

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DW 20-112

ABENAKI WATER COMPANY, INC.

Request for Change in Rates

Order Suspending Proposed Tariffs

ORDER NO. 26,427

November 30, 2020

This order suspends Abenaki Water Company, Inc.'s proposed tariffs for temporary and permanent rate increases for 18 months, pending further investigation.

On July 16, 2020, Abenaki Water Company, Inc. (Abenaki or the Company), filed its notice of intent to file rate schedules for four of its water systems (Belmont, Bow, Tioga-Gilford Village, and Tioga-Belmont) and its Belmont sewer system. Abenaki followed with its rate case filing on September 15, including proposed tariffs and rate case expenses; and filed a request for temporary rates on September 21. The notice of intent and subsequent docket filings, other than any information for which confidential treatment is requested of or granted by the Commission, are posted at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2020/20-112.html>.

After discussions with Commission Staff (Staff), Abenaki filed a request to withdraw its notice of intent and various rate case filings on September 25, 2020. The Commission granted the request without prejudice on September 29. Abenaki refiled its notice of intent to file rate schedules that same day.

On October 30, 2020, the Company refiled its request for an individual increase in the permanent rates for four of its water systems and its Belmont sewer system. Abenaki also proposed that "the Commission approve unified rates" for those four water systems. Abenaki

Water Company, Inc., Rate Case Filing, October 30, 2020, at 2. Along with the filing, Abenaki provided, among other things, pre-filed testimony of Robert Gallo and Donald Vaughn, Stephen St. Cyr, Nicholas LaChance, various schedules, and proposed tariffs. The Company requested temporary rates and provided associated temporary rate proposed tariffs.

On November 19, Abenaki filed amended proposed tariffs to replace the previously proposed tariffs filed on October 30. The Company also submitted amended rate calculations for its Tioga-Gilford Village and Tioga-Belmont water systems, a proposed tariff for “unified” or consolidated rates, and proposed tariff pages for utility service fees in the event a consolidated rate among the four water systems is approved. The requested effective date for all proposed tariffs submitted, including its temporary, permanent, and consolidated rates, is December 1, 2020.

Last, Abenaki requested “the ability to file notice with [the Commission], and its customers, of increases imposed by the City” of Laconia for treatment of the Company’s Belmont sewer system’s wastewater at Laconia’s sewer treatment system. Abenaki Water Company, Inc., Rate Case Filing, October 30, 2020, at 7. The Company requested an automatic adjustment of customer rates based on Laconia’s increased rates, after notice to customers, in order to avoid further regulatory proceedings which increases costs faced by customers.

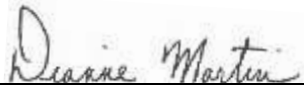
The Commission finds that Abenaki’s proposed customer notices are inadequate and that the Company’s tariff revisions warrant further investigation. On April 24, 2020, the Governor issued an executive order (Exhibit D to Executive Order #29) that extended the Commission’s ability to suspend rate schedules by six months, from 12 to 18 months. *See* RSA 378:6, I(a). Accordingly, we suspend the proposed tariff pages for 18 months pending our investigation; however, the Commission will endeavor to set rates as expeditiously as possible.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

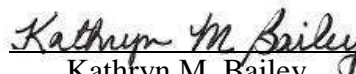
ORDERED, that the proposed tariff pages are suspended for a period of 18 months pursuant to RSA 378:6, I(a), and Exhibit D to Executive Order #29, pending investigation and further order of the Commission; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that Abenaki shall work with the Commission's Director of Consumer Services and External Affairs on its customer notice to be mailed no later than December 14, 2020, containing the proposed rate changes and rate impacts, and instructions for intervention.

By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this thirtieth day of November, 2020.

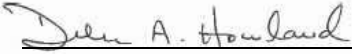


Dianne Martin
Chairwoman



Kathryn M. Bailey
Commissioner

Attested by:



Debra A. Howland
Executive Director

Service List - Docket Related

Docket#: 20-112

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Email Addresses

ExecutiveDirector@puc.nh.gov
pradip.chattopadhyay@oca.nh.gov
robyn.descoteau@puc.nh.gov
sfairchild@newenglandservicecompany.com
steve.frink@puc.nh.gov
NLaChance@NewEnglandServiceCompany.com
jayson.laflamme@puc.nh.gov
anthony.leone@puc.nh.gov
amanda.noonan@puc.nh.gov
ocalitigation@oca.nh.gov
Christa.Shute@oca.nh.gov
stephenpstcyr@yahoo.com
Christopher.tuomala@puc.nh.gov