

CHAIRMAN
Amy L. Ignatius

COMMISSIONERS
Michael D. Harrington
Robert R. Scott

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Debra A. Howland

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE



PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, N.H. 03301-2429

DG 11-196

TDD Access: Relay NH
1-800-735-2964

Tel. (603) 271-2431

FAX (603) 271-3878

Website:
www.puc.nh.gov

December 18, 2013

Gary Epler, Esq.
Northern Utilities, Inc.
6 Liberty Lane West
Hampton, NH 03842-1720

Re: DG 11-196. Unitil Corporation and Northern Utilities, Inc.
Show Cause Proceeding
Reporting Requirements

Dear Mr. Epler:

The Commission approved a 2012 Settlement Agreement in this docket between Staff and Northern Utilities, Inc. (Northern) which, among other things, amended Northern's emergency response standards and clarified its reporting obligations. Order No. 25,390 (July 9, 2012). Paragraph 3.3 of the Settlement Agreement requires quarterly meetings between Northern and Staff "to review the Company's reporting and performance under the Emergency Response Standards." Through a Staff Recommendation dated December 6, 2013 (Recommendation), the parties asked the Commission to amend the first sentence of Paragraph 3.3 of the Settlement Agreement to read as follows, with the proposed language underlined and old language stricken:

Northern agrees to work with the Commission's Safety Division to establish a schedule of ~~quarterly meetings~~ semi-annual meetings, or less frequently at the discretion of Staff without the need for Commission approval, to review the Company's reporting and performance under the Emergency Response Standards.

Staff conducted a thorough review of Northern's monthly reports and compared Northern's actual performance to the metrics established in the Settlement Agreement for seven emergency response categories. Based on its review Staff reported that Northern has complied with the Settlement Agreement's performance obligations to date and that Northern adequately reports its emergency response data. *See Recommendation.*

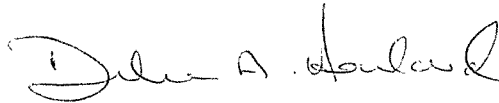
Northern's compliance is due to a combination of changes including: (1) the creation of a new position, a Utility Worker Technician, which allows flexibility in staffing emergency response duties; (2) adding work shifts that cover Saturdays and evening hours during the week, thus reducing the use of on-call technicians; (3) splitting Northern's response areas from two into three zones with an on-call technician assigned to each zone; (4) a residency

requirement for newly hired Emergency Response Technicians; (5) the ability to call on Distribution Crews when Emergency Response Technicians are responding to calls; and (6) a continued focus by management on emergency response performance. *Id.*

Northern and Staff asked the Commission to approve the above-quoted ministerial change to Paragraph 3.3 of the Settlement Agreement given Northern's performance.

The Commission has determined that the requested modification to the reporting requirement is appropriate, administratively efficient, and consistent with the intent of Order No. 25,390. As noted in the Recommendation, Northern is meeting its emergency response obligations under the Settlement Agreement and is providing Staff with timely and complete information. Accordingly, quarterly meetings are no longer necessary to achieve the goals of the Settlement Agreement and the Commission has approved the change to semi-annual meetings, or less frequently at Staff's discretion. The parties need not obtain Commission approval for any future change to the scheduling of compliance meetings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Debra A. Howland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a stylized "H".

Debra A. Howland
Executive Director

cc: Service list (Electronically)
Docket File

SERVICE LIST - EMAIL ADDRESSES - DOCKET RELATED

Pursuant to N.H. Admin Rule Puc 203.11 (a) (1): Serve an electronic copy on each person identified on the service list.

Executive.Director@puc.nh.gov
amanda.noonan@puc.nh.gov
asbury@unitil.com
Christina.Martin@oca.nh.gov
donna.l.mcfarland@oca.nh.gov
epler@unitil.com
michael.sheehan@puc.nh.gov
randy.knepper@puc.nh.gov
robert.wyatt@puc.nh.gov
Rorie.E.P.Hollenberg@oca.nh.gov
sgeiger@orr-reno.com
sjs@sjsullivanlaw.com
Stephen.R.Eckberg@oca.nh.gov
steve.frink@puc.nh.gov
stewart@unitil.com

Docket #: 11-196-1 Printed: December 18, 2013

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:

- a) Pursuant to N.H. Admin Rule Puc 203.02 (a), with the exception of Discovery, file 7 copies, as well as an electronic copy, of all documents including cover letter with: DEBRA A HOWLAND
EXEC DIRECTOR
NHPUC
21 S. FRUIT ST, SUITE 10
CONCORD NH 03301-2429
- b) Serve an electronic copy with each person identified on the Commission's service list and with the Office of Consumer Advocate.
- c) Serve a written copy on each person on the service list not able to receive electronic mail.