

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

MEPLIC 194001948:33

August 6, 2019 - 1:39 p.m. Concord, New Hampshire

> RE: DG 19-116 NORTHERN UTILITIES, INC. PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF PRECEDENT AGREEMENTS FOR WESTBROOK XPRESS PHASE III PROJECT

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

Sandy Deno, Clerk

APPEARANCES:

Reptg. Northern Utilities, Inc. Patrick Taylor, Esq. - Northern Utilities

Reptg. Residential Ratepayers: D. Maurice Kreis, Esq. Pradip K. Chattopadhyay Office of Consumer Advocate

Reptg. PUC Staff: Lynn Fabrizio, Esq. Stephen Frink, Dir. Gas & Water Div. Al-Azad Iqbal, Gas & Water Div.

COURT REPORTER: SUSAN J. ROBIDAS, N.H. LCR NO. 44

{DG 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19]

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PROCEEDINGS 1 2 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: We are here in Docket DG 19-116, which is a petition by 3 Northern Utilities for approval of precedent 4 5 agreements for the Westbrook Xpress Phase III Project. This is a prehearing conference, to 6 7 be followed by a technical session. 8 Before we do anything else, let's 9 take appearances. 10 MR. TAYLOR: Good afternoon, 11 Commissioners. Patrick Taylor, on behalf of Northern Utilities, Inc. 12 MR. KREIS: Good afternoon. 13 T'm D. 14 Maurice Kreis, the consumer advocate, here on 15 behalf of residential ratepayers. With me 16 today is Pradip Chattopadhyay, deputy 17 consumer advocate. MS. FABRIZIO: Good morning, 18 19 Commissioners. Lynn Fabrizio, on behalf of 20 Staff. With me at the table today is Steve 21 Frink, director of the Gas and Water 22 Division, and Al-Azad Iqbal, utility analyst 23 with the Gas and Water Division. CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: I know we have 24 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19]

1 a pending motion seeking confidential treatment of certain materials that were 2 filed. I have not seen a response from 3 anyone. Does anyone have anything they want 4 5 to say on that? Ms. Fabrizio? MS. FABRIZIO: Staff supports the 6 7 motion. It covers information that falls within the confidential, commercial and 8 sensitive category, in our view, that the 9 10 Commission has regularly provided 11 confidential treatment for in the past. CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Kreis, 12 13 anything? 14 MR. KREIS: I have no position. 15 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right. 16 We're going to grant the motion for confidential treatment. 17 Are there other matters we need to 18 19 take up before we hear preliminary positions of the parties? 20 21 [No verbal response] 22 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Seeing 23 nothing, Mr. Taylor, why don't you start us off. 24 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19]

PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS 1 2 MR. TAYLOR: Good afternoon. In this docket the Company is requesting 3 Commission approval of certain precedent 4 agreements for a firm natural gas 5 transportation path from Dawn, Ontario, in 6 7 connection with Portland Natural Gas's Westbrook Xpress Phase III, or WXP Project. 8 The agreements will enable the Company to 9 10 transport 10,000 decatherms a day from Dawn 11 to Granite State Gas Transmission's interconnects for a 15-year term, with an 12 option to renew. Based on current forecasts, 13 14 approximately 4,200 decatherms per day of the 15 proposed capacity will be supported by New 16 Hampshire customers, with the balance being 17 supported by Northern's Maine customers. This resource, if approved, will increase the 18 19 Company's maximum daily quantity of long-term 20 resources in the Company's portfolio by 21 approximately 11 percent and thereby 22 partially address projected demands. If 23 approved, the agreements will increase reliability and price stability for Northern 24 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19]

customers and will reduce reliance on 1 delivered supplies, resulting in savings and 2 improved fuel security for those customers. 3 It will also provide access to Dawn Hub, 4 5 which is a highly liquid trading point, moving the Company's receipt point away from 6 7 Maritimes in Portland pipelines, which is an illiquid market due to limited supplies and 8 competing demands. 9

10 As noted in the Company's petition, 11 Northern respectfully requests that the Commission conduct an expedited review of 12 this docket, as the Company has the option to 13 14 terminate the agreements with PNGTS and 15 Enbridge if the Company doesn't obtain 16 necessary regulatory approval prior to 17 October 31.

As the Company [sic] is likely aware, the Company has also filed for approval of the same precedent agreements in Maine. And the Company has provided all the discovery in that case to Staff and the OCA in this case, and we're hopeful that that will assist in expediting the Commission's

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review.

2	Further, we appreciate the
3	Commission's consideration of these precedent
4	agreements, and we look forward to working
5	with Staff and the OCA in the coming weeks.
6	CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: What's the
7	status of the proceeding in Maine?
8	MR. TAYLOR: The status of the
9	proceeding in Maine, intervenor testimony is
10	due in a week or so. And after that there
11	will be an opportunity there will be
12	what's called a technical session on that,
13	after which there will be, I believe, an
14	opportunity to respond, and then Commission
15	deliberations and an order.
16	CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Kreis.
17	MR. KREIS: Mr. Chairman, I don't
18	have an elaborate peroration to deliver about
19	this particular filing. Our preliminary
20	review of it and the discovery we received to
21	date leaves us favorably inclined. So I'm
22	optimistic that we'll actually be able to
23	reach some kind of agreement with the Company
24	and actually deliver this in an uncontested
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matter in time for you to offer your approval 1 on the time line the Company is requesting. 2 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Ms. Fabrizio. 3 MS. FABRIZIO: Thank you, Mr. 4 Staff is in the process of 5 Chairman. reviewing the agreements for which Northern 6 7 is seeking approval in this proceeding. The 8 agreements entail potential cancellation fees which could be quite significant, depending 9 10 on when in the course of the project 11 cancellation might occur. And to Staff's knowledge, this is the first time 12 cancellation fees of this magnitude have been 13 subject to the Commission's review in similar 14 15 precedent agreements. It's our understanding 16 that there may be very limited or no recourse available to Northern in case of 17 cancellation. So we will be looking closely 18 at the implications of this element of the 19 20 agreements for ratepayers, as well as for the 21 Company. 22 We anticipate that we will be able 23 to conduct our review in time to address Northern's concerns regarding the trigger 24

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dates for cancellation fees. We have already 1 received responses to our first set of data 2 requests, as you heard, and we were able to 3 benefit from the discovery that was provided 4 5 from the Maine proceeding. That said, Staff has no position on 6 7 Northern's filing at this time. We look forward to working with the Company and the 8 OCA. 9 COMMISSIONER GIAIMO: With this 10 11 robust crowd, has the Company done anything with respect to publicity with respect to the 12 project and/or reached out to the 13 stakeholders? 14 15 MR. TAYLOR: We have not. 16 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: But you 17 published, right, your notice? MR. TAYLOR: 18 Certainly, yes, we 19 went through the publication requirements 20 and, you know, have been conducting a public 21 process in Maine, as well as in New 22 Hampshire. 23 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right. If there's nothing else, then we will adjourn 24 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19]

the prehearing conference and leave you to your technical session. Thank you all. (Hearing adjourned at 1:44 p.m.) 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19]

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1	CERTIFICATE
2	I, Susan J. Robidas, a Licensed
3	Shorthand Court Reporter and Notary Public
4	of the State of New Hampshire, do hereby
5	certify that the foregoing is a true and
6	accurate transcript of my stenographic
7	notes of these proceedings taken at the
8	place and on the date hereinbefore set
9	forth, to the best of my skill and ability
10	under the conditions present at the time.
11	I further certify that I am neither
12	attorney or counsel for, nor related to or
13	employed by any of the parties to the
14	action; and further, that I am not a
15	relative or employee of any attorney or
16	counsel employed in this case, nor am I
17	financially interested in this action.
18	
19	(CHEY
20	Susan J. Robidas, LCR/RPR Licensed Shorthand Court Reporter
21	Registered Professional Reporter N.H. LCR No. 44 (RSA 310-A:173)
22	
23	
24	
L	{DG 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19]

In Re:

DG 19-116 NORTHERN UTILITIES, INC. PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF PRECEDENT AGREEMENTS

PREHEARING CONFERENCE August 6, 2019

SUSAN J. ROBIDAS, N.H. LCR 30 James Pollock Drive Manchester, New Hampshire 03102 (603) 540-2083 shortrptr@comcast.net

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4	August 6, 2019 - 1:39 p.m. Concord, New Hampshire		4	Northern Utilities for approval of precedent
5			5	agreements for the Westbrook Xpress Phase III
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7	AGREEMENTS FOR WESTBROOK XPRE: PHASE III PROJECT	SS	7	be followed by a technical session.
8			8	Before we do anything else, let's
9	PRESENT: Chairman Martin P. Honigberg, Commissioner Kathryn M. Bailey	Presiding	9	take appearances.
10	Commissioner Michael S. Giaimo	5	10	MR. TAYLOR: Good afternoon,
11	Sandy Deno, Clerk		11	Commissioners. Patrick Taylor, on behalf of
12			12	Northern Utilities, Inc.
13	APPEARANCES:		13	MR. KREIS: Good afternoon. I'm D.
14	Reptg. Northern Utilities, Ind Patrick Taylor, Esq Northern		14	Maurice Kreis, the consumer advocate, here on
15	Patrick Taylor, Esq Northern	Utilities	15	behalf of residential ratepayers. With me
16	Reptg. Residential Ratepayers	:		today is Pradip Chattopadhyay, deputy
17	D. Maurice Kreis, Esq. Pradip K. Chattopadhyay			consumer advocate.
18	Office of Consumer Advocate		18	MS. FABRIZIO: Good morning,
19	Reptg. PUC Staff:		19	Commissioners. Lynn Fabrizio, on behalf of
20	Lynn Fabrizio, Esq. Stephen Frink, Dir. Gas & Wate	er Div.		Staff. With me at the table today is Steve
21	Al-Āzad Iqbal, Gas & Water Div	ν.		Frink, director of the Gas and Water
22				Division, and Al-Azad Iqbal, utility analyst
23	COURT REPORTER: SUSAN J. ROBIDAS, N.H. L	CR NO. 44		with the Gas and Water Division.
24			24	CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: I know we have
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Page 5 Page 5 1 PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS 1 Trvicw. 2 MR. TAYLOR: Good alternoon. In 3 this docket the Company is requesting 4 Commission approval of certain precedent 5 agreements, and we look forward to working. 5 agreements, and we look forward to working. 6 transportation path from Dawn, Ontario, in 7 ronnection with Porland Natural Gas's 8 Westbrook Xpress Phase II, or WXP Project. 9 the agreements and y from Dawn. 10 torrantees that Commission's 20 interconnects for a 15-year term, with an 21 interconnects for a 15-year term, with an 23 optorunity customers, with the balance being 7 supported by Northern's Maine customers. 14 approved, will increase the 20 partially address projected demands. If 21 approximately 11 percent and beeroby 22 approved, the agreements will increase the 23 approved, we cecipt point away from 24 rela		PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF PRECEDENT AGREEMENTS		August 6, 2019
2 MR. TAYLOR: Good afternoon. In 2 Further, we appreciate the 3 this docket the Company is requesting 4 4 Commission approval of certain precedent 4 5 agreements for a firm natural gas 5 6 transportation path from Dawn. Ontario, in 5 7 onnection with Portland Natural Gas's 6 9 this docket the Company to 6 10 to Granite State Gas Transmission's 1 11 to Granite State Gas Transmission's 1 12 interconners, with an 1 13 option to normew. Based on current forecasts, 1 14 approximately 4.200 decatherms per day of the 1 15 proposed capacity will be supported by New 1 16 Hampshire customers, with the balance being 1 17 supported by Northerm's day from thereby 1 18 transmitely 11 prostinately 11 prostinately 12 19 prostinately 14 proprostinately 4.200 prostinately 4.200 14 approximately 11 prostinately 4.200 prostinately 4.200		Page 5		Page 7
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{DG 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19] {DG 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19]		 customers and will reduce reliance on delivered supplies, resulting in savings and improved fuel security for those customers. It will also provide access to Dawn Hub, which is a highly liquid trading point, moving the Company's receipt point away from Maritimes in Portland pipelines, which is an illiquid market due to limited supplies and competing demands. As noted in the Company's petition, Northern respectfully requests that the Commission conduct an expedited review of this docket, as the Company has the option to terminate the agreements with PNGTS and Enbridge if the Company loesn't obtain necessary regulatory approval prior to October 31. As the Company has also filed for approval of the same precedent agreements in Maine. And the Company has provided all the discovery in that case to Staff and the OCA in this case, and we're hopeful that that 	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	matter in time for you to offer your approval on the time line the Company is requesting. CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Ms. Fabrizio. MS. FABRIZIO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Staff is in the process of reviewing the agreements for which Northern is seeking approval in this proceeding. The agreements entail potential cancellation fees which could be quite significant, depending on when in the course of the project cancellation might occur. And to Staff's knowledge, this is the first time cancellation fees of this magnitude have been subject to the Commission's review in similar precedent agreements. It's our understanding that there may be very limited or no recourse available to Northern in case of cancellation. So we will be looking closely at the implications of this element of the agreements for ratepayers, as well as for the Company. We anticipate that we will be able to conduct our review in time to address
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1	dates for cancellation fees. We have already	1	CERTIFICATE
	received responses to our first set of data	2	I, Susan J. Robidas, a Licensed
	requests, as you heard, and we were able to	3	Shorthand Court Reporter and Notary Public
	benefit from the discovery that was provided	4	of the State of New Hampshire, do hereby
5		5	certify that the foregoing is a true and
6		6	accurate transcript of my stenographic
-	Northern's filing at this time. We look	7	notes of these proceedings taken at the
8		8	place and on the date hereinbefore set
	OCA.	9	forth, to the best of my skill and ability
		10	under the conditions present at the time.
10	robust crowd, has the Company done anything	11	- I further certify that I am neither
12		12	attorney or counsel for, nor related to or
		13	employed by any of the parties to the
13	stakeholders?	14	action; and further, that I am not a
15		15	relative or employee of any attorney or
		16	counsel employed in this case, nor am I
16	published, right, your notice?	17	financially interested in this action.
18		18	and a second the state of the second s
		19	
19 20		20	Susan J. Robidas, LCR/RPR Licensed Shorthand Court Reporter
20		21	Registered Professional Reporter N.H. LCR No. 44 (RSA 310-A:173)
22		22	N.H. ICK NO. 11 (KBA 510-A.175)
23		23	
	there's nothing else, then we will adjourn	24	
21	there's nothing else, then we will adjourn	27	{DG 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19]
	{DG 19-116} [PREHEARING CONFERENCE] {08-06-19]		
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