

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DE 20-199

EVERSOURCE ENERGY

**Decommissioning of Electric Line
Over State-Owned Land and Public Waters in Henniker
and Termination of Crossing License**

Order Terminating Crossing License

ORDER NO. 26,454

February 9, 2021

This order terminates a license issued to Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy on May 15, 2000, in Order No. 23,480, for a distribution-level tap line from Eversource's 311 Line, an overhead three-phase, 34.5 kV electric transmission line. On November 16, 2020, Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy filed a notice regarding the decommissioning of a portion of its 311 electric line over State-owned land and public waters in Henniker, New Hampshire. The Company's notice of decommissioning and subsequent docket filings, other than information for which confidential treatment is requested of or granted by the Commission, are posted on the Commission's website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2020/20-199.html>.

I. HISTORY AND DECOMMISSIONING OF THE 311 LINE

On November 16, 2020, Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource or the Company) filed a notice regarding the decommissioning of a portion of its 311 electric line over State-owned land and public waters in Henniker, New Hampshire. .

The Commission granted a license for a distribution-level tap line from Eversource's 311 Line, an overhead three-phase, 34.5 kV electric transmission line, in Order No. 23,480, issued on May 15, 2000. As Eversource stated in its notice of decommissioning, the 311 Line was constructed between Hillsboro and Webster, with a tap line (the 311 Tap) running from the main line to serve a substation in Henniker that has since been removed. According to the Company's filing, the 311 Tap fed no customers and no longer served any useful purpose, and therefore had been permanently de-energized. As a result, the Company initiated the decommissioning of the 311 Tap in December 2020.

Eversource stated that it had coordinated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under a Special Use Permit, dated November 13, 2020, with respect to decommissioning activity on USACE-owned land associated with the Hopkinton-Everett Lakes Flood Risk Management Area along the 311 Tap. The Company also coordinated with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), which also owns land along the 311 Tap. According to Eversource, USACE and NHDOT are the only abutters to the tap line corridor, which crosses the Contoocook River in Henniker in three locations.

The scope of the decommissioning project entailed the removal of 16 wooden poles and associated wooden cross-arms, an overhead conductor, and associated line hardware, including insulators. The majority of the 16 poles were slated to be removed in their entirety, with two poles to be cut at the ground surface due to limited vehicle accessibility.

Eversource stated that there would be no impacts to wetlands associated with access to and removal of the pole structures, and that the Company would notify the Town of Henniker prior to project commencement and take precautions to ensure that no members of the public were in the vicinity of the Contoocook River crossings while removal work was conducted.

II. SUMMARY OF STAFF REVIEW

Commission Staff (Staff) reviewed the filing, conducted a field inspection of the project, and concluded that the decommissioning of the 311 Tap would provide an aesthetic improvement to the affected area with the removal of pole structures and facility equipment on state-owned land and across the public waters of the Contoocook River in Henniker. Staff recommended that the Commission find no adverse safety impacts as a result of the decommissioning project and that the docket be closed.

III. COMMISSION ANALYSIS

“Whenever it is necessary, in order to meet the reasonable requirements of service to the public, that any public utility should construct a pipeline, cable, or conduit, or a line of poles or towers and wires and fixtures thereon, over, under or across any of the public waters of this state, or over, under or across any of the land owned by this state, it shall petition the commission for a license to construct and maintain the same.” RSA 371:17 (Supp. 2019). The Commission is authorized to grant such a license if it “may be exercised without substantially affecting the public rights in said waters or lands.” RSA 371:20. DES has classified the Contoocook River in Henniker as a public water,¹ and the land on which the 311 Tap runs in Henniker is owned by the State of New Hampshire Department of Transportation, as noted in the Company’s filing. The Commission granted a license for the 311 Tap in Order No. 23,480 on May 15, 2000.

Here, Eversource has provided notice of its intent to decommission the 311 Tap. Based on the Company’s notice and Staff’s recommendation, we find that the decommissioning as presented will result in no adverse safety impacts. Accordingly, upon completion of

¹ See <https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/olpw.pdf>

decommissioning, the license granted by Order No. 23,480 is terminated and this docket is closed subject to the conditions set forth in the ordering clauses below, including notice to the Town of Henniker, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the NH Department of Environmental Services, the NH Department of Transportation, and, pursuant to RSA 371:19, the Office of the Attorney General.

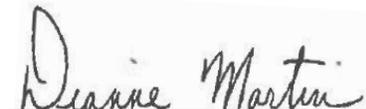
Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

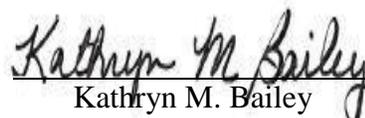
ORDERED, that upon completion of decommissioning, the license granted by Order No. 23,480 is terminated, and this docket is closed; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that Eversource shall notify the Commission upon completion of decommissioning; and it is

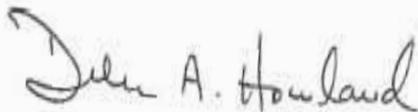
FURTHER ORDERED, that Eversource shall provide a copy of this order to: (i) the Town Clerk of Henniker, New Hampshire; (ii) the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services; (iii) the New Hampshire Department of Transportation; (iv) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and (v) the New Hampshire Attorney General, as required by RSA 371:19, by first class mail, no later than February 19, 2021, to be documented by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before March 5, 2021.

By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this ninth day of February, 2021.


Dianne Martin
Chairwoman


Kathryn M. Bailey
Commissioner

Attested by:



Debra A. Howland
Executive Director

Service List - Docket Related

Docket# : 20-199

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