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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

October 27, 2020-10:11 a.m. DAY 2  
MORNING SESSION ONLY

[Remote Hearing conducted via Webex]

RE: DE 19-057  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
D/B/A EVERSOURCE ENERGY  
Notice of Intent to File Permanent Rates  
[Hearing on Settlement Agreement]

PRESENT:

Chairwoman Dianne Martin, Presiding  
Commissioner Kathryn M. Bailey  
  
Jody Carmody, Clerk  
Eric Wind, PUC Remote Hearing Host

APPEARANCES:

Reptg. Public Service Co. of NH, d/b/a  
Eversource Energy:  
Matthew J. Fossum, Esq.  
  
Reptg. The Way Home:  
Raymond Burke, Esq. (NHLA)  
Stephen Tower, Esq. (NHLA)  
  
Reptg. N.H. Dept. of Environ. Svs.:  
Christopher Skoglund, Climate & Energy  
Rebecca Ohler, Technical Services  
  
Reptg. Clean Energy:  
Elijah D. Emerson, Esq. (Primmer...)

COURT REPORTER: SUSAN J. ROBIDAS, NHLCR NO. 44

## APPEARANCES (CONT'D)

Reptg. ChargePoint:  
Melissa Birchard, Esq. (Keyes & Fox)

Reptg. AARP:  
John Coffman, Esq.

Reptg. Residential Ratepayers:  
D. Maurice Kreis, Esq., Consumer Adv.  
Office of the Consumer Advocate

Reptg. Commission Staff:  
Suzanne Amidon, Esq.  
Brian Buckley, Esq.  
Scott Mueller, Esq. (S. Mueller Law)

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I N D E X

WITNESS PANEL:            DOUGLAS HORTON  
                                 MADELINE MINEAU  
                                 KEVIN MILLER  
                                 RICHARD CHAGNON

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WITNESS PANEL:            LEE LAJOIE  
                                 KURT DEMMER  
                                 DOUGLAS HORTON  
                                 RICHARD CHAGNON

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## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: We're here this  
3 morning to continue the hearing in DE 19-057  
4 regarding the Eversource Energy Petition for  
5 Permanent Rates. We already made the  
6 necessary findings to hold this hearing  
7 remotely. I would like to remind everyone  
8 that if there is a problem during the hearing  
9 with your connection, please call  
10 (603)271-2431. And if the public are unable  
11 to participate, the hearing will be adjourned  
12 and rescheduled.

13 Okay. We need to take a roll call  
14 attendance of the Commission. My name is  
15 Dianne Martin. I am the Chairwoman of the  
16 Public Utilities Commission, and I am alone.  
17 Commissioner Bailey.

18 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Commissioner  
19 Kathryn Bailey, and I am alone.

20 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right.  
21 Let's take appearances from attorneys who are  
22 here for today's presentation, starting with  
23 Mr. Fossum.

24 MR. FOSSUM: Good morning,

1           Commissioners and all. Matthew Fossum here  
2           for Public Service Company of New Hampshire,  
3           doing business as Eversource Energy.

4                       CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Thank you.

5                       And Mr. Kreis.

6                       MR. KREIS: Good morning,  
7           Commissioners. Good morning, colleagues.  
8           I'm D. Maurice Kreis, the consumer advocate,  
9           here as always on behalf of residential  
10          utility customers.

11                      COMMISSIONER BAILEY: All right.  
12          Thank you.

13                      And Ms. Amidon. You're on mute.

14                      MS. AMIDON: Suzanne Amidon for  
15          Commission Staff, along with my two  
16          co-counsel.

17                      CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank  
18          you.

19                      And for today I have Mr. Burke.

20                      MR. BURKE: Good morning,  
21          Commissioners and everyone. Raymond Burke,  
22          New Hampshire Legal Assistance, representing  
23          The Way Home.

24                      COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Thank you.

1                   And Mr. Skoglund is going to be in  
2                   today. Do I have that right?

3                   MR. SKOGLUND: Yes, this is Chris  
4                   Skoglund, from New Hampshire DES, appearing  
5                   with Becky Ohler, who will be the prime  
6                   spokesperson for New Hampshire DES.

7                   CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay.  
8                   Excellent. Thank you.

9                   And Mr. Emerson.

10                  MR. EMERSON: Eli Emerson from the  
11                  law firm of Primmer, Piper & Cramer, on  
12                  behalf of Clean Energy New Hampshire. Thank  
13                  you.

14                  COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Thank you.  
15                  And Ms. Birchard. Melissa, is that right?

16                  MS. BIRCHARD: Yes, that's right.  
17                  Good morning, Ms. Chairwoman, Commissioner  
18                  Bailey and others. My name is Melissa  
19                  Birchard, appearing on behalf of ChargePoint,  
20                  from the law firm Keyes & Fox.

21                  (Pause in proceedings. Connectivity issues.)

22                  CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. I can  
23                  hear you, but I don't know what's going on  
24                  with my connection. But let's continue for

1 the time being because I can see all of you.

2 All right. Mr. Coffman.

3 MR. COFFMAN: Good morning, Your  
4 Honor. Appearing on behalf of AARP, I'm John  
5 Coffman.

6 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: (connectivity  
7 issue) Hmm. What's going on?

8 MR. WIND: All right. We're going  
9 to pause momentarily. It appears the  
10 Chairwoman has lost the connection.

11 (Brief recess was taken at 10:17 a.m.,  
12 and the hearing resumed at 10:22 a.m.)

13 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: I think we had  
14 left off with Mr. Coffman.

15 MR. COFFMAN: Do I need to make my  
16 appearance again? John Coffman for AARP.

17 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Excellent.  
18 Thank you. I apologize. I missed the end of  
19 it because I lost my connection.

20 Okay. Is there anything we need to  
21 do before we proceed with the next panel?

22 MS. AMIDON: This is Attorney  
23 Amidon. I just wanted to point out that for  
24 the second panel today, I'm trying to take

1 care of this at the outset, Rich Chagnon  
2 should be listed as also one of the  
3 panelists. And this is for the base  
4 resilience investment section. That's the  
5 second panel.

6 And I also wanted to note that I  
7 added a witness for the Office of Consumer  
8 Advocate to the rate design panel; that's the  
9 third panel. Ron Nelson is their consultant  
10 on rate design, and he will be part of the  
11 panel on that issue. That's all I had. I  
12 just wanted to make sure that that  
13 housekeeping was taken care of.

14 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: I appreciate  
15 that. Thank you.

16 Okay. Then why don't we go ahead  
17 with today's first panel today on electric  
18 vehicles.

19 Ms. Robidas, when the witnesses are  
20 brought up, can you swear them in, please?

21 (WHEREUPON, DOUGLAS HORTON, MADELINE  
22 MINEAU, KEVIN MILLER and RICHARD  
23 CHAGNON were duly sworn and cautioned  
24 by the Court Reporter.)

1 DOUGLAS HORTON, SWORN

2 MADELINE MINEAU, SWORN

3 KEVIN MILLER, SWORN

4 RICHARD CHAGNON, SWORN

5 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right.

6 Which attorney is going to go first with this  
7 panel?

8 MR. FOSSUM: You know, I don't know  
9 that we discussed that. I'm fine to do so,  
10 if that's agreeable to others.

11 [No verbal response]

12 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: You're the only  
13 volunteer, so go right ahead.

14 MR. FOSSUM: I guess that makes  
15 Eversource the winner.

16 DIRECT EXAMINATION

17 BY MR. FOSSUM:

18 Q. In that case, Mr. Horton, since you had  
19 testified yesterday, we'll forego the usual  
20 qualification, with one exception. I'll just  
21 ask you to restate for the record your name,  
22 your position and responsibilities, please.

23 A. (Horton) My name's Doug Horton. I'm  
24 vice-president of distribution rates and

1 regulatory requirements for Eversource. And  
2 my responsibility and my team's  
3 responsibility are to facilitate the  
4 regulatory filings for any regulatory rate  
5 change filing at the Commission.

6 Q. And just to again refresh from yesterday,  
7 you're familiar with the terms of the  
8 settlement agreement that's pending before  
9 the Commission today?

10 A. (Horton) Yes.

11 Q. Okay. For this panel, we're looking  
12 specifically at electric vehicles. So if I  
13 could direct your attention to Section 16 of  
14 the settlement. And I know that you briefly  
15 covered this in your overview yesterday  
16 morning, but could you please just explain  
17 your understanding, the Company's  
18 understanding of what this section requires  
19 and anticipates.

20 A. (Horton) Yup. So it's not very long and it  
21 does speak for itself. But certainly a quick  
22 overview, if it's helpful.

23 No. 1, we have committed to make a  
24 filing within four months of the Commission's

1 approval of the settlement agreement that  
2 will cover a proposal for make-ready  
3 infrastructure investments related to  
4 electric vehicle charging infrastructure in  
5 New Hampshire. As part of that filing, we  
6 will include a proposal for an alternative to  
7 demand charges for electric vehicles, which  
8 at times can be an additional inhibitor to  
9 adoption of electric vehicles, or at least  
10 making it cost-prohibitive when compared to  
11 traditional fuel resources. And that we will  
12 collaborate with the interested parties to  
13 this settlement agreement in the development  
14 of that proposal that will be filed within  
15 four months of this agreement.

16 And then 16.3 just acknowledges that we  
17 have not reached agreement as a settlement  
18 group, anything related to cost recovery that  
19 might be accompanied by that proposal. And  
20 we acknowledge that that will need to be  
21 separately justified in that proposal, and  
22 that we'd also include in that proposal a  
23 discussion of the costs and the benefits of  
24 the make-ready proposal that we've committed

1 to filing.

2 Q. Thank you. And just to be clear, as with the  
3 other provisions of this agreement, is it  
4 your position and the Company's position that  
5 this is a just and reasonable provision?

6 A. (Horton) Yes.

7 Q. Thank you.

8 MR. FOSSUM: That's what I have for  
9 direct on this topic.

10 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right.  
11 Thank you.

12 Mr. Emerson, would you like to go  
13 next?

14 MR. EMERSON: Yeah, that would be  
15 great. All right. My witness is Ms. Mineau.

16 DIRECT EXAMINATION

17 BY MR. EMERSON:

18 Q. Could you please state your name for the  
19 record.

20 A. (Mineau) Madeline Mineau.

21 Q. Could you also state your employer and your  
22 position.

23 A. (Mineau) I'm the executive director of Clean  
24 Energy New Hampshire.

1 Q. And have you ever testified in front of the  
2 New Hampshire PUC before?

3 A. (Mineau) I have previously submitted  
4 testimony in Docket 17-136, the ERS for the  
5 2019 update. And I also adopted my  
6 predecessor's testimony in DE 17-189, the  
7 Liberty Battery docket.

8 Q. Thank you. And do you have before you right  
9 now what's been marked as Exhibit 21, which  
10 is prefiled testimony by you, dated  
11 December 20th, 2019, that includes one  
12 attachment to that testimony?

13 A. (Mineau) Yes, I do.

14 Q. And was this prepared by you or at your  
15 direction?

16 A. (Mineau) Yes.

17 Q. Do you have any corrections to that testimony  
18 today?

19 A. (Mineau) No, I do not.

20 Q. Do you adopt that testimony for this  
21 proceeding?

22 A. (Mineau) Yes, I do.

23 Q. Okay. And did you participate in the  
24 negotiation and drafting of the settlement

1 agreement?

2 A. (Mineau) Yes.

3 Q. And you're familiar with the terms thereof?

4 A. (Mineau) I am.

5 Q. Do you support the settlement agreement,  
6 specifically including Section 16 related to  
7 electric vehicles?

8 A. (Mineau) Yes.

9 MR. EMERSON: That's all I have.

10 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right.

11 Thank you.

12 And Ms. Birchard.

13 MR. BIRCHARD: Yes, thank you. And  
14 my witness today is Kevin Miller.

15 DIRECT EXAMINATION

16 BY MS. BIRCHARD:

17 Q. Good morning, Mr. Miller. Would you please  
18 state your name and position for the record.

19 A. (Miller) Sure. My name is Kevin George  
20 Miller. I'm the director of public policy  
21 for ChargePoint.

22 Q. And Mr. Miller, have you delivered testimony  
23 before this Commission or any other public  
24 utilities commission before?

1 A. (Miller) Yes. I have presented in a  
2 non-adjudicated docket, IR 20-004, in New  
3 Hampshire. I have also prepared and  
4 delivered testimony and served as an expert  
5 witness in Massachusetts, New York, New  
6 Jersey, and in Maryland.

7 Q. And Mr. Miller, you prepared direct testimony  
8 in this proceeding; correct?

9 A. (Miller) Yes, that is correct.

10 Q. Do you have that testimony before you,  
11 premarked Exhibit No. 22?

12 A. (Miller) Yes, I do.

13 Q. You prepared that testimony both on behalf of  
14 ChargePoint, Incorporated, as well as on  
15 behalf of Clean Energy New Hampshire; is that  
16 correct?

17 A. (Miller) Yes, that is correct.

18 Q. And that is the only testimony that you have  
19 provided so far in this proceeding; correct?

20 A. (Miller) That's correct.

21 Q. Do you have any corrections to make to that  
22 testimony?

23 A. (Miller) No, I do not.

24 Q. If I were to ask you the same questions that

1 appear in your written testimony live today,  
2 would your answers be the same?

3 A. (Miller) Yes, they would.

4 Q. Is that testimony true and accurate to the  
5 best of your knowledge, and do you adopt that  
6 testimony here today?

7 A. (Miller) Yes, it is, and I do.

8 Q. Mr. Miller, do you also support the  
9 settlement agreement in this proceeding as  
10 just and reasonable?

11 A. (Miller) Yes.

12 MR. BIRCHARD: Honorable  
13 Chairwoman, I move for the admission of the  
14 direct testimony of Kevin George Miller,  
15 which has been premarked as Exhibit No. 22.  
16 And I also make Witness Miller available for  
17 questions.

18 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right.  
19 Thank you. We will take up all of the  
20 exhibits at the end of the proceedings. I  
21 assume there is no objection to the admission  
22 of Mr. Miller's testimony -- (connectivity  
23 issue)

24 (Court Reporter interrupts.)

1 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: We will take up  
2 all of the exhibits at the end of the  
3 proceeding. And I assume there is no  
4 objection to admission of Mr. Miller's  
5 testimony, based upon the settlement  
6 agreement. And then Ms. Amidon was speaking.

7 Ms. Amidon.

8 MS. AMIDON: Are you ready, Sue?  
9 Thank you.

10 Yes, I just wanted to inquire of  
11 Mr. Chagnon if he had any additional comments  
12 or observations about this provision in the  
13 settlement agreement.

14 DIRECT EXAMINATION

15 BY MS. AMIDON:

16 Q. We already heard yesterday that you support  
17 the agreement. But if you have any  
18 additional comments on this particular  
19 provision, please provide them for the  
20 Commission now. You're on mute, Mr. Chagnon.

21 A. (Chagnon) Thank you. Staff supported this  
22 provision in the agreement in order to  
23 achieve a global settlement. Staff looks  
24 forward to reviewing any proposal made by

1 PSNH regarding make-ready investments for  
2 electric vehicle charging infrastructure and  
3 reviewing any proposal for alternatives to  
4 demand charges for electric vehicle charging  
5 rates. We do not have any position at this  
6 time of what to expect from these proposals,  
7 and we do not prejudge any possible outcomes.

8 Q. Thank you, Mr. Chagnon.

9 MS. AMIDON: That's all I had,  
10 Madam Chairwoman.

11 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank  
12 you.

13 And since everyone has agreed to  
14 forego cross, I will go directly to  
15 Commissioner Bailey.

16 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Thank you.  
17 Good morning, everyone. I don't have any  
18 questions for this panel. As Mr. Horton  
19 said, it speaks for itself. And I think this  
20 was a good way to handle this important  
21 issue. Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: I am in the  
23 same place. I do not have any questions on  
24 this section because it was very brief and it

1 speaks for itself. So, thank you all for  
2 your testimony. And I think we can move to  
3 the next panel at this point.

4 Mr. Wind, I think we just need Mr.  
5 Demmer and Mr. Lajoie.

6 (WHEREUPON, LEE LAJOIE AND KURT DEMMER  
7 were duly sworn and cautioned by the  
8 Court Reporter.)

9 LEE LAJOIE, SWORN

10 KURT DEMMER, SWORN

11 DOUGLAS HORTON, SWORN

12 RICHARD CHAGNON, SWORN

13 MS. AMIDON: And Madam Chair and  
14 Commissioner Bailey, my co-counsel, Brian D.  
15 Buckley, will be conducting the inquiry in  
16 the next panel. Thank you.

17 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Great. Thank  
18 you.

19 (Connectivity issue)

20 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Let's go off  
21 the record for a second.

22 (Pause in proceedings)

23 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: We're going  
24 to need to take a five-minute recess. So

1 we'll try again at 10:40.

2 (Brief recess was taken at 10:35 a.m.,  
3 and the hearing resumed at 10:56 a.m.)

4 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Let's proceed.  
5 Did we get to swearing in the witnesses?

6 Mr. Fossum, would you like to  
7 start?

8 MR. FOSSUM: Certainly. Since Mr.  
9 Horton has been qualified, I'll just do the  
10 same with Mr. Lajoie.

11 DIRECT EXAMINATION

12 BY MR. FOSSUM:

13 Q. Mr. Lajoie, could you please state your name,  
14 position and responsibilities for the record.

15 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Mr. Lajoie,  
16 you're on mute.

17 Q. We're not hearing you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Is your  
19 microphone on?

20 A. (Lajoie) Can you hear me now?

21 Q. Ah, there you go.

22 A. (Lajoie) Sorry about that. Good morning. My  
23 name is Lee Lajoie. I am employed by  
24 Eversource Energy as manager of system

1           resiliency. In recent years I've had  
2           responsibility for the reliability  
3           enhancement program, which supported up to  
4           \$40 million of annual capital investment  
5           targeted at reliability projects. As the REP  
6           program matured and tapered off, I have taken  
7           on broader responsibility for the capital  
8           budgeting process. In addition, there are  
9           two internal groups which report to me, the  
10          reliability reporting group and the  
11          distribution automation group.

12        Q.    Thank you. And Mr. Lajoie, have you  
13              previously testified before this Commission?

14        A.    (Lajoie) Yes, I have.

15        Q.    Now, Mr. Lajoie, did you, back on May 28th,  
16              2019, file testimony and attachments in what  
17              has been marked for identification as  
18              Exhibit 7?

19        A.    (Lajoie) Yes, I did.

20        Q.    And was that testimony prepared by you or at  
21              your direction?

22        A.    (Lajoie) Yes, it was filed -- (connectivity  
23              issue)

24                                    CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Just a minute,

1 Mr. Lajoie.

2 MR. FOSSUM: A lot of feedback in  
3 there.

4 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Now we can't  
5 hear you. We're off the record.

6 (Pause in proceedings)

7 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Let's try this  
8 again. Go back on the record. Oh, let's go  
9 off the record. Looks like we just lost  
10 video as well.

11 (Pause in proceedings)

12 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Back on the  
13 record.

14 BY MR. FOSSUM:

15 Q. All right. I'll pick up where I left. You  
16 were answering the question about whether the  
17 testimony in Exhibit 7 was prepared by you or  
18 at your direction.

19 A. (Lajoie) Yes, it was, for the portions of  
20 testimony that I was responsible for.

21 Q. And do you have any corrections to that  
22 testimony this morning?

23 A. (Lajoie) No, I do not.

24 Q. And do you adopt that as your testimony for

1           this proceeding?

2    A.   (Lajoie) Yes, I do.

3    Q.   Mr. Lajoie, did you also file testimony and  
4           attachments as part of the Company's rebuttal  
5           on March 4, 2020, which has been marked as  
6           Exhibits 45 and 46 for the redacted and  
7           confidential versions?

8    A.   (Lajoie) Yes, I did.

9    Q.   And was that testimony prepared by you or at  
10          your direction?

11   A.   (Lajoie) Yes, it was.

12   Q.   And do you have any corrections to that  
13          testimony?

14   A.   (Lajoie) No, I do not.

15   Q.   And do you adopt that testimony as your  
16          testimony for this proceeding?

17   A.   (Lajoie) Yes, I do.

18   Q.   Mr. Lajoie, are you familiar with the terms  
19          of the agreement that is pending before the  
20          Commission today?

21   A.   (Lajoie) Yes, I am.

22   Q.   In particular, I'd like to, Mr. Lajoie,  
23          direct your attention to Section 11 of the  
24          agreement. And could you please discuss your

1           understanding of what is required by that  
2           section and the resiliency issues that are  
3           discussed there.

4    A.   (Lajoie) Yes, I will.  The Company has  
5           concerns with the distribution system in New  
6           Hampshire, in that it is aging faster than it  
7           can be replaced.  Our viewpoint is that we  
8           need to accelerate investment on a planned  
9           basis to improve the condition of the system,  
10          to increase reliability, and improve capacity  
11          to host distributed energy resources.  We  
12          entered this rate case with a proposal to  
13          accelerate investment in renewing the system  
14          which was focused on poles, wires and  
15          substations.  Approximately 40 percent of our  
16          poles are over 40 years old, and the poles  
17          installed back then were shorter and smaller  
18          in diameter, which means they are less able  
19          to withstand degradation from impact, decay  
20          and insects.  Up until a few years ago, we  
21          were an open wire company.  Since that time,  
22          we have transitioned to covered wire, which  
23          is better able to withstand the impacts of  
24          trees, limbs and other external items.  We

1 are also installing a larger-diameter  
2 conductor, which is physically stronger  
3 electrically, has more capacity, and enables  
4 the system to more easily host distributed  
5 energy resources and allow for two-way power  
6 flow.

7 Substation enhancements include the  
8 replacement of oil-filled circuit breakers  
9 with vacuum breakers and the replacement of  
10 their associated electromechanical relays  
11 with solid state devices.

12 Other parties to the proceeding, Staff  
13 in particular, had concerns about the need  
14 for or the value of those investments. So in  
15 the settlement we have agreed to an outside  
16 assessment of the overall Eversource  
17 distribution system in New Hampshire and a  
18 survey of our customers to attempt to balance  
19 the need for a reliable system with the level  
20 of investment necessary. The assessment will  
21 review the overall age and condition of the  
22 system and make recommendations as to short-  
23 and long-term investment plans. It will also  
24 evaluate the strategies the Company is

1 currently using to upgrade system condition  
2 and resiliency; to assess cost versus  
3 strength benefit, including the  
4 larger-diameter poles, composite crossarms  
5 versus wood crossarms; covered wire and the  
6 relocation of right-of-way lines to roadside.  
7 Recommendations from this assessment will be  
8 implemented on a basis consistent with least  
9 cost planning principles.

10 Q. Thank you very much. Mr. Lajoie, did you  
11 listen in to the session that was conducted  
12 yesterday in this proceeding?

13 A. (Lajoie) Yes, I did.

14 Q. And did you hear and do you recall the  
15 questions and answers at that session that  
16 were asked regarding the Company's decisions  
17 to proceed or not with certain capital  
18 projects based on cost concerns in  
19 particular?

20 A. (Lajoie) Yes, I did.

21 Q. And did you hear Ms. Menard's explanation and  
22 answer?

23 A. (Lajoie) Yes, I did.

24 Q. And do you have any additional detail to

1 provide on that issue beyond what Ms. Menard  
2 provided yesterday?

3 A. (Lajoie) Yeah, a few points. As discussed by  
4 Ms. Menard yesterday, project development is  
5 a four-step process. First, a potential  
6 project is identified as needed to resolve a  
7 particular issue -- for example, to improve  
8 reliability or to install or replace  
9 infrastructure.

10 Second, we develop a conceptual estimate  
11 which is used to help prioritize the list of  
12 proposed projects, to determine which  
13 projects of the entirety of the projects that  
14 are proposed will fit within the limits of  
15 the capital budget. For example: In 2020,  
16 over 50 projects were proposed by our field  
17 engineering group, each of which required a  
18 conceptual estimate in order to be evaluated.  
19 This list was narrowed to 20 projects which  
20 were included in our capital budget plan.

21 Third, if a project is to move forward,  
22 we develop a detailed project budget by  
23 clarifying and enhancing the conceptual  
24 estimate. Depending on the project, this

1           could involve performing detailed  
2           engineering, obtaining bids from contractors  
3           and so forth.

4                     Fourth, finally, we review the final  
5           project costs and variances. As the project  
6           moves through this process, there could be  
7           changes. Depending on the justification for  
8           the project, it might be decided that the  
9           cost increase is justified and necessary, and  
10          therefore approved. Or it could be decided  
11          that the project was no longer justified and  
12          therefore would not be completed. For  
13          example: Reliability-based projects are  
14          typically evaluated on the basis of cost per  
15          saved customer minute. If a project cost is  
16          projected to significantly exceed the  
17          conceptual estimate, and therefore the cost  
18          per saved customer minute has significantly  
19          increased, the project could be cancelled.  
20          This recently happened in 2020 with a project  
21          proposed in the town of Lancaster.  
22          Reliability in that particular area may be  
23          below average, but there is no safety or  
24          other significant risk to the public, so the

1 project was cancelled. However, if a project  
2 is proposed to perhaps replace a piece of  
3 equipment which has been determined to be on  
4 the verge of failure, or to alleviate an  
5 overloaded piece of equipment, and the  
6 proposed solution is the most cost-effective  
7 method to accomplish the goal, the project  
8 would seek and likely be approved for  
9 additional funding. This funding would have  
10 to be offset with reductions in other areas  
11 in order to stay within the total capital  
12 budget.

13 Q. And so is it fair to say that along this  
14 project life cycle that you were describing,  
15 that there are a number of opportunities,  
16 instances to review the costs of various  
17 projects, the need for those projects, and  
18 the justification for those projects?

19 A. (Lajoie) Yes. Absolutely. The initial  
20 conceptual proposal is reviewed by a team of  
21 approximately a dozen managers and directors  
22 on the engineering team and the operations  
23 team. And that's where the decision is made  
24 to move forward to the next step of a

1 detailed project estimate or not. As the  
2 project moves through its life cycle, a group  
3 meets monthly to review project expenditures,  
4 projections for the remainder of the year,  
5 for the remainder of the project and so  
6 forth, and that's where some of that  
7 balancing takes place. If a project requires  
8 additional funding, supplemental  
9 authorization is sought, as I mentioned, for  
10 any project that requires additional funding,  
11 and that goes through an entire approval  
12 process in itself.

13 Q. Thank you. Transitioning slightly, Mr.  
14 Lajoie. Did you also hear and do you recall  
15 from yesterday's discussion on tree trimming  
16 and vegetation -- did you hear the discussion  
17 yesterday related to tree trimming and  
18 vegetation management?

19 A. (Lajoie) Yes, I did.

20 Q. And do you recall hearing, I don't think it's  
21 much of a paraphrase to say a question along  
22 the lines of, "How do you determine when the  
23 amount of trimming is enough?"

24 A. (Lajoie) Yes, I did.

1 Q. So turning to you, in your role. How would  
2 the Company assess or propose to assess an  
3 appropriate level of trimming and veg  
4 management activity?

5 A. (Lajoie) As mentioned, I'm not in control of  
6 the tree trimming program. However, in my  
7 role as the manager of system resiliency, we  
8 do track reliability, which is broken out  
9 into overall reliability, and specifically  
10 events which relate to tree trimming.

11 So there are a number of factors that we  
12 might consider to determine the correct level  
13 of tree trimming, including looking through  
14 these reliability metrics that are affected  
15 by trees, to see whether they're going up,  
16 down or staying steady.

17 In addition to the concerns about the  
18 impact on reliability from trees, one of the  
19 other important things to keep in mind in  
20 assessing the appropriate amount of trimming  
21 is the Commission itself has directed that  
22 electric utilities maintain a trimming cycle  
23 of no more than five years. Up until now,  
24 with trimming funding in both base rates and

1           the REP program together, we have improved  
2           and have met this goal with a trimming cycle  
3           in the area of four years. The amount in the  
4           settlement is less than we had requested when  
5           we first approached with the rate case, but  
6           it is in line with our recent spending.  
7           While it appears from some of the bids we are  
8           getting from trimming contractors that costs  
9           will be higher going forward than in the  
10          recent past, we will be working with the  
11          budgets, as we have been, in the settlement  
12          to maintain our trimming in line with the  
13          Commission's requirements. As part of any  
14          assessment on trimming going forward, that is  
15          one of the factors we will need to be sure to  
16          consider.

17                    At the end, we will have a review that  
18                    will look at certain trimming activities, as  
19                    well as other information on the customer's  
20                    value on reliability. And we have the  
21                    Commission's requirements. And we can work  
22                    from that base of information to determine an  
23                    appropriate level of trimming investment for  
24                    New Hampshire.

1           And as part of the settlement, we have  
2           agreed to file two trimming reports annually:  
3           One in November, which lays out the plan for  
4           the following year, and one by March 1st,  
5           which details the achievements of the prior  
6           year.

7    Q.    And Mr. Lajoie, is it your opinion and the  
8           Company's position that the requirements  
9           around this section, more broadly speaking as  
10          part of the settlement, are just and  
11          reasonable?

12   A.    (Lajoie) Yes, it is my opinion.   Yes.

13   Q.    Thank you.

14                    COMMISSIONER BAILEY:   That's what I  
15                    have for direct at this time.

16                    CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN:   All right.  
17                    Thank you.   Mr. Buckley.

18                    MR. BUCKLEY:   Thank you, Madam  
19                    Chair.   I'll proceed by qualifying Mr. Demmer  
20                    and then just doing a brief direct with him.

21                    DIRECT EXAMINATION

22   BY MR. BUCKLEY:

23   Q.    Mr. Demmer, can you please state your full  
24          name for the record?

1 A. (Demmer) Yes. My name is Kurt Demmer. I am  
2 employed -- excuse me. Yes, this is Kurt  
3 Demmer. Sorry.

4 Q. And by whom are you employed, and what is  
5 your position with that employer?

6 A. (Demmer) I'm employed with the New Hampshire  
7 Public Utilities Commission as a senior  
8 utility analysis for the Electric Division.

9 Q. And have you previously testified before the  
10 Commission?

11 A. (Demmer) Yes, I have.

12 Q. And did you participate in the investigation  
13 of this petition?

14 A. (Demmer) Yes, I have.

15 Q. What aspects of the petition did you examine?

16 A. (Demmer) My testimony largely focused on  
17 resiliency and reliability investments as  
18 part of the GTEP initiative proposed by the  
19 Company. In addition, I also performed a  
20 reliability analysis of the Company's ongoing  
21 veg management program and provided testimony  
22 to that end.

23 Q. And so you mentioned your testimony. Would  
24 it be accurate to say that what is marked for

1 identification as Exhibit 34 reflects the  
2 prefiled testimony that you prepared for this  
3 proceeding?

4 A. (Demmer) Yes, it does.

5 Q. And do you have any corrections to make to  
6 that testimony?

7 A. (Demmer) No, I do not.

8 Q. And do you affirm that your testimony  
9 accurately represents your opinions at the  
10 time you prepared it, from facts known to you  
11 at the time you prepared it, adopting it here  
12 today for those purposes?

13 A. (Demmer) Yes.

14 Q. Would it be fair and accurate to say that you  
15 raised certain concerns in your testimony  
16 relating to the Company's planned GTEP  
17 program, Grid Transformation and Enablement  
18 Program; certain base resilience investments;  
19 enhanced tree trimming; and hazard tree  
20 removal activities, amongst other things?

21 A. (Demmer) Yes, I did.

22 Q. And did you participate in the development of  
23 the settlement agreement before the  
24 Commission?

1 A. (Demmer) Yes, I did.

2 Q. And are you familiar with the terms of that  
3 settlement agreement?

4 A. (Demmer) Yes, I am.

5 Q. So, Settlement Sections 11.1 and 11.2, and 11  
6 more broadly, discuss a condition assessment.  
7 Can you tell me why there is value in such an  
8 assessment and the subsequent review of the  
9 assessment in the Company's LCIRP proceeding?

10 A. (Demmer) The LCIRP proceeding is a forward-  
11 looking document in a proceeding. Going  
12 forward over the next several years, there  
13 will be hundreds of millions of dollars of  
14 infrastructure investments. The initial  
15 Company engineering assessment into the  
16 Company's infrastructure condition and  
17 investments, and follow-up subsequent Staff's  
18 engineering assessment, will demonstrate the  
19 reliability and resiliency benefit of the  
20 resiliency investments, as well as ETT and  
21 ETR, including any quantifiable or  
22 qualitative benefits that could be utilized  
23 in a cost benefit analysis. Staff feels this  
24 engineering analysis will strike a balance

1           between net benefits and ratepayer impact.

2    Q.    And do you believe the concerns addressed  
3           within your testimony are adequately  
4           alleviated by the provisions within the  
5           settlement relating to those concerns?

6    A.    (Demmer) Yes, I do.

7    Q.    And do you believe that this settlement  
8           agreement meets the public interest standard  
9           and will result in just and reasonable rates?

10   A.    (Demmer) Yes, it does.

11   Q.    And just to attempt to tie up -- or maybe,  
12           rather, tee up a loose end from yesterday's  
13           discussion, Commissioner Bailey asked  
14           yesterday about what type of metrics might be  
15           associated with the Company's resiliency  
16           programs. Can you comment on where in the  
17           settlement one might look to understand such  
18           metrics or reporting requirements associated  
19           with reliability, and provide any other  
20           comment on that issue you feel is reasonable?

21   A.    (Demmer) Yes. There are reliability metrics,  
22           and I believe Lee had referenced this. But  
23           we do have -- as part of Attachment 4 of the  
24           settlement, there are reliability-based,

1 specific capital investments that will have  
2 metrics such as dollars per Delta CI, dollars  
3 per Delta CMI, which are customers  
4 interrupted -- or customer minute  
5 interrupted, for those reliability-based,  
6 specific capital investments.

7 Q. And so in addition to that which is set forth  
8 in Attachment 4, is it possible that  
9 additional metrics might be developed as a  
10 result of the engineering assessment or set  
11 forth in the assessment?

12 A. (Demmer) Yes, they may. Utilizing a  
13 third-party assessment will allow Staff and  
14 the Commission to quantitatively assess  
15 reliability investments with additional  
16 accepted industry benchmarks, but also allow  
17 to investigate current industry practices as  
18 it relates to resiliency measurements, both  
19 qualitatively and quantitatively. At this  
20 time, bear in mind, there are no widely  
21 accepted industry benchmarks for resiliency  
22 measurement.

23 Q. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Demmer. That's all I  
24 have for you.

1           And I would just ask Mr. Chagnon, who's  
2           also on the panel, do you have anything to  
3           add to what you've heard so far on this  
4           panel?

5    A.    (Chagnon) I do not. Thank you.

6    Q.    Great.

7                   MR. BUCKLEY: No further questions  
8           for the panel.

9                   CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right.  
10          Thank you.

11                   Mr. Lajoie, are you there?

12                   MR. LAJOIE: Yes, I am.

13                   CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Can you turn  
14          your video on for this part, please?

15                   Commissioner Bailey, would you like  
16          to ask some questions?

17                   COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Yes, thank  
18          you. Good morning, everyone.

19    INTERROGATORIES BY COMMISSIONERS:

20    BY COMMISSIONER BAILEY:

21    Q.    Mr. Lajoie, can you explain the Company's  
22          decision on why it decided to use steel poles  
23          instead of wooden poles?

24    A.    (Lajoie) Steel poles are only used in

1 right-of-way applications and on -- those are  
2 typically more difficult to access because  
3 clearly they're not roadside. They have been  
4 shown -- they have a life span that's  
5 approximate -- (connectivity issue). Can you  
6 hear me okay? I'm getting a lot of --  
7 (connectivity issue)

8 Q. I can.

9 A. (Lajoie) They have a life span that's at  
10 least twice as long as a wood pole. They're  
11 not susceptible to rot or insects or  
12 woodpeckers, which have all been, you know,  
13 proven to be issues with wooden poles. And  
14 because we only need to access the  
15 right-of-way half as often, the environmental  
16 impacts of that, you know, track vehicles or  
17 wheeled vehicles obstructing roadways in the  
18 right-of-way and so forth, that environmental  
19 impact is reduced by only having to access  
20 the right-of-way half as often.

21 Q. So the life of a steel pole is 80 years?

22 A. (Lajoie) It's at least 80 years, yes.

23 Q. How much more does it cost than a wooden  
24 pole?

1 A. (Lajoie) I believe that information is in our  
2 testimony, but I do not have that in front of  
3 me at this time. They are more expensive,  
4 yes.

5 Q. Are they twice as expensive or more than  
6 twice as expensive?

7 A. (Lajoie) I don't have that number in front of  
8 me, and I would hate to speculate. I don't  
9 know that off the top --

10 Q. Mr. Demmer, do you know?

11 A. (Demmer) I believe the material cost for a  
12 steel pole over a regular pole is  
13 approximately three times the cost. For  
14 installation, you're probably looking at  
15 approximately the same, maybe possibly about  
16 one and a half times more because of the  
17 deeper depth you have to use for steel poles.

18 Q. Do you think it's -- well, let me ask this  
19 question to Mr. Lajoie first.

20 Do you know if the depreciation will  
21 happen over 80 years instead of 40 years for  
22 steel poles? Maybe Mr. Horton knows the  
23 answer to that.

24 A. (Horton) I'm sorry. Could you repeat the

1 question?

2 Q. Is the depreciation for steel poles over 80  
3 years rather than 40?

4 A. (Horton) I actually don't have the  
5 depreciation specifics at my fingertips  
6 either. Certainly can get it.

7 Q. Well, do you expect the Company to recover  
8 its investment sooner than the useful life?

9 A. (Horton) So with the depreciation rates that  
10 are set, the idea is to try to align the  
11 recovery for accounting purposes with the  
12 expected useful life. And it's done on a  
13 asset class basis. And so I'd have to  
14 familiarize myself with how the depreciation  
15 rate for poles is derived. You know, it's  
16 not on a specific pole-by-pole basis.

17 Q. Understand. Is that one of the things the  
18 engineering firm will look at?

19 A. (Lajoie) Yes, it is.

20 Q. Okay. We've reviewed a lot of water  
21 crossings and state land crossings recently  
22 because it seems like there's a lot of  
23 activity replacing transmission lines from  
24 wooden poles to steel poles. Is any part of

1 that investment included in distribution?

2 A. (Lajoie) No. My understanding is  
3 transmission investment and rates are  
4 recovered totally separate from distribution  
5 rate cases.

6 A. (Horton) That's absolutely the case. That's  
7 right.

8 Q. Okay. Thank you.

9 What year did you decide to start using  
10 steel poles rather than wooden poles in  
11 rights-of-way?

12 A. (Lajoie) Approximately 2018. But I would  
13 have to go back and look. It has only been a  
14 couple of years now, maybe three.

15 Q. Okay. Thanks.

16 When you made that decision, did you do  
17 some cost benefit analysis to see if the  
18 benefits that you mentioned outweighed the  
19 increased cost?

20 A. (Lajoie) No, that analysis was not performed.  
21 With the extension of life, the stronger -- a  
22 steel pole is physically stronger than a  
23 wooden pole, and it's consistent in its  
24 strength. Wooden poles, it depends on the

1 growth pattern of the tree and the type of  
2 wood used and so forth. Even poles from a  
3 particular manufacturer all received at a  
4 certain period of time will have variations  
5 in strength and between poles, and also over  
6 the length of the poles. So you may have a  
7 weak spot in a particular area where there  
8 happens to be a knot from a tree branch and  
9 so forth. So the consistent strength, the  
10 increased strength, and the extended life  
11 made sense for right-of-way purposes to  
12 transition to steel poles, and that's why the  
13 decision was made.

14 Q. At any cost?

15 A. (Lajoie) They -- (connectivity issue)

16 Q. They didn't factor that into the analysis.

17 A. (Lajoie) We received bids for steel poles and  
18 made the decision to transition to steel  
19 poles in right-of-way. Had we -- you know,  
20 had the cost been astronomical, depending how  
21 you define astronomical, I guess, you know, I  
22 suspect the decision would have been  
23 different. But it looked like a reasonable  
24 solution to extending the life of these

1 right-of-way lines and reducing the need to  
2 access them on a regular basis.

3 Q. Okay. Can you speak to Mr. Allen's testimony  
4 on advanced tree trimming?

5 A. (Lajoie) I can try. I converse with  
6 Mr. Allen on a regular basis.

7 Q. Okay. What year did you begin enhanced tree  
8 trimming?

9 A. (Lajoie) Early two thousands I would say. So  
10 it's approaching 20 years at this point.

11 Q. And you still have five years left to  
12 complete the first cycle?

13 A. (Lajoie) Yes. Enhanced tree trimming is not  
14 on a cycle basis. We only do that once. So  
15 to finish --

16 Q. Of enhanced.

17 A. (Lajoie) -- the system, yeah, there's five  
18 years left I believe is what he says, yeah.

19 Q. Okay. How long does the Company expect it to  
20 take to complete the enhanced tree trimming?

21 A. (Lajoie) I was not party to any discussions  
22 at the initial -- at the onset of enhanced  
23 tree trimming, as to when it would be  
24 completed. The initial analysis, you know,

1 was by increasing the clearance  
2 specification, the reliability benefit would  
3 be something that, you know, would be  
4 beneficial to our customers. So we moved  
5 toward that increased enhanced specification.  
6 We understand that ETT can only be performed  
7 on a particular piece of line once. But I  
8 don't know that anyone ever went through and  
9 looked at every mile of line that would be  
10 subject to enhanced tree trimming or a  
11 candidate for enhanced tree trimming to  
12 determine the end date of the ETT program.

13 Q. Well, I think Mr. Allen's testimony says  
14 60 percent of the system had been completed,  
15 there's 40 percent left, and it's going to  
16 take another five years.

17 A. (Lajoie) Okay. I'm not disputing his  
18 testimony. I'm just saying at the onset of  
19 ETT back, you know, a number of years ago, I  
20 don't think anyone said, hey, to do the  
21 entire system is going to take us 10 years or  
22 15 years or whatever. I thought that was the  
23 question you were asking. That's what I was  
24 trying to address.

1 Q. It was. Okay.

2 Do you believe that if we had a  
3 2008-like winter storm today, there would be  
4 significantly less damage as a result of --  
5 (connectivity issue)

6 A. (Lajoie) As a result of, excuse me, what?

7 Q. As a result of this enhanced tree trimming.

8 A. (Lajoie) Areas where we have performed  
9 enhanced tree trimming anecdotally have  
10 performed better under storm conditions. It  
11 depends on the particular storm, the  
12 direction of the wind, the weight of the snow  
13 and so forth. You know, trees certainly are  
14 taller than the clearance specification, even  
15 under ETT. So a tree from well outside the  
16 enhanced zone could still come into the line.  
17 But ETT seems to have proven that we do see a  
18 reduction in tree-related outages in areas  
19 that have been trimmed to that specification.

20 A. (Horton) May I just offer one other  
21 observation?

22 Q. Please.

23 A. (Horton) As you know, I'm not the vegetation  
24 person, by any stretch. But just one item

1 I'll note from recent experience in  
2 Connecticut, where we had, you know, a recent  
3 drought, as well as insect infestation, which  
4 has affected the trees within the, you know,  
5 the fall zone and just the magnitude of the  
6 storms -- so there's several considerations  
7 that go into it. But what I just wanted to  
8 add is that, even what we saw in Connecticut  
9 with the recent storm, Isaias, just the  
10 magnitude of the event caused healthy trees  
11 to fall that would not be mitigated by ETT or  
12 any veg program.

13 So I think as Lee was saying, it's  
14 really hard to compare two events and make a  
15 definitive statement. But clearly, if we're  
16 trimming trees to a broader specification,  
17 there's going to be fewer branches or trees  
18 to impact our lines during an event, I guess  
19 all else equal.

20 Q. Okay. But you haven't quantified that with  
21 data, have you, Mr. Lajoie?

22 A. (Lajoie) I'm not sure. I would have to check  
23 with Mr. Allen on that. I apologize. I  
24 believe it's been looked at, but I do not

1           have that information in front of me. I  
2           wouldn't want to commit to something that I'm  
3           not sure of.

4                           CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Commissioner  
5           Bailey, you're on mute.

6 BY COMMISSIONER BAILEY:

7 Q.   Mr. Demmer, do you think that if we had a  
8       2008-like storm, the damage would be less in  
9       the area, in the 60 percent of the area that  
10      has experienced ETT?

11 A.   (Demmer) I would say that I would have to  
12      agree with the Company's response, as far as  
13      having a lot of variables involved. However,  
14      my thought is that right now there's no  
15      quantitative benefit given to ETT. That's  
16      what I stated in my testimony. So as far as  
17      whether or not it could withstand another ice  
18      storm depends on how much ice there is, if we  
19      had the same level of ice that hit in the  
20      previous time in 2008. It's undetermined  
21      because there's no cost benefit analysis.  
22      There's no measurement that's been made by  
23      the Company to show that it would be better  
24      or would be worse, or the same. So that's --

1           it's hard for me to say.

2   Q.   Mr. Horton, did you want to add something to  
3       that, or are you --

4   A.   (Horton) Well, I was -- (connectivity issue)  
5       just to offer, and certainly continuing the  
6       line of the questions, but just to offer back  
7       to the settlement agreement. You know, I  
8       think it was clear there were various  
9       perspectives on these topics that you're  
10      asking about. You know, we have and still  
11      have a different understanding and  
12      appreciation for certain things and needs of  
13      the system. That's clear. And I think the  
14      reason we were able to reach a comprehensive  
15      settlement agreement with all the parties,  
16      between us and Staff and everybody else, was  
17      not because we were able to resolve these  
18      specific discrepancies and get to common  
19      understanding and agreement on the questions  
20      you're asking. We still have differences of  
21      opinion of what the system needs are. But  
22      the value that all the settling parties see  
23      in the next steps that we have agreed to is  
24      to try to bring in more perspectives to

1           inform that discussion. I think, as Mr.  
2           Lajoie said in the direct testimony, we  
3           expect an outcome of the engineering  
4           assessment. We expect it's going to provide  
5           the data and the facts that you all are  
6           asking us to provide, that we were not able  
7           to produce during the case to a level of  
8           satisfaction to get Mr. Demmer and the other  
9           parties comfortable, you know, to just  
10          approve our GTEP proposal as filed.

11                   The reason for the system assessment,  
12           including ETT and hazard tree removal as part  
13           of that, you know, and doing a system  
14           assessment and then evaluating the investment  
15           decisions we make, including steel poles and  
16           other things referenced in the settlement  
17           agreement, is to try to find common ground in  
18           exactly the questions you're asking. We just  
19           were not -- we would not have been able to  
20           reach a settlement agreement on, you know,  
21           the basis of if we were to try to -- we  
22           weren't going to be convinced to a different  
23           perspective, and neither was Staff. And so  
24           the settlement agreement is our collective

1 resolution to that.

2 A. (Lajoie) And just if I could offer a  
3 clarification. Rebuttal testimony filed by  
4 Mr. Allen in this case states that in 2018,  
5 Eversource customers saw a 50-percent  
6 reduction in tree-caused outages on circuits  
7 that had the entire three-phase ETT  
8 back-trimmed in 2017, the previous year. And  
9 in 2019, that number increased to 82 percent  
10 for circuits where ETT was performed in the  
11 prior year. So there has been some analysis  
12 performed, and it has resulted in significant  
13 improvement. ETT has resulted in significant  
14 improvement.

15 Q. Okay. Thank you. Actually, I was -- never  
16 mind.

17 In Paragraph 6.1 of the settlement, it  
18 says that you're going to spend \$27.1 million  
19 on vegetation management, which includes  
20 \$11.6 million for ETT and hazard tree  
21 removal. Do you know how much of that is for  
22 ETT?

23 A. (Lajoie) The two activities are performed  
24 simultaneously. When they're doing the ETT

1 on a section, they're also looking for the  
2 hazard trees along that section. I don't  
3 know the cost breakdown between the two  
4 functions as they're performed going down a  
5 particular section of line.

6 Q. The reason I ask is because in Mr. Allen's  
7 testimony, he says that you need to spend \$5  
8 million a year over each of the next five  
9 years to finish the enhanced tree trimming.  
10 So I was wondering if you were going to  
11 finish more quickly than that if you spend  
12 \$11.6 million.

13 A. (Lajoie) I don't know the answer to that.

14 A. (Horton) I mean, I also don't know the  
15 specifics of that. I'll just note that the  
16 \$11.6 million was not an acceleration, as far  
17 as I'm aware, my understanding. You know, we  
18 didn't break out how much of the 11.6 was to  
19 ETT versus hazard tree removal. But that is  
20 actually less than the amount that we had  
21 spent in the test year for those activities.  
22 So, again, in recognition of the differences  
23 of opinion or value that the parties saw in  
24 the program, we landed at 11.6, with the

1 provision that's also in Section 6.1, that  
2 there's an ability for us to justify spending  
3 more than that in total on the vegetation  
4 management program and then getting that  
5 recovered through the RRAM.

6 Q. Okay. Thanks.

7 Mr. Demmer, are you comfortable with the  
8 resolution of the issues that you've raised,  
9 as proposed in the settlement?

10 A. (Demmer) Yes, I am.

11 Q. Okay. Thanks.

12 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Commissioner,  
13 can I jump in on that one?

14 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Sure.

15 BY CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN:

16 Q. Mr. Demmer, I had read your prefiled  
17 testimony on your concerns about replacement,  
18 the plan for replacement -- (connectivity  
19 issue)

20 (Court Reporter interrupts.)

21 Q. The plan for replacement for Eversource  
22 infrastructure. And Commissioner Bailey just  
23 asked you, at a high level, if you were  
24 satisfied. I was going to ask you if you

1           could go over your most significant concerns  
2           with that plan, previous plan, and how the  
3           provision in Section 11 satisfies you and  
4           your concerns.

5       A.     (Demmer) Sure.  So the investments that the  
6           Company is making are for both reliability  
7           and resiliency.  And I believe the  
8           reliability aspect of that is addressed in  
9           Attachment 4 of the settlement with the  
10          associated metrics, along with the  
11          reliability, and getting the reliability  
12          reports.

13                 As far as the resiliency benefits, as I  
14                 stated earlier, there is no wildly-held  
15                 metric for resiliency.  However, with the  
16                 settlement, and with the engineering  
17                 assessment, we are looking for some sort of  
18                 benefit analysis for resiliency measurement  
19                 for these investments the Company is making  
20                 to do a cost benefit analysis and, again, to  
21                 strike that balance between ratepayer impact,  
22                 cost and resiliency measurement.

23       Q.     And you're comfortable with the provision  
24           that the Company is continuing current

1 practices for the time being?

2 A. (Demmer) I am comfortable with the  
3 investments as they're being made prior to  
4 the proposal for GTEP. So, assuming the  
5 Company has not started GTEP with the  
6 accelerated replacement, so that is not an  
7 existing plan, I am comfortable with the  
8 existing investments being installed as they  
9 are today.

10 Q. Okay. Mr. Horton or Mr. Lajoie, can you  
11 confirm that, that the GTEP is not being  
12 implemented, and the current practices  
13 referred to are those that were in place when  
14 Mr. Demmer submitted his testimony?

15 A. (Lajoie) That is correct. GTEP is not being  
16 implemented at this time. The current  
17 practices are what we have been doing for the  
18 past several years.

19 Q. Okay. Thank you.

20 BY COMMISSIONER BAILEY (cont'd):

21 Q. I just have one last question or maybe line  
22 of questioning.

23 Are you the panel responsible for  
24 reviewing the investments being added to rate

1 base?

2 A. (Demmer) Is that for me, Commissioner, or is  
3 that for --

4 Q. Well, for each of you.

5 A. (Demmer) Okay. Yes, I am working with Mr.  
6 Dudley on the step adjustments, if that's  
7 what you're referring to.

8 Q. No, I'm talking about the investments that  
9 have been made since the last step adjustment  
10 up until today, that are being added to rate  
11 base as a result of this settlement  
12 agreement. And I wanted to ask you about  
13 prudence on those.

14 A. (Demmer) Okay. The projects that were  
15 reviewed as part of Mr. Dudley's testimony, I  
16 was not involved in that prudence  
17 determination. For the first step that's  
18 going to be coming in a month or so and the  
19 subsequent steps, I will be involved with  
20 those. I'm sorry I'm not really...

21 Q. But how do we -- okay. All right. Thank you  
22 that's all I have.

23 BY CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN (cont'd):

24 Q. I had a question for Mr. Lajoie.

1           You mentioned you had a list of the  
2           concerns with the distribution system in New  
3           Hampshire. And as you read through them,  
4           said "relocation of right-of-way lines to  
5           roadside." Can you explain that to me?

6    A.   (Lajoie) That was a part of the original GTEP  
7           proposal. So it would be covered by the  
8           engineering analysis that we have agreed to  
9           as part of the settlement agreement. The  
10          issue was in areas where a right-of-way line  
11          is parallel to an existing roadway; is it in  
12          fact more cost-effective to relocate that  
13          right-of-way line out to the roadside to make  
14          it accessible for, you know, system  
15          maintenance and construction and so forth  
16          versus continuing to maintain it in an  
17          off-road position -- an off-road location.

18                 There are definitely some lines that we  
19                 have that are in some pretty difficult  
20                 right-of-ways. The line that feeds Wildcat  
21                 Mountain is an example. It's a very, very  
22                 narrow right-of-way, too small to actually  
23                 drive a vehicle in. So anytime we have to  
24                 get in there to replace poles and so forth,

1 we've used a helicopter to deliver poles to  
2 it before. We've used, you know, ATVs to  
3 access the right-of-way, or hiked in by foot  
4 power, you know, carrying equipment in on  
5 toboggans in the wintertime and so forth.  
6 That would be one where relocating it out to  
7 the line -- the road that leads up to Wildcat  
8 Mountain would be advantageous, as far as  
9 access goes.

10 There's another line that's in the  
11 Bradford to Warner area that's in a pretty,  
12 again, a very rugged, nasty right-of-way,  
13 limited width. And we are considering or  
14 have considered relocating portions of that  
15 out to Route 103, which runs parallel to that  
16 right-of-way, to provide better access and  
17 ease of maintenance.

18 Q. Okay. Thank you for that.

19 You also testified that with regard to  
20 tree trimming, you've seen increased costs in  
21 proposals. Do you have any idea why that is?

22 A. (Lajoie) We went out for -- we go out for  
23 trimming services on a multi-year basis. So  
24 we reached the end of our bid, you know, our

1 contract basis in 2019 -- no -- excuse me --  
2 2020. So the bids coming in for 2021 are the  
3 start of a new four-year cycle. And just  
4 based on the economic situation and, you  
5 know, other jobs that are available to  
6 people, oftentimes tree trimmers have -- you  
7 know, their labor costs vary widely,  
8 depending on whether people have access to  
9 easier, less dirty jobs. So sometimes they  
10 do have to pay more to get the people to  
11 actually perform that function. It is dirty,  
12 unskilled work, and sometimes you have to pay  
13 people more to do that work.

14 Q. So it's an increase over what you got for  
15 bids for four years.

16 A. (Lajoie) Correct. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Thank you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: I don't have  
19 any other questions.

20 Mr. Buckley, Mr. Fossum, do you  
21 have any redirect?

22 MR. FOSSUM: Commissioners, I  
23 believe I will have a couple of questions.  
24 But if I may, could we have just five or ten

1 minutes? I think Commissioner Bailey had  
2 asked some questions that I think we can get  
3 the answers to very quickly, in the interest  
4 of answering the questions that she had, if  
5 you would just give us a couple of minutes.  
6 I think Mr. Lajoie and/or Mr. Horton can get  
7 ahold of relevant information to answer those  
8 questions.

9 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Does it make  
10 sense to break for lunch for an hour now and  
11 then return with that?

12 MR. FOSSUM: I guess my  
13 understanding is if the Commissioners are  
14 done with their questions, subject to the  
15 redirect, we would be finished with this  
16 panel. So maybe it would make sense to break  
17 for lunch at that point and then return from  
18 lunch with the last panel for the day.

19 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. That may  
20 be easier for your witnesses. All right.  
21 Then let's -- is ten minutes enough? Do you  
22 need more?

23 MR. FOSSUM: I'd say ten minutes is  
24 probably enough.

1 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Let's  
2 return at 11:55 then.

3 MR. FOSSUM: Thank you very much.

4 (Brief recess was taken at 11:44 p.m.,  
5 and the hearing resumed at 12:00 p.m.)

6 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Looks  
7 like we have everybody. Let's go back on the  
8 record. Mr. Fossum.

9 MR. FOSSUM: Thank you. And thank  
10 you very much for giving us those couple of  
11 minutes.

12 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

13 BY MR. FOSSUM:

14 Q. Mr. Horton and Mr. Lajoie, do you recall,  
15 earlier this morning, the questions that  
16 you'd gotten from Commissioner Bailey  
17 regarding the use of steel poles, and in  
18 particular, the questions about, for example,  
19 their life span?

20 A. (Lajoie) Yes.

21 Q. At the time, it seemed like you had given an  
22 answer that said perhaps, you know, you were,  
23 apologize for using the word, but guessing.  
24 But in the interim, have you found additional

1 information relative to those issues on steel  
2 poles that the Commissioner was asking about?

3 A. (Lajoie) Yes, I have. Thank you.

4 The question was asked about the life  
5 span of steel poles versus wood poles, and it  
6 is approximately double. A steel pole is  
7 expected to last twice as long as a wood  
8 pole.

9 The question was asked about the cost  
10 differential between the two. A wood pole  
11 for right-of-way applications is  
12 approximately \$900, and a comparable steel  
13 pole is approximately \$2100; so a little more  
14 than twice for twice the life span.

15 But I need to emphasize that these are  
16 only used in limited applications, and not a  
17 large quantity of them. For example: In  
18 2019, we installed 131. So, you know, out of  
19 a capital budget of north of \$130 million a  
20 year, steel poles represent literally \$150-  
21 to \$200,000 a year in incremental costs over  
22 equivalent wood poles.

23 And one of the cost factors that we've  
24 mentioned but never specifically dug into or

1           dove into as part of our testimony is this  
2           access to right-of-ways. Environmental costs  
3           and considerations require in many cases  
4           matting, those large timbers that they lay  
5           down in a cross-hatched pattern to prevent  
6           vehicles from causing ruts in right-of-ways.  
7           It becomes a tremendously expensive process.  
8           We are in the midst of a project in Miller  
9           State Park, which Commission Staff is aware  
10          of. Access to that right-of-way is -- the  
11          bids that we have received to put down the  
12          necessary matting for that is on the order of  
13          \$300,000 just for this one installation, you  
14          know, to get poles in that right-of-way up  
15          the side of Pack Monadnock.

16                 So there's a tremendous environmental  
17          remediation cost associated with accessing  
18          these right-of-way locations, which, again,  
19          leads us to the conclusion that steel poles,  
20          in the long term, are a cost-effective  
21          investment. This will be part of the  
22          engineering analysis that we have agreed to  
23          as part of the settlement. So an independent  
24          third party will be looking at this, and

1           their findings will guide us in future  
2           applications.

3       A.     (Lajoie) No sound, Matthew.  Sorry?

4                       MR. FOSSUM:  Apologies.  I thought  
5           I was going to get away without making that  
6           mistake.  That was the only question I had.  
7           Thank you.

8                       CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN:  All right.  Mr.  
9           Buckley, did you have any redirect?

10                      MR. BUCKLEY:  Yes.  Just one brief  
11           question for Mr. Demmer and then maybe  
12           another for Mr. Chagnon.

13                      REDIRECT EXAMINATION

14       BY MR. BUCKLEY:

15       Q.     Mr. Demmer, there were a couple of questions  
16           during the panel about the Company having  
17           used its judgment and experience when  
18           deciding to switch to steel poles and  
19           right-of-ways and other similar  
20           resiliency-related investments rather than  
21           relying on a quantitative cost benefit  
22           analysis.

23                      Is it your understanding that the  
24           purpose of the engineering assessment, as

1 suggested in Section 11.2 of the settlement,  
2 would be for the Company to perform just such  
3 a cost benefit analysis so that the Staff,  
4 the Company and the Commission have that  
5 information to consider as the Company charts  
6 a path for least cost planning in Docket No.  
7 20-161, Eversource's 2020 LCIRP, with that  
8 assessment being filed less than six months  
9 from today? Mr. Demmer, you're on mute.

10 A. (Demmer) Yes, and the subsequent assessment  
11 that is performed by Staff, Staff's  
12 consultant.

13 Q. Given that, and given that the Company has  
14 not accelerated the investments in resiliency  
15 as initially proposed under the GTEP program,  
16 does that alleviate the concerns addressed in  
17 your testimony?

18 A. (Demmer) Yes, it does.

19 Q. And now turning to Mr. Chagnon.

20 Commissioner Bailey asked about the  
21 prudence of plant in service as of the test  
22 year. Would it be fair to say that for the  
23 purposes of this settlement, concessions were  
24 made relating to the overall revenue

1 requirement and that one just such concession  
2 is in fact explicitly stated in the revenue  
3 requirement settled on to cover all concerns  
4 raised within this proceeding, including  
5 those related to prudence?

6 A. (Chagnon) Yes, it does.

7 MR. BUCKLEY: No further questions.

8 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank  
9 you to the witnesses.

10 With that, we'll break for lunch  
11 and return at five past one. Off the record.

12 (Lunch recess taken at 12:05 p.m. and  
13 concludes the Day 2 Morning Session.  
14 The hearing continues under separate  
15 cover in the transcript noted as Day 2  
16 Afternoon Session.)

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