

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

July 11, 2019 - 1:07 p.m.
Concord, New Hampshire

NHPUC 25 JUL 19 PM 1:12

RE: **DE 19-104**
EVERSOURCE ENERGY:
Petition for Clean Innovation
Community Solar Pilot Project.
(Prehearing conference)

PRESENT: Chairman Martin P. Honigberg, Presiding
Commissioner Kathryn M. Bailey
Commissioner Michael S. Giaimo

Sandy Deno, Clerk

APPEARANCES: **Reptg. Public Service Company of New**
Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy:
Matthew J. Fossum, Esq.

Reptg. Conservation Law Foundation:
Melissa E. Birchard, Esq.

Reptg. Clean Energy NH:
Madeleine Mineau, Executive Director

Court Reporter: Steven E. Patnaude, LCR No. 52

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ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

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APPEARANCES: (C o n t i n u e d)

Reptg. Residential Ratepayers:

Brian D. Buckley, Esq.
Office of Consumer Advocate

Reptg. PUC Staff:

David K. Wiesner, Esq.
Karen Cramton, Dir./Sustainable Energy
Division
Amanda Noonan, Dir./Consumer Services
& External Affairs Div.
Elizabeth Nixon, Electric Division
Tanya Wayland, Sustainable Energy Div.

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P R O C E E D I N G

1
2 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: We are here this
3 afternoon in Docket DE 19-104, which is
4 Eversource's proposal for a Community Solar
5 Pilot Project. This is a prehearing
6 conference, which will be followed by a
7 technical session.

8 Before we do anything else, let's
9 take appearances.

10 MR. FOSSUM: Good afternoon,
11 Commissioners. Matthew Fossum, here for Public
12 Service Company of New Hampshire doing business
13 as Eversource Energy.

14 MR. BUCKLEY: Good afternoon, Mr.
15 Chairman and Commissioners. My name is Brian
16 D. Buckley. I am here representing the
17 interests of residential ratepayers with the
18 Office of the Consumer Advocate.

19 MS. BIRCHARD: Good afternoon.
20 Melissa Birchard, for Conservation Law
21 Foundation. And I have with me here several of
22 our summer interns: Saskia Braden, Arielle
23 King, and AnneMarie Wamsted.

24 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Welcome.

1 MS. MINEAU: Good afternoon.
2 Madeleine Mineau, representing Clean Energy New
3 Hampshire.

4 MR. WIESNER: Mr. Chairman,
5 Commissioners, I'm Dave Wiesner, attorney for
6 Staff in this matter. And with me are Karen
7 Cramton, Director of the Sustainable Energy
8 Division; Amanda Noonan, Director of the
9 Consumer Services and External Affairs
10 Division; and co-counsel Mary Schwarzer. And
11 we didn't have enough room at our table here,
12 but we also have two analysts: Liz Nixon of
13 the Electric Division and Tanya Wayland from
14 Sustainable Energy.

15 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Not quite
16 standing room only.

17 Let's take the interventions first.
18 Is there any objection to the motions to
19 intervene?

20 MR. FOSSUM: The Company has no
21 position on either motion.

22 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Anyone else?

23 *[No verbal response.]*

24 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right.

1 Those motions are granted.

2 Anything else we need to do before we
3 take the preliminary positions of the parties?

4 *[No verbal response.]*

5 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right.

6 Mr. Fossum, why don't you start us off.

7 MR. FOSSUM: Thank you. And I don't
8 have a whole lot to say this afternoon.

9 I believe, in large measure, our
10 proposal speaks for itself, which is something
11 I'm very pleased to be able to say. This is a
12 proposal that follows on a directive of the
13 Commission back from the old net metering order
14 some time ago. This is a proposal that we've
15 taken some time and care to make sure we get, I
16 hesitate to say "we got right", but we got, I
17 think, very good.

18 We met and we took time to -- we, the
19 Company that is, took the time to meet with
20 various interested stakeholders, gather their
21 input, and develop a proposal that builds on
22 the knowledge that our Company has developed in
23 administering similar programs elsewhere and on
24 the feedback of those other parties.

1 As the filing that we had made points
2 out, this is a proposal for a somewhat new,
3 somewhat different way of developing,
4 delivering the benefits of solar programs to
5 low and moderate income customers. And we
6 think that it is a good and useful proposal.
7 It will provide near-term benefits to
8 participating customers, as well as useful and
9 helpful information to the Company, the
10 Commission, participating parties, and others.

11 It's perhaps premature to ask that it
12 be approved, but I hope that it will be
13 approved largely as it's been proposed. But we
14 certainly stand ready to work with the parties
15 to this docket on this proposal, to answer
16 their questions, and hopefully to develop a
17 proposal that can be supported by all, and
18 delivered in the near-term for the low and
19 moderate income customers in New Hampshire.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Thank you,
22 Mr. Fossum.

23 For the others, let's take
24 Ms. Birchard, Ms. Mineau, Mr. Buckley, and then

1 Mr. Wiesner.

2 MS. BIRCHARD: Thank you,
3 Commissioners.

4 Conservation Law Foundation fully
5 supports community solar, and supports
6 expanding access for community solar to low
7 income customers in particular. We believe
8 that this pilot can set positive precedent both
9 for the state and for the region. And we look
10 forward to working closely with Eversource to
11 improve their "very good" proposal to be even
12 better.

13 We do have some questions and
14 recommendations that we will be developing and
15 offering in conjunction with Vote Solar, which
16 has special expertise in the area of low income
17 access to solar. But we look forward to
18 working with Eversource on that.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Thank you,
21 Ms. Birchard. Ms. Mineau.

22 MS. MINEAU: Clean Energy New
23 Hampshire doesn't need to make an opening
24 statement at this time.

1 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Buckley.

2 MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr.

3 Chairman.

4 While the OCA is still evaluating the
5 issues raised in the instant Petition, we will
6 say today that we do appreciate that thus far
7 in the process of developing this pilot
8 Eversource has been responsive to much, though
9 maybe not all, of the feedback solicited on
10 earlier iterations.

11 And we are supportive of the
12 innovative customer acquisition approach that
13 the Company has suggested, because we think it
14 has the potential to save ratepayer dollars.
15 And we also likewise are supportive of the
16 Company's efforts to integrate energy
17 efficiency into the proposed pilot.

18 However, we do have some concern
19 about the Company's request to allow projects
20 up to five megawatts in size to participate in
21 the pilot, and that requests consistency with
22 law and prior precedent. And we also have some
23 further concern that the Company's proposed
24 evaluation plan should contain some more

1 specific metrics to identify any incremental
2 benefits or costs accruing to low-income
3 customers that might help inform the
4 Commission's pending Value of Distributed
5 Energy Resources Study.

6 That being said, we look forward to
7 working with the Commission Staff, the Company,
8 and the other parties to the proceeding to
9 reach an amicable resolution of those and any
10 other issues that might arise in our further
11 review of the pilot.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Thank you, Mr.
14 Buckley. Mr. Wiesner.

15 MR. WIESNER: Thank you, Mr.
16 Chairman.

17 Staff has begun to review the
18 Company's proposed pilot. And we look forward
19 to working with the Company to answer our
20 questions and resolve some of the initial
21 concerns that we've identified.

22 I will note that the net metering
23 order, Number 26,029, stated that the
24 Commission would evaluate the potential

1 benefits and costs of each pilot program
2 proposal to determine whether it is
3 cost-effective from the perspective of future
4 net metering tariff development. So, we see
5 that as the governing standard for
6 consideration of the proposed pilot. And we
7 will be mindful of that standard when
8 evaluating the proposed pilot.

9 Among the significant issues that
10 we've identified today, are the five-megawatt
11 maximum size eligibility, as noted by the OCA.
12 That is not consistent with the current net
13 metering statute. We're aware, of course, of
14 legislation that would increase that, vetoed by
15 the Governor, but potentially to be subject to
16 an override vote sometime in September, as we
17 understand it.

18 There's also a provision in the
19 proposal that would provide full compensation,
20 even when surplus generation exceeds the
21 aggregate load of the relevant local EAP
22 customers. And we are not certain that that is
23 consistent with the net metering statute as
24 well.

1 I also note that the net metering
2 order required that LMI pilot programs be
3 developed that are consistent with, and not
4 duplicative of, any other such programs and
5 projects required under enacted legislation.
6 So, in Senate Bill 165, which would, excuse me,
7 provide an additional adder in compensation to
8 low- and moderate-income community solar
9 projects as defined in the statute, if that
10 passes, then we will take a close look at
11 whether there would, in fact, be duplication or
12 inconsistency between the Company's proposal
13 and the requirements of that statute.

14 And we are concerned as well with the
15 potential cost of the program, which as we
16 understand it is estimated to total
17 approximately \$5 million. And again, in the
18 context of the applicable benefits that may be
19 available and how they could be -- how those --
20 how the cost-effectiveness of the program will
21 be determined in the context of the net
22 metering tariff development in the future.

23 We look forward to working with the
24 Company to resolve these issues, answer our

1 questions, and evaluate the proposal more
2 fully, so we can develop a complete record for
3 the Commission's decision.

4 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: What are the
5 parties' thoughts on how long discovery in this
6 case will go? When do you think we'll be
7 getting to a hearing on the merits?

8 MR. WIESNER: We've circulated a
9 proposed procedural schedule just today, and
10 we'll be talking about that during the
11 technical session. Our thought was a hearing
12 in January. But that's to be decided, of
13 course.

14 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: I understand.
15 Just getting ballpark thoughts.

16 Seems like there are no other
17 questions. If there's nothing else, we will
18 adjourn the prehearing conference and leave you
19 to your technical session. Thank you all.

20 ***(Whereupon the prehearing***
21 ***conference was adjourned at***
22 ***1:17 p.m., and a technical***
23 ***session was held thereafter.)***