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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

September 20, 2013 - 10:08 a.m.  
Concord, New Hampshire

NHPUC OCT04'13 PM 2:31

RE: DE 13-195  
UNITIL ENERGY SYSTEMS, INC.:  
2013 Least Cost Integrated Resource Plan.  
(Prehearing conference)

PRESENT: Chairman Amy L. Ignatius, Presiding  
Commissioner Robert R. Scott  
Commissioner Michael D. Harrington

Sandy Deno, Clerk

APPEARANCES: Reptg. Unitil Energy Systems, Inc.:  
Gary Epler, Esq.

Reptg. Residential Ratepayers:  
Rorie E. P. Hollenberg, Esq.  
Office of Consumer Advocate

Reptg. PUC Staff:  
Suzanne G. Amidon, Esq.  
Steven E. Mullen, Asst. Dir./Electric Div.  
Les Stachow, Electric Division

Court Reporter: Steven E. Patnaude, LCR No. 52

ORIGINAL

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**P R O C E E D I N G**

CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Good morning. I'd like to open the hearing in Docket DE 13-195. This is Unitil Energy Systems' 2013 Least Cost Integrated Resource Plan. Unitil submitted its plan on July 16th, 2013, pursuant to RSA 378:8. And, the details of the plan were laid out in the order of notice dated August 7th, 2013, and scheduled a hearing -- a prehearing conference for this morning, and asked for any interventions. I see nothing in the file from anyone seeking to intervene. And, I don't know if anyone is aware of anyone else, any other party that's interested in coming forward?

(No verbal response)

CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Doesn't appear to be. But we have a notice from the OCA that it intends to participate, so thank you.

So, let's begin with appearances please.

MR. EPLER: Good morning. Gary Epler, counsel for Unitil Energy Systems, Inc. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Good morning.

MS. HOLLENBERG: Good morning. Rorie Hollenberg, here for the Office of Consumer Advocate.

CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Good morning.

MS. AMIDON: Good morning. Suzanne

1 Amidon, for Commission Staff. With me today is Les  
2 Stachow, who is an analyst with the Electric Division, and  
3 to his left is Steve Mullen, the Assistant Director of the  
4 Electric Division.

5 CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Good morning,  
6 everyone. On procedural matters in the file, it looks  
7 like the requested waiver has already been granted to the  
8 Company. I don't know if there are any other pending  
9 motions. I didn't see any for confidentiality or anything  
10 at this point, although there may be something down the  
11 road through discovery and all.

12 So, are there, I guess, Mr. Epler,  
13 anything you want to describe of issues that you think  
14 will be likely to come up during the course of the  
15 proceeding or a quick summary of the filing?

16 MR. EPLER: Thank you, Chairman  
17 Ignatius. No, I don't. There's nothing in particular  
18 that we're aware of that may be issues, other than, as  
19 pointed out in the cover letter, pursuant to the  
20 Settlement Agreement in DE 10-055, there is an ongoing  
21 review by the Commission Staff of a number of distribution  
22 planning and operation issues. And, so, that may cover  
23 some issues that may also be covered here. And, we're  
24 open to addressing those in the most efficient way

1 possible, or those might be totally separate issues.

2 And, also, just to point out to the  
3 Commission, that a significant portion of this information  
4 has been provided to the Commission. So, some of it may  
5 look familiar to the Commission, because it's been  
6 provided in the two step increase dockets, one you've  
7 recently ruled on. And, also, a lot of this was reviewed  
8 in the last rate case, in 10-055.

9 CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Thank you.

10 MR. EPLER: So, thank you.

11 Ms. Hollenberg.

12 MS. HOLLENBERG: Thank you. The Office  
13 of Consumer Advocate has no comments or position on the  
14 filing at this time. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: All right.

16 MR. EPLER: Chairman Ignatius?

17 CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Yes.

18 MR. EPLER: I just wanted to add, I  
19 apologize, I just did want to introduce, to my right, is  
20 Kevin Sprague, who is the Director of Engineering for  
21 Unitil, and to his right is John Bonazoli, who is the  
22 Manager of Electric Engineering for Unitil. And, if the  
23 Commission has any questions this morning, they're  
24 available.

1 CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Thank you. And,  
2 they will be participating in the technical session?

3 MR. EPLER: Yes.

4 CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Great.

5 MR. EPLER: Absolutely.

6 CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Thank you.

7 Ms. Amidon.

8 MS. AMIDON: Thank you. Staff doesn't  
9 have a position at this point on the filing. We intend to  
10 investigate it. And, we've developed a procedural  
11 schedule, which we will be discussing at the prehearing  
12 conference -- I mean, at the technical session following  
13 this prehearing conference. As always, we hope that we  
14 can resolve this docket through settlement, and work with  
15 the OCA and the Company. But we'll proceed according to  
16 the procedural schedule that the Commission approves.  
17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: All right. Thank  
19 you. Commissioner Scott, a question?

20 CMSR. SCOTT: This is more for Staff.  
21 But I was just curious if you had a time estimate on the  
22 Staff review that's going on?

23 MS. AMIDON: What we have done is put  
24 together a procedural schedule that is similar to the

1 schedule that the Commission approved with respect to the  
2 Liberty least cost plan. So, we contemplate a couple of  
3 rounds of discovery and a technical session. Of course,  
4 complications occur when you have Staff working on other  
5 rate cases. So, we have a proposed hearing date in March  
6 of 2014. And, that is -- one of the reasons being that  
7 there's about a four or five week delay between the last  
8 technical session and Staff testimony, due to other  
9 obligations of Staff.

10 CMSR. SCOTT: Okay. And, we're talking  
11 about the DE 10-055 review that -- we're talking the same  
12 review?

13 MR. MULLEN: I can address that. That  
14 is being performed by a consultant --

15 CMSR. SCOTT: Thank you.

16 MR. MULLEN: -- for Staff, and I  
17 actually spoke with that consultant yesterday. That  
18 report is still forthcoming. He's also working on some  
19 other things in some other dockets for us at the same  
20 time. But that shouldn't be before too long, and that can  
21 be worked into the schedule. And, whatever results from  
22 that can be worked into whatever we come up with for this  
23 schedule here and we'll deal with it that way, so there's  
24 not a lot of overlap or a duplication of effort.

1 CMSR. SCOTT: Thank you. That was where  
2 I was going, is "is there a way to kind of streamline this  
3 to work together?" So, thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: Thank you.  
5 Commissioner Harrington.

6 CMSR. HARRINGTON: Yes. Just one quick  
7 question. I noticed in your summary you talk about the  
8 "demand side planning" and the "customer acceptance of  
9 distributed generation". Is Unitil actively involved in  
10 the ISO Distributed Generation Task Force or meeting group  
11 that's going on now? They just initiated that set of  
12 meetings, like, within the last month.

13 MR. EPLER: I would have to check. I  
14 believe we are, but I would have to check with Rob Furino.

15 CMSR. HARRINGTON: Okay.

16 MR. EPLER: That would fall under his  
17 responsibility.

18 CMSR. HARRINGTON: That's no big deal.  
19 We can take it up later. I just was curious if you knew  
20 off the top of your head. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN IGNATIUS: All right. Unless  
22 there's anything further, we will leave you to the  
23 technical session, and await any issues that come from  
24 that and a proposed procedural schedule. And, appreciate

1 your attention and we are adjourned. Thank you.

2 (Whereupon the prehearing conference was  
3 adjourned at 10:14 a.m., and a technical  
4 session commenced thereafter.)  
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