the Commission's hearing guidelines issued for this docket on October 22, 2021, Northern Utilities, Inc. (the "Company") respectfully requests accommodations for a hybrid format to be offered for the March 28, 2022 hearing in the above-referenced matter. The hearing is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. on that day.

On March 14, 2022, the Company requested a hybrid hearing due to concerns about the cost of travel by the Company's external consultants, most of whom live out of state. As the hearing is a "mid-period" event intended for the Commission to ask questions and receive an update on the status of the proceeding, the Company understands that its consultants should be made available. The Company also appreciates that the time, travel, and potentially lodging expenses required to make its external expert witnesses physically available would add considerable expense to the docket. In the Company's view, a hybrid hearing would allow its expert witnesses to participate in the hearing, while eliminating travel costs, and potentially reducing hourly costs.

On March 21, 2022, the Commission issued a Procedural Order declining to allow remote participation by the Company's external consultants because they were not named in the motion. The Company respectfully renews its request for remote participation in connection with the following witnesses, identified below by name, business location, and testimony subject:

- John Taylor, Atrium Economics, Hilton Head Island, SC (Cost of Service and Rate

Patrick H. Taylor
Chief Regulatory Counsel
taylorp@unitil.com

6 Liberty Lane West
Hampton, NH 03842

Design);

- Ronald Amen, Atrium Economics, Hilton Head Island, SC (Cost of Service and Rate Design). **Mr. Amen resides full time in Washington State;**
- Timothy Lyons, ScottMadden, Inc., Westborough, MA (Decoupling). **Mr. Lyons resides full time in South Burlington, Vermont;**
- Ned Allis, Gannet Fleming Valuation and Rate Consultant, LLC, Camp Hill, PA (Depreciation).

Most of these witnesses would need to incur airfare and travel costs, as well as the costs associated with overnight accommodations, to attend this hearing in person. While Mr. Lyons can likely drive to the hearing, his attendance would still necessitate travel costs and increased time billed to this case. The Company believes that the aggregate cost of requiring that all witnesses appear in person would amount to several thousand dollars. While the Company understands the Commission's interest in having witnesses available for questioning, we believe that objective may be accomplished at considerably less expense through a hybrid hearing.

Company witness Jonathan Giegerich, who testified regarding the effects of certain legislation on Northern's accounting for income taxes, was employed by the Company at the time that he submitted his testimony. Mr. Giegerich has since taken employment with an external firm and is now acting as a consultant to the Company. Though Mr. Giegerich's new employer, Edward C. David & Company CPAs PLLC, is located within New Hampshire (Hampstead, NH), the Company does not anticipate significant questioning for Mr. Giegerich and respectfully believes that the cost associated with his personal appearance on March 28, 2022 should be avoided if possible.

The Company's Cost of Capital witness, John Cochrane, of FTI Consulting, Inc. located in Boston, Massachusetts, is unavailable on March 28, 2022 due to an unavoidable personal conflict that existed prior to February 24, 2022 Order scheduling the March 28, 2022 hearing. The Company respectfully requests that Mr. Cochrane be excused from attendance at the hearing, and will certainly take as record requests any questions that the Commission intended to ask Mr. Cochrane.

Finally, the Company notes that the Commission has not issued an agenda specifying the matters that it intends to address at the March 28, 2022 hearing or a description of the format of the hearing. If the Commission is able to provide an agenda in



advance of the hearing it will enable the Company to best prepare and allow for a more efficient proceeding.

In accordance with the Secretarial Letter issued on March 17, 2020, the Company is filing this request only electronically and paper copies will not follow.

If you have any questions, please contact me. Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick H. Taylor", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patrick H. Taylor

CC: Service List