

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

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December 18, 2018 - 1:41 p.m.
Concord, New Hampshire

**RE: DE 18-177
EVERSOURCE ENERGY
PETITION FOR CONTINUATION OF
RELIABILITY ENHANCEMENT
PROGRAM
(Hearing on the Merits)**

PRESENT: Chairman Martin P. Honigberg, Presiding
Commissioner Kathryn M. Bailey
Commissioner Michael S. Giaimo

Sandy Deno, Clerk

APPEARANCES: **Reptg. Eversource Energy:**
Matthew J. Fossum, Esq.

Reptg. Residential Ratepayers:
D. Maurice Kreis, Esq., Consumer Adv.
Office of Consumer Advocate

Reptg. PUC Staff:
Suzanne G. Amidon, Esq.
Kurt Demmer, Esq.
Richard Chagnon, Electric Div.

Court Reporter: Susan J. Robidas, NH LCR No. 44

I N D E X

WITNESS PANEL: ROBERT ALLEN
 JOSEPH PURINGTON
 CHRISTOPHER GOULDING

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Good morning.
3 We're here in Docket DE 18-177, which is
4 Eversource's Petition for the Continuation of
5 the Reliability Enhancement Program. Before
6 we do anything else, let's take appearances.

7 MR. FOSSUM: Good afternoon,
8 Commissioners. And I guess it needs to be
9 said for a third time today. I am Matthew
10 Fossum, here for Public Service Company of
11 New Hampshire, doing business as Eversource
12 Energy.

13 MR. KREIS: Good afternoon. I am
14 D. Maurice Kreis, the Consumer Advocate, here
15 on behalf of the residential utility
16 customers of this fine investor-owned
17 utility. And with me today is the OCA
18 Director of Finance, Mr. James Brennan.

19 MS. AMIDON: So, happy holidays.
20 I'm Suzanne Amidon, here for Commission
21 Staff.

22 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: How are we
23 proceeding this afternoon?

24 MR. FOSSUM: This afternoon the

1 Company intends to present a panel consisting
2 of the three people who were on the filing
3 that was made for continuation of the
4 program. And that's how we would propose to
5 proceed.

6 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right.

7 MR. FOSSUM: The only other note I
8 would make is I have marked with the clerk
9 for identification that filing, the
10 November 16th filing, as Exhibit 1 for
11 identification.

12 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right. If
13 there's nothing else, why don't we have the
14 witnesses come up to the witness box.

15 Would you do the honors, please.

16 (WHEREUPON, ROBERT ALLEN, JOSEPH
17 PURINGTON AND CHRISTOPHER GOULDING were
18 duly sworn and cautioned by the Court
19 Reporter.)

20 DIRECT EXAMINATION

21 BY MR. FOSSUM:

22 Q. All right. We'll start with Mr. Purington.
23 Mr. Purington, I'll ask you a question, and
24 the same question will be to all three of

1 you.

2 Could you please state your name, your
3 place of employment and your responsibilities
4 for the record.

5 A. (Purington) My name is Joseph Purington. I
6 am the vice-president of electric operations
7 for PSNH, doing business as Eversource. My
8 responsibilities include electric operations,
9 which includes the transmission and
10 distribution of control centers, the line
11 work force and the substation work force.

12 Q. Thank you. Mr. Allen, the same to you.

13 A. (Allen) Yes, good afternoon. My name's
14 Robert Allen. I'm the manager of vegetation
15 management for Eversource. My
16 responsibilities include distribution
17 vegetation management in New Hampshire and
18 Massachusetts.

19 A. (Goulding) My name is Christopher Goulding.
20 I'm the manager of New Hampshire Revenue
21 Requirements, employed by Eversource Service
22 Company. I'm in charge of implementation and
23 coordination of rights and revenue
24 calculations associated with the distribution

1 rates, energy service rates, stranded cost
2 recovery charge rates, and system benefit
3 charge rates.

4 Q. Thank you. Mr. Goulding, I'm going to leave
5 you out of the next couple of questions.

6 Mr. Purington, have you ever testified
7 before this Commission?

8 A. (Purington) No, sir.

9 Q. In that case, could you please give a brief
10 description of your education and experience
11 for the record.

12 A. (Purington) Yes. I have an associate's
13 degree from Southern Maine Community College
14 and a bachelor's degree from Southern New
15 Hampshire University. I have 30 years in
16 electric utility operations, based all of it
17 in operations. Arrived here in New Hampshire
18 in February of 2014 in my current position.
19 Prior to that, I served as the director of
20 system operations at Iberdrola USA, which
21 included responsibilities for the control
22 center transmission; distribution of gas at
23 Rochester Gas & Electric in Rochester, New
24 York; at NYSEG, New York State Electric and

1 Gas at Binghamton, New York; and Central
2 Maine Power in Augusta, Maine.

3 Q. Thank you. And Mr. Allen, have you testified
4 before this Commission previously?

5 A. (Allen) No, sir.

6 Q. In that case, could you please also provide
7 an overview of your education and experience
8 for the record.

9 A. (Allen) Sure. I have an associate's degree in
10 arbor culture from the Stockbridge School of
11 Agriculture at University of Massachusetts
12 Amherst. This is my 40th year in arbor
13 culture, the last 31 with Eversource or its
14 predecessor companies. I've worked in
15 Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.
16 I came up here in 2009 after the ice storm
17 and took over as supervisor in vegetation
18 management. Prior to coming to Eversource, I
19 worked in residential, commercial and
20 municipal arbor culture.

21 Q. Thank you. Now turning back to a question
22 for all three of you. Back on November 16th,
23 and as part of what has been marked for
24 identification as Exhibit 1, did you file a

1 technical statement? We'll go just down the
2 line.

3 A. (Purington) Yes.

4 A. (Allen) Yes.

5 A. (Goulding) Yes.

6 Q. And that technical statement and the
7 information in there, was that prepared by
8 you or at your direction?

9 A. (Purington) Yes.

10 A. (Allen) Yes.

11 A. (Goulding) Yes.

12 Q. And do you adopt that statement and the
13 associated information as your testimony for
14 this proceeding?

15 A. (Purington) Yes.

16 A. (Allen) Yes.

17 A. (Goulding) Yes.

18 Q. Thank you. Now I guess I'll direct this to
19 Mr. Goulding. Could you please just provide
20 a very brief overview of the Company's
21 request in this filing and technical
22 statement.

23 A. (Goulding) Sure. So as a little background,
24 the REP has been in place for a number of

1 years, and there's been improvement in
2 reliability due to the activities done under
3 this program. The Company recognizes that
4 the REP was not going to last indefinitely
5 and presented this filing after discussions
6 with Staff and OCA as a bridge to a rate case
7 that we have agreed to file in 2019. As
8 noted in our tech statement, the proposal is
9 to address the treatment of vegetation
10 management costs that are currently being
11 capitalized, treat those as O&M effective
12 January 1st, 2019; continue the
13 Troubleshooter Program funding at \$2 million
14 a year; continuation of funding to support
15 the REP investments through the end of 2018;
16 a distribution rate adjustment to account for
17 changes effective January 1st, 2018 that were
18 to recover consulting costs and PUC
19 assessment costs and Medicare adjustment --
20 or Medicare tax-deferral refund adjustment;
21 and a commitment to file a comprehensive rate
22 review in 2019, using 2018 calendar-year
23 data. Additionally, to fund the extension of
24 this program, we were going to defer -- we

1 propose to defer the costs associated with
2 this program above a level that's currently
3 in rates, and then at the earliest of our
4 exogenous event filing a rate change, which
5 would be July 1st, or a temporary rate change
6 as part of a rate review. We will offset
7 those costs with the deferred tax dollars
8 that are being deferred on behalf of
9 customers as a result of the tax change that
10 occurred January 1st, 2018.

11 Q. Thank you. I just have a few questions for
12 direct, and I'll just take them in the order
13 in which the issues show up in the Technical
14 Statement. So I'll start with you, Mr.
15 Allen.

16 In the Technical Statement there's
17 discussion of various types of trimming
18 activities, specifically enhanced tree
19 trimming, full-width right-of-way clearing,
20 hedge and tree removals. Are these the same
21 types of activities that have previously been
22 undertaken by the Company?

23 A. (Allen) Yes, those have been in the previous
24 REPs up to 2018, where full-width clearing

1 was not in it.

2 Q. And are these activities above and beyond
3 what's undertaken for normal maintenance
4 trimming?

5 A. (Allen) Yes, they are.

6 Q. Mr. Allen, there's some numbers in there,
7 funding levels for these vegetation
8 management activities. Are those -- could
9 you describe whether those -- how those
10 proposed funding levels align with previous
11 amounts for the same activities?

12 A. (Allen) Sure. In 2016, the REP -- or in
13 2018, I'm sorry, the REP for vegetation
14 management was \$6 million; so, \$4 million for
15 ETT and \$2 million for hazard tree removal.
16 Prior to that it had been higher funding.
17 But our base budget also includes those
18 activities. So, for this year, in 2018, the
19 total for our hazard tree removal was
20 \$10 million.

21 Q. And so the proposed levels -- would it be
22 fair to say the proposed levels in 2019 are
23 effectively consistent with what they have
24 been?

1 A. (Allen) Yes, that's true.

2 Q. Is it your position that the proposed amounts
3 of funding are reasonable and appropriate?

4 A. (Allen) Yes.

5 Q. Mr. Allen, assuming the Commission is
6 inclined to approve the budget levels that
7 have been proposed, would the Company have
8 any issue securing a work force to carry out
9 these activities and to get this work done?

10 A. (Allen) That's a great question. It is not
11 an issue for us to get those crews. So after
12 the ice storm in 2008, we had 85 tree crews
13 on the system when I came up here in 2009.
14 We currently have 160 tree crews on the
15 system. This year -- and across Eversource,
16 we have 450 crews. So we have a large amount
17 of tree crews on our system. This year we
18 spent some time in our sister companies
19 helping out with storm stuff. In
20 Massachusetts and Connecticut in March, there
21 were three Nor'easters in a row, and we went
22 down there and helped to get those folks back
23 into power, not unlike what happened a couple
24 years ago with the Thanksgiving storm up here

1 in New Hampshire where they came up and
2 helped us. So that's the benefit of having a
3 large company and having all those tree crews
4 at our disposal. So I'm comfortable and
5 confident that we can get the work done with
6 the crews we have on our roster now.

7 Q. And finally, Mr. Allen, is it your position
8 that the activities proposed in the Company's
9 filing are reasonable and appropriate for
10 this Reliability Enhancement Program?

11 A. (Allen) Yes. Trees remain our largest
12 contributor to outages. It goes back and
13 forth between Maine and New Hampshire. And
14 Joe can maybe testify on that as well. We're
15 both heavily forested states. So currently I
16 think Maine is the most forested state, and
17 New Hampshire is No. 2. But the fact of the
18 matter is we're always going to have trees
19 that grow above our wires. So having these
20 programs that allow us to remove those trees
21 and get clearances necessary is appropriate.

22 Q. Thank you. Moving down to the next issue, at
23 least as presented in the Technical
24 Statement. Mr. Purington, there's discussion

1 in the Technical Statement regarding
2 troubleshooters. Could you please explain
3 the inclusion of the troubleshooters for
4 2019.

5 A. (Purington) Yes. The proposal to remove them
6 from the REP was based on the thought we
7 would be filing a rate case in late 2018. As
8 noted in the filing, we have committed to
9 filing a rate case in 2019, using 2018 as a
10 test year. Given the delay in the filing
11 until next year, we concluded that having a
12 bridge for those employees until a rate
13 filing would be appropriate.

14 Q. So has funding for the troubleshooters
15 previously been a part of the REP?

16 A. (Purington) Yes, that's correct. About half
17 the funding for the Troubleshooter Program
18 has previously been part of the REP, and that
19 funding has been supporting the reliability
20 work of these employees as identified in the
21 tech statement.

22 Q. And so that for 2019, it would essentially
23 just be a continuation of the existing, of
24 the status quo for that program.

1 A. (Purington) That's correct.

2 Q. And as to the final issue as identified in
3 the Technical Statement, for you, Mr.
4 Goulding, could you please explain the
5 revenue requirement numbers, sort of how you
6 got to those numbers that are shown and
7 described in the Technical Statement.

8 A. (Goulding) Yes. So it probably makes sense
9 to turn to Bates Page 22 of the filing. So,
10 on Bates Page 22 we have a summary of the
11 kind of current funding and also the 2019
12 funding and just the changes so it's easy to
13 identify what's moving, what the moving parts
14 are.

15 So, for 2019, it has \$2 million of
16 troubleshooter funding to continue for 2019.
17 We removed the O&M portion of capital because
18 the Bridge Program doesn't have any
19 additional REP capital work being done under
20 it. And then we have the adjustment to
21 account for the treatment of vegetation
22 management going from capital item to expense
23 item effective January 1st, 2019, and that's
24 the \$16.8 million. And then we have the

1 return and the depreciation expenses
2 associated with the investments, the REP
3 investments, through December 31st, 2018.
4 And that gives a total revenue requirement of
5 \$33.9 million. And we have a forecasted over
6 recovery for year end 12/31/2018 of \$958,000,
7 which gives us a total revenue requirement
8 necessary of \$32.9 million. And the current
9 annual REP funding is \$18.063 million, so
10 there is a deficiency of \$14.9 million. And
11 that was the \$14.9 million that we talked
12 about -- or I mentioned earlier we were going
13 to defer the revenue deficiency associated
14 with continuing the program above the levels
15 of the current annual REP funding, and then
16 come July 1st, when the exogenous event rate
17 change is necessary for our rate case filing
18 is made, we would offset any deferred REP
19 dollars with the deferred tax dollars that
20 are being deferred on customers' behalf.

21 Q. Mr. Goulding, with respect to that
22 \$14 million that you were just discussing,
23 that's all associated with vegetation
24 management; is that correct?

1 A. (Goulding) The primary driver of the change
2 is the vegetation management. If you look
3 over at the Difference column, you'll see a
4 slight decrease for the O&M portion of
5 capital, but then there's the \$16.8 million
6 increase associated with the vegetation
7 management.

8 Q. And that 16.8 that's included in the REP, how
9 does that compare to the cost of similar
10 activities done prior to 2019?

11 A. (Goulding) In 2018, the projected year-end
12 spending -- or investment level for
13 ETT/hazard tree removal/ROW clearing between
14 the Base Capital Program and the REP Capital
15 Program is projected at \$19 million. So it's
16 comparable.

17 Q. And so just because I want to be very clear
18 on this point, would it be fair to say that
19 what the Company does presently, or funds
20 presently out of both its base rates and REP
21 will be rolled exclusively into the REP for
22 these activities?

23 A. (Goulding) Yes, because they were both
24 capitalized before as part of the base and

1 then part of our REP. So the order was
2 issued to change the treatment from being
3 treated as capital effective January 1st, so
4 we had to treat the base portion and the REP
5 portion as O&M items going forward. So
6 that's why they're included as an adjustment
7 here in the REP filing.

8 Q. Thank you. And just as a last question,
9 could you just very quickly run through the
10 other adjustments that are identified in the
11 Technical Statement and explain what's going
12 on there. Again, it's written in the
13 statement, so just very briefly.

14 A. (Goulding) Yeah, I think it might be easiest
15 to probably just turn to Bates Page -- let's
16 start with Bates Page 45. So last year there
17 was a rate change on January 1st, 2018, in
18 Docket DE 17-160. And that was to increase
19 our rates to recover \$430,569 of consulting
20 costs. What we experienced in 2018 is
21 \$51,400. This is on Bates Page 45. So on
22 Line 17, because we already have \$430,000 in
23 our rates and we only need \$51,000, we would
24 reduce the recovery amount by \$379,000. So

1 I'll pause on that one for a second and turn
2 to Bates Page 44.

3 Additionally in that docket last year,
4 17-160, we were allowed to increase our
5 recovery amounts associated with the NH PUC
6 assessment by \$911,000. And we already had
7 \$4.1 million in assessment cost recovery in
8 our rates. So that brings the total level in
9 our rates for PUC assessment recovery to
10 \$5.070 million. But we received the most
11 recent fiscal year assessment bill from the
12 PUC, and it \$4.776 million. So we would be
13 reducing our rates by \$294,000.

14 Now, if we turn to Bates Page 43, you'll
15 see the adjustment levels decreased in the
16 rates by \$294,000 that we saw on Page 2 and a
17 decrease in the rates for proceeding costs of
18 \$379,000 that we saw on Page 3. But then
19 there was also a removal of Medicare deferral
20 credit back in Docket No. 17-076. We had
21 adjusted our rates down to give back \$690,000
22 of a deferral back to customers, and that was
23 to be over the period of July 1st, 2017 to
24 June 30th, 2018. So we're removing that from

1 our rates effective January 1st. So netting
2 those all together results in a change that
3 won't show up in a rate of \$16,700. So
4 that's why we said there's no rate change
5 associated with those adjustments. We're
6 just looking for approval that we accounted
7 for those correctly.

8 MR. FOSSUM: Thank you. That's my
9 direct.

10 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Kreis.

11 MR. KREIS: Thank you, Mr.
12 Chairman. With your indulgence, I think I'd
13 like to mark another exhibit for
14 identification. So I'll hand that out. This
15 is simply a page from the 2017 report of the
16 Reliability Enhancement Program of PSNH d/b/a
17 Eversource. It was already filed in Docket
18 17-196, so it's a familiar document I think.

19 CROSS-EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. KREIS:

21 Q. Just I think the -- go back to my microphone.
22 In request of clarity, I would like to see
23 how this page, Exhibit 2 from the 2017
24 Reliability Enhancement Program Report,

1 compares to the similar graph that is Bates
2 Page 17 of Exhibit 1, which is the Company's
3 filing in this docket. And so I guess I
4 would maybe ask Mr. Purington, or whichever
5 member of the witness panel that's qualified
6 to do that, to help me understand the
7 difference between the graph on Exhibit 2 and
8 the graph that is Bates Page 17 of Exhibit 1.

9 A. (Purington) Mr. Kreis, the exhibit in the
10 filing has the Troubleshooter Primary Region
11 SAIDI, compared against the other regions.
12 The previous filing that we referenced here
13 is the whole company SAIDI.

14 Q. So, in other words, there is no whole company
15 graph in Exhibit 1. Neither of those lines
16 on Bates Page 17 of Exhibit 1 is reflective
17 of the whole company's SAIDI record.

18 A. (Purington) No, I do not see that.

19 Q. Okay. The graph from the 2017 report refers
20 to NH PUC criteria, and the graphs
21 attached -- or excuse me. Exhibit 2 refers
22 to NH PUC criteria, and the graphs in
23 Exhibit 1 refer to IEEE criteria. What's the
24 difference between the NH PUC criteria and

1 the IEEE criteria?

2 A. (Purington) So NH PUC is very similar to the
3 IEEE, based on my understanding, with the
4 exception that the IEEE excludes major event
5 days.

6 Q. And would it be fair to say, looking at
7 Exhibit 2, that there has been -- that there
8 was an increase in the system, SAIDI system,
9 average -- I forget what the "I" stands
10 for -- duration index from 2015 through 2017,
11 meaning outages were longer, the average
12 outage was longer?

13 A. (Purington) So refer me again to which one is
14 Exhibit 2?

15 Q. The document from the 2017 report. And I
16 apologize. I copied it in black and white
17 because I don't have a color copier in my
18 office. The original version of this
19 document was in color. But I think it' still
20 perfectly legible.

21 A. (Purington) Could you please restate your
22 question, Mr. Kreis.

23 Q. So would it be fair to say, looking at
24 Exhibit 2, which is the page from the 2017

1 report, that the average duration of outages
2 increased? Starting from a low point in
3 2015, there have been increases in 2016 and
4 2017?

5 A. (Purington) Based on that graph, yes.

6 Q. Do you know if there's a similar trend in
7 2018?

8 A. (Purington) 2018 year-to-date was 107 SAIDI.

9 Q. So that would suggest a decrease this year.

10 A. (Purington) That's correct.

11 Q. So is that just a matter of weather
12 variations, or is there an explanation for
13 that?

14 A. (Purington) It can be a matter of weather.
15 It can be a matter of outage cause types and
16 locations as well. You know, for instance, a
17 couple weeks ago we had a logging truck cross
18 a right-of-way interrupting 4,000 customers
19 in Pittsburg, which took us a long time to
20 get to, get up there and get it repaired. So
21 depending on the nature of the outages in
22 that given year and weather, obviously cause
23 type and weather really drive the duration
24 types of damage.

1 Q. And is there a reason that the Company
2 switched from using the NH PUC criteria in
3 its 2017 report to the IEEE criteria in the
4 filing it made in this docket?

5 A. (Purington) No known reason.

6 Q. Wouldn't it be better to use consistent
7 criteria?

8 A. (Purington) I would agree. We can provide
9 that.

10 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Kreis, do
11 you want him to provide some additional
12 exhibit?

13 MR. KREIS: I think, Mr. Chairman,
14 I would like to leave that to your
15 discretion. My posture in this docket is to
16 be supportive of the Company's filing, and so
17 I don't have a strong feeling about the
18 necessity. I'm really just making the point
19 that it would be better to use a consistent
20 set of reporting criteria. It really depends
21 on what will make you comfortable in terms of
22 adopting the recommendation that I intend to
23 make at the end of the hearing to adopt and
24 approve the Company's proposal. How's that

1 for an unequivocal --

2 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Exceedingly
3 unhelpful. But I think there is a benefit to
4 using the same standards so that the current
5 filing looks like something in the past, or
6 the past filings are redone using the
7 current. I mean, I don't know if it's going
8 to look any different. I'm guessing it won't
9 look radically different.

10 MR. KREIS: Indeed. And as I think
11 about it, it is absolutely critical that the
12 Company revise its filings so that it reports
13 its SAIDI results using the NH PUC criteria,
14 because after all this is the NH PUC.

15 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Fossum,
16 would it be possible to get, I think it's
17 some number of pages of Exhibit 1 redone
18 using the PUC criteria or vice versa? Make
19 me an offer.

20 MR. FOSSUM: Well, I mean, I'll put
21 it this way: I won't answer right away by
22 saying this, that the Company historically
23 filed REP reports at the end of an REP year,
24 which has not always coincided with the

1 calendar year. There have been consistent
2 reporting metrics in those filings. In the
3 Company's filing last year for a continuation
4 of the REP, we presented an exhibit like
5 this -- actually, I believe we presented it
6 in discovery, and the Staff brought it in as
7 an exhibit. We had been asked to produce
8 this information and thought it would be
9 helpful to produce again using the IEEE
10 criteria. That's my way of explanation for
11 the mismatch here.

12 To answer your more immediate
13 question, I believe it's possible. And since
14 Mr. Purington has already offered to do so,
15 that we could reproduce I think about five
16 pages of this present filing using the NH PUC
17 criteria and submit those.

18 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right.
19 Why don't we have you do that. So we'll
20 reserve Exhibit 3 for that. And thank you
21 Mr. Fossum and Mr. Purington.

22 MR. KREIS: Thank you, indeed.

23 BY MR. KREIS:

24 Q. It's true, is it not -- I think my questions

1 are still for Mr. Purington -- that major
2 storm events are excluded from the
3 reliability statistics that you reported both
4 here and reported in the 2017 REP report?

5 A. (Purington) I would have to validate that.

6 Q. Subject to check, in other words.

7 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Purington
8 is not an experienced witness here, remember,
9 Mr. Kreis.

10 MR. KREIS: Trying to help him.

11 BY MR. KREIS:

12 Q. Do you think it would be valuable to
13 normalize out small storms from the
14 reliability reports that you make to the
15 Commission?

16 A. (Purington) I think that would be subjective.
17 You know, in the month of November we had, I
18 think, 11 minor storm days. So I'm not sure
19 the value of excluding those.

20 Q. Super. I mean thank you.

21 On the first page of the Technical
22 Statement, which is Bates Page No. 10 in
23 Exhibit 1, there's a reference to the fact
24 that in 2018 Eversource was going to

1 construct two circuit ties. Can you -- maybe
2 this is a question for Mr. Goulding. What's
3 the impact to the revenue requirement of
4 those two circuit tie investments?

5 A. (Goulding) So it was a \$3 million project, so
6 it would be somewhere in the range of
7 \$400,000 on an annual basis.

8 Q. Including depreciation expenses, return on
9 investment, all of that?

10 A. (Goulding) Yes, return on investment.

11 Q. Do you expect those two circuit tie projects
12 to be in service by the end of the year, or
13 are they already in service?

14 A. (Goulding) When I made the filing, that was
15 the expectation, that they were to be in
16 service. So the plan is they would be in
17 service by the end of the year.

18 Q. The Company uses both its own crews and
19 third-party crews to do tree trimming. Which
20 of those two sources of tree trimming human
21 resources are more expensive to the Company?

22 A. (Allen) We generally only use contracted tree
23 crews. When Company personnel cuts a tree,
24 it's basically in response to a trouble call

1 that they could handle without having a tree
2 crew there.

3 Q. Has the Company ever considered using
4 in-house resources to do tree trimming?

5 A. (Allen) I think that's a question that's come
6 up in the past. It's nothing that -- or we
7 haven't done it, to my knowledge. But I
8 believe we have looked into the cost of doing
9 that in a previous incarnation of Eversource,
10 I believe it was Connecticut Light & Power,
11 and decided it was not cost-efficient.

12 Q. And is that your opinion here with respect to
13 PSNH?

14 A. (Allen) My opinion is that we have 160 tree
15 crews that are professionally trained to do
16 the work, and for us to go into this economy
17 and try to find 160 crews would be very
18 difficult. So I think the ones we have now
19 are the ones we should use.

20 MR. KREIS: I think those are all
21 the questions I have.

22 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Ms. Amidon.

23 MS. AMIDON: Thank you. I have
24 some questions, and Mr. Demmer will have some

1 questions as well.

2 CROSS-EXAMINATION

3 BY MS. AMIDON:

4 Q. Good afternoon. Have you presented this
5 budget to management for approval at this
6 point?

7 A. (Goulding) Yes.

8 Q. And does this proposal propose the same
9 budget you requested?

10 A. (Goulding) The \$16.8 million is what's in the
11 budget.

12 Q. And was that what you requested at the
13 outset?

14 A. (Goulding) Yes.

15 Q. Is there any -- and this relates to something
16 I think Mr. Goulding knows. Is there any REP
17 funding in rate base; and if so, what does it
18 pay for?

19 A. (Goulding) There is no REP funding in base
20 rates. It's all been kind of separated out
21 as part of this REP distribution rate
22 adjustment.

23 Q. And that's why we see the same, similar
24 levels of funding, but it's now in O&M? It's

1 now an expense; is that right?

2 A. (Goulding) Are you referring to the base
3 capital vegetation management?

4 Q. No, I'm talking about just the activities,
5 vegetation management activities.

6 A. (Goulding) Right. So there is base --
7 there's vegetation management activities that
8 are being done as part of the base capital
9 budget. But there's no O&M, ETT/hazard tree
10 removal/right-of-way that's being done as
11 part of the base O&M or base rate -- or O&M
12 as part of base rates.

13 MS. AMIDON: Mr. Demmer has a
14 follow-up on that.

15 MR. DEMMER: So your normal circuit
16 pruning, is that base O&M or is that base
17 capital?

18 WITNESS GOULDING: Normal circuit
19 pruning is base O&M. Sorry, I wasn't clear
20 what the distinction was or what we were
21 referring to.

22 BY MS. AMIDON:

23 Q. Thank you. I can't remember. I think it was
24 Mr. Allen. You talked about -- I think you

1 referenced a base budget. Do you know what
2 you meant by that word earlier in your
3 testimony today? You used the term "base
4 budget."

5 A. (Allen) Yeah, it was the base capital budget.

6 Q. Okay. And I think it was you, Mr. Purington,
7 who used a strange expression on why you're
8 continuing to troubleshoot a program. You
9 said, "Given the delay in filing the rate
10 case, this was a bridge for employees." What
11 did you mean by that?

12 A. (Purington) Well, as we -- if we move forward
13 without the Troubleshooter Program being in
14 REP, we'd have to make budget adjustments.

15 Q. And why is that?

16 A. (Purington) Because we had originally planned
17 in our budget process for this to be a
18 continuation in REP until we got a bridge for
19 the rate case filing.

20 Q. But that was just something done recently in
21 connection with this filing; right?

22 A. (Purington) Yes. Our original plan was to
23 file prior to year end, which we'd be moving
24 those employees into the base rates. That

1 will be part of our review on the 2019
2 filing.

3 Q. And that will be part of Staff's and OCA's
4 review of the rate filing.

5 A. (Purington) Yes.

6 Q. And Mr. Goulding, I think you can put this in
7 context for us. I don't need to have
8 something lengthy from you. But basically
9 when you talk about the deferral of rates,
10 that the deferral of the amount was
11 \$14 million in rates, you're referencing the
12 reduction in the corporate tax rate effective
13 January 1; is that right?

14 A. (Goulding) That would be the offset, yes.

15 Q. And the Commission dealt with that in 18-149,
16 a docket I think you participated in; am I
17 right?

18 A. (Goulding) 18-049.

19 Q. 049. Thank you for the correction.

20 And it was there that there was two
21 things discussed: The 2015 settlement
22 agreement regarding divestiture and the
23 provision in there on exogenous events; is
24 that right?

1 A. (Goulding) Yes.

2 Q. And do you recall what the discussion or the
3 conclusion that the Commission reached
4 regarding the exogenous events provision?

5 A. (Goulding) Yes, that the exogenous event
6 provision required the rate adjustment
7 effective July 1st, 2019, for any exogenous
8 events, which the tax change was an exogenous
9 event, and/or the earlier of a rate case
10 filing.

11 Q. And so consistent with the Commission -- with
12 the Company's statement that they're delaying
13 the filing of the rate case for whatever
14 reason until next year, the Company accounted
15 for that change with the tax change, which
16 did account as an exogenous event; is that
17 right? Is that fair to say?

18 A. (Goulding) Yes, there's dollars being
19 deferred as exogenous event, and they would
20 be refunded effective July 1st. We've agreed
21 to make a rate case -- filing a rate review
22 that will use 2018 calendar year. So it will
23 be filed at the same time as an exogenous
24 event change would occur.

1 Q. Very good. And I just wanted to make sure
2 that was just in this record.

3 I had a question, and I'm not sure who
4 this is for. One of the references that
5 we've heard with respect to the budget is
6 that the level of expenditure is reasonable
7 in light of past levels of vegetation
8 management expenditures. Is there any other
9 basis upon which you established this
10 proposed budget?

11 A. (Allen) So our historical funding has been --
12 this year it was \$44 million for vegetation
13 management in New Hampshire. So as Chris
14 said, \$19 million was part of the REP
15 programs for this year, traditional REP
16 programs, ETT/hazard tree removal and
17 full-width clearance. We're asking for 16.8,
18 which is a reduction in that 19 million from
19 2018.

20 Q. Do you ever conduct any -- and this is sort
21 of a segue to Mr. Demmer's questions. Do you
22 ever conduct any cost/benefit analysis about
23 whether certain activities, investing more
24 money would not marginally increase the

1 benefits to customers, so to modify the
2 budget to reflect the non-cost benefit items?

3 A. (Allen) In my 40 years of arbor culture, I
4 don't think I have the skills to answer that
5 question. It's a great question, but I don't
6 think I'm the right person to answer.

7 Q. So it sounds like there's been no
8 cost/benefit analysis.

9 A. (Allen) I think there is, but I'm not the
10 person that performs them.

11 MS. AMIDON: Okay. I'm going to --
12 with your permission, Mr. Chairman, Mr.
13 Demmer has a few questions.

14 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Demmer.

15 CROSS-EXAMINATION

16 BY MR. DEMMER:

17 Q. Okay. So, this --

18 MR. DEMMER: Thank you.

19 Q. So this question is for Mr. Allen. I'd like
20 you to explain the determination of ETT
21 candidates, how you choose your ETT
22 candidates.

23 MS. AMIDON: Are we good?

24 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: We are. Most

1 of us are.

2 A. (Allen) So, ETT is decided by the circuit
3 schedule each year. We do approximately
4 25 percent of our miles each year. We've
5 been trying to do all the backbone miles or
6 the main line miles on ETT. So when we look
7 at the schedule for the next year of our
8 maintenance miles, we look at which circuits
9 have not had ETT treatment on them before.
10 The belief is if we're going to be out there
11 on those streets doing our regular trimming,
12 we'd like to talk to the customers only once
13 and have them only be obstructed by us
14 trimming on the street only once. So while
15 we're trimming our circuit trimming, that's
16 one of the main factors as to how we decide
17 what to do for ETT.

18 Additionally, we have a daily outage
19 call, where operations, engineering and veg
20 management are on call, and we discuss any
21 outages or trends that have happened the day
22 before. We can find out if there's projects
23 that need to be addressed quicker than that.
24 So some of those ETT projects that might not

1 be on the circuit schedule we then put into
2 the mix and decide which ones we can do to
3 make the best benefit for our customers.

4 Q. So, just to clarify, so your ETT candidates
5 follow the pruning candidates for that year.
6 So they're on a full year cycle, much like
7 pruning is on a full year cycle.

8 A. (Allen) That's the majority of them. But if
9 there's a trend, we would certainly follow up
10 on that.

11 Q. All right. Thank you.

12 As far as ETT, how many years have you
13 done that so far?

14 A. (Allen) To the level we're doing it, it
15 started -- as I said, I came up here in 2009,
16 and we were doing approximately 25 to
17 35 miles a year at that point. We moved it
18 up to 50 miles a year. And over the last few
19 years we've been up over 130 miles for two of
20 the years. So ETT as we know it has about a
21 2007 or so beginning to that program.

22 Q. Is there a way to measure the effectiveness
23 of that ETT trimming in the way of say, for
24 example, safety, a decrease in tree safety,

1 but not just tree safety, but a metric that
2 may be able to point to the effectiveness of
3 that ETT trimming, actually see a correlation
4 between a decrease in safety with the ETT?

5 A. (Allen) Yes, I believe there is a way to
6 measure that.

7 Q. Have you -- just off the top of your head, do
8 you know exact numbers? What have you seen
9 as a decrease in safety for tree-related
10 safety for ETT since that time frame?

11 A. (Allen) So it's a difficult question because
12 of some of the things that Mr. Purington
13 mentioned earlier. The weather changes each
14 year. Trees are not something you can
15 guesstimate how long they're going to last.
16 So we could trim a tree today and it could
17 fail tomorrow. We don't have a chance to say
18 is that tree going to stand. I mean, I think
19 we all know people that last time we saw them
20 they were fine, and next time you hear about
21 them they dropped. Trees are in the same
22 boat.

23 So we do have a situation where we can
24 look at those circuits and measure their

1 safety the following year. And four years
2 later, again we would look at it to make sure
3 it has increased.

4 Q. So in that particular case where you said you
5 don't really know -- sorry. If a tree is
6 starting to lose its health, fails, falls,
7 obviously that falls underneath the hazard
8 tree part. So the ETT now switches over to
9 kind of a hazard tree type of program. But
10 the metric I'm talking about is that would be
11 under a fallen tree scenario rather than a
12 branch scenario that is under ETT. So is
13 there a way to really accurately capture ETT
14 trimming as far as improvements for ETT? I
15 know you're saying where it could fail later
16 on, but then you could have a metric for
17 falling trees which would capture your hazard
18 tree type of --

19 A. (Allen) Sure. We measure our tree outages by
20 inside the zone or outside the zone. And
21 that is for both SMT and for ETT. So there's
22 a way to measure it. I don't have the
23 numbers with me today.

24 Q. Okay. All right. Can you briefly explain

1 how you handle the traffic control cost and
2 management for the tree program?
3 A. (Allen) Yes. It's a difficult topic because
4 it seems to increase every year. So there
5 was a time in my budget where we had a
6 traffic control portion to my budget. After
7 looking around at benchmarks in other
8 utilities, we determined that if we included
9 it in the cost of our contractors going out
10 to bid and included it in their cost per
11 mile, that there would be an incentive for
12 them to manage that cost better. They know
13 where their crews are going to be on any
14 given day. They know if somebody didn't come
15 in one day, they could switch them over. And
16 if they had a detail or a flagger, they could
17 move that person quicker than if we were
18 managing it. So I think in the long run it's
19 a better story for all our customers because
20 the costs are managed between the contractor
21 and the police force or the flagging company,
22 which we would have administrative costs if
23 we were managing it. And I don't know that
24 we would be -- but with limited staff, we

1 wouldn't be out in the field every single day
2 at every single detail, whereas the
3 contractor is there and can manage it
4 quicker.

5 Q. Do they include any administrative costs of
6 them handling the billing to Eversource as
7 part of that bid process?

8 A. (Allen) If they do, we don't see it. It's
9 part of the cost per mile.

10 Q. So there's really no breakdown in the bid
11 package as to whether there's administrative
12 costs or any other costs that may be
13 applicable to having that traffic control be
14 part of that bid package.

15 A. (Allen) We haven't seen that, no.

16 Q. Okay. And do you monitor by town or any
17 other ways to be able to monitor that traffic
18 control to get a good sense of where it may
19 be going awry?

20 A. (Allen) Yes, we have a monthly score card
21 meeting with our contractors. And they will
22 let us know if there's a certain town that's
23 caused an issue, is becoming a little more
24 onerous than it previously had been.

1 Q. Okay. So as far as the towns, you definitely
2 meet with them. As far as going back and
3 circling back with the contractor, and if
4 anything seems onerous, you then meet with
5 the town?

6 A. (Allen) Yes.

7 Q. Okay. All right. Thank you.

8 My next question is to Mr. Purington.
9 This is Bates Page 19 for the Petition for
10 the Continuation of a Reliability Enhancement
11 Program. So as you can see here, this is the
12 Eversource New Hampshire CAIDI Troubleshooter
13 Primary Region versus Other Regions --

14 (Court Reporter interrupts.)

15 A. Eversource New Hampshire CAIDI, which is the
16 average customer interruption duration
17 indices for troubleshooters, primary region
18 versus other regions. This is the IEEE
19 criteria. So you do have TMED-type of
20 reductions.

21 So, looking at this chart, I'm wondering
22 if you can explain how it's pretty much
23 flatlined for, or pretty much similar for
24 after the troubleshooters or before the

1 troubleshooters for CAIDI.

2 A. (Purington) So CAIDI is cause of duration as
3 you know. And within any given year you have
4 outages that may be large outages that we're
5 able to respond quickly to through automated
6 switching, and, you know, that will help
7 reduce the number of outages that are
8 included in CAIDI. And as we automate the
9 system more, we'll see more of that
10 happening. So the pressure on CAIDI will be
11 increasing because we'll miss those large
12 outages where we may have had to manually
13 switch in the 30 minutes or 60 minutes or
14 whatever time period it took.

15 So your question, you know, is can I
16 explain why it's flatlined?

17 Q. Or similar.

18 A. (Purington) I mean, it's just the nature of
19 the outage locations, the duration and, you
20 know, our response to the damage that was
21 incurred during those outages.

22 Q. Okay. Thank you. Back to Mr. Allen.

23 Just a follow-up on that last piece of
24 the contractors and the tree trimming. Is

1 there an audit process post-completion of a
2 circuit to make sure that those costs are
3 comparable to other circuits?

4 A. (Allen) Yes. Our arborists are required to
5 do a hundred-percent quality control audit.
6 As far as the costs, we put that contract out
7 to bid and we get a competitive bid process
8 before it's awarded. But the actual checking
9 of the work, which I think is what you're
10 asking, the auditing of the work --

11 Q. Yes.

12 A. -- yeah, we do a hundred-percent quality
13 control.

14 Q. Okay. So my next question is on Bates
15 Page 11 of the Petition for Continuation of
16 the Reliability Enhancement Program.
17 Approximately halfway down the page it talks
18 about -- or you talk about in your statement
19 as to the mileage schedule for 2018 for the
20 Company's trimming activity, and ends with
21 that basically New Hampshire is different
22 than other states, and this is why it takes a
23 little bit longer for these tree crews that
24 come into the state to get acclimated to the

1 state. Can you explain the thought process
2 behind that?

3 A. (Allen) Yes. What I meant when I wrote that
4 was that the crews that we did have come in
5 this year from Global and from Asplundh were
6 from South Carolina, North Carolina,
7 Louisiana and Florida. And beyond the height
8 and density of the trees, the weather, the
9 fact that they're used to working, in their
10 words, on "straight roads," which they
11 weren't seeing up here in New Hampshire, made
12 it a little more difficult for them to get
13 used to doing the work that we needed them to
14 do.

15 Q. And do you anticipate using or utilizing
16 those type of crews going forward in the 2019
17 work plan?

18 A. (Allen) We currently do not. This was an
19 event. It was historic when we had those
20 three Nor'easters in March. So we had to
21 bring crews in to get us back on track.

22 Q. So that pretty much leads into my last
23 question. When you do the planning for the
24 year, your tree trimming planning and your

1 enhanced tree trimming, your hazard tree,
2 what type of contingency plans do you put in
3 place for storms? I mean, I know this one is
4 roughly going to be for until the rate case
5 is coming through, and then you have the rest
6 of the year. But what do you do for the
7 contingency planning for storms and other
8 instances to avoid having those crews come up
9 from Louisiana?

10 A. (Allen) Great question. We have, as I said,
11 450 crews on our system across all three
12 states. During those three storms, those
13 three Nor'easters, we did not have to bring
14 in any outside crews. We were able to move
15 our crews internally to where the problems
16 were. The problem is what happened after
17 that, that we had to get back on track. So
18 that's when we brought them back in. And
19 that was all three states felt the brunt of
20 that storm restoration effort.

21 So one of the things that we do each
22 year is we put the ETT out to bid. We're in
23 a four-year contract on the maintenance
24 trimming. So those miles are known ahead of

1 time for the contractor; therefore, they can
2 keep the stability of their crew roster.
3 That means a lot to the guys. They want to
4 know is there work next year, is there work
5 the year after, because tree trimming is a
6 very difficult job. And if they can find
7 another job to go to, oftentimes they will.
8 But if there's work for four years, we found
9 that that's the best way to keep a stable
10 roster. However, we put the ETT out every
11 year, and we put it out twice, two different
12 bids, which gets other contractors to come in
13 and bid in case they missed out on another
14 utility's bid. So this year with Western
15 Mass. Electric, we put some work out for next
16 year, and Davey Tree came and won some of
17 that work. We hadn't had them in our system
18 in over five years. So I think that's a good
19 story that we have these bids go out in the
20 beginning of the year and again later on in
21 the year. It gives us more crews onto our
22 system in the event of a storm.

23 Q. If you were to come up against that, where
24 you did have some storms coming in and you

1 saw or you had some sort of prediction that
2 you weren't going to be able to make the
3 plan, you needed to increase crews, which
4 could increase cost because you're going
5 outside the bid package, do you have a
6 process in place of an overage or cost
7 control, where you can then, if they need to
8 come back, look for additional expenditures?

9 A. (Allen) Based on the storm?

10 Q. No, based on overall work plan. For example,
11 if you do a \$16 million work plan and you
12 have storms throughout the year, you have to
13 get different crews. It costs you more, and
14 you suspect your work plan is going to come
15 \$2 million over. What is the point that you
16 end up to coming back to the staff and say
17 this is going to cost a lot more than we
18 thought? And do you adjustment your mileage
19 to get to a budget, or do you allow yourself
20 to go over budget?

21 A. (Allen) So we haven't had that issue yet, but
22 we maintain a conversation with staff when we
23 believe there is an issue. This year I
24 thought there might be issue, and I did talk

1 to staff about it. We have -- we're part of
2 a mutual aid group, so when there's a need
3 for more crews to come in if it is a large
4 storm event, Asplundh is one of our major
5 contractors, so they will be able to get us
6 other crews if need be.

7 Q. But the ones that were Global were because
8 Asplundh couldn't give you crews.

9 A. (Allen) We sent a request out to all the
10 companies we had working on our system and we
11 asked for X-amount crews from each of them
12 and Asplundh was able to give us 32. We had
13 asked for more than that, so we went to
14 Global. So...

15 Q. And I just had one last question. As far as
16 the ETT trimming, you had said you do it
17 coincident with the four-year cycle trim.
18 Does the cycle trim reflect the ETT crews
19 working on the mileage on the cycle trim?
20 For example, if you have 2,000 miles in your
21 cycle trim for the year, and now you're
22 taking out X-amount of miles for ETT, I'm
23 assuming those ETT crews are probably doing a
24 cycle trim at the same time as they're doing

1 ETT trimming. Has that been taken out of the
2 mileage, or has that been in addition to the
3 mileage as far as cost?

4 A. (Allen) Yes, we reported it when it was a
5 capital expenditure. We reported it
6 separately as the miles. So if there's 2,000
7 and we did 100 on ETT, we would report 1900
8 on SMT and 100 on ETT to give us the total --

9 Q. So get the balance between the two. Okay.
10 Thank you. That's all I have.

11 MS. AMIDON: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Commissioner
13 Bailey.

14 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Thank you.

15 INTERROGATORIES BY COMMISSIONERS:

16 BY COMMISSIONER BAILEY:

17 Q. I'm not sure I understand the request that
18 you are asking us to approve, continued
19 funding of approved REP capital investments
20 made through December 31, 2018.

21 A. (Goulding) So we have capital investments
22 that we've been making under the REP program,
23 and they're supported by funding -- or
24 there's funding out there to support those

1 return on and return of the investment. So
2 it's just to continue that funding to support
3 the return on and of those investments that
4 have been made under the REP program.

5 Q. And by approved REP capital investments, are
6 these things that we have already approved?

7 A. (Goulding) They are the costs that have
8 been -- or the investments that have been
9 approved to be made under the REP program for
10 the past 2-1/2 years or three years.

11 Q. And we would make a prudency determination on
12 those in a rate case?

13 A. (Goulding) That's my expectation.

14 Q. Okay. And you, in response to somebody's
15 question, I think Ms. Amidon's, said when
16 you -- at the time of the filing you expected
17 to have the two circuit ties in place or in
18 service by the year end.

19 A. (Goulding) Yes.

20 Q. Do you still expect they'll be?

21 A. (Goulding) So I was trying say it that way
22 because I haven't asked recently. So that's
23 why I don't know the status of it. I assume
24 it's still on schedule to be in service. I

1 just haven't followed up since I made the
2 filing.

3 Q. Mr. Purington, do you know?

4 A. (Purington) I believe they'll be completed by
5 year end. Sorry. So they have been on
6 schedule to be completed by year end. We may
7 go one week over, depending on the
8 contractors. But right now they're saying
9 they're scheduled to be complete by year end.

10 Q. And where are those located?

11 A. (Purington) I would have to go back and look
12 at the records. There are two circuit ties.
13 I believe they're in central and eastern
14 region.

15 COMMISSIONER GIAIMO: I'm going off
16 the top of my memory. Does Hinsdale sound
17 right?

18 WITNESS PURINGTON: I would have to
19 go back and look. Sorry.

20 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: I think all
21 my other questions have been answered. Thank
22 you.

23 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Commissioner
24 Giaimo.

1 QUESTIONS BY COMMISSIONER GIAIMO:

2 Q. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. I
3 think I have a couple quick ones that you
4 could answer fairly quickly.

5 Referring to the -- or continuing on
6 with Commissioner Bailey's question about the
7 two circuit ties, just so I understand, there
8 are no additional circuit ties proposed for
9 2019?

10 A. (Purington) There are none.

11 Q. Okay. On Bates Page 11, Page 2 of the
12 Technical Statement, there's a line that says
13 that the ETT is determined through a
14 competitive bid process and has generally
15 resulted in costs of approximately \$30,000 to
16 \$40,000 per mile. And then further on it
17 says Eversource expects prices for that
18 activity to be somewhat higher for 2019. Any
19 idea what "somewhat higher" means?

20 A. (Allen) I know we put it out to bid. But as
21 I stated earlier, the tree crew complement is
22 limited in New Hampshire.

23 Q. So if those prices -- if the number is
24 25 percent higher than expected, would that

1 be 25 percent fewer miles would be done?

2 A. (Allen) We'd have to look at that, yeah.

3 Q. Okay. I asked this question last year, and
4 now with Mr. Purington here I believe I can
5 get more details. Last year I asked: There
6 are no troubleshooting locations north of
7 Tilton; is that correct?

8 A. (Purington) That is correct.

9 Q. Is there a need for anything north of Tilton?

10 A. (Purington) So it would not be cost-effective
11 to do something north of Tilton. Just the
12 geography, although we did have a number of
13 troubles in Lancaster. We'll look to adjust
14 those by different shift coverage with our
15 existing line workers and continued standby.

16 Q. So you've actually thought about it and
17 looked into it and determined that it's
18 cost-prohibitive and that the best
19 utilization of funds is Tilton?

20 A. (Purington) The central and southern region,
21 yes.

22 Q. Okay. Thank you very much.

23 COMMISSIONER GIAIMO: That's all
24 the questions I have.

1 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Commissioner
2 Bailey, you said you had something else?

3 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Yes, for Mr.
4 Goulding.

5 QUESTIONS BY COMMISSIONER BAILEY (CONT'D):

6 Q. In the discussion about offsetting the costs
7 with the tax abatement, I just wanted to
8 clarify or understand for myself, did you
9 mean that if we approve the deferral of these
10 costs until next time you change your rates,
11 that just for -- say the rates change on
12 July 1st. For the first six months of the
13 year, whatever the costs that were deferred
14 would get offset by the excess revenue you
15 have collected for taxes because you haven't
16 changed your rates? So I think it was a
17 \$1.2 million a month that you were
18 collecting.

19 A. (Goulding) Right. So right now we're
20 deferring \$1.023 million a month plus
21 carrying charges. So I anticipate when we
22 get to July 1st, we would have 18 months at
23 that rate, so roughly 18 and a half million
24 dollars deferred to go back to customers.

1 And the forecast I have for deferral for the
2 REP program is roughly \$8 million on
3 July 1st. So you would net the two. So now,
4 instead of being 18 and a half million
5 dollars going back to customers, there would
6 be \$10.5 million, 18-1/2 minus the 8.

7 Q. Okay. That's what I thought. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: I have no
9 questions that haven't already been answered.

10 Mr. Fossum, do you have any
11 redirect for your panel?

12 MR. FOSSUM: Just one.

13 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

14 BY MR. FOSSUM:

15 Q. Mr. Purington, I believe this goes to you.
16 The circuit ties that were discussed, subject
17 to check, would those be circuit ties in
18 Swanzy and Hinsdale? Does that sound
19 accurate to you?

20 A. (Purington) I'd want to go look. It was what
21 we filed in our 2018 plan that was reviewed
22 with Commission Staff, those two circuit
23 ties.

24 Q. Fair enough.

1 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Do you want to
2 show him something that would refresh his
3 recollection?

4 MR. FOSSUM: Yeah.

5 A. (Purington) If it's in there and it says
6 Swanzey and Hinsdale, yes, that's correct.

7 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: I don't think
8 it's that significant, but --

9 MR. FOSSUM: The point is made,
10 yes.

11 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: We appreciate
12 it. Thank you, Mr. Fossum.

13 A. (Purington) So I would like to just go back
14 because we talked about the troubleshooters
15 north of Tilton. We are in the process of
16 expanding coverage, not part of this
17 proceeding, in the eastern and western
18 regions. It's a different model. And
19 basically what we're looking to do is offset
20 some increased customer -- you know, meet
21 customer expectations in those areas and add
22 additional scheduled line workers to
23 Saturdays and Sundays, which we currently
24 only have a Monday through Friday complement,

1 and then cover everything else with standby
2 and volunteer on-call.

3 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Okay. Thank
4 you for that clarification. If there's
5 nothing else, I think you gentlemen can stay
6 where you are because it won't take long from
7 here.

8 Without objection, we'll strike
9 I.D. on Exhibits 1 and 2. We're going to
10 hold the record open for Exhibit 3.

11 Is there anything else before the
12 parties sum up?

13 [No verbal response]

14 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Mr. Kreis, why
15 don't you start us off.

16 CLOSING STATEMENTS

17 MR. KREIS: Thank you, Mr.
18 Chairman.

19 As William Shakespeare said in
20 "Much Ado About Nothing," "What need the
21 bridge much broader than the flood? The
22 fairest grant is the necessity." In other
23 words, this proposal that is before you today
24 is a reasonable "bridge" from where we are

1 now to where the Company will be on July 1st
2 when it will be here asking you for temporary
3 rates in connection with the thing formally
4 known as a rate case that the Company intends
5 to file sometime in the spring. So, in other
6 words, even though there is no formal
7 settlement agreement before you, the way this
8 case came to you is that Eversource did the
9 OCA and Staff the courtesy of presenting this
10 proposal to us informally as a, I guess you
11 would call it kind of a compromise that deals
12 with the question of the effect of the tax
13 cut and several other issues, in a way that
14 delivers immediate rate relief to consumers
15 and creates a pathway to the rate case that
16 is in the order of a compromise. And we
17 accept it in that spirit. We think it's a
18 reasonable proposal from the Company, and we,
19 or the OCA, urges you to adopt it as in the
20 public interest in that spirit.

21 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Thank you, Mr.
22 Kreis. Ms. Amidon.

23 MS. AMIDON: Thank you. Staff
24 supports the proposal. And I understand that

1 they need approval to begin the program
2 effective January 1. One proviso, though, is
3 Staff has had issues with this program and
4 its funding and capitalization of certain
5 costs and the merits of the Troubleshooter
6 Program for the past, I would say three
7 years. And when that rate case comes, we
8 will be conducting a comprehensive review of
9 REP and consider the criteria they use to
10 perform the activities under the program; the
11 expense, whether the expense is reasonable;
12 and where that cost recovery occurs, whether
13 in base rate or in maintenance. So I just
14 want to be on the record that Staff does
15 intend to take on and review some of this
16 material in more depth and try to get some of
17 the information that we weren't able to get
18 today. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Thank you, Ms.
20 Amidon.

21 Mr. Fossum.

22 MR. FOSSUM: Thank you. I'll begin
23 by thanking the Staff and the OCA for their
24 support this afternoon and for reviewing

1 this. The timing on this was, I'll say, less
2 than ideal from I think all perspectives.
3 But on the Company's behalf, I deeply
4 appreciate the time and effort that they took
5 to speak with us to work through these issues
6 that we had in getting to the filing that's
7 before you this afternoon.

8 The Company, too, obviously
9 supports the filing and requests that it be
10 approved, recognizing it, as we have
11 described it, as a "bridge" to get the
12 Company from where we are today to the rate
13 filing that we'll be making next year once we
14 finish out calendar year 2018. And we
15 would -- due to the fact that there are some
16 changes that need to take place January 1st
17 of this year, we would request that any order
18 be issued in sufficient time to make those
19 changes -- for instance, as for the
20 accounting treatment.

21 Closing out, with reference to the
22 Staff's statement, I can assure the Company
23 is acutely aware of how long it has been
24 since we've been in a full rate proceeding

1 and that that length of time and the number
2 of things that have changed in that time are
3 going to present a host of issues that will
4 require a great deal of time and effort to
5 explore. Those items that have been covered
6 by REP are among them. We're aware of that.
7 We're prepared to undertake that analysis and
8 participate in that activity. But for today,
9 I would ask that the Commission approve the
10 filing as submitted, and we will return with
11 the outstanding record request as quickly as
12 we're able.

13 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Thank you, Mr.
14 Fossum. With that, we will close the
15 hearing, hold the record open for Exhibit 3,
16 and otherwise adjourn and issue an order as
17 quickly as we can.

18 (Hearing adjourned at 2:51 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Susan J. Robidas, a Licensed Shorthand Court Reporter and Notary Public of the State of New Hampshire, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of my stenographic notes of these proceedings taken at the place and on the date hereinbefore set forth, to the best of my skill and ability under the conditions present at the time.

I further certify that I am neither attorney or counsel for, nor related to or employed by any of the parties to the action; and further, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed in this case, nor am I financially interested in this action.

Susan J. Robidas /s/

Susan J. Robidas, LCR/RPR
Licensed Shorthand Court Reporter
Registered Professional Reporter
N.H. LCR No. 44 (RSA 310-A:173)

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