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New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
By email: PUC-GroupNetMetering@puc.nh.gov

Re: White Rock Community Solar Project Host Application to Register for Group Net Metering

On behalf of White Rock Cooperative Estates, Inc. (“Host”), please find **attached** an application to register the White Rock Community Solar Project (the “Project”), a low-moderate income community solar project, for group net metering. We also provide the following information and documentation to assist with the registration process.

Host Election to Receive Payment

In accordance with Puc 909.13(c) and (d)(3), the Host elects to receive payment from Eversource on a monthly basis equal to the host’s on-bill credit amount.

Income Verification Process

The Project received funding from the Renewable Energy Fund’s 2019 Grants for Community Solar Photovoltaic Projects Providing Direct Benefits to Low and Moderate Income Residential Electric Customers (the “Grant”). The Project participants completed anonymous income surveys as part of that Grant process and received Grant funds based off the results of those surveys. The Host facilitated the income surveys in coordination with the Energy Clinic and ROC-NH using a “double blind” process to protect the privacy of the participants. The double blind process involves the Host distributing a randomly numbered survey to each of the Project’s participating households, and the participating households returning the numbered survey to ROC-NH. ROC-NH and the Energy Clinic compile the survey results and provide those results to the Commission in accordance with the terms of the Grant agreement. The income surveys ask participants to identify how many people reside in the participating household and that household’s applicable income bracket to identify which households meet the definition of low-moderate income (below 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines).

The 2019 income surveys showed that 11 households were below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (low income), 7 households were below 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (moderate income), and 6 households were not LMI. In total, 75% of the participants qualified as LMI in 2019. The Energy Clinic and ROC NH worked with the Host to administer another double blind income survey in 2020. To date, 23 out of the 24 surveys have been returned to ROC-NH. The results show that of the returned surveys, 69.5% of the participants qualify as LMI. 12 households are below 200% of the 2020 Federal Poverty Guidelines, 4 households are below 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, and 7 households are not LMI. We have **attached** a copy of the 2020 income surveys and a summary of the survey results. We request that the Commission keep the attached income surveys confidential as they

reveal confidential personal information about individuals at the White Rock community, release of which may be an invasion of privacy.

Rule Waiver Request

Because the income surveys were conducted using a double blind process, we are unable to identify which specific group members are LMI. Therefore, we request a waiver of Puc 909.09(a)(17)(b) which requires a host registering an LMI group to indicate whether the host and each member is a residential end-user customer with household income at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

We believe the Host meets the standard for a rule waiver under Puc 201.05. Under Puc 201.05, the Commission should waive the provision of any of its rules upon the request by an interested party if the commission finds that the waiver serves the public interest and the waiver will not disrupt the orderly and efficient resolution of matters. Under Puc 201.05, a rule waiver is considered in the public interest if compliance with the rule would be onerous or inapplicable given the circumstances of the affected person or the purpose of the rule would be satisfied by an alternative method proposed. The Commission should grant the Host's waiver request because strict compliance with the rule would be both onerous to the Host and the Project participants and because the double blind income survey process satisfies the purpose of Puc 909.09(a)(17)(b).

First, strict compliance with Puc 909.09(a)(17)(b) would be onerous because it would require the Host and each of the Project's participants to draft and execute a new group net metering agreement; the group net metering agreement approved by the Commission as part of the Grant process mandates a confidential annual income process. Our experience indicates that the confidential treatment of participant income information through the double blind process was an important factor in securing community participation and ensuring income surveys are completed each year. We are concerned that an alternative process would undermine the efficacy of such projects in serving low-income communities. Second, the double blind income survey process satisfies the purpose of Puc 909.09(a)(17)(b) because it provides evidence that at least half of the Project's group members are low-moderate income households and that at least 12% of the Project's net metering credits are allocated to LMI customers per Puc 909.13(h). The 2020 income survey results show that 69.5% of the Project's group members are LMI. Because the Host will distribute the Project's financial benefits equally among the group members, 69.5% of the Project's net financial benefits will be distributed to LMI customers. LMI customers will receive 17.4% of the Project's net metering credits directly as on-bill credits (being 69.5% of the 25% allocated to all group members as on-bill credits) and will receive 69.5% of the Host's allocation as monthly lot rent reductions after the Host pays for the Project's operating expenses.

For the above stated reasons, we believe the Commission should grant a waiver of Puc 909.09(a)(17)(b). Please let us know if there is any further information that may assist the Commission in granting the requested rule waiver.

Host is an Affordable Housing Project

The Host qualifies as an Affordable Housing Project in accordance with the definition set out in Puc 902.01(4). Specifically, the Host meets the definition of a multi-family residential housing project that is a limited equity cooperative manufactured housing park in which a majority of members are of low or

moderate income. The Host is a “Resident Owned Community” or “ROC”. ROCs are low-moderate income manufactured housing communities based on a cooperative ownership structure where every household participate in the ownership of the underlying property. Please find a copy of the Host’s bylaws **attached**.

Distribution of Benefits

On-bill Credits

Twenty-five percent of the Project’s total net metering credits will be allocated to group members as on-bill credits. Based on the 2020 income surveys, this means that LMI customers will receive approximately 17.4% of the Project’s net metering credits as on-bill credits and non-LMI participants will receive approximately 7.6% of the net metering credits as on-bill credits. The Project’s group members consented to receive on-bill credits in this manner through an amendment to the group net metering agreement, **attached**.

Monthly Lot Rent Reduction

The remaining 75% of the total net metering credits will be allocated to the Host. The Host has chosen to receive payment from Eversource on a monthly basis equal to Host’s on-bill credit monetary credit amount. The Host will use its allocation to pay for the Project’s operating expenses, such as property taxes and accounting costs, and will distribute the balance to all group members equally as monthly lot rent reductions in accordance with the procedure set out in schedule C of the group net metering agreement, **attached**.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or require any further information.

Sincerely,



Jeannie Oliver

cc: eversource-nhdg@eversource.com

Attachments:

1. Application to Register for Group Net Metering
2. Copy of 2020 income surveys and summary of results
3. White Rock Cooperative Estates, Inc. Bylaws
4. LMI Adder Amendment to the White Rock Group Net-Metering Agreement
5. White Rock Group Net Metering Agreement