

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DE 20-046

GREEN MOUNTAIN POWER CORPORATION

Petition for Authority to Discontinue Service

Order *Nisi* Granting Petition

ORDER NO. 26,365

June 16, 2020

This order grants Green Mountain Power Corporation authority to discontinue electric transmission service, and remove existing transmission facilities, in Chesterfield.

I. BACKGROUND

Green Mountain Power Corporation (GMP or the Company) is authorized to conduct business as a public utility in New Hampshire. *See Central Vermont Public Service Corporation*, Order No. 25,367 (May 21, 2012), in Docket No. DE 11-201. GMP's New Hampshire operations include the ownership and operation of certain transmission assets formerly owned by Central Vermont Public Service Corporation. Those assets include a 69 kV transmission line (the TL30 Line), which connects National Grid's 69 kV sub-transmission network in Chesterfield, New Hampshire, to GMP's 46 kV sub-transmission network in Brattleboro, Vermont.

The TL30 Line is 0.25 miles long, starting at the National Grid 69 kV transmission line at Pole P462 in Chesterfield, and terminating at GMP's North Brattleboro Substation (the Substation) in Brattleboro, Vermont. The TL30 Line crosses public land (the Wantastiquet State

Reservation) in Chesterfield; the line also crosses the Connecticut River, from the westerly boundary of the Wantastiquet State Reservation to the west bank of the river in Brattleboro.

According to the petition, the 69 kV TL30 Line was originally constructed to provide an alternate power source to GMP's 46 kV network during transmission outages. The line does not serve customers in New Hampshire or Vermont, and its function as an alternate power source for the GMP 46 kV system has been replaced by improvements the Company made to its existing 46 kV system in Vermont. GMP has not used the line in several years and does not plan to use it in the future. The Company plans to retire all existing 69 kV infrastructure within the Substation. As a result, GMP wishes to retire and disconnect the TL30 Line in New Hampshire.

II. SUMMARY OF PETITION

On April 3, 2020, GMP filed a petition for authority pursuant to RSA 374:28 to discontinue service in New Hampshire.¹ GMP said it informed National Grid of its plans to remove the TL30 Line from service, and that National Grid consented to the removal. The Company said it also notified the Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO). VELCO is Vermont's state-wide transmission operator and administrator for GMP's 46 kV system which connects to the regional transmission grid managed by ISO New England (ISO-NE). According to the petition, VELCO informed GMP that there is no requirement to notify or receive consent from ISO-NE to retire this type of asset, because ISO-NE currently models the TL30 Line as an inactive branch of the regional grid. Upon receipt of approvals to discontinue use of the line from Vermont and New Hampshire, GMP will ask ISO-NE to remove the TL30 Line from its model.

¹ Note that while the petition cites to RSA 378:28, the applicable statute is RSA 374:28.

GMP stated it will follow best management practices to retire the existing conductor from the poles along the TL30 Line in coordination with National Grid and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and then remove the poles from the ground. GMP intends to retire the conductor in the winter, when the river is frozen and river traffic has ceased. The Company plans to remove the poles following standard practice. Based on recommendations to be made by the Company's environmental consultant, GMP will excavate the poles and backfill the holes with native soil, or alternatively, flush-cut the poles at the base.

GMP stated that it will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local permits, approvals, reviews, and notices before commencing work, including, but not limited to, requirements falling within the jurisdiction the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The removal of the TL30 Line is part of the Company's planned upgrade of its Substation in Vermont. The construction schedule for the Substation upgrade indicates the Company plans to remove the line by March 2021. To accommodate that schedule, GMP requested an order *nisi* in this matter effective no later than September 1, 2020.

The petition and subsequent docket filings, other than information for which confidential treatment is requested of or granted by the Commission, are posted on the Commission's website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2020/20-046.html>.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on its review of the petition and applicable statute, Staff recommended that the Commission issue an order *nisi* granting GMP authority to discontinue electric service in New Hampshire and dismantle the TL30 Line. Staff said that discontinuance of service and removal

of the TL30 Line is in the public good, as it removes redundant facilities that have not been operational for several years.

IV. COMMISSION ANALYSIS

RSA 374:28 authorizes the Commission to permit a public utility to discontinue any part of its service in New Hampshire on a permanent basis and to remove the equipment essential to that service “whenever it shall appear that the public good does not require the further continuance of such service.” Under the statute, a public hearing is required only where the Commission has found that a utility has declined or unreasonably failed to render service or that its service is inadequate for no sufficient reason. In this instance, the TL30 Line is not providing service to customers in New Hampshire and the only electric operator connected to the line, National Grid, no longer uses it and agreed service could be discontinued.

Based on that information, we find the public good does not require continuance of service on the TL30 Line in Chesterfield, New Hampshire, and that approval for the discontinuance of service by order *nisi* is appropriate. Upon pole removal, we will require GMP to notify the Commission of whether the Company flush-cut or excavated the poles.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED *NISI*, that subject to the effective date below, authority is granted pursuant to RSA 374:28 to Green Mountain Power Corporation to discontinue service in Chesterfield, New Hampshire, as set forth in the petition and discussed above; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that Green Mountain Power notify the Commission, once pole removal is complete, of the method and date of completion; and it is

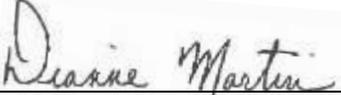
FURTHER ORDERED, that the Petitioner shall cause a copy of this order to be published once in a statewide newspaper of general circulation or of circulation in those portions of the state where operations are conducted, such publication to be no later than June 25, 2020, and to be documented by affidavit filed with this office on or before July 10, 2020; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that all persons interested in responding to this order be notified that they may submit their comments or file a written request for a hearing which states the reason and basis for a hearing no later than July 2, 2020, for the Commission's consideration; and it is

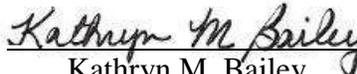
FURTHER ORDERED, that any party interested in responding to such comments or request for hearing shall do so no later than July 9, 2020; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that this order shall be effective July 15, 2020, unless the Petitioner fails to satisfy the publication obligation set forth above or 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 sixteenth day of June, 2020.



Dianne Martin
Chairwoman

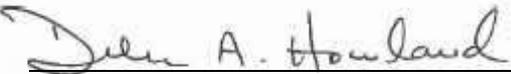


Kathryn M. Bailey
Commissioner



Michael S. Giaimo
Commissioner

Attested by:



Debra A. Howland
Executive Director

Service List - Docket Related

Docket#: 20-046

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