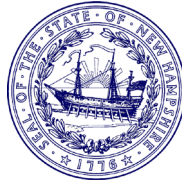


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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10
Concord, N.H. 03301-2429

June 19, 2023

Daniel C. Goldner, Chair
Public Utilities Commission
21 S. Fruit Street
Concord, NH 03301-2429

Re: DG 22-045 Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty, Winter 2022-2023 and Summer 2023 Cost of Gas, *DOE's Request for Consultant to Testify Remotely and for Remote Attendance for Primary Contractor*

Dear Chairman Goldner:

As explained in more detail below, the Department of Energy ("Department" or "DOE") is seeking leave for a certain witness to testify remotely to reduce witness travel time and related expenses. Accordingly, the Department is filing this assented-to request for our consultant to testify remotely. The Department anticipates that consultant Mark Thompson will testify remotely in conjunction with the in-person testimony of Gas Director Faisal Deen Arif, Ph.D.

By way of background, the hearing in this docket is scheduled for Wednesday, August 30, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. *See* Procedural Order (April 27, 2023). The Commission has directed that the hearing be "conducted in person . . ." *See Hearing Guidelines* at 1 (August 24, 2022)

Mr. Thompson is the President of Forefront Economics Inc. and is subcontractor in the H. Gil Peach & Associates contract. *See Joint Testimony of Deen Arif & Thompson* (filed June 8, 2023). Mr. Thompson is based in Beaverton Oregon, approximately 3,100 miles away.

To significantly reduce witness travel time and related expenses, the Department respectfully requests permission from the Commission for Mr. Mark Thompson to testify remotely. Mr. Thompson expects to be in Beaverton Oregon on or about August 30, 2023. If Mr. Thompson were to testify in person before the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission in Concord, he would need to travel by plane and stay overnight in New Hampshire for at least one night. Ultimately the costs for his flight and hotel stay would be borne by rate payers. Moreover, Mr. Thompson can testify through WebEx effectively and without diminishing the clarity of his testimony. Based upon information and belief, Mr. Thompson has "access to a hard-wired (not wireless) internet connection and a good quality wired microphone." *See Hearing Guidelines* at 1. The Department anticipates that Mr. Thompson will "download and test the WebEx software in advance of the hearing," as the Commission directs. *See id.*

As a related matter, the Department is also seeking permission for the primary contractor, Hugh Gil Peach, to be given remote access to the hearing to permit him to attend remotely. Mr. Peach has not filed testimony in this docket. Nonetheless, as the primary contractor, it is appropriate for him to attend the hearing and in-person attendance would similarly require rate payers to cover costs of at least one night in New Hampshire and related travel expenses. The Department similarly understands Mr. Peach to be equipped to attend remotely. He also expects to be in Beaverton, Oregon during the relevant time period.

The Department's request is consistent with the fifteen-day notice period required by the applicable Hearing Guidelines.

Consistent with the Commission's current policy, this letter is being filed solely in electronic form. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mary E. Schwarzer

Mary E. Schwarzer
Staff Attorney/Hearings Examiner

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