

**THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DG 11-207

NORTHERN UTILITIES, INC.

2011-2012 Winter Period Cost of Gas Adjustment

ORDER OF NOTICE

On September 15, 2011, Northern Utilities, Inc. (Northern), a public utility supplying natural gas service to approximately 29,000 customers in the seacoast region of New Hampshire, filed its cost of gas (COG) rates for the winter period November 1, 2011 through April 30, 2012, its local distribution adjustment clause (LDAC) charges and certain supplier charges for the period November 1, 2011 through October 31, 2012. The petition and subsequent docket filings, other than information for which confidential treatment is requested of or granted by the Commission, will be posted to the Commission's website at <http://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2011/11-207.html>.

The proposed residential COG rate is \$1.1149 per therm, a \$0.0168 per therm decrease from the weighted average residential COG rate of \$1.1317 per therm from last winter. The estimated impact of the proposed COG and LDAC rates, combined with an increase in the delivery rates, on a typical residential heating customer's winter period bill is an increase of approximately \$8.70, or 0.59 percent, compared to last winter's rates. The proposed commercial/industrial low winter use COG is \$0.9542 per therm and the proposed commercial/industrial high winter use COG is \$1.1477 per therm.

A variety of rates and charges comprise the LDAC charges for the coming year applicable to the different customer classes. The proposed surcharge to recover expenses and

lost revenues related to the residential low income assistance program is \$0.0056 per therm, an increase of \$0.0013 per therm. The proposed surcharge to recover environmental remediation costs is \$0.0053 per therm, a decrease of \$0.0001 per therm. The proposed conservation charge for residential customers is \$0.0315 per therm, a decrease of \$0.0044 per therm. The proposed conservation charge for commercial and industrial customers is \$0.0094 per therm, a decrease of \$0.0058 per therm from the current rate.

Northern is also updating its supplier balancing charges, the charges that suppliers are required to pay Northern for balancing services as Northern attempts to meet the shifting loads for the customers' supplier pools. The proposed balancing charge of \$0.78 per MMBtu of daily imbalance volumes is an increase of \$0.03 from the current rate. In addition, the proposed peaking demand charge of \$13.10 per MMBtu of peak maximum daily quantity is a decrease of \$4.58 per MMBtu from the current rate. The changes are based on an update of the volumes and costs used in calculating the charges. In addition, the proposed capacity allocator percentages used to allocate pipeline, storage and local peaking capacity to a customer's supplier under New Hampshire's policy of mandatory capacity assignment, required for firm transportation service, have also been updated to reflect Northern's supply portfolio for the upcoming year. Finally, the proposed re-entry fee for capacity exempt (grandfathered) transportation customers that choose to revert back to firm sales service is \$8.4600 per MMBtu, an increase of \$3.6370 per MMBtu from the current rate of \$4.8230 per MMBtu.

The filing raises, inter alia, issues related to RSA 378 relative to the justness and reasonableness of rates, forecasting of sales, supplier prices and transportation prices, the firm sales service re-entry fee, purchasing decisions related to the current and past winter supplies and capacity, revenue projections related to transportation services and released capacity, cost

allocations between Northern's New Hampshire and Maine divisions, the causes and treatment of any over and under recoveries, the reconciliation of prior period costs and revenues, the recovery of expenses relative to the federal rate case litigation, and the prudence of environmental remediation costs for which recovery is being sought. Each party has the right to have an attorney represent them at their own expense.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED, that a hearing be held before the Commission located at 21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire on October 20, 2011, at 10:00 a.m.; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that technical session be held at the commission office on September 29, 2011 at 1:30 p.m.; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to N.H. Admin. Rules Puc 203.12, Northern shall notify all persons desiring to be heard at this hearing by publishing a copy of this Order of Notice no later than September 30, 2011, in a newspaper with general circulation in those portions of the state in which operations are conducted, publication to be documented by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before October 20, 2011; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to N.H. Admin. Rules Puc 203.17, any party seeking to intervene in the proceeding shall submit to the Commission seven copies of a Petition to Intervene with copies sent to Northern and the Office of the Consumer Advocate on or before October 17, 2011, such Petition stating the facts demonstrating how its rights, duties, privileges, immunities or other substantial interest may be affected by the proceeding, as required by N.H. Admin. Rule Puc 203.17 and RSA 541-A:32,I(b); and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party objecting to a Petition to Intervene make said Objection on or before October 17, 2011.

By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this twenty-first day of
September, 2011.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Debra A. Howland", is written over a horizontal line.

Debra A. Howland
Executive Director

Individuals needing assistance or auxiliary communication aids due to sensory impairment or other disability, should contact the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, NHPUC, 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire 03301-2429; 603-271-2431; TDD Access: Relay N.H. 1-800-735-2964. Notification of the need for assistance should be made one week prior to the scheduled event.