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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

October 12, 2023 - 9:07 a.m.
21 South Fruit Street
Suite 10
Concord, NH

REDACTED
[For PUBLIC Use]

[Status Conference also conducted via Webex]

RE: DE 19-197
ELECTRIC AND NATURAL GAS UTILITIES:
Development of a Statewide, Multi-Use
Online Energy Data Platform.
(Status Conference)

PRESENT: Chairman Daniel C. Goldner, *Presiding*
Commissioner Pradip K. Chattopadhyay
Commissioner Carleton B. Simpson

Sarah Fuller, *Esq./PUC Legal Advisor*

Doreen Borden, *Clerk & PUC Hybrid*
Hearing Host

APPEARANCES: **Reptg. Public Service Company of**
New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy:
Jessica A. Chiavara, *Esq.*

Reptg. Unitil Energy Systems, Inc.,
and Northern Utilities, Inc.:
Patrick H. Taylor, *Esq.*

Reptg. Liberty Utilities (Granite State
Electric) Corp. and Liberty Utilities
(EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp.:
Michael J. Sheehan, *Esq.*

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

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APPEARANCES: *(C o n t i n u e d)*

Reptg. Clean Energy NH:
Sam Evans Brown, Executive Director
Ethan Goldman *(Resilient Edge)*

Reptg. Mission:data Coalition:
Michael Murray, President

Reptg. Residential Ratepayers:
Donald M. Kreis, Esq., Consumer Adv.
Office of Consumer Advocate

Reptg. New Hampshire Dept. of Energy:
Mary E. Schwarzer, Esq.
Scott Balise, Electric Group
(Regulatory Support Division)

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P R O C E E D I N G

CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Good morning. I'm Chairman Goldner. I'm joined today by Commissioner Chattopadhyay.

We're here this morning for a status conference in Docket Number DE 19-197, as requested by the Multi-Use Energy Data Platform Governance Council.

Pursuant to Order 26,861, July 27th, 2023, the Governance Council had selected a consultant to assist in developing the design and cost estimates for integrating utility back-end processes with the proposed data platform. The Commission is eager to hear from the parties on the ongoing progress of the Council, the progress of the consultant's back-end review, and the status of the upcoming drafting of the RFP for development of the platform.

Let's begin by taking appearances, beginning with Liberty?

MR. SHEEHAN: Good morning, Commissioners. Mike Sheehan, for the two Liberty entities, Granite State Electric and EnergyNorth Natural Gas.

[Status conference]

1 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Very good.

2 Eversource?

3 MS. CHIAVARA: Good morning,
4 Commissioners. Jessica Chiavara, here on behalf
5 of Public Service Company of New Hampshire, doing
6 business as Eversource Energy.

7 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And Unitil and
8 Northern?

9 MR. TAYLOR: Good morning,
10 Commissioners. Patrick Taylor, appearing on
11 behalf of Unitil Energy Systems and Northern
12 Utilities.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. The New
14 Hampshire Department of Energy?

15 MS. SCHWARZER: Good morning, Mr.
16 Chairman. Mary Schwarzer, Staff Attorney with
17 the Department. And with me is Scott Balise,
18 Utility Analyst.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Very good. The
20 Office of the Consumer Advocate?

21 MR. KREIS: Good morning. I'm Donald
22 Kreis, the Consumer Advocate. We represent the
23 interests of residential utility customers,
24 pursuant to RSA 363, Section 28.

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1 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. And the
2 City of Lebanon?

3 [No verbal response.]

4 MR. SHEEHAN: Mr. Below was on a call
5 yesterday, and indicated he wasn't feeling well.
6 So, he may not be here this morning for that
7 reason.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.
9 Clean Energy New Hampshire?

10 MR. EVANS BROWN: Good morning, Mr.
11 Chair. I'm Sam Evans Brown, Executive Director
12 of Clean Energy New Hampshire.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Very good. Welcome,
14 Mr. Brown. Mission: data Coalition, which I
15 believe is online?

16 MR. MURRAY: Yes, Commissioners.
17 Michael Murray.

18 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Very good, sir. Do
19 you have your video on?

20 MR. MURRAY: I just wanted to make sure
21 the presentation came through with limited
22 bandwidth. So, I want to make sure that this is
23 the priority, rather than seeing my face. But I
24 could turn that on, if you require it?

[Status conference]

1 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: If you could just
2 turn it on real quick, so we can make sure that
3 you're a real human, that would be great, and
4 then you can go back off. I think we just need
5 to identify you for the record.

6 *[Mr. Murray's video was activated for*
7 *authentication.]*

8 MR. MURRAY: Good morning.

9 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Very good, sir.
10 Okay. Thank you. Yes, we can go off for
11 bandwidth. That makes total sense.

12 All right. Did I miss anyone? I catch
13 all the parties?

14 Yes, sir.

15 MR. POTTER: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
16 My name is Bob Potter. I'm with Energy Services
17 Group. We provide software and services to
18 utilities and retail suppliers in multiple
19 countries around the world. We currently manage
20 data for 40 million meters per month.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. Very
22 good. Do you wish to speak today, sir? Do you
23 have any comments or anything? We can lead off,
24 if you would like a few minutes to make any kind

[Status conference]

1 of statement?

2 MR. POTTER: Sure. I'd love to speak
3 and to add comments.

4 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Please. Yes. If
5 you could keep it to five minutes or so, that
6 would be fantastic.

7 MR. POTTER: Sure. Would you like me
8 to start now?

9 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Yes, please.

10 *[Court reporter interruption to*
11 *indicate the use of the microphone.]*

12 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Yes. Close to the
13 mike, please.

14 MR. POTTER: So, we represent
15 utilities --

16 *[Court reporter interruption.]*

17 MR. POTTER: We represent utilities and
18 retail suppliers in the U.S., Canada, U.K.,
19 Japan, and other countries, and Europe. We find
20 that it's absolutely critical to gain access to
21 meter data, both for vendors that are serving the
22 needs of the customers, and for the customers
23 themselves to have access to that data. So, we
24 applaud the Commission's efforts to provide

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1 access to the data to consumers in New
2 Hampshire.

3 The data is, in addition to consumers,
4 as I noted earlier, critical for vendors, because
5 vendors that are offering PV, demand response,
6 and even companies selling electric vehicles, and
7 energy efficiency services, need access to that
8 data to offer those services to end-use
9 customers, both at the resi [sic], small
10 commercial, and C&I level.

11 So, we, again, applaud the effort to
12 create this solution. And we would very much
13 like to be involved in moving forward with that
14 effort.

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you
16 very much.

17 Is there anyone else that wishes to
18 speak today?

19 *[No indication given.]*

20 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Seeing none.

21 A question for Mr. Sheehan. Would you
22 like to begin the proceeding today with the
23 presentation?

24 MR. SHEEHAN: Yes. That was our

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1 intent. And I could kick it off, and hand it
2 over to a few folks who will walk through the
3 slides.

4 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Perfect. Thank you.

5 MR. SHEEHAN: Thank you for scheduling
6 this conference. As you know, the Commission is
7 playing a role in the development of this, the
8 data platform, through its oversight of the
9 various steps we have to take. And this, as the
10 Commission indicated in its orders, an
11 opportunity to be updated.

12 I am going to turn it over to Justin
13 Eidfeller, from Unitil, to start, and he will
14 enlist a few other people in the room to walk
15 through this presentation and bring you folks up
16 to speed.

17 MR. EISFELLER: Okay. Thank you,
18 Michael.

19 So, I just want to give a brief
20 introduction to the presentation today. We
21 appreciate the opportunity to provide a status
22 update.

23 One item that we added to the agenda
24 was a discussion about a grant, and our

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1 recommendations for pursuing the grant. You may
2 recall, last fall, the Governance Council
3 sponsored a concept paper that we submitted to
4 the U.S. DOE. And we did receive an acceptance
5 letter, an encouragement letter, from the DOE to
6 pursue a proposal for a grant. So, a majority of
7 this presentation is on that discussion, and our
8 recommendation to pursue the grant, and how we
9 propose to pursue that grant.

10 The rest of the presentation is on
11 updating the status of the efforts underway. And
12 we'll have a discussion on the various
13 workstreams, from both Riley and myself. And we
14 welcome any questions you may have.

15 So, next slide. So, again, here's the
16 agenda. I will be presenting on behalf of Jeremy
17 Haynes. He was unable to make it this morning.
18 So, I will be presenting the Utilligent
19 workstream as well.

20 The first topic is the GRIP Grant. And
21 Sam Evans Brown is going to be presenting on
22 that. Sam.

23 MR. EVANS BROWN: Thank you, Justin.

24 So, if you could just go to the next

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1 slide, and probably the one after that. We're
2 starting with sort of a "cheeky" point here,
3 which is that -- and these numbers I will caveat
4 by saying they're coming from a draft of the
5 Dunsky benefit/cost analysis for the data
6 platform. And, so, these numbers are all draft
7 numbers. And, so, please take them with a grain
8 of salt. They're put in for illustrative
9 purposes only.

10 But one of the main takeaways from that
11 benefit/cost analysis is that, as the heading
12 says, the benefits "are contingent". And they
13 depend on us. It depends on folks that are part
14 of the Data Governance Council, to ensure that
15 both customers and, you know, contractors and
16 service providers are aware of the benefits that
17 this platform can provide, and are, therefore,
18 availing themselves of those services, and making
19 them available to customers.

20 And, so, you know, the joke of the
21 slide is we're at a fork in the road, where we
22 can either, you know, make this investment and
23 get the low end of the benefits, or make the
24 investment and get the high end. And we believe

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1 that the GRIP -- the GRIP Grant opportunity
2 provides us more of an opportunity to push those
3 benefits towards the high end. And that's why
4 we're, as members of the Council, excited to try
5 to pursue that grant.

6 So, next slide. Again, these numbers
7 come from the Dunsky -- the Dunsky Study, it's a
8 draft. We expect them to be revised, once the
9 study is finalized. Frankly, we expect them to
10 be revised upward, because there are many
11 services that are provided by the platform that
12 weren't included in the draft, and we're pushing
13 Dunsky to include them.

14 What you see is essentially nearly an
15 order of magnitude more benefit if we're able to
16 roll out the platform more aggressively and more
17 quickly, versus, you know, between the low end
18 and the high end of the estimates. And the
19 question is sort of "Why?" What is it that makes
20 the difference between the low end and the high
21 end, right?

22 So, next slide. The answer really
23 comes down to "adoption curves", and who is it
24 that's going to be making use of the platform,

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1 and why -- how is it that they're learning about
2 the platform, and how is it that they're getting
3 plugged into the platform?

4 I'd like to take a quick moment and
5 just talk a bit about first principles here,
6 which is the goal of this platform really is
7 pushing towards market transformation. And, in
8 any functioning market, data is critical. You
9 know, you can't have price discovery unless you
10 know the price. And in the energy -- in the
11 energy space, and the electricity space in
12 particular, there isn't an enormous amount of
13 transparency as to what is driving what goes into
14 your electric bill. You get the rate, you pay
15 the rate. You know, the only thing you really
16 know is "this is how much a kilowatt-hour costs",
17 and maybe, as a consumer, you can decide to use
18 slightly fewer of those kilowatt-hours.

19 But, if you wanted to push the system
20 as a whole towards lower costs, as a whole, you,
21 as a consumer, you know, your average residential
22 consumer, has no indication of how to do that
23 through just getting their electric bill. This
24 is one step towards a system that provides more

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1 transparency, and, you know, better price
2 discovery, that can lead towards offering of more
3 innovative services, that can drive down the
4 costs for the system as a whole. But, again,
5 that outcome is not assured, it's contingent.

6 So, let's dig into this diffusion curve
7 a little bit next slide. You know, who is going
8 to use this platform? There are folks who, as
9 soon as this platform goes live, they will begin
10 to use it, because they're already looking for
11 this data. And, you know, if you think of owners
12 of large buildings, who are looking to control
13 their energy costs, as it stands, they're trying
14 to get this data. Frequently, they have to hire
15 consultants to help them to collate the data.
16 They're spending tens, if not hundreds, of
17 thousands of dollars to pay those consultants to
18 provide services. And one of those services is
19 to assemble and sort through the mess of meter
20 data that may or may not be available to them
21 through their utility.

22 So, those consumers will likely adopt
23 this platform very quickly. And, so, when you
24 look at the diffusion curves, there are

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1 several -- there are several that shows steep and
2 rapid adoption.

3 The question is everyone else, right?
4 So, I picked two of the curves that are somewhat
5 slower. And one of the -- one of the things that
6 you find when you read through the Dunskey Study
7 is there a lot of -- there are a lot of caveats
8 in that right-hand -- that right-hand column.
9 You know, "Slow ramp-up of new use-cases with
10 increased awareness. Lower for residential and
11 small commercial and industrial." And you see
12 that all throughout, that that sort of awareness
13 and learning about the platform are the key
14 drivers of whether or not the higher-end benefits
15 that are forecast through the Study are actually
16 realized.

17 And, so, that, I think, is a real
18 important takeaway, that simply creating the
19 platform is not enough. We need to drive
20 awareness into the marketplace, especially early
21 on, in order to drive adoption and increase the
22 benefits to customers.

23 So, next slide. So, that's where we
24 see the GRIP Grant opportunity. Grid Resilience

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1 and Innovation Partnerships are the -- is DOE's
2 GRIP Deployment Office, I believe, if I'm doing
3 justice to the alphabet soup of the federal
4 agencies.

5 So, I run a nonprofit. And one thing
6 that was drilled into my head early on when I
7 took this job was "Don't go chasing" -- "Don't go
8 chasing money just because money is available.
9 Look for opportunities where there are available
10 grants, they're aligned with what you're going to
11 do anyway." This, I think, is a perfect example
12 of "there's money available for what we ought to
13 be doing anyway." And, so, we have to jump on
14 the opportunity, and this is the takeaway that
15 I'm going to be trying to push towards here.

16 The request that we're planning is
17 around 3-6 million. And we'll dig into what that
18 request will go towards.

19 So, next slide. So, this is just an
20 overall -- overall explanation of the program
21 itself. It's over a billion dollars. And the
22 grants are for "up to \$50 million each". So, the
23 "\$3-6 million" number that you saw on the
24 previous slide, obviously, we're toward the low

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1 end of what these grants are expected to fund.
2 And, you know, there has been a demonstrated
3 willingness of the DOE to fund things, like
4 software, as part of this program. It's not all
5 just for hard infrastructure.

6 If we go -- yes. So, you see that list
7 there, I won't sort of read it to you. But I
8 would simply state, you know, we see a lot of
9 alignment, and not only that, the consultants
10 that we have spoken to see a lot of alignment
11 between the data platform and this opportunity.

12 So, next slide. And, again, sort of
13 more information, more information about the --
14 about the GRIP opportunity. The point here, I
15 think, is that this is supposed to be a grant
16 that is enabling Smart Grid and driving down
17 system costs. I think that's the overarching --
18 the overarching structure of the grant.

19 Next slide. So, the idea behind the
20 Grant Proposal that the Council has roughly
21 sketched out is that we can use this grant, in
22 part, to buy down the cost of the platform
23 itself. I think the grant requires a 50 percent
24 match that will come from all the participants in

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1 the grant application. A large part of that
2 match would simply be the utilities' investment
3 in the platform itself. And much of the funding,
4 you know, something on the order of maybe
5 50 percent of the funding, would be used to
6 defray the cost of the development of the
7 platform.

8 The rest of the monies would be used
9 towards pushing the platform toward that higher
10 end of the benefit spectrum in the Dunsky Study.
11 So, getting the word out, engaging communities,
12 making sure that software -- or, service
13 providers are aware of the software, that they're
14 trained in the use of the software, and that they
15 know how to offer innovative products to
16 customers by using the software.

17 Of particular interest to my
18 organization is that third bullet in the -- well,
19 the third subbullet in bullet number three,
20 "Providing municipal benefits". We have a
21 program of providing technical assistance to
22 particularly low-income and rural municipalities
23 around the State of New Hampshire. As it stands,
24 those staff are doing benchmarking for municipal

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1 governments. It is currently an incredibly
2 clunky process, that often involves
3 building-by-building inputting utility bill
4 information into EPA's portfolio manager. And we
5 think that this would result in a lot of
6 streamlining that would provide a great deal more
7 visibility into the energy consumption, both of
8 municipal buildings, but also you could start to
9 do, you know, a communitywide assessment of
10 where -- where are our residents spending their
11 money on energy, and where might we provide --
12 where might we provide some sort of program that
13 would try to help our lowest income residents in
14 terms of reducing their energy burden. But it's
15 not just municipal benefits, it really is.

16 I particularly have been working with
17 New Hampshire Housing a lot lately. I've seen an
18 enormous amount of opportunity to work with
19 entities like that, that have large portfolios of
20 buildings, and, frankly, know very little about
21 those buildings, and how energy is being consumed
22 in them. And interfacing with entities like
23 that, to make them aware of the benefits of the
24 platform, is something that I think is an obvious

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1 low-hanging fruit.

2 Next slide. So, the question that's
3 sort of a pertinent question for the Commission,
4 the Council believes that we need to hire a
5 consultant to help us to develop this grant
6 application. This is a complicated grant, it has
7 complicated requirements. And, while we did put
8 forth our concept paper, and, if we were
9 encouraged to submit a full application, there
10 would be five areas, four were identified as
11 somewhat weak in our concept paper. And, so,
12 there's a lot of work to be done in order to
13 really flesh this out.

14 In particular, there is -- there's a
15 heavy emphasis on what are called "Justice40
16 Communities", which are disadvantaged
17 communities, and making sure that our proposal
18 has enough meat on the bone for how we're going
19 to make sure that this platform is being -- is
20 manifesting benefits for those communities. And
21 that, I think, is a particular area of weakness
22 from our original concept paper, and one that
23 will require a fair amount of fleshing out.

24 But, moreover, this is a Council, it is

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1 a -- you know, it's a committee. And putting
2 together a grant application with a lot of
3 participants has a lot of moving parts. And, so,
4 having a single entity that can help to sort of
5 be the air traffic controller and drive that
6 process forward, we think will be really
7 essential to the success of the application.

8 Next slide. And, so, that is what we
9 are asking for the PUC to approve, is the --
10 incurring the expense of bringing that consultant
11 onboard. The expense is, you know, not -- not
12 nothing. But, in the grand scheme of the
13 benefits of the project, it's fairly
14 insignificant. And, furthermore, when we look at
15 the potential upside of receiving the grant, on
16 the order of 3 to \$6 million, it seems like a
17 reasonable investment to make to raise the
18 likelihood of a positive outcome.

19 And I believe, is that our last slide
20 or do we have one more?

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: The next one is
22 "Timeline", I think.

23 MR. EVANS BROWN: Yes. So, "Timeline".
24 And folks who -- I will confess, I am not a

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1 regular attendee of the Governance Council
2 meetings. So, if with you have questions
3 about -- specifics about the expense, please do
4 ask them. I will defer to the other smarter
5 minds in the room to answer those.

6 But I would say, just as a matter of
7 urgency here, we really ought to kick up our
8 heels on this. It's arguable that we're already
9 behind if we're going to get such a big and
10 complicated grant application together. You
11 know, we're expecting, we don't have -- we don't
12 know the exact timeline yet. But, based on the
13 timeline of last year's funding opportunity,
14 we're expecting Q1 of next year, which, you know,
15 check our watches here, that's right around the
16 corner.

17 So, yes, we've got to go.

18 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: So, just to follow
19 up on a couple of things.

20 So, I think what you just said was
21 that, based on history, that the deadline for the
22 grant application is Q1. So, you would be
23 looking for someone to come in and -- sort of a
24 grant writer, to come in and prepare that grant.

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1 And, if you said this, and I missed it, I
2 apologize, but do you have any idea of what the
3 grant consultant would cost?

4 MR. SHEEHAN: Mr. Chairman, he can
5 answer. We will ask that this number be
6 confidential, as it, for the time being, is a
7 third party bid.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

9 MR. SHEEHAN: But he can certainly --

10 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Is there anybody in
11 the room that you would ask to step out?

12 MR. SHEEHAN: I don't think so.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The ESG guy?

14 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: The gentleman in the
15 back?

16 MR. SHEEHAN: So, ESG is not a party of
17 the Council. I will defer to others whether that
18 should be --

19 MR. EISFELLER: He shouldn't.

20 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Should step out?

21 MR. SHEEHAN: Okay.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: So, if you could
23 just step out for a minute. We will come grab
24 you in just a couple of minutes. Thank you.

[Status conference]

1 MR. SHEEHAN: We're good.

2 {BEGINNING OF CONFIDENTIAL SESSION}

3 *[PLEASE NOTE: Certain information*
4 *within this Confidential Session may be*
5 *redacted from the Public version of*
6 *this transcript.]*

7 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. You can --
8 does somebody have an estimate for the cost?

9 MR. EISFELLER: So, we've received two
10 proposals for this effort. We solicited more
11 than that, but that's all we've gotten. And the
12 two proposals are _____ and _____.

13 We have not selected one of those
14 consultants, and have not entered into any type
15 of contract discussions at all.

16 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And are these
17 specialists in this kind of work?

18 MR. EISFELLER: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Yes. Okay. Okay.
20 Because my experience with grant writing is
21 probably a lot less than the people in this room,
22 but, you know, school boards and things like
23 that, the grant writing was usually, you know, 20
24 or 30K, something like that. But I expect this

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1 is much more complicated than the kind of thing a
2 school board would see?

3 MR. EISFELLER: It's quite complicated.
4 The forms are extensive. And we are also looking
5 for them to help facilitate some of the effort as
6 well.

7 We will be working with a variety of
8 other entities in developing this grant. And
9 we're also asking them to assist with that
10 effort.

11 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. So, I guess
12 I'll state the obvious. So, the downside is, if
13 a grant writer is hired, and no grant is
14 received, then that's 150K that is lost. And, if
15 the grant writer is successful, you'll get
16 somewhere between \$1.00 and \$6,000,000, depending
17 on the success of the grant, right? Because
18 you're applying for 3 to 6, but they may not
19 grant the whole thing.

20 And I just want to clarify something,
21 Mr. Evans Brown, that you said earlier. I think
22 that in the slide set it said that, basically,
23 "the grant would be for 50 percent of the total
24 money spent." Is that -- is that for the overall

[Status conference]

1 data platform, everything included, or is that a
2 portion of the data platform, sort of overall
3 project?

4 MR. EVANS BROWN: So, a lot of these
5 details have yet to be worked out exactly. But,
6 in concept, in discussion on the Council, the
7 thought was that something on the order of
8 50 percent of the funding could go towards buying
9 down, defraying the cost of the platform itself,
10 and something on the order of 50 percent could go
11 towards the activities required to push up the
12 benefits, so, outreach, education, you know,
13 awareness-building, and facilitation between
14 third-party contractors that might use the grant.

15 So, not all of the monies would go
16 towards the development of the platform, because,
17 frankly, that itself would not be a compelling
18 bid to the Department of Energy. So, we would be
19 unlikely to be successful if that was our
20 application by itself. So, the community
21 engagement and outreach efforts are quite
22 important to the successfulness of the grant
23 application.

24 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. And just sort

[Status conference]

1 of leveraging on that, turning my attention back
2 to the cost folks.

3 If you look at the total cost of the
4 data platform, so, the Governance Council's view
5 of the total project, everything included,
6 all-in, do you have a handle on roughly what that
7 would be at this point?

8 I'm just trying to get a handle on how
9 much we're asking for here, with federal grants,
10 versus the entire, you know, ship, the entire
11 project, and just trying to understand what that
12 scoping looks like?

13 MR. SHEEHAN: I don't -- I'm certainly
14 not prepared to give an order-of-magnitude
15 number, maybe Mr. Eisfeller is. But, using rough
16 numbers, if, let's assume we got 6 million, as
17 Mr. Evans Brown said, half of that went towards
18 the buy-down of costs, I believe the total costs
19 would easily match the other half. But that's --

20 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: It would be
21 something greater than 12 million, because there
22 would be other things in there that the grant
23 wouldn't cover.

24 MR. SHEEHAN: Greater than 6.

[Status conference]

1 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Greater than 12.

2 MR. SHEEHAN: Am I saying that wrong?

3 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: If you got 6 in the
4 federal grant, they would be matching 50 percent.
5 So, the total project would then be 12. But
6 there are some things that the federal grant
7 wouldn't cover, so it would be something more
8 than 12, is that fair?

9 MR. EVANS BROWN: Yes. So, I think,
10 between the costs of the platform itself and the
11 costs of the outreach and engagement, and other
12 activities that we wind up in, say, putting into
13 the grant, yes, the total -- I believe the total
14 cost would be on the order of 12.

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: So, yes. Twelve, or
16 greater, yes.

17 MR. EVANS BROWN: With the caveat that
18 these are all placeholder numbers, because the
19 work of developing a proposal has not been done
20 yet.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: I understand.

22 MS. HASTINGS: I just want to -- sorry.
23 This is Riley Hastings, Eversource. I just want
24 to clarify, that we're saying we're looking at

[Status conference]

1 somewhere between 3 to 6. So, it's either 6 to
2 12 million. So, we haven't settled yet if we're
3 going for the 12 million or the 6 million, but
4 somewhere in that range.

5 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Understand. I
6 understand. And I think, and my takeaway is
7 that, and so please correct me quickly, if I have
8 this wrong, that this grant-seeking is going to
9 cost _____ to _____. It's going to cover
10 half of the cost, because that's the matching
11 program of what's in scope. But, then, it's not
12 going to cover everything. So, the cost of the
13 total data platform will be something greater
14 than that doubling of what you receive in the
15 grant. Fair enough?

16 *[Ms. Hastings indicating in the*
17 *affirmative.]*

18 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.
19 Mr. Patnaude, I hope that covered it?

20 MR. PATNAUDE: I got it.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: When there's nodding
22 in the back of the room, I'm just making sure
23 that the stenographer knows that that was an
24 acknowledgment.

[Status conference]

1 Okay. Yes, sir?

2 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you. Ethan
3 Goldman, on behalf of Clean Energy New Hampshire.

4 I just wanted to address in a little
5 more detail one of the questions that you asked
6 about "whether there was a risk that the
7 investment in the consultant would end up being
8 for no benefit, because the grant was not
9 ultimately awarded by the DOE?"

10 And we feel that the activities that
11 we'd be undertaking with the consultant, which
12 are going to involve lots of outreach to the
13 stakeholders around the state, lots of
14 coordination and planning among the stakeholders
15 on the Council, and the sort of other core
16 participants in creating the platform. That's
17 work that needs to be done anyway, and will
18 already start to create some of the benefits that
19 we're looking for, by informing more of the
20 parties about what the platform is going to do,
21 what work they'll need to participate in.

22 And we think that the framing of
23 convening these stakeholders around the
24 opportunity to get some of the proceeds of the

[Status conference]

1 grant will be a great way to bring in some folks
2 who otherwise might not find it to be as
3 compelling to start participating in
4 conversations about a platform that's planning to
5 be built, *et cetera, et cetera*.

6 So, we think there's a lot of benefits
7 in informing the stakeholders, and in the Council
8 learning about what some of the concerns of the
9 stakeholders and things that they require in
10 order to make the most use of the platform will
11 be. So, we think we're going to get a lot of
12 benefit out of the consultant, and the activity
13 that they will help to support, even in the
14 worst-case scenario where no DOE funds are
15 awarded.

16 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: I think we are -- I
17 think we're actually on the same page. My
18 question before was relative to these consultants
19 having experience in this space, which is highly
20 relevant, as you suggest. So, thank you for that
21 clarification.

22 Commissioner Chattopadhyay, would you
23 have any questions, before we let our guest back
24 in, relative to costs?

[Status conference]

1 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: So, just -- so,
2 just trying to confirm, if the grant doesn't
3 materialize, then, let's say you had applied for
4 6 to 12 million, you know, requesting it, and you
5 didn't get it, I know this is all rough. But
6 you're essentially saying, you kind of expect
7 that you need to spend \$12 million to do what
8 you're planning to do?

9 MR. EVANS BROWN: I would invite other
10 members of the Council to respond to this
11 question as well.

12 But I would say, I would characterize
13 my answer to this more as I would suggest that,
14 to do a good job, that would result in more
15 benefits accruing to ratepayers, that might be
16 the order of magnitude we're talking about, in
17 order to roll the platform out in a comprehensive
18 way.

19 But, again, I would encourage others to
20 respond to that question as well.

21 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Go ahead. And,
22 then, I have a follow-up.

23 MR. EISFELLER: The only thing I'll say
24 there is, that there's a lot of work to do before

[Status conference]

1 we define the budget for the proposal. That's
2 why we gave a pretty broad range, the "6 to 12
3 million", on what we think the scope of the costs
4 for this proposal will be. And I would say the
5 Governance Council has a lot of work to do to
6 work through what that final budget and proposal
7 will be.

8 We have not sat down to say "It's going
9 to be 12 million." So, I'm not comfortable
10 saying "This is a \$12 million project that we're
11 putting forth." That all needs to be scoped. We
12 need to see and have discussions about the value.
13 That consensus discussion and decision-making
14 needs to happen.

15 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: So, my point --

16 MR. EISFELLER: And it hasn't happened
17 yet.

18 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: My point really
19 is that, if it turns out that you don't get the
20 grant, then you need to go back to the, you know,
21 drawing board, and sort of think about "Can we
22 really spend that much?" Maybe we'll have to
23 scale it down, some things, to make it still an
24 effective, you know, program. So, that's how --

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1 that's why I'm asking that.

2 So, will there -- whatever you propose,
3 is that set in stone? Or, you know, depending on
4 what happens to the grant, you will react
5 accordingly?

6 MR. EISFELLER: I would expect that
7 there -- if we do not get the grant, that there
8 be a discussion about the appropriate scope for
9 the implementation, which might be less than what
10 was proposed with the grant.

11 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: And, yes, I mean,
12 this discussion can continue forever. So, I'm
13 just going to stop it there. But one more
14 question.

15 You mentioned that, this is on the
16 confidential data, the numbers were _____
17 to _____, roughly. Is the process complete?
18 Or do you think that there might be other -- may
19 be other ways to rope in a few more bids?

20 MR. EISFELLER: I'm trying to remember
21 how many solicitations there have been, three or
22 four groups that we had reached out to, and we
23 only got two firm proposals. And there really is
24 no time for us to solicit more.

[Status conference]

1 I mean, our expectation and hope is
2 that we can get started on that effort within a
3 couple of weeks. There will be a very brief
4 contract discussion, and we need to run. You
5 know, essentially, both parties said "You should
6 have already started."

7 And I can tell you, from the last time
8 around, where we developed the concept paper,
9 which was far easier, we didn't have enough time,
10 as a Governance Council, to write and agree on
11 the language in the concept paper.

12 So, our hope is that we can move fairly
13 quickly. So, I would not expect that we're going
14 to go out and solicit additional bids for this
15 work. We would actually select one of these two,
16 and move forward with contract discussions to
17 start immediately.

18 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And Q1 will come
19 quickly, yes.

20 MR. EISFELLER: Yes. It's right around
21 the corner, we have holidays.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Grant writing, this
23 is a lot. That's not very much time.

24 MR. EISFELLER: Yes. I mean, we

[Status conference]

1 started the vetting process much earlier in the
2 year, we've had several discussions and
3 presentations. We're very familiar with both
4 consultants. The Council hasn't selected on yet.
5 I think everyone has some preferences, but we
6 haven't selected one yet. So, we're ready to
7 start.

8 And, you know, really, we're looking
9 for some direction from the Commission, as part
10 of this docket, to either move forward or not.

11 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Yes. I can confirm
12 that we'll issue something very shortly, after
13 this hearing, and probably this week. Or, this
14 week -- yes, I got a confirmation on that. This
15 week we'll get this moving.

16 I do want to specify, Attorney Sheehan,
17 for your -- just as a reminder, so, in Order
18 26,861, we had not ruled on the confidential
19 treatment of these numbers, which is why we're
20 having the session right now, with our guest
21 excused. So, can you share a reasonable timeline
22 for you to file, under Puc 203.08, you know, a
23 motion for confidential treatment of this
24 information?

[Status conference]

1 MR. SHEEHAN: Sure. I can get that out
2 next week.

3 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Next week?

4 MR. SHEEHAN: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.

6 Okay. Is there anything else on cost,
7 before we let our guest back in?

8 MR. MURRAY: Mr. Chairman?

9 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Yes. Yes.

10 MR. MURRAY: May I just quickly address
11 one of the questions around sort of cost and
12 likelihood of receiving the grant?

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Yes, please.

14 MR. MURRAY: The Commissioner had asked
15 "have we solicited other bids?" One of the
16 consultants, which is composed of ex-Department
17 of Energy officials, told us that there are other
18 firms, based in Washington, D.C., that specialize
19 in this, but they would likely be significantly
20 more expensive, you know, on the order of double,
21 perhaps, the estimates that we received.

22 And another point is that the firm
23 composed of ex-DOE officials was of the view that
24 this was in the "sweet spot" of what the

[Status conference]

1 Department of Energy was looking for. And, while
2 they can't guarantee an outcome, they did believe
3 that we had a greater than 50 percent chance of
4 winning.

5 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

6 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: A very --

7 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Very good.

8 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Very quick.

9 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Commissioner
10 Chattopadhyay, I'm just -- when we're done with
11 costs, we can invite the guest back in. So, --

12 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Yes.

13 So, just with respect to the contracts
14 that we are talking about here, for _____
15 and _____, do you expect that there will be
16 flexibility on the costs, depending on what is
17 actually done?

18 I'm assuming that's always true, but
19 just confirming it.

20 MR. EISFELLER: Yes. I would assume
21 that we're going to finalize the cost and the
22 scope, --

23 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Yes.

24 MR. EISFELLER: -- along with the

[Status conference]

1 contract discussions, which will happen quickly.

2 I don't expect that there will be a lot
3 of negotiation around the cost. I think the
4 general consensus is we got good prices from
5 these vendors, our consultants, and we're going
6 to want to move fairly quickly.

7 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

8 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: I'm all set.

9 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Could I ask
10 someone in back, maybe one of the Eversource
11 folks, to grab our guest, and just so we can
12 resume? Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

13 We'll just pause here for a moment and
14 wait for the gentleman to return.

15 **{END OF CONFIDENTIAL SESSION}**

16 *[Short pause.]*

17 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: So, this is not a
18 cost-specific question, Attorney Sheehan. But,
19 if the order that we'll provide this week gives a
20 max. cost, would that be okay? Or, how would you
21 like us -- what would you propose that the
22 Commission provide to you to move forward?

23 MR. SHEEHAN: Meaning the max. cost of
24 the consultant?

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1 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: The consultant, yes,
2 without talking about specific numbers here.

3 MR. EISFELLER: I think that would be
4 consistent with past practice --

5 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Past practice.

6 MR. EISFELLER: -- in this docket.
7 And, if costs vary, for some reason, then we'll
8 do the same thing we're going to do here, later
9 in this presentation, and solicit some discussion
10 on a change order.

11 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

12 MR. EISFELLER: So, we'll treat it
13 accordingly, I assume.

14 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. That will be
15 acceptable, Mr. Sheehan?

16 MR. SHEEHAN: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. That's a
18 helpful clarification.

19 And, yes. I think that's all the
20 questions we have for this portion. I guess we
21 can proceed with the presentation, if that works
22 for everyone?

23 MR. EISFELLER: Okay. Thank you.

24 Michael, next slide. So, I'm going to

[Status conference]

1 do a quick review of the schedule today.
2 Hopefully, everyone can see this. This is the
3 same workstream summary schedule we've provided
4 in the past. So, we've tried to maintain the
5 same format. And, so, I'll just walk down
6 through the workstreams here. And they're all
7 color-coded on the left-hand side.

8 As you know, the "RFI for the Platform"
9 is done. That, you know, the RFI was when we
10 solicited input from the various vendors that
11 were included in that RFI process, to get some
12 sense of the scope of what this would look like,
13 and how best to integrate with systems that would
14 form the hub.

15 The "Third Party Use Survey", we did
16 contract with Dunskey. Riley is going to give an
17 update on that status. We've seen a draft of
18 that already, and we're expecting to get the
19 final draft next week.

20 The "RFP for the Back End" is another
21 workstream. And, as you know, we've contracted
22 with Utelligent to do that back-end review. I've
23 got a presentation following this, at the end of
24 this series, on their status to date. That, once

[Status conference]

1 they finish that report, that will finish that
2 workstream.

3 The "RFP for the Platform" is still
4 ongoing. We've made substantial progress on the
5 drafting on the RFP. We will be incorporating
6 feedback from the consultant for the back end.
7 Already they're observing some things that we
8 need to consider for the RFP. So, we expect to
9 get their feedback, incorporate that into the
10 RFP, and file that with the Commission by
11 year-end for their review and -- or, for your
12 review. And, then, we'll incorporate your
13 feedback into the final RFP, that we expect to
14 submit sometime in -- following that, sometime in
15 January.

16 And, then, the "Cost/Benefit Study", as
17 you know, we selected Dunsky to do that study as
18 well, based upon what they had done in a report
19 in Canada. They provided us with a draft of that
20 report already. We provided comments back to
21 them. We expect them to provide a final report
22 next week. And we should have that in hand.
23 That report will be shared with the Commission as
24 well.

[Status conference]

1 We do have one item, a change order
2 that we're considering with Dunsky, to add some
3 additional capability in their model. And Riley
4 is going to cover that later.

5 We expect that we'll conclude the RFP
6 process and the cost/benefit analysis, and have
7 all of the third party survey review and costs in
8 hand for a discussion in May of next year.

9 Okay. Any questions on the schedule?

10 *[No verbal response.]*

11 MR. EISFELLER: I'll highlight one
12 item. You know, critical path. It's a pretty
13 simple critical path at this point, since most of
14 the work is, you know, well underway. Critical
15 path is the back-end review, because that does
16 feed into the RFP, the final RFP development.
17 And, then, the Commission review will be part of
18 that process. And, then, we'll be on to the
19 actual RFP submittal to vendors and processing
20 of, you know, those discussions with the vendors.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. I think
22 we're good. Thank you.

23 MR. EISFELLER: Okay. Next slide. I
24 think this is where I hand it back to Riley, and

[Status conference]

1 then she'll hand it back to me later.

2 MS. HASTINGS: Good morning. This is
3 Riley Hastings, from Eversource. And I'm going
4 to give a quick update on the progress with some
5 of the Dunsky Study, since we're here.

6 As you know, they have -- we've hired
7 them to do a cost/benefit analysis, as others
8 have already said. We have a draft report.
9 We're still providing comments on that. We're
10 expecting a new draft next week. I expect
11 another set of comments. And, then, we'll have
12 to see how close we are to finalizing. But I
13 don't think that we're that far away from having
14 a study in hand that we can share with the
15 Commission.

16 So, before, Sam talked about the high
17 and the low benefits. Again, this is
18 preliminary. We're still providing comments.
19 But they have provided us a Low Scenario, a High
20 Scenario, and a Mid Scenario. So, I've provided,
21 just to give you a sense of what we're seeing
22 right now, in the Mid Scenario, they're
23 estimating \$18.6 million in benefits over five
24 years, growing to 62 million by year ten. And

[Status conference]

1 that's sort of the update for the cost/benefit
2 analysis.

3 We've also hired them to do a vendor
4 market survey. The cost of the study was under
5 the 50K threshold that was set for seeking PUC
6 approval. So, we've moved forward with that.
7 And there are nice synergies, since they were
8 already working on the cost/benefit analysis, to
9 also do the vendor market survey for us.

10 So, we've retained them to conduct this
11 survey. They used some of the same parties who
12 they had interviewed for the cost/benefit
13 analysis, and then added some additional
14 third-party energy service providers to ascertain
15 their interest if we were to build this platform.
16 It was also used to further refine the use-cases
17 and benefits that fed into the cost/benefit
18 analysis.

19 So, the results of this study are based
20 on nine market survey interviews. And this study
21 is on a similar timeframe to the cost/benefit
22 study, where we've seen a draft of the report,
23 we've provided comments, and we're expecting
24 another draft next week, potentially with another

[Status conference]

1 round of comments and review, before finalizing
2 that report, and sharing that as well with the
3 Commission.

4 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Commissioner
5 Chattopadhyay.

6 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: The cost
7 estimates -- sorry, the total benefits estimates
8 that appear in the blue box there, can you tell
9 me, like, when were those undertaken? Based on,
10 you know, ultimately, the benefits are dependent
11 on the electric prices and all of that, so, if
12 the -- and gas is the marginal fuel in New
13 England. I just want to get a sense of, like,
14 are these, when Dunskey is doing it, they're
15 updating the information based on the new -- the
16 latest numbers? So, do you know what date they
17 were relying on, roughly?

18 MS. HASTINGS: The data they collected
19 was this year. So, the general process was that
20 the utilities each had a data request form that
21 we went through, where we talked about the number
22 of customers that we have, the types of systems
23 they're on, the amount of hours that would be
24 spent responding to certain types of requests.

[Status conference]

1 And, so, that's one component of the benefits.

2 And, so, like all of the data they
3 selected was similar to the model they had used
4 in Canada, but they have tailored it to current
5 values in New Hampshire.

6 But I wouldn't say that it's that
7 contingent on electric and gas costs. It's one
8 component, but --

9 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Well, Dunsky had
10 previously done a similar analysis, right? So,
11 my question really is, whether they have updated
12 the inputs?

13 And one of the important inputs, in my
14 opinion, regardless of how you were describing
15 it, is, indeed, the prices, the gas prices and
16 things like that. So, that's what I'm trying to
17 get a sense of. Was that updated?

18 MS. HASTINGS: Yes. Those were
19 updated.

20 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: On what date?

21 MS. HASTINGS: I don't --

22 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: If you don't
23 know, that's fine. I'm just, you know, because
24 we will know soon.

[Status conference]

1 MS. HASTINGS: I don't know if somebody
2 else knows the specific date.

3 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay.

4 MS. HASTINGS: But they did it this
5 year.

6 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay.

7 MR. EISFELLER: Yes, they were
8 definitely updated.

9 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay.

10 MR. EISFELLER: And, actually, the
11 change order that we're going to discuss, will
12 allow us to do some additional analysis.

13 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Yes.

14 MR. EISFELLER: And, so, you'll see
15 that in a minute. And, you know, we want the
16 ability to vary all the inputs. But the model
17 right now doesn't allow for all that. It's
18 fairly static. And it has some ranging
19 capabilities. But we want to be able to do more,
20 so we can get a better picture of what the
21 probabilities are. So, you'll see that further
22 in this presentation.

23 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: So, the numbers
24 that have been shared here are based on that

[Status conference]

1 update?

2 MR. EISFELLER: Correct.

3 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And just to sort of
5 reiterate.

6 On Slide 18, the slide we're looking at
7 now, you've got "18.6" to "62 million" in
8 benefits. That matches Page 5, Figure 3, those
9 bar charts that Mr. Evans Brown showed earlier.
10 So, that's -- it's a ressummary of the same
11 information.

12 I guess my request is that, at our next
13 meeting, which I know you've got a slide here,
14 on -- just a moment. Got a slide, Slide 14, it
15 looks like, with the timeline. That, as soon as
16 possible, in order to look at the benefits and
17 costs together, the Commission would need a good
18 understanding of the cost piece, at the time for
19 the total project, everything together.

20 And, you know, my compliments on
21 finding this opportunity for federal funding,
22 because, you know, the state funding, in the end,
23 is what the Commission looks at, because that's
24 what ratepayers are paying. So, it's a big lift

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1 to have this federal funding, and that effort is
2 appreciated, and is a very positive path forward.

3 So, I guess my request to you,
4 Mr. Sheehan, is when do you think you could have
5 a handle on the total cost for the entire data
6 platform picture to compare to these benefits?
7 When do you think that would be available for the
8 Commission?

9 MR. SHEEHAN: Subject to Mr. Eisfeller
10 confirming, I would assume that's after we get
11 the RFP out for the whole thing, and that was a
12 springtime date.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

14 MR. SHEEHAN: So, that's when we will
15 come to you to say "Here's the costs, here's the
16 benefits. Shall we go forward?"

17 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: I see. Okay. So,
18 the springtime/Q1 kind of timeframe?

19 MR. EISFELLER: I would expect, by the
20 time we're ready to submit the GRIPS Grant, that
21 you will have a proposal in hand. But we won't
22 have the definitive pricing until after the
23 bidding process, which will culminate, you know,
24 in April, May, June -- May timeframe of next

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1 year.

2 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: So, if you apply for
3 federal funding in Q1, I assume it takes them a
4 quarter or something, --

5 MR. EISFELLER: To have it all in hand.

6 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: -- and, so, you
7 would know -- you would know that part of the
8 picture, obviously, when they get back to you,
9 which would be -- would it be another quarter or
10 so for them to analyze it, or are they faster
11 than that?

12 MR. EISFELLER: I wish with had a great
13 answer on that. Our experience to date is it's
14 unknown.

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: That's not refining
16 it very much.

17 So, you don't know. But would you -- I
18 mean, is it a year? Is it six months? Three
19 months? Two weeks? I mean, do you have any
20 flavor?

21 Mr. Taylor, if you have any thoughts at
22 all on helping us? I'm just trying to understand
23 when we can expect to hear back on the federal
24 funding.

[Status conference]

1 MR. TAYLOR: So, for the round of
2 funding that was released, the most recent round
3 of funding, if you assume a similar timeline, so,
4 concept written papers were due last December
5 2022, applications were due in March 2023. And,
6 on the DOE's website, it didn't provide any
7 specific date, but it said that "The Department
8 of Energy had anticipated reaching a decision
9 sometime in the summertime of this year."

10 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

11 MR. TAYLOR: It's not entirely clear to
12 me that they have actually met that timeline.
13 It's hard to get that information from the DOE
14 website, as to when they have actually started to
15 reach out and award any of those grants. But
16 that was the general timeline that the Department
17 set.

18 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

19 MR. TAYLOR: So, I would expect that
20 they would probably set a similar timeline,
21 unless, based on experience with the first round,
22 they decided to adjust it in some way.

23 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: I see. Very
24 helpful. So, I would summarize that as "three to

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1 six months", in terms of the targeted feedback,
2 and, of course, they could take longer or
3 shorter. But "three to six months" sounds like a
4 sensible expectation for everyone. Okay. That
5 is very helpful.

6 Okay. Yes, please proceed.

7 MS. HASTINGS: Any more questions on
8 this slide?

9 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: None from me.

10 MS. HASTINGS: No? Okay. Hopefully,
11 if you go two more slides, hopefully, this one
12 will be fairly quick and easy.

13 But we have requested, as Justin
14 mentioned before, an additional scope beyond, you
15 had previously approved up to 100K for Utelligent
16 and analysis. And, once we got the results, we
17 realized that the sensitivity analysis was fairly
18 basic. There were low, medium, and high
19 scenarios for all variables. And that it would
20 be useful to be able to vary single variables or
21 multiple variables at once, and have more detail
22 on the -- be able to adjust even some of the
23 input values, if needed.

24 And, so, we asked them for a estimate

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1 of how much this enhanced sensitivity scenario
2 analysis would cost, and they gave us a budget of
3 \$3,450. And we think that this would improve the
4 value of this study. So, we're asking for your
5 approval to incur this extra expense associated
6 with this study.

7 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Often when -- even
8 when the scope changes a little bit, you know,
9 it's customary to go back to the vendor and say
10 "Hey, my budget is only 1,000 -- 100,000, can you
11 help me?" Was that effort made in this case?
12 Or, is this just the first shot across the bow,
13 they gave a quote back and they said "Hey, we
14 need an extra \$3,400"?

15 MR. EISFELLER: We did have a
16 discussion about whether they would do this for
17 the scope already provided. And they clearly
18 said "It's not in our scope." So, we did ask.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: But you did make the
20 inquiry?

21 MR. EISFELLER: We did, yes.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

23 MR. EISFELLER: That's how we started
24 the discussion with them.

[Status conference]

1 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Very good. Okay.
2 Thank you. That's helpful.

3 So, you would be looking for the
4 Commission, on the first issue, some dollars that
5 we talked about earlier for the consultant, plus
6 the 3,450 here, in an order quickly forthcoming?

7 MR. SHEEHAN: Correct.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Okay, please
9 proceed.

10 MS. HASTINGS: I guess it's back to
11 you, Justin.

12 MR. EISFELLER: Okay. Thank you.
13 Moving ahead.

14 So, the last -- the last item on our
15 presentation is the update on the back-end review
16 by Utelligent. We've been engaged with them for
17 about a month now.

18 First couple of weeks was really
19 focused on contracting, and scope review, and
20 kick-off. And we've begun -- we've moved now
21 into the stage of discovery. They have provided
22 detailed lists of requests for information.
23 We've set up a share-point site for them to share
24 information with them directly, and have been

[Status conference]

1 providing them quite a bit of documentation on
2 our plans and background of what we're trying to
3 accomplish.

4 They've -- Part of their review process
5 is to have three mini-design reviews with each of
6 the utilities, and some discussion with the
7 Governance Council and third parties, on the
8 scope of the back-end work. They have completed
9 two of those meetings with each of the companies,
10 and have now started to get an idea of where
11 there might be gaps, or what the design actually
12 looks like for each of the companies.

13 And, then, going forward, they're going
14 to continue that process over this next week, and
15 then provide an initial set of observations to
16 each of the utilities, to ensure that we have --
17 that they have a correct perspective on each of
18 the designs.

19 And, then, they will be presenting that
20 to the Governance Council for discussion, before
21 we start iterating on a Final Report. So,
22 they're well underway.

23 The next slide you can see their
24 remaining schedule. This is their work schedule.

[Status conference]

1 At the top, it says they have a "nine-week plan".
2 It's a nine-week discovery plan. It's actually
3 more than nine weeks' worth of engagement.

4 But, as you can see here, we're about
5 four weeks into their schedule. And they've
6 indicated that, at this point in time, they feel
7 that they can still meet their deadlines.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. And I can't
9 help but note, at the bottom of this slide, there
10 is a "PUC Support (TBD)" over Thanksgiving. So,
11 I need to ask about that. What do you need from
12 the Commission on that timeline?

13 MR. EISFELLER: No, we shouldn't need
14 anything regarding this.

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

16 MR. EISFELLER: There's a clause in the
17 contract that we may solicit further support from
18 them for presentation to the PUC during the
19 cost/benefit discussions, and possibly for
20 additional scope for implementation and hub
21 design.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

23 MR. EISFELLER: So, they're -- they
24 have got that as a placeholder for us to have

[Status conference]

1 discussions about what that might look like, and
2 if we're still interested.

3 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.
4 Thank you.

5 Any questions, Commissioner
6 Chattopadhyay, on this section?

7 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: No.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Okay. Thank
9 you. Anything else to add to the presentation?

10 MR. SHEEHAN: I don't think so.

11 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Not at this point.
12 Okay. Very good.

13 So, I thought what I would do now, in
14 this status conference, is just go "around the
15 table", as it were, to get comments from each --
16 pardon me, sorry -- each of the parties. And we
17 can begin with the Department of Energy.

18 MS. SCHWARZER: Thank you, Mr.
19 Chairman.

20 The clarification I would like to make
21 at this time is that, while many of the
22 Governance Council members, who are represented
23 here, are fully in support of what was
24 represented this morning. The Department is

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1 neutral.

2 We feel like additional information
3 would be needed before we could weigh in, and are
4 also mindful of the RSA 378:51 statute. Which
5 suggests that, ultimately, this will be
6 adjudicated, and the Department may take a
7 position at that time.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Does the
9 Department have a position on the specific
10 questions of the consultant costs we talked about
11 first, and the \$3,450, I think, that we talked
12 about second? Does the Department have a
13 position on those two specific requests?

14 3,450 was the second one.

15 MS. SCHWARZER: We do not. We are
16 neutral at this time.

17 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: No position on --

18 MS. SCHWARZER: Correct.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: -- everything.
20 Okay. All right. Thank you. The Office of the
21 Consumer Advocate?

22 MR. KREIS: Thank you very much,
23 Mr. Chairman.

24 I would like to start by saying how

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1 disappointed I am in what I just heard from the
2 Department of Energy. I have slowly figured out
3 over time that the world does not necessarily
4 bend to the will of the Consumer Advocate.

5 And, in particular, in relation to the
6 data platform, and this docket, we're proceeding
7 under a paradigm that I didn't recommend, because
8 I thought that the Commission was being asked, or
9 perhaps was asking to step out of its role as a
10 regulator, and into a new role as a sort of
11 project manager or project steering committee.
12 And I think the result of that is, frankly, a
13 slower, more ponderous, less-efficient process
14 from moving to concept to reality of the data
15 platform.

16 But I have inured myself to that
17 reality. And I want to do my best to make sure
18 that this all works. And one of the advantages
19 of the process that we have is that we have the
20 benefit of the insights that the PUC,
21 particularly its Commissioners, and, frankly,
22 particularly you, Chairman Goldner, bring to this
23 whole process.

24 I would like to take this opportunity

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1 to remind the Commission, and the Department of
2 Energy, that the public policy of this state is
3 that this data platform should be built. How do
4 I know that? I know that for two reasons. One,
5 I've read the findings, and I would urge
6 everybody else here to reread the findings, that
7 appear in the enabling statute that is the reason
8 we are all here. That is Chapter 286 of the 2019
9 New Hampshire laws.

10 And, for convenience, I note that the
11 findings are even published in the pocket part to
12 everybody's copy of the Revised Statutes
13 Annotated, Title XXXIV. I'm not going to read
14 them here, but I would urge everybody else to
15 look at them.

16 And, even if you don't read the
17 findings, all you have to do is read the first
18 sentence of RSA 378:51. It says "The department
19 of energy shall require electric and natural gas
20 utilities to establish and jointly operate a
21 statewide, multi-use, online energy data
22 platform." The verb is "shall".

23 I would like to thank my colleagues on
24 the Governance Council for their excellent work.

[Status conference]

1 What you saw here today is an example of this
2 process working as promised, and the utilities,
3 particularly Unitil, I would say, but also
4 Eversource and Liberty, working really diligently
5 to put something together that they didn't
6 initiate, but that they are committed to making
7 work really well. And I think that they deserve
8 a commendation from the Commission for their
9 diligence.

10 With respect to the GRIPS Grant, I have
11 a little bit of experience, in my life prior to
12 being Consumer Advocate, with trying to extract
13 money from the United States government. And
14 what I learned from that experience is that it
15 does require a lot of specialized expertise, and
16 there are politics involved. So, for good or
17 ill, it does become necessary to hire
18 specialists, who are buzzing their way around our
19 Nation's Capitol, gaining insight, I guess here
20 by virtue of having been formerly employed by the
21 agency that would be dolling out the money, into
22 how you actually manage to get access to the
23 money that Congress has appropriated for these
24 purposes.

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1 The fact that it's a political process
2 means that, in due course, outreach to our
3 congressional delegation is likely going to
4 become necessary. And, fortunately, one member
5 of our delegation, at least one member of our
6 delegation, has a long-standing special interest
7 in energy issues. And I would assume, although I
8 haven't asked, that she and her office would be
9 willing to deploy their resources and their
10 influence in favor of a grant like this. So,
11 that's something for everybody to keep in mind as
12 well.

13 I had a couple of ideas that I would
14 like to throw out, or issues I would like to
15 raise. And I want to stress, as I do that, that
16 I'm not speaking on behalf of the Governance
17 Council, I'm merely speaking in my capacity as
18 the Consumer Advocate.

19 And these are sort of in the order of
20 "trial balloons". I'm not committing to
21 anything. And I don't necessary assume that
22 anybody else is going to agree with me.

23 But one thing that occurred to me
24 recently is that it might be helpful if there

[Status conference]

1 were some informal mechanism that would
2 facilitate contact between the Commission,
3 meaning I think the two of you Commissioners
4 sitting up there on the Bench ultimately, and the
5 Governance Council. Because it is, and, you
6 know, this has become, I think, apparent today
7 even, it becomes difficult to move this project
8 forward efficiently and expeditiously, if every
9 time we want to get any guidance or report
10 anything back to you folks up on the Bench, we
11 have to all convene here for one of these things,
12 and bring the court reporter in, and communicate
13 in a very formalized way.

14 The Commission, here, in this docket,
15 at this stage, has stepped out of its role as
16 adjudicator and rulemaker. And, so, that means
17 that what's happening here is what I have, in
18 other contexts, referred to as a
19 "strawberry-flavored proceeding". You're not
20 adjudicating anything and you're not promulgating
21 a rule. So, this is more -- this is one of these
22 things that falls into the other amorphous realm
23 of things that government agencies do, basically,
24 overseeing a project. What that means is, that

[Status conference]

1 the contested case rules don't apply, and the
2 rules pertaining to rulemaking don't apply. This
3 is all very informal. That's why it might be
4 advisable for there to be more informal
5 back-and-forth between the PUC and the Governance
6 Council, because I don't think there's any
7 possibility of any *ex parte* contact happening
8 here, for the simple reason that the rules that
9 generally apply to *ex parte* contact don't apply
10 here, just as they don't apply in a rulemaking.

11 People don't realize that, when the
12 Commission opens a rulemaking, it's theoretically
13 perfectly permissible for anybody in the world to
14 pick up the phone and call one of the
15 Commissioners, and say "Here's why I think you
16 should do X, Y, and Z", in the context of a
17 particular rulemaking. So, that is something to
18 consider.

19 And I guess that's all I have to say at
20 this time. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. We'll
22 move to Clean Energy New Hampshire?

23 MR. GOLDMAN: So, I guess one question,
24 somewhat along the lines of what Don has raised,

[Status conference]

1 is maybe a question back to you, on the
2 Commission, about your reflections of what has
3 been working and what might be improved over the
4 course of this next phase, right?

5 We've been in this part of the process
6 for almost a year now. It's sort of a new type
7 of project, from what I gather, not having good
8 experience here, but there's all of the
9 collaboration that happens on the Council, and
10 then a certain amount of communication back and
11 forth, through either sessions like this, or
12 through some of the other filings that we've
13 made.

14 And, so, I think, you know, we are
15 looking forward to some of the activities in this
16 next phase getting even more intense, in terms of
17 the level of effort, the level of collaboration
18 and communication that's needed, as we're
19 developing the rest of the details for the RFP
20 for the platform, digesting information back from
21 the reports that we've commissioned.

22 So, there's, you know, a lot of
23 decisions to be made, a lot of work to be done.
24 And, so, I think one of the questions that we

[Status conference]

1 have is, do you have any thoughts, from your
2 perspective, about what's been working well, in
3 terms of how you've been supported in your role,
4 and do you have any thoughts about how you might
5 be better able to support us on the Council, to
6 make sure that this project continues to move
7 forward expeditiously and, ultimately,
8 successfully.

9 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: I think you might
10 have been reading my script.

11 *[Laughter.]*

12 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: The question that we
13 were going to end with is, if you needed anything
14 else from the Commission? How can we help
15 facilitate the process? How can we make this
16 easier and not harder?

17 I can just say, from today's
18 presentation, this was extremely helpful for us,
19 you know, in terms of, in the end, assuming this
20 goes forward, there's a lot of money that needs
21 to be spent. There's benefits from that.

22 And, you know, having had the personal
23 experience of developing a lot of software over
24 many years in industry, you know, there's nothing

[Status conference]

1 simple about it. You know, this is -- it's hard
2 to get software right, and to get the results
3 that you imagine.

4 We looked at the PowerPoint slides, and
5 they're beautiful and they're pretty, and they're
6 in color, and they really nice. And, then, you
7 get the reality of the software, and it can be
8 disappointing.

9 And, so, we're very interested in that,
10 development of that software, giving -- given the
11 results that are intended. We're interested in
12 those benefits and we're interested in those
13 costs, and making sure that the -- that
14 everything, you know, works as intended.

15 So, and speaking for Commissioner
16 Chattopadhyay, I'll let him speak for himself as
17 well, but it's our intention to facilitate and
18 streamline the process, and move this project
19 along as quickly as possible. While helping, in
20 our mind, the utilities, from the standpoint of,
21 if they were to come to us at the end of all
22 this, if there was no engagement from the
23 Commission, they came to us at the end and they
24 said "Oh, by the way, we spent \$50 million, and

[Status conference]

1 we want approval." Well, that, you know, that
2 can go different ways. And, so, in our mind, by
3 being engaged in the process as we go, it's
4 helpful, so that -- so that any concerns that we
5 have are highlighted on the way. And, to us,
6 that seems like a fair process.

7 So, I'll let Commissioner Chattopadhyay
8 comment as well.

9 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: I think it's a
10 very good question. And I think I would rather
11 go back and talk to my co-Commissioner, and
12 figure out whether there are things that we can
13 share with you how to improve the process.

14 There are, I mean, I think it's,
15 personally, I think it's working quite well.
16 Obviously, there are going to be, like, for
17 example, the grant matter, we never thought about
18 it initially, right? So, it comes in, and that
19 means that you are going to talk about it, and
20 it's going to take some time. So, it's just the
21 nature of how this is going to happen. And I
22 think I'm quite okay with how it's proceeding.

23 I would point out that, as long as
24 it's -- everything, ultimately, is

[Status conference]

1 cost-effective, I'm sort of sharing my personal
2 views here, it's extremely important to have
3 customers, whether through aggregation or on
4 their own, the ability to participate in the
5 markets in a way that they bring value, they also
6 extract value out of it.

7 So, what that means is, you know,
8 questions like, for example, whether we should
9 actually have time-of-use and dynamic pricing and
10 all of that made mandatory? I'm just, you know,
11 sharing my -- and, so, what -- that may be one of
12 the important steps, to have the adoption rates
13 to be high. Because, if, you know, it's a fair
14 question to raise, when -- to say that, for
15 example, if I'm paying only four percent of my
16 incomes on energy, or electricity, yes, I mean,
17 why should I worry about all these rates
18 changing, you know.

19 And, so, the question really becomes,
20 it's -- can customers, end customers, bring
21 value, and also extract that value? So, it's --
22 ultimately, what I'm trying to stress is, I'm
23 very interested in this being successful. Okay.
24 So, I just wanted to point it out.

[Status conference]

1 But I would, clearly, like the
2 opportunity to go back and talk to my
3 co-Commissioner. And, if there are ways that
4 this process can be improved further, then I will
5 suggest those.

6 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And, Attorney Kreis,
7 let me -- I didn't comment after your statement.
8 But we will address your suggestion in this quick
9 order that we'll issue this week. So, we'll try
10 to be thoughtful about it, if you can accept 24
11 hours as being "sufficiently thoughtful"?

12 MR. KREIS: I think I can live with
13 that, Mr. Chairman.

14 I just want to add, or stress, that
15 I've been listening carefully to everything that
16 you have ever said in this docket. And I -- to
17 the extent I didn't already know, it's now
18 perfectly obvious to me that you, personally,
19 bring a lot of expertise and experience in
20 project management to this. Your questions are
21 really well-informed, and constructive.

22 So, to the extent I've been kind of
23 uncomfortable with the process that's being used
24 here, it's not because I don't think that our

[Status conference]

1 Commissioners wouldn't be excellent überoverseers
2 of this whole thing. It's just the process that
3 I find cumbersome and frustrating.

4 If I may, I thought of another
5 suggestion I had meant to make, and this one
6 might be even more controversial than anything
7 else I have ever said.

8 I wonder if it would be possible to
9 bring Commissioner Simpson back into this
10 process?

11 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: He's recused.

12 MR. KREIS: Oh, indeed. And here's why
13 it might not be necessary for him to remain
14 recused: (a) we're not conducting an
15 adjudicative proceeding here; (b) the issues that
16 are in play here are unrelated, I think, except
17 at maybe a very high level, to the ones that
18 Commissioner Simpson was involved in at an
19 earlier stage. He was very involved in figuring
20 out -- first, he was involved in drafting the
21 statute that we're all talking about here. Then,
22 he was involved in creating the Governance
23 Council, and the über -- or, the overall concept
24 of a so-called "API of APIs".

[Status conference]

1 But all of that stuff is sort of
2 already chiseled into the granite. And what
3 we're talking about here are nuts-and-bolts
4 issues that he hasn't been involved in.

5 I don't make a suggestion about
6 un-recusing a Commissioner casually. And,
7 ultimately, it might not be appropriate to bring
8 him back. But it is something to consider,
9 because he does have a lot of expertise.

10 And it might be the case that everybody
11 here, who's actually a party or a participant,
12 might waive any objections they might ordinarily
13 make to his participation.

14 Again, that's just a trial balloon. I
15 don't really know what other people, or what you,
16 Commissioners, up on the Bench, or what
17 Commissioner Simpson, himself, might think of
18 that.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you,
20 Attorney Kreis. Let's move now to Eversource.

21 MS. CHIAVARA: Eversource supports
22 everything that was -- well, supports the
23 presentation that was given here today. And we
24 have no further comments to make at this time.

[Status conference]

1 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.
2 Let's move to Unitil and Northern?

3 MR. TAYLOR: Unitil Energy Systems and
4 Northern Utilities both fully support the
5 presentation that was given here today.

6 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.
7 And, finally, Liberty?

8 MR. SHEEHAN: Thank you. Liberty also
9 supports it.

10 And just one mild suggestion, following
11 up on Mr. Kreis's, about some informal contact,
12 even if it's simply a channel for you to ask us a
13 question through so-and-so, "We'd really like to
14 hear about X", and us maybe to, you know, even
15 something simple as that may be helpful. So,
16 food for thought.

17 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

18 MR. SHEEHAN: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. Thank
20 you. We will address that in our order.

21 Yes, Attorney Schwarzer.

22 MS. SCHWARZER: Mr. Chairman, could the
23 Department comment on Mr. Kreis's suggestion?

24 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Of course. Please.

[Status conference]

1 MS. SCHWARZER: Thank you. That was
2 made after we had initially spoken.

3 Mr. Kreis raised that idea yesterday in
4 a Governance Council meeting. And, so, the
5 Department wants to share some concerns with the
6 Commission.

7 We certainly support PUC-attended
8 technical sessions. We agree that status
9 conferences are useful and helpful.

10 However, with regard to a PUC liaison
11 to the Governance Council, which seems to be what
12 Mr. Kreis is describing. To the extent that RSA
13 378:51 does contemplate, under Section II, that
14 there's an adjudicative proceeding, and the very
15 framework of our meetings here have come from an
16 approved settlement agreement, pursuant to an
17 order from the Commission, it does seem to the
18 Department that, to directly involve the
19 Commission, or staff that might report to the
20 Commission, in informal Governance discussions or
21 proceedings, would be an *ex parte* -- would raise
22 *ex parte* concerns.

23 And, so, to the extent there's a
24 suggestion that there be more PUC tech sessions,

[Status conference]

1 or record requests into the docket, certainly,
2 that seems functional and useful.

3 And I appreciate a chance to comment.
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. And I'll
6 open up the opportunity for anyone else to
7 comment, since we're kind of going around a
8 couple of times. Attorney Kreis?

9 *[No verbal response.]*

10 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Clean Energy New
11 Hampshire, anything else you'd like to add today?

12 *[No verbal response.]*

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Or the companies?

14 *[No verbal response.]*

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. All right.
16 Is there anything else that we need to cover
17 today? Did I miss anything?

18 *[No verbal response.]*

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Well, thank
20 you. Thank you, again, for your participation
21 and feedback today.

22 The Commission will issue an order,
23 relative to the issues we discussed, by close of
24 business tomorrow. And I thank you for your

[Status conference]

1 time. We are adjourned.

2 **(Whereupon the status conference was**
3 **adjourned at 10:26 a.m.)**

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