



May 26, 2022

**By electronic mail only**

Daniel Goldner, Chairman  
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  
Request for Hybrid Hearing Format

Chairman Goldner,

In accordance with the Commission's hearing guidelines issued for this docket on April 26, 2022, Northern Utilities, Inc. ("Unitil" or the "Company") respectfully requests accommodations for a hybrid hearing in this matter. At present, the hearings in this docket are scheduled for June 2, 7, and 8; however, Unitil, the Department of Energy, and the Office of the Consumer Advocate have reached a settlement and expect to file final documents with the Commission shortly. The Company has there for requested, in a separate motion, that the June 2 hearing date be canceled and that the Commission schedule a hearing on the Settlement Agreement on June 7 or 8.

Unitil acknowledges that this request is not being made at least fifteen days in advance of hearing, as required in the April 26, 2022 hearing guidelines. The Company regrets any inconvenience caused to the Commission but believes that there is good cause to grant the request.

The Company is primarily requesting 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 Company expects this to be a hearing on a Settlement Agreement, the Company understands that its consultants should be made available, though the consultants are less likely to be subject to cross examination or examination by the Commissioners than they would be in a fully litigated hearing. The time, travel, and lodging expenses required to

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make the Company's external expert witnesses physically available would add considerable expense to this docket. In the Company's view, a hybrid hearing would allow its expert witnesses to participate in the hearing, while eliminating travel costs, and likely reducing billed hourly costs. The Company respectfully requests that remote participation be allowed for 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 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);
- John Cochrane, FTI Consulting, Inc., Boston, MA (Cost of Capital).

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 and, potentially, lodging costs, as well as 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 at the hearing in this matter should be avoided if possible.



The Company also notes that COVID continues to be a concern both nationally and in the region, an additional good cause to allow the Company's witnesses to avoid traveling to the hearing.

This request is consistent with similar requests recently granted by the Commission. *Northern Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy*, DE 21-077, Procedural Order Re: Request for Hybrid Hearing (Dec. 30, 2021); *Electric Distribution Utilities*, DE 20-170, Procedural Order Re: Requests for Hybrid Hearings, Motion to Amend Procedural Schedule, and Motion to Establish Witness Schedule (Dec. 30, 2021).

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