

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**DE 23-092**

**UNITIL ENERGY SYSTEMS, INC.**

**2024 Reliability Enhancement Program and Vegetation Management Program  
Plan**

**Order Accepting 2024 Plan**

**ORDER NO. 26,992**

**April 10, 2024**

In this order the Commission accepts Unitil Energy System, Inc.'s 2024 Plan, subject to reconciliation in 2025 when final Reliability Enhancement Program and Vegetation Management Program costs for 2024 will be reviewed in the annual Stranded Cost Recovery and External Delivery Charge Reconciliation petition.

**I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY & BACKGROUND**

Unitil Energy Systems, Inc. (Unitil or the Company) filed its 2024 Reliability Enhancement Program (REP) and Vegetation Management Program Plan (VMP) on November 17, 2023. Unitil filed its reconciliation of the 2023 REP and VMP on April 1, 2024. The reconciliation showed a total under-collection of \$387,940. Pursuant to Order No. 26, 388 (July 31, 2020) the reconciled 2023 REP and VMP report will be audited by the DOE and reviewed by the Commission in the Company's annual Revenue Decoupling Adjustment, Stranded Cost, and External Delivery Charge (EDC) Reconciliation Petition typically filed in June, for rates to be effective August 1<sup>st</sup>. See Order No. 26,388.

The Department of Energy (DOE) reviewed Unitil's 2024 REP and VMP plan and recommended, through its April 05, 2024 technical statement, that the Commission

accept the plan as filed, subject to audit review in 2025 of the actual costs of 2024 REP and VMP by the DOE.

## **II. COMMISSION ANALYSIS**

Pursuant to the Commission's general supervisory powers over the public utilities it regulates, the Commission reviews Unitil's proposed spending plan for REP and VMP during 2023. *See* RSA 374:1, :2, :3, :4, and :5.

There are five components (circuit pruning, hazard tree mitigation, midcycle review, forestry reliability assessment, and storm resiliency work) that make up Unitil's 2024 REP & VMP plan. The DOE has confirmed that these five components constitute a complete approach to vegetation management and are intended to determine the optimal trimming cycle of five years. This approach is appropriate and consistent with industry practices. *See* April 5, 2024 Technical Statement at 2. Despite the sound approach, the Commission is aware that the cost of the REP and VMP plans over the past two years are trending upwards. The Commission shares the DOE's concern of the upward trend in VMP costs expended by Unitil. *See id.* The Commission directs Unitil to work with the DOE in the upcoming EDC docket to determine, what if any, steps can be taken to ensure the containment of costs surrounding the REP and VMP plans while also ensuring Unitil continue to uphold industry practices for REP and VMP.


We have reviewed the proposed spending plan for 2024 and find it reasonable. The projected costs of this plan will be reconciled to actual costs in the update to be filed on or before April 1, 2025. The Commission will consider recovery of any over- or under- collections through Unitil's 2025 external delivery charge docket. The final REP and VMP cost reconciliation for 2024 will be subject to review and audit by the DOE.

**Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby**

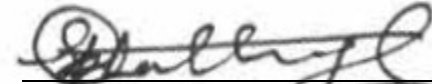
**ORDERED**, Unitil's 2024 REP and VMP report is accepted, with final planned costs subject to reconciliation to actual costs by Unitil, review and audit by the DOE, and approval by the Commission; and it is

**FURTHER ORDERED**, that Unitil shall include its 2023 REP and VMP reconciliation with its 2024 REP and VMP reconciliation with clarification of any deviations from planned spending to allow an actual to planned cost comparison as well as a year over year comparison.

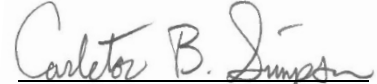
By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this tenth day of April, 2024.



Daniel C. Goldner  
Chairman



Pradip K. Chattopadhyay  
Commissioner



Carleton B. Simpson  
Commissioner

# Service List - Docket Related

Docket#: 23-092

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