

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DE 23-075

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
d/b/a EVERSOURCE ENERGY**

Petition for Approval of Pole Plant Adjustment Mechanism Rates

COMMENCEMENT OF ADJUDICATIVE PROCEEDING AND NOTICE OF HEARING

On August 2, 2023, Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource) filed a petition requesting that the Commission approve its Pole Plant Adjustment Mechanism (PPAM) rates for effect on October 1, 2023. In support of its petition, Eversource filed the joint direct testimony of Eversource Energy Service Company employees Marisa B. Paruta, Director of Revenue Requirements, and Scott R. Anderson, Manager of Rates (Joint Testimony) and related attachments. The initial filing and subsequent docket filings, other than any information for which confidential treatment is requested of or granted by the Commission, are available on the Commission's website at www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2023/23-075.html.

I. BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Commission authorized the transfer of certain utility pole assets from Consolidated Communications of Northern New England Company, LLC d/b/a Consolidated Communications (Consolidated) to Eversource pursuant to a Settlement and Pole Asset Purchase Agreement in Order No. 26,729, issued on November 18, 2022 in Docket No. DE 21-020. *Id.* at 12-14, 21. In this order, the Commission also approved Eversource's proposed PPAM, which would allow Eversource to recover the incrementally higher costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the transferred poles, pole inspection and replacement, and vegetation management (VM)

following completion of the pole asset transfer. *Id.* at 15, 17-19, 21. As proposed by Eversource, these costs would be subject to prudence reviews by the Commission, and they would be offset by any incremental pole attachment revenues received by Eversource following the transfer. *Id.* at 6, 17-18. The Commission authorized Eversource to implement the PPAM as of February 10, 2021, the effective asset transfer date, until the resolution of Eversource's next full rate case. *Id.* at 17-18, 21. On February 8, 2023, the Commission issued an order denying a motion for rehearing of Order No. 26,729. *See* Order No. 26,772.

Eversource and Consolidated notified the Commission that the pole asset transfer transaction closed on May 1, 2023. On May 12, 2023, as required by Order No. 26,729, Eversource filed a compliance tariff providing for the PPAM. It filed a revised tariff on June 8, 2023. The Commission issued a compliance letter approving Eversource's PPAM tariff on August 25, 2023.

In its petition for approval of PPAM rates, Eversource requested recovery through the PPAM of \$14,714,102 associated with VM costs incurred from February 10, 2021 until December 31, 2022. Petition, ¶¶ 6, 8. Eversource stated that no other costs recoverable through the PPAM were incurred, and no incremental pole attachment revenues were collected, during this period because it was prior to the closing on the pole asset transfer transaction. *Id.*, ¶ 6. Effective October 1, 2023, Eversource proposed implementing a total average PPAM rate of 0.190 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh). *Id.*, ¶ 8. According to the Joint Testimony, implementation of the proposed PPAM rates would result in an overall average increase to current rates of 0.6 percent. Joint Testimony dated August 2, 2023 at 6. If Eversource's proposed PPAM rates are approved, the average residential ratepayer using 650 kWh per month

would see an increase in their monthly bill of approximately \$1.72. *See* Joint Testimony dated August 2, 2023, Attachment MBP/SRA-3, page 3.

II. ISSUES PRESENTED

The filing presents, *inter alia*, the following issues: whether Eversource's proposed PPAM rates are consistent with the PPAM approved by the Commission in Order No. 26,729; whether Eversource appropriately calculated the proposed PPAM rates; and whether implementation of the proposed PPAM rates will result in just and reasonable rates, as required by RSA 374:2, and RSA 378:5 and :7. Accordingly, an adjudicative proceeding will be convened to address these issues.

The Commission will be conducting any hearings scheduled in this matter in person. The Commission will consider requests to conduct hearings using a hybrid format to permit remote participation by a specific individual only if the Commission has determined that a sufficient reason has been provided for why that individual would be unable to attend in person. Any party requesting that a specific individual be permitted to participate remotely should file a written request with the Commission's Clerk's Office no later than ten (10) days prior to the hearing date. If the Commission determines that one or more individuals will be permitted to appear remotely, then individuals in the Commission's hearing room, including the Commissioners, will be broadcast on a web-enabled platform.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED, that an adjudicative proceeding be commenced for the purpose of reviewing and resolving the foregoing issues pursuant to RSA chapter 541-A, RSA 374:2, and RSA 378:5 and :7, and the Commission's procedural rules; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that the Commission will hold a hearing in this matter at its offices located at 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire, on

September 14, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. Three hours shall be allotted for this hearing; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that the New Hampshire Department of Energy shall file its position regarding Eversource's petition, including the reasons for this position, on or before September 7, 2023; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any entity or individual may petition to intervene and seek to be admitted as a party in this proceeding. Each party has the right to have an attorney represent the party at the party's own expense; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that, consistent with N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.17 and Puc 203.02, any entity or individual seeking to intervene in the proceeding shall file with the Commission a petition to intervene with copies sent to Eversource and any other parties on the service list, on or before September 5, 2023. The petition shall state the facts demonstrating how the petitioner's rights, duties, privileges, immunities, or other substantial interests may be affected by the proceeding, consistent with N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.17; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party objecting to a petition to intervene make said objection on or before September 14, 2023; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that parties shall file any proposed exhibits, written testimony, motions, or other documents intended to become part of the record in this proceeding with the Commission. Pursuant to the secretarial letter issued on March 17, 2020, which is posted on the Commission's website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Secretarial%20Letters/20200317-SecLtr-Temp-Changes-in-Filing-Requirements.pdf>, all Commission rules requiring the filing of paper copies are suspended until further notice. Parties may elect to submit any filing in


electronic form unless otherwise ordered by the Commission. Filings will be considered filed as of the time the electronic copy is received by the Commission; and it is

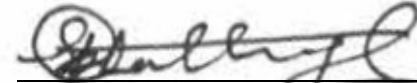
FURTHER ORDERED, that routine procedural inquiries may be made by contacting the Commission's Clerk's Office at (603) 271-2431 or ClerksOffice@puc.nh.gov. All requests to the Commission should be made in a written pleading filed with the Commission. Unless otherwise authorized by law, *ex parte* communications are prohibited; and it is

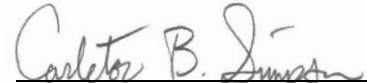
FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.12, Eversource shall notify all entities and individuals desiring to be heard at this hearing by publishing a copy of this order of notice on its website no later than two business days after the date of issue, such publication to be documented by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before August 31, 2023. In addition, the Clerk shall publish this order of notice on the Commission's website no later than two business days after the date of issue; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any hearings in this matter shall be conducted in accordance with the attached hearing guidelines.

So ordered, this twenty-fifth day of August, 2023.


Daniel C. Goldner
Chairman


Pradip K. Chattopadhyay
Commissioner


Carleton B. Simpson
Commissioner

Individuals needing assistance or auxiliary communication aids due to sensory impairment or other disability should contact the NHPUC, 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire 03301-2429; 603-271-2431; TDD Access: Relay N.H. 1-800-735-2964. Notification of the need for assistance should be made one week prior to the scheduled event.

Service List - Docket Related

Docket#: 23-075

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