

DG 00-010

ENERGYNORTH NATURAL GAS, INC.

Authority to Serve Within the Town of Auburn, New Hampshire

Order Nisi Granting Franchise

O R D E R N O. 23,406

February 14, 2000

On January 19, 2000, EnergyNorth Natural Gas, Inc. (ENGI) filed with the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (Commission) a petition for authority under RSA 374:26 to provide natural gas service within the Town of Auburn, New Hampshire. The Wellington/Auburn Realty Group, LLC has proposed construction of a business park in Auburn and requested that ENGI provide natural gas to the site which is located approximately one mile from an existing ENGI gas main in Manchester, New Hampshire. The business park is expected to be completed by September 2000. The system expansion meets the twenty-five percent (25%) revenue test whereby the estimated revenues from the business park over four years exceed the estimated cost of the main and service installations required to serve it.

ENGI has identified thirteen potential new customers located along the proposed main extension in Manchester that may be added as a result of the expansion into Auburn. ENGI believes that the potential exists to economically serve

customers in Auburn other than the business park and will be actively exploring such opportunities.

The proposed system expansion would reduce the Business Park's initial capital outlay for heating equipment and provide a reliable source of energy while minimizing adverse impacts on the environment.

Both the Auburn Board of Selectmen and the Auburn Development Authority filed letters supporting the petition and stated their belief that the expansion will improve future prospects for economic development in Auburn.

ENGI stated that it has the technical and financial capability to operate the proposed service territory. ENGI and its predecessor companies have provided safe, reliable, and economical natural gas service to New Hampshire communities for over 150 years.

On February 11, 2000, Staff, with concurrence of the Office of Consumer Advocate, recommended that the petition be granted. In its memorandum, Staff cited the following arguments in support of its recommendation: 1) the community to be served is contiguous with existing service territories; 2) the Town of Auburn supports the petition; 3) expansion of the franchise territory will not adversely affect existing gas supply resources; 4) the project meets the 25 percent revenue

test; and 5) consumers in the region will be provided an additional energy resource from which to choose.

After reviewing the merits of the arguments set forth above, we find that the granting of the petition is in the public good. Because it appears that all interested parties are in agreement with the petition, we will grant it without a hearing. See RSA 374:26. However, in order to give interested parties an opportunity to comment or request a hearing on the petition we will grant the petition on a nisi basis.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED NISI, that the petition of ENGI for authority to provide natural gas service within the Town of Auburn, New Hampshire is GRANTED; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that ENGI shall serve a copy of this Order **NISI** on the Auburn Town Clerk by first class mail and cause a copy of this Order **NISI** to be published once in a statewide newspaper of general circulation or of circulation in those portions of the state where operations are conducted, such publication to be no later than February 21, 2000 and to be documented by affidavit filed with this office on or before March 2, 2000; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that all persons interested in

responding to this petition be notified that they may submit their comments or file a written request for a hearing on this matter before the Commission no later than March 2, 2000; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party interested in responding to such comments or request for hearing shall do so no later than March 7, 2000; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that this Order Nisi shall be effective March 16, 2000, unless the Commission provides otherwise in a supplemental order issued prior to the effective date.

By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this fourteenth day of February, 2000.

Douglas L. Patch
Chairman

Susan S. Geiger
Commissioner

Nancy Brockway
Commissioner

Attested by:

Thomas B. Getz
Executive Director and Secretary