

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
Before the
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty Utilities
Petition for Approval of a Gas Franchise in Jaffrey, Rindge, Swanzey, and Winchester

Docket No. DG 15-442

NORTHERN UTILITIES, INC.
PETITION TO INTERVENE

Northern Utilities, Inc. (“Northern” or “the Company”) hereby respectfully petitions the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) for full party Intervenor status in the above captioned matter pursuant to RSA 541-A: 32 and N.H. Code of Admin. Proc. Puc 203.17. Northern’s interests are likely to be affected by this proceeding, and the interests of justice and the orderly and prompt conduct of the proceedings will not be impaired by allowing the intervention. In support of its Petition, Northern states the following:

1. Northern is a public utility organized and existing under the laws of New Hampshire. It is wholly owned by Unitil Corporation, a New Hampshire corporation and public utility holding company. Northern is primarily engaged in the business of distributing natural gas in various cities and towns in New Hampshire and Maine. Northern’s primary place of business is located at 6 Liberty Lane West, Hampton, New Hampshire.

2. On October 9, 2015, Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty Utilities (“Liberty”) filed a petition requesting that the Commission grant it franchises to serve in the Towns of Jaffrey, Rindge, Swanzey, and Winchester (collectively, the “Towns”), New Hampshire pursuant to RSA 374:22 and 26. The Commission has opened this docket to consider Liberty’s request.

3. Pursuant to RSA 541-A:32 and Puc 203.17, the Commission shall grant a petition to intervene if it “states facts demonstrating that the petitioner's rights, duties, privileges, immunities or other substantial interests may be affected by the proceeding or that the petitioner qualifies as an intervenor under any provision of law,” and if “the interests of justice and the orderly and prompt conduct of the proceedings would not be impaired by allowing the intervention.” RSA 541-A:32, I.

4. Northern, like Liberty, is a public utility engaged in the business of distributing natural gas to towns in New Hampshire. As such, positions taken by Liberty, Commission Staff, the

Office of the Consumer Advocate (“OCA”), or other intervenors, as well as the Commission’s ultimate analysis in this docket, may impact Northern’s business and its ability or efforts to expand and extend gas service to New Hampshire customers in the future.

5. Liberty proposes to serve the Towns by constructing a distribution system that interconnects with Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, LLC’s proposed Northeast Energy Delivery pipeline (“NED”). In the event that the NED project is cancelled or delayed, Liberty indicates that it would examine other alternatives, including service to customers in the Towns through liquefied natural gas (“LNG”) or compressed natural gas (“CNG”). Under Liberty’s proposal in this docket, it appears that Liberty plans to support the costs of an interconnection with the NED and construct its distribution system into the Towns to potentially serve customers at the same rates paid by other Liberty customers.

6. Northern takes no position regarding Liberty’s proposal at this time. Northern is, however, generally supportive of the expansion of natural gas distribution within New Hampshire, and believes that such expansion will yield benefits to the public and the environment. As a natural gas utility that may seek to extend its gas distribution system and franchise in the future, Northern has a substantial and direct interest in the policy developments implicated by Liberty’s petition. As such, Northern’s participation in this docket serves the interests of justice.

7. Liberty’s proposal raises several important policy concerns including, but not limited to, the appropriate financial models and method(s) used to evaluate the financial viability of large gas distribution expansion projects, the proper ratemaking treatment associated with investments to expand into new franchise areas, the manner in which the Commission evaluates a request for a franchise to provide natural gas service, and the effective geographic area to be included within the scope of a request to expand into a new franchise area. As a natural gas utility operating in New Hampshire that may seek to extend its gas distribution system and franchise territory, Northern has a substantial and direct interest in the ability of a natural gas utility to obtain a franchise to expand service to customers.

WHEREFORE Northern respectfully requests that the Commission grant its Petition to Intervene consistent with RSA 541-A:32 and Puc 203.17 and such further relief as may be just and equitable.

Respectfully submitted,

December 1, 2015

By: 

Gary Epler
Patrick Taylor
Attorneys for Northern Utilities, Inc.
Unitil Service Corp.
6 Liberty Lane West
Hampton, NH 03842-1720
603.772-0775

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that on December 1, 2015, a copy of the foregoing Petition to Intervene in this docket has been served by electronic mail to the service list in this docket.

By: 

Patrick Taylor