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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10
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April 16, 2024

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*

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 at the May 14, 2024 hearing to reduce witness travel time and related expenses. Accordingly, the Department is filing this 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. and Utility Analyst Ashraful Alam.

The New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (Commission) most recently approved the DOE’s request that Mr. Thompson testify remotely at the August 30, 2023 hearing at what turned-out to be Hearing Day One. *See Procedural Order Re; Requests for Remote Participation and Attendance*. While that permission might be assumed to apply to Hearing Day Two, in the interests of certainty, the DOE reiterates the information that supported the request for remote testimony at Hearing Day One, and that supports the renewed request for remote testimony at Hearing Day Two.

By way of background, the hearing in this docket is scheduled for Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. *See Procedural Order Re: Proposed Procedural Schedule* (March 15, 2024). The Commission has directed that the hearing be “conducted in person” *See Hearing Guidelines* at 1 (August 24, 2022)

Mr. Thompson

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 May 14, 2024. 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.*

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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