

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DG 24-106

LIBERTY UTILITIES (ENERGYNORTH NATURAL GAS) CORP. d/b/a LIBERTY

Winter 2024-2025 and Summer 2025 Cost of Gas

COMMENCEMENT OF ADJUDICATIVE PROCEEDING AND NOTICE OF HEARING

On September 3, 2024, Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty (Liberty) petitioned to open this docket for review and approval of its Winter 2024–2025 and Summer 2025 Cost of Gas (COG) filing. In its filing, Liberty also seeks approval to modify the letter informing customers of the Fixed Price Option (FPO). In support of its filing, Liberty filed schedules, proposed tariff changes, and the testimony of its employees Robert Garcia, Alyssa E. Maston, Joshua J. Tilbury, Kelly A. Esposito, and Mark J. Summerfield. Liberty also submitted a proposed procedural schedule within the cover letter. The New Hampshire Department of Energy (DOE) filed a request for certain changes to the proposed procedural schedule. No party filed an objection to the DOE’s recommended changes. All docket filings, other than any information subject to confidential treatment, are available on the Commission’s website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2024/24-106.html>.

I. BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

For the Winter 2024–2025 period, with rates effective November 1, 2024, Liberty proposes a firm sales COG rate of \$0.6792 per therm for residential customers, \$0.6793 per therm for commercial/industrial high winter use customers, and \$0.6796 per therm for commercial/industrial low winter use customers. See Direct Testimony of Robert Garcia and Alyssa E. Maston at Bates page 4. Table 1 reflects the changes between the Winter 2023–2024 COG rates and the proposed

rates for Winter 2024-2025:

Table 1				
	Rates Effective November 1, 2023	Proposed Rate	Change Increase/ (decrease)	% Change Increase/ (decrease)
Residential	\$0.7563	\$0.6792	\$(0.0771)	(10)%
C & I – (High winter use)	\$0.7561	\$0.6793	\$(0.0768)	(10)%
C & I – (Low winter use)	\$0.7573	\$0.6796	\$(0.0777)	(10)%

Id.

For the Summer 2025 period, with rates effective May 1, 2025, Liberty proposes a firm sales cost of gas rate of \$0.0724 per therm for residential customers, \$0.0725 per therm for commercial/industrial high winter use customers, and \$0.0726 per therm for commercial/industrial low winter use customers. *Id.* Table 2 reflects the changes between the Summer 2024 COG rates and the proposed rates for Summer 2025:

Table 2				
	Rates Effective May 1, 2024	Proposed Rate	Change	% Change
Residential	\$0.0187	\$0.0724	\$0.0537	287%
C & I (High winter use)	\$0.0181	\$0.0725	\$0.0544	301%
C & I (Low winter use)	\$0.0193	\$0.0726	\$0.0533	276%

Id.

Table 3 demonstrates the impacts Liberty’s proposed rates will have on customers’ bills:

Table 3			
	Winter 2024/2025 Bill Impact Increase/(decrease)	Summer 2025 Bill Impact Increase/(decrease)	Annual Bill Impact Increase/(decrease)
Residential – R3	\$51 or 5%	\$3 or 1%	\$54 or 4%
Residential – R3 FPO	\$(33) or (3)%	N/A	\$(33) or (3)%
Residential – R4 GAP	\$(78) or (10)%	N/A	\$(78) or (10)%
C & I – G41	\$86 or 3%	\$17 or 3%	\$104 or 3%
C & I – G42	\$846 or 4%	\$154 or 4%	\$1,001 or 4%
C & I – G52	\$768 or 6%	\$365 or 10%	\$1,133 or 7%

Id. at Bates Page 20.

II. ISSUES PRESENTED

The filing presents, *inter alia*, the following issues: whether Liberty's proposed rates are just and reasonable pursuant to RSA 374:2 and RSA chapter 378; and whether Liberty has correctly forecasted and factored the appropriate elements into its COG rates; and whether the Commission should grant approval for the changes sought to the letter informing customers of the Fixed Price Option. 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 fifteen (15) 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 chapter 378, and the Commission's procedural rules; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that the Commission APPROVES Liberty's proposed procedural schedule, as modified by the changes proposed by the DOE in its September 12, 2024, filing, except for the proposed hearing date; 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 October 24, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. Three hours shall be allotted for this hearing; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that, consistent with the approved procedural schedule, the New Hampshire Department of Energy will file its position regarding Liberty's COG proposal, including the reasons for this position, on or before October 21, 2024; 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 Liberty and any other parties on the service list, on or before October 11, 2024. 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 October 21, 2024; 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

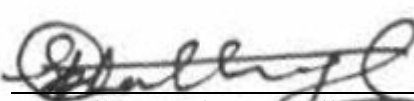
FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.12, Liberty shall notify all entities and individuals desiring to be heard at this hearing by publishing a copy of this order of notice on its website no later than two business days after the date of issue, such publication to be documented by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before October 7, 2024. 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 third day of October, 2024.



Daniel C. Goldner
Chairman



Pradip K. Chattopadhyay
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#: 24-106

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