

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
BEFORE THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Electric Distribution Utilities

Docket No. DE 22-060

Consideration of Changes to the Current Net Metering Tariff Structure, Including Compensation
of Customer-Generators

**JOINT PARTY OUTLINE FOR PROPOSED DATA COLLECTION EFFORT FOR NET
METERING**

Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy; Liberty Utilities (Granite State Electric) Corp. d/b/a Liberty; Unitil Energy Systems, Inc. (together the “Electric Utilities”); the Office of the Consumer Advocate; Clean Energy New Hampshire; Granite State Hydropower Association; Conservation Law Foundation; and Standard Power of America (the “Proposing Parties”) hereby submit the following outline to provide initial information regarding the data collection effort as directed by the November 18, 2024 Supplemental Order of Notice in this docket (“Notice”). The Proposing Parties hope that the additional context provided in this outline offers some clarity the range of what is possible and practicable, and insight into the implications of what is outlined in the Notice.

There are certain preliminary considerations that have impacted the development of this outline. There is currently a motion for reconsideration and clarification filed by most of the Proposing Parties that is still pending before the Commission. In that motion, the moving parties sought additional clarity regarding what Order No. 27,074 and the Notice refer to as “Phase 3”, as well as a decision from the Commission on the settlement agreement put forward in this docket, within which was proposed a data collection effort similar to what is described in Phase 3. Additionally, the parties to the settlement agreement had planned, on approval of the settlement

agreement, that the settling parties and other possible interested stakeholders would convene to discuss and ascertain what data points should be captured in the data collection effort, and how to go about the collection, both of which would take some time to determine. Given this and the fact that an order has not yet been issued on the motion for rehearing, the Proposing Parties have not yet been able to establish the elements of the data set that would be captured in the collection effort, as there are many unresolved variables to make such a determination. Notwithstanding this fact, the Proposing Parties did meet to revisit the intent and approach to the data collection effort in the settlement agreement in light of Order No. 27,074 and the Notice and offer the following information regarding process and timeline for the collection effort, with the idea being that whatever is finalized as an approach will help to define what data gets collected.

The second element the Notice listed for the outline was a description of how the data was going to be collected. At a high level, the parties to the settlement agreement envisioned leveraging existing resources as much as possible to minimize costs. The need for a consultant has not yet been determined. The New Hampshire data privacy statutes RSA 363:37 and 363:38 require explicit affirmative customer consent to use any sensitive or personally identifiable information. The settlement agreement included illustrative utility customer consent forms¹, which the Electric Utilities would issue to customers to obtain authorization to use and share their data, consistent with RSA 363:37 and 363:38. The data collection effort in the settlement agreement intended to focus on residential customers, but it is not clear if that is also what the Notice intended. To supplement customer data collection effort by the Electric Utilities, Clean Energy New Hampshire planned to conduct outreach to their solar developer members to similarly collect customer and project data from that segment, again by obtaining signed consent forms.²

¹ Exhibit 1 at Bates pages 33-36.

² *Id.* at Bates Pages 35-36.

As previously mentioned, the collection effort was intended to focus on residential customers for the purpose of informing the design of a residential net metered time-of-use rate. The notice appears to have an expanded scope for the collection effort, as it describes the Electric Utilities proposing “further action on net metering compensation levels”, which is broader than development of a residential time-of-use rate design, and casts a wide net, which is another reason why the Proposing Parties are not yet able to enumerate an itemized data set. Even with the settlement agreement’s narrower scope of developing a residential time-of-use rate design, any number of data points *may* be informative, and it is not necessarily known exactly what would ultimately inform the rate design, so the collection effort would be an iterative process. Given the direction of “further action on net metering compensation levels,” the Proposing Parties’ initial impression is that all, or nearly all, customer usage and distributed generation (“DG”) installation and production information should be collected. The Proposing Parties have not yet had the chance to ascertain what all that would be comprised of.

As to this last point, collecting existing data was also another parameter that the parties to the settlement had planned on, and the Proposing Parties likewise recommend. The level of effort to generate new data points and then collect them would incur much greater cost and take substantially more time. The amount of additional time required would depend upon what, which type, and number of new data points would be generated and collected. This complexity can be avoided by focusing on existing customer and DG data, which would consequently minimize cost and be the most efficient and expedient effort.

Regarding a timeline, the Proposing Parties respectfully recommend the Commission reconsider its proposed timeline of submitting a proposal for “further action on net metering compensation levels” at the end of this year. First, “further action on net metering compensation”

needs to be sufficiently narrowed to know what data should be collected. Additionally, by the time the data set and collection methodology is finalized, the collection effort would be at most a few months underway by year end. However, it the collection would be more likely to only last a couple months at most because it would take time to process and analyze the data and then develop and submit proposals, which would include a time-of-use rate design. Two or three months of data is not statistically meaningful and would not lead to an informative data set, particularly regarding net metering where it is necessary to have an entire calendar year (preferably more) to be able to account for seasonality in the analysis.

Additionally, it would be difficult to compile a sufficient quantity of customers for the data set in only a couple of months. Because there is an affirmative consent requirement to use customer data, there is a timing element to the collection effort that is not within the Electric Utilities' control. The Electric Utilities cannot simply pull data from their billing systems but are dependent upon the speed with which customers complete and submit their consent forms. If the Electric Utilities, in consultation with interested stakeholders such as the rest of the Proposing Parties, are going to undertake this effort with an aim to submit recommendations about further modification to net metering compensation, substantially more time is needed, and the Proposing Parties believe that the 18-month timeframe that was proposed for the settlement's data collection effort is the necessary minimum for obtaining a data set that is sufficiently informative for the Electric Utilities and stakeholders to develop meaningful, valid and supported proposals regarding compensation. The Notice's parameter of filing a proposal at the end of 2025 would make it impossible to make any reliable and supportable recommendations as to modifications to current compensation, and the resources that go into such a collection effort would unfortunately likely be wasted, as they would not provide any meaningful insight into net metering trends.

Finally, the recommendation in the Notice that the collection effort include “data relevant to determine how netting can be improved to be more instantaneous than what monthly-netting permits” is not feasible with existing resources, and would incur significant costs and time to obtain, the extent of which is unknown. This is because neither Eversource nor Liberty have residential interval meters currently installed. A sizeable investment would be required to obtain such data, and for a relatively small subset of customers, compared with all Electric Utility customers. Further information regarding current limitations and the effort required to address them will be provided in the Liberty and Eversource responses to Commission question 11, due to be filed in this docket on January 21, 2025. This is another reason why the Proposing Parties recommend sticking to readily available data for this effort.

BULLETED PROCESS AND TIMELINE

- Stakeholder sessions to determine data points (4 weeks)
- Process set up (4 weeks)
- Customer consent and data collection period (18 months)
 - Utility effort – utility customers
 - CENH effort – developer community
- Analysis and stakeholder engagement (8 weeks)
- Rate design and proposal development (16 weeks – but concurrent starting simultaneously with stakeholder engagement)