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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

February 8, 2024 - 9:04 a.m.  
21 South Fruit Street  
Suite 10  
Concord, NH

*[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  
  
Sarah Fuller, Esq./PUC Legal Advisor  
  
Doreen Borden, *Clerk & PUC Hybrid*  
*Hearing Host*

**APPEARANCES:** Reptg. Public Service Company of  
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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**

1  
2 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Good morning.  
3 I'm Chairman Goldner. I'm joined today by  
4 Commissioner Chattopadhyay. We're here for a  
5 status conference in Docket Number DE 19-197.  
6 This status update is being held pursuant to the  
7 Commission's ongoing oversight of the development  
8 of the Statewide, Multi-Use Online Energy Data  
9 Platform.

10 Pursuant to Order Number 26,894,  
11 October 13th, 2023, the Governance Council had  
12 identified federal funds to subsidize this  
13 project. In October, the Commission authorized  
14 the Governance Council to hire a consultant to  
15 coordinate the proposal for the Grid Resilience  
16 and Innovation Partnerships Grant.

17 On January 26, the Governance Council  
18 wrote to the Commission to provide an update on  
19 the progress of the GRIP Grant application. The  
20 Commission understands that some of the  
21 information provided at the October 2023 meeting  
22 has changed concerning the Governance Council's  
23 planned application of the GRIP grant. The  
24 Commission is eager to hear from the parties on

1 the ongoing process of obtaining federal funds to  
2 support the project.

3 Let's take appearances, beginning with  
4 the Department of Energy.

5 MS. SCHWARZER: Good morning. Mary  
6 Schwarzer, Staff Attorney, with the Department of  
7 Energy.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. And  
9 Eversource?

10 MS. CHIAVARA: Good morning,  
11 Commission. Jessica Chiavara, here for Public  
12 Service Company of New Hampshire, doing business  
13 as Eversource Energy. And with me here today is  
14 Riley Hastings.

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Very good.  
16 And Unutil?

17 MR. TAYLOR: Good morning,  
18 Commissioners. Patrick Taylor, representing  
19 Unutil Energy Systems, Inc. With me today is  
20 Justin Eisfeller.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Very good.  
22 And Liberty?

23 MR. SHEEHAN: Good morning. Mike  
24 Sheehan, for the Liberty companies, Liberty

1 Utilities (Granite State Electric) and Liberty  
2 Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas).

3 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. Is the  
4 City of Lebanon here today?

5 *[No indication given.]*

6 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Seeing  
7 they're not here.

8 Clean Energy New Hampshire?

9 MR. EVANS BROWN: Good morning. Sam  
10 Evans Brown, Executive Director of Clean Energy  
11 New Hampshire.

12 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. And was  
13 there someone online from Clean Energy New  
14 Hampshire?

15 MR. EVANS BROWN: So, Ethan Goldman I  
16 believe is attempting to join us. He was just  
17 texting me that he was having trouble with  
18 connectivity. So, we should see Ethan Goldman,  
19 our consultant, popping online shortly.

20 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you,  
21 Mr. Brown.

22 And Mission:data Coalition?

23 MR. MURRAY: Good morning,  
24 Commissioners. Michael Murray. From



1 Mission:data.

2 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. And  
3 UtilityAPI, Incorporated?

4 *[No indication given.]*

5 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. And, then,  
6 finally, the Office of the Consumer Advocate?

7 MR. KREIS: Good morning. I'm Donald  
8 Kreis, the Consumer Advocate, on behalf of  
9 residential utility customers, as per usual.

10 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. And are  
11 there any other persons that wish to speak today?

12 MR. GOLDMAN: This is Ethan Goldman.  
13 Can you hear me okay?

14 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Yes. We can.

15 MR. GOLDMAN: Okay. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And Mr. Evans Brown  
17 introduced you earlier. I think you were having  
18 trouble connecting. So, we can hear you now.  
19 Thank you.

20 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. All right.  
22 The Commission understands that this status  
23 conference was requested to discuss the GRIP  
24 application, and that the Governance Council has

1 prepared a presentation.

2 Who will be presenting today on behalf  
3 of the Governance Council?

4 MS. CHIAVARA: It will be Riley  
5 Hastings for Eversource.

6 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

7 MR. TAYLOR: And Justin Eisfeller will  
8 also be -- will be presenting for Unitil.

9 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

10 MR. EISFELLER: We'll also have Sam  
11 Evans Brown present as well. So, there's three  
12 presenters.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

14 MS. SCHWARZER: Mr. Chairman?

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Uh-huh.

16 MS. SCHWARZER: The Department would  
17 like to make a very brief comment before the  
18 presentation begins?

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Sure. That's fine.  
20 Yes. The next thing I had in my notes was to  
21 mention that the DOE had concerns about the  
22 approach, and that we wanted to give the  
23 Department the opportunity to comment.

24 Would you prefer to do that before or

1 after the presentation?

2 MS. SCHWARZER: Excuse me. What I just  
3 wanted to start with is the request that we be  
4 allowed to make a very short addendum, after the  
5 presentation, but before Commission questions.

6 We certainly support the expanded scope  
7 of the federal grant, and wanted to bring to the  
8 Commission's attention that the Grant application  
9 itself, which was filed on February 2nd, can be  
10 hard to read in the electronic format. And the  
11 Department provided a transcript yesterday  
12 evening.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

14 MS. SCHWARZER: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. Yes, we  
16 just -- the Commission just got that in our email  
17 about 20 minutes ago. But we have received it.  
18 So, thank you.

19 All right. Anything else, before we  
20 begin the presentation?

21 *[No verbal response.]*

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: All right. So,  
23 please begin.

24 MS. HASTINGS: All right. This is

1 Riley Hastings, with Eversource.

2 I'm going to present on the first  
3 couple slides. I'm going to pass it off to Sam  
4 Evans Brown to talk about some of the community  
5 benefits pieces, and then Justin will talk about  
6 schedule and approval request at the end.

7 So, to get started, I'm going to be  
8 talking about the Grant and the Grant Concept  
9 Paper, and the decision to move to a regional  
10 approach, as well as sort of a brief summary of  
11 our proposal that we included in the Grant  
12 Concept Paper, the regional interest that we've  
13 seen so far, the community benefits and the risks  
14 will be discussed by Sam Evans Brown and Justin  
15 Eisfeller.

16 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And would the  
17 speakers prefer that the Commission or the other  
18 parties wait until the end or would you prefer  
19 questions as we go? Do you have a preference?

20 MR. EISFELLER: Questions as we go is  
21 fine.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Everybody is  
23 okay with that?

24 *[Multiple parties indicating in the*

1                   *affirmative.]*

2                   CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Okay, yes.

3                   So, anyone, as we go, anyone, please just ask as  
4                   we go.

5                   MS. HASTINGS: Okay. Great. Do you  
6                   want to go to Slide 3?

7                   Oh, yes. And, at the very end, on the  
8                   agenda, at the very end, Justin will be very  
9                   clear about what the approval is that we're  
10                  seeking today. But I think I went through this  
11                  while we weren't on that slide. You can go to  
12                  the next slide.

13                  Okay. So, first, we just wanted to --  
14                  I think you may have seen this slide, or  
15                  something very similar to it, before, but we just  
16                  wanted to present some highlights from the  
17                  Funding Opportunity Announcement that related to  
18                  this grant, and why we think that we're a good  
19                  candidate for Topic Area 2 of the Grid Resilience  
20                  and Innovation Partnerships Grants offered by the  
21                  U.S. DOE.

22                  So, the projects are focused on  
23                  innovative and ambitious uses of cutting-edge,  
24                  market-ready technologies, which can include

1 software tools, along with other things. What  
2 we're -- the new data energy hub would fall under  
3 that "software tools" category.

4 And some of the priority investments  
5 include enhanced interoperability and data  
6 architecture of systems that support two-way flow  
7 of data, both electric power and local analytics,  
8 to provide information between electricity system  
9 operators and consumers. And, obviously, what  
10 we're trying to do here is provide analytics and  
11 data to consumers.

12 And some of the allowable investments  
13 include purchase costs in software, expenditures  
14 from installing equipment that allows Smart Grid  
15 functions to operate, and documented purchase  
16 costs of data analytics.

17 So, these are all pieces that we're  
18 contemplating in this project.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Can I just ask you  
20 there?

21 MS. HASTINGS: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Under your "Priority  
23 investments include", and you mentioned this, it  
24 talks about the "two-way flow of both electric

1 power and localized analytics". I understand the  
2 "localized analytics" part. But how does this  
3 support the two-way flow of electric power?

4 Because there's an "and" statement in  
5 there, so, I assume it has to be both.

6 MR. EISFELLER: The data being shared  
7 is also shared with third party -- third parties,  
8 that may provide services to the customers, and  
9 services to others in the region. So, I would  
10 expect that, you know, distributed energy  
11 resources, those opportunities, would benefit  
12 from the sharing of this data as well, which has  
13 an indirect benefit on the regional power flow.  
14 Reduction in demand, localized provisions of  
15 energy, all that is enabled by the sharing of  
16 this data.

17 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: So, you're not  
18 changing the scope of what we've been talking  
19 about, you're -- and you do believe that what  
20 you're moving towards fits the description for  
21 the federal funding. Are both statements true?

22 MR. EISFELLER: Correct.

23 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

24 MR. EISFELLER: The extensibility of

1 the platform, too, would allow for the platform  
2 to manage external data. But that's not  
3 contemplated at this time.

4 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Okay. Yes,  
5 that was really one of my main questions for  
6 today, is we're not talking about changing the  
7 scope of the project, other than other regional  
8 connections, other states, you know, potentially  
9 using the same system. But the scope of what  
10 we're talking about is still the same?

11 MR. EISFELLER: Correct.

12 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.

13 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: And I have a  
14 follow-up. And just to make sure I understand  
15 what is being proposed.

16 Because you're going regional, is there  
17 any accommodation of, you know, when you talk  
18 about "two-way flow", at the end customer's  
19 premise, are there things that, you know, like  
20 Smart Grid-wise, that this will allow, or that is  
21 not the part of the mix?

22 And, as I understood from the previous  
23 question and the answer, it wasn't. But I just  
24 want to understand for sure.



1 MR. EISFELLER: Yes. So, I'm going to  
2 try to paraphrase your question first, to make  
3 sure I understand it.

4 So, you are asking whether there are  
5 behind-the-meter devices that this platform may  
6 share data, usage data on -- or other type of  
7 information on it?

8 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Correct.

9 MR. EISFELLER: So, the system is, as  
10 designed, would be capable of that, but that is  
11 not currently contemplated. So, that is not  
12 within the scope. The platform design could  
13 accommodate that, due to its extensibility and  
14 use of APIs. But, at this point in time, that's  
15 not contemplated.

16 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay. So, --

17 MR. EISFELLER: Nor is it included with  
18 this regional proposal.

19 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay. So, the  
20 investments are -- the allowable investments here  
21 does not include that. Okay.

22 MR. EISFELLER: Correct.

23 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay. Thank you.

24 MS. HASTINGS: All right. Shall we

1 move to the next slide? All right.

2 Okay. All right. So, now, we just  
3 want to talk about what encouraged us to move to  
4 this regional approach. So, we didn't learn  
5 until late last year that they were -- that the  
6 U.S. DOE, in a presentation that they gave on the  
7 next round of funding, had a statement in there  
8 that they were "expecting a \$10 million grant  
9 award", which was quite different from the grant  
10 that we were originally proposing, and what we  
11 had originally been planning on, on providing our  
12 paper around. So -- and the \$10 million grant  
13 award means a \$20 million project. So, it's a  
14 50 percent grant match.

15 So, this was a significant change.  
16 They also, U.S. DOE, on that call stated their  
17 "strong preference for larger, regional consortia  
18 type projects" that they were looking for as part  
19 of their grant awards.

20 And, so, at the same time that the  
21 Governance Council was talking about this, we  
22 also brought in West Monroe. And we  
23 collaboratively agreed that a shift to a larger,  
24 regional approach would probably be the most

1           successful strategy for creating a grant that  
2           would be large enough, and would also hopefully  
3           appeal to the U.S. DOE, based on their desire for  
4           regional approaches.

5                        So, there's still quite a few details  
6           to be figured out, in terms of what a regional  
7           approach might look like, and we're prepared to  
8           provide updates as necessary.

9                        But the overall intent is to defray  
10          costs for New Hampshire with the regional  
11          approach. And the design that we're pursuing is  
12          still, per the questions on the previous slide,  
13          we're still pursuing the same design. And, when  
14          we submit the RFP for looking for a vendor for  
15          the hub, we plan on asking them to provide  
16          estimates that are New Hampshire-only, based on  
17          our current project design, and a regional  
18          approach, so that we can see the differences in  
19          the costs based on those two different paths.

20                       And we also will need to come up with  
21          an equitable measure -- method of cost-sharing,  
22          if we did take on this regional approach, but we  
23          haven't yet contemplated that.

24                       Any questions on this slide, before I

1 move on?

2 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Do you have any  
3 sense or idea what the total regional approach  
4 would cost? I guess I'm assuming 20 million, and  
5 then, if it was just New Hampshire, what it would  
6 cost? Do you have any thoughts on that?

7 Because, if the New Hampshire approach  
8 is less than 10 million, and, you know, and New  
9 Hampshire is paying, for whatever reason, the  
10 bulk of the balance of the regional approach,  
11 then it may make sense not to -- not to go  
12 regional, depending on how many other states  
13 participate.

14 MS. HASTINGS: Thank you.

15 MR. EISFELLER: I'll take my shot at  
16 that.

17 The expectation is that you'll have  
18 both options presented to us, as well as the  
19 Commission. And it will be apparent as to  
20 whether there's value for the New Hampshire  
21 customers to engage in a regional platform.

22 So, there's no decision being made. We  
23 expect to design the platform and cost the  
24 platform both ways, so that we have the ability

1 to make that decision.

2 The goal is to provide benefit to New  
3 Hampshire customers. So, if there is no benefit,  
4 incremental benefit to a regional approach, then  
5 I think you'd find that the Governance Council  
6 does not recommend a regional approach.

7 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And you'll have that  
8 ready end of May, is that how to read this?

9 MR. EISFELLER: The goal would be to  
10 have all that presented. And the proposal, I'm  
11 sure there will -- those will be estimates at  
12 that point in time. And, then, as we move into  
13 the fall, we'll have more detailed estimates from  
14 our RFP that we're pursuing for the hub design  
15 and hub delivery. So, we should have better  
16 numbers by the time we get to the point where  
17 we're thinking or contemplating decisions.

18 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. So, estimates  
19 end of May, and then firmer numbers end of the  
20 year, something like that?

21 MR. EISFELLER: Correct.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.

23 MS. HASTINGS: Okay. So, --

24 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Can I? Sorry.

1 MS. HASTINGS: Yes. Go ahead.

2 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: When is a  
3 decision expected from, you know, the DOE?

4 MS. HASTINGS: We think  
5 October/November timeframe.

6 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay.

7 MR. EISFELLER: Yes. The goal there is  
8 to have feedback from our proposal from the  
9 national DOE, and then have all of our estimates  
10 from the vendors, as well as the benefit study  
11 information updated at that time, to present an  
12 overall picture of the New Hampshire costs and  
13 the regional costs, for presentation and  
14 recommendation to the Commission in the late  
15 October/early November timeframe.

16 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Thank you.

17 MS. HASTINGS: All right. If there are  
18 no other questions, we'll move on to the next  
19 slide.

20 So, the minimum project size was going  
21 to have to be 10 million. We've come up with a  
22 preliminary budget, and this is still, as we get  
23 to -- this is just a concept paper. So, there  
24 are a lot of details. This budget was quite

1 preliminary. But we came up with 14.5 million  
2 for a grant, which would actually be a \$29  
3 million project, not a \$20 million project, with  
4 a 50 percent match.

5 The goal is to reduce costs to  
6 ratepayers for the platform that would have  
7 already been incurred, if the platform project  
8 was deemed reasonable by the Commission.

9 Monies from the grant are expected to  
10 be split between buying down the platform and  
11 then assisting with program offerings, which  
12 would include services provided by partner  
13 organizations to provide benefits to customers  
14 and invest in community outreach, education,  
15 connecting third parties to the platform, and  
16 providing municipal benefits, which is an  
17 important component in a U.S. DOE grant, the  
18 Justice40, making sure that benefits are being  
19 realized by disadvantaged customers is an  
20 important component.

21 So, we feel like there will be value  
22 regardless of a grant award as a result of the  
23 vendor and service provider relationships and  
24 plan development for communications and customer

1 engagement that would happen as a result of  
2 developing this Grant Concept Paper and  
3 application.

4 And the full application is due  
5 May 22nd, at which point we'll have a definitive  
6 list of participating utilities, stakeholders,  
7 and project budgets. But, at this point, all of  
8 this is preliminary and can -- open to change.

9 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And, when you -- on  
10 the second bullet, you say "Grant requires a  
11 50 percent match from participating companies".  
12 By that, you mean "ratepayers", right? It comes  
13 through Eversource or Liberty, or wherever, but  
14 it's funded by ratepayers, not by the company,  
15 right?

16 MS. HASTINGS: It would be funded by  
17 ratepayers, and any other partners that are  
18 contributing funds.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And what do you have  
20 lined up there? I mean, what kinds of  
21 participants would there be to -- in this match?  
22 Like, do you have some examples?

23 MS. HASTINGS: I don't think we have  
24 those details yet. We still need to figure that



1 out.

2 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Mr. Evans Brown?

3 MR. EVANS BROWN: Well, and just to  
4 venture here, I actually think the activities of  
5 the entities that would be providing community  
6 benefits would also be offered up as match.

7 So, for instance, our Circuit Rider  
8 Program already has staff on the ground. And,  
9 insofar as that staff is being leveraged as part  
10 of the community work, community outreach,  
11 awareness-building about the platform, I think  
12 that also can be offered up as a match as part of  
13 the program budget.

14 I think a lot of that is yet to be  
15 sorted out, though, since we're still only at the  
16 concept paper phase.

17 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: So, would that have  
18 the effect, I'm just trying to understand what  
19 you just described, would that have any effect of  
20 reducing costs for ratepayers, because this would  
21 eat into the 50 percent that the ratepayers would  
22 otherwise be paying?

23 MR. EVANS BROWN: I don't know that I  
24 can necessarily promise that. What I think I can

1 say is that, when you look at the overall \$20  
2 million grant budget, there will be match that is  
3 leveraged from the utilities, which, obviously,  
4 is coming from ratepayers, as our friend, Don  
5 Kreis, likes to point out, "there's only one  
6 wallet."

7 But, also, there's going to be match  
8 that's going to be leveraged that's coming from  
9 other project partners, such as ourselves, such  
10 as the Community Power Coalition. And working  
11 out those budgets and allocating the match will  
12 be the bulk of the work of creating the grant  
13 proposal.

14 So, I don't necessarily know that less  
15 can be, you know, that we will be paying for  
16 development of the platform, but the whole  
17 \$20 million grant budget is not necessarily  
18 coming from the utilities.

19 And my colleagues can correct me, if  
20 they think I'm speaking out of turn.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And I think I'll  
22 just say, what the Commission would be interested  
23 in, in the end, when the proposal comes down, is  
24 how much is the DOE -- U.S. DOE paying, how much

1 are ratepayers paying, and how much are, you  
2 know, other participants or other parties paying?

3 That would be an important breakdown.  
4 I'm sure that's obvious. But, just to be clear,  
5 that would be something we would want to see.

6 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: So, for the GRIP  
7 national DOE funding opportunity, obviously,  
8 others are also vying for it, right? So, they're  
9 competing.

10 And the first question I had asked  
11 before, about what's going to happen at the end  
12 customer end, or behind-the-meter, okay, do  
13 you -- do you know whether the funding  
14 opportunity here puts a limit on what parties can  
15 ask for?

16 I mean, there might be others who may  
17 say "I didn't include the behind-the-meter  
18 customers", because you're talking about, you  
19 know, also reaching out to customers who don't  
20 have the financial bandwidth.

21 So, I'm just trying to understand,  
22 where does the GRIP funding construct end? So,  
23 if it is the case that the -- if it is the case  
24 that behind-the-meter, that is also part of the

1 story, is the fact that the way you have built  
2 it, you know, given what we have worked on  
3 previously, you're not going to rely on that,  
4 does that create some sort of a disadvantage?  
5 I'm just trying to understand.

6 MR. EISFELLER: Let me see if I can  
7 answer the first question.

8 Right now, we are not contemplating  
9 adding any additional data fields to the design  
10 of the platform. The Grant proposal will include  
11 monies for use of the platform, and the use of  
12 the platform will likely include services that  
13 benefit the customers directly, and may provide  
14 benefits to distributed energy resources, and  
15 other cost-saving opportunities for customers.

16 So, part of the Grant proposal will  
17 include monies for other than building the  
18 platform, --

19 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay.

20 MR. EISFELLER: -- for the use of the  
21 platform. So, that's all being discussed. We  
22 expect to have partners selected for that, for  
23 that effort, and describe the services that they  
24 provide as part of the proposal.

1 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: As you may guess,  
2 I'm really hoping that whatever is proposed is  
3 actually very competitive. And, whether it's  
4 competitive or not, depends on how the national,  
5 you know, DOE looks at it. And, so, do you  
6 have -- that's why I was asking, you know, what  
7 are they looking for, and do you have a good  
8 sense of that? And that may include other  
9 elements. So, thank you.

10 MR. EISFELLER: One of the reasons that  
11 we selected West Monroe as a consultant is they  
12 have experience with these grant proposals. And  
13 their advice was that we needed to expand the  
14 proposal beyond just the building of the hub,  
15 which is what we've included in this discussion,  
16 and you'll hear more of it from Sam Evans Brown  
17 in his discussion.

18 There's still work to be done on  
19 defining and selecting those services that we  
20 want to include as part of the proposal. But  
21 that's the intent. That a portion of the monies  
22 will go to expedite the use of the platform,  
23 provide services up front, educate, such that we  
24 are expediting the benefits to the customers.

1 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Thank you.

2 MS. HASTINGS: All right. With that, I  
3 am going to pass it off to Sam Evans Brown.

4 MR. EVANS BROWN: All right. So, the  
5 next slide please.

6 *[Court reporter interruption.]*

7 MR. EVANS BROWN: A general reminder  
8 that I tend to talk too fast for the  
9 transcription.

10 So, I'm going to use this slide to just  
11 remind us all of the performance of the community  
12 benefit portion of the GRIP application. Making  
13 sure that actual people are benefiting from these  
14 grant proposals is crucial in the scoring and the  
15 competitiveness of our application. The DOE does  
16 not want to just give out money to, you know,  
17 create widgets that sit in the ether of the  
18 internet and don't get used. They want people to  
19 actually benefit from them. As such, the  
20 community benefits portion of the application is  
21 key to our likelihood of success.

22 And I would remind the Commission that,  
23 based on the Dunsky Benefit-Cost Report, that  
24 it's also crucial to maximizing the benefit for

1           ratepayers, New Hampshire ratepayers in  
2           particular, of the platform. That, again, if it  
3           doesn't get used, the benefits aren't going to be  
4           created. And, so, this is work that likely we  
5           should be doing anyway, as a coalition on the  
6           Council, in order to make sure that this  
7           investment is maximized for New Hampshire  
8           ratepayers.

9                        The entities that you see listed on  
10           this slide are the ones that have already  
11           suggested that they would be interested in trying  
12           to work on the community benefit portion. There  
13           are more that I think we could line up. And, in  
14           particular, we've heard from the Northeast Energy  
15           Efficiency Partnerships, that they would be  
16           interested in trying to help in organizing a  
17           coalition of service providers that we would  
18           leverage to get the word out about the benefits  
19           of the platform.

20                        So, the next slide.

21                        CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: I'm sorry, before  
22           you move to the next slide.

23                        Just I'll note a couple of things on  
24           this slide that are -- they're interesting, and I

1           just wanted to get the perspective, and it's  
2           actually a question I'll direct at the utilities.

3                        So, if we look at the "Utility Leads",  
4           I think most of them are in the room today,  
5           except for National Grid. But we have quite  
6           different levels associated. We have the CTO of  
7           Unitil, and then we've got, you know, analysts  
8           and directors, and so forth. And I'm sure the  
9           Companies have been thoughtful about providing  
10          the right leads for the project. But I just  
11          wanted to make sure that we have visibility into  
12          the -- at the executive level, through these  
13          organizations, so that -- so that this doesn't  
14          get lost in the translation.

15                        So, if you're the CTO, then you have  
16          visibility across the board, and that's covered.

17                        But can Eversource and Liberty sort of  
18          address, like, organizationally, how that gets  
19          communicated to the C-suite?

20                        MS. CHIAVARA: Yes. Eversource has an  
21          internal steering committee, and we regularly  
22          brief them on the progress. So, there are a  
23          number of business groups who are briefed on this  
24          regularly.



1                   CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. And, then, at  
2 what level do you communicate up to? Is it  
3 through the president and the CEO?

4                   MS. CHIAVARA: To the vice president  
5 level, and I'm sure that trickles on up from  
6 there.

7                   CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Liberty?

8                   MS. TEBBETTS: Yes. I can speak to  
9 that.

10                   I have personally had conversations all  
11 the way up to our Chief Operating Officer, in  
12 Oakville, to discuss where this platform is  
13 today, and where we expect it to go in the  
14 future. They do understand that we are asking  
15 for these funds. And that, until we get  
16 confirmation that we've received the funds or  
17 will not receive the funds, we are working  
18 towards building something so that we can present  
19 to them, and also to you.

20                   CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.  
21 Yes. My encouragement would just to be make sure  
22 this has the right level of visibility through  
23 the utilities.

24                   And, then, a question for you,

1 Mr. Evans Brown. I noticed in -- is there anyone  
2 in the room that can't hear the confidential  
3 information?

4 *[No verbal response.]*

5 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: No? So, in the  
6 confidential filing made by the DOE, last night  
7 or this morning, one of the items on the list was  
8 40 percent of overall benefits flow to  
9 disadvantaged communities.

10 It's a question, I guess, for you,  
11 Mr. Evans Brown. Like, doesn't that change the  
12 scope of the sort of New Hampshire project when  
13 we go regionally, and we have these different  
14 requirements coming from the DOE? Can you talk  
15 to the scoping of the project, and how you see  
16 this working, from a funding point of view?

17 MR. EVANS BROWN: That 40 percent  
18 requirement is an across-the-board requirement  
19 that the Biden Administration has said is going  
20 to apply to all of their federal programs. It's  
21 an interpretation. There's a variety of ways  
22 that it can be interpreted. And there's  
23 different guidance documents from different  
24 agencies of exactly what that means.

1           So, that, I think, first of all,  
2           selecting the definition that the DOE would like  
3           us to use, and then determining how to direct  
4           those benefits, is something that is absolutely  
5           going to be a focus of the development of the  
6           full proposal.

7           I actually think that, in terms of  
8           making the Grant application more competitive,  
9           working with more regional partners will make it  
10          easier to hit that metric of 40 percent of the  
11          benefits going to disadvantaged communities.

12          Because, frankly, if you look at the  
13          maps of who is qualified for Justice40 that the  
14          federal government has made available, New  
15          Hampshire doesn't have a large swath of the  
16          population that is represented on those maps.  
17          And, as such, working with regional partners may  
18          make the grant more competitive, because it will  
19          be easier to show how those communities are going  
20          to benefit.

21          I'm not sure if that answers your  
22          question, so, please --

23                 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: It does, actually.

24                 MR. EVANS BROWN: Okay.

1                   CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: It does. I was just  
2                   doing the mental math of the disadvantaged  
3                   communities in New Hampshire, versus the 40  
4                   percent here, and was unable to correlate how  
5                   that would happen.

6                   MR. EVANS BROWN: Well, and, so, to  
7                   speak to how I, personally, have been thinking  
8                   about how to help those communities in our work,  
9                   I think a lot of it relies on working with the  
10                  entities and agencies that are already serving  
11                  those communities. So, I think of the Community  
12                  Loan Fund, of New Hampshire Housing, of the CAP  
13                  Agencies, and exactly how is it that we can  
14                  partner with them to make sure that, you know,  
15                  all of our programming, but also the Data  
16                  Platform, in particular, relevant to today's  
17                  conversation, are reaching those communities.

18                  I personally think there's a lot of --  
19                  I think New Hampshire Housing is a perfect  
20                  example of an entity that we should make aware of  
21                  this, and the landlords, in particular, that are  
22                  developing housing with LIHTC, so that they know  
23                  the capabilities of the Data Platform, so that  
24                  they can be taking advantage of that when they

1           are looking to redevelop housing or to make any  
2           improvements in multi-family housing units.  
3           That, to me, is a perfect example of the type of  
4           community benefit work that we might engage in,  
5           if we were funded to do so through the GRIP  
6           proposal, the GRIP grant.

7                         CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. And,  
8           just as we go through the day here, I'm just  
9           trying to understand, you know, we originally had  
10          a proposal that was very, let's say, computer  
11          science centric. You know, we were building this  
12          thing. And, then -- and, now, we're sort of  
13          broadening it into outreach and some other  
14          things, which are, of course, necessary in any  
15          implementation.

16                        But that the Commission in the end  
17          would just want to understand how much is going  
18          towards the core implementation of the computer  
19          program, and how much is going towards outreach  
20          and other sort of necessary activities? You  
21          know, how does the DOE funding relate to that?

22                        And I know this is all in front of you,  
23          but just sharing the Commission mindset as we  
24          move forward. So, --

1 MR. EVANS BROWN: And I think I  
2 wouldn't be out of place in restating what we  
3 said in the last status conference. Which was  
4 that, roughly speaking, we would imagine that  
5 50 percent of the grant funds would go towards  
6 buying down and defraying the costs of the  
7 platform, roughly 50 percent would go towards  
8 community benefit work.

9 The regional approach may change those  
10 numbers. In particular -- well, I am not a  
11 software guy. So, I won't venture to speak about  
12 how software costs are allocated. But Ethan has  
13 said to me "Any software vendor that increases  
14 the per seat cost as the number of seats rises  
15 goes out of business quickly."

16 So, if this becomes a regional  
17 platform, the software cost portion,  
18 theoretically, might fall. And, you know, maybe  
19 I'm giving Justin heartburn by saying that, but I  
20 think, as a general statement, that's likely  
21 true.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Would you compare to  
23 comment or --

24 MR. EISFELLER: I've been asked not to

1 speculate.

2 MR. EVANS BROWN: And perhaps I  
3 shouldn't either.

4 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Mr. Taylor wants to  
5 take a bathroom break, so we can -- then, can we  
6 ask you to speculate?

7 *[Laughter.]*

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: All right. We can  
9 proceed. Thank you.

10 MR. EVANS BROWN: Next slide.

11 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: A clarifying  
12 question. Sorry.

13 So, based on the discussion that we  
14 were having, this -- the project being \$29  
15 million, does that include everything? Or, when  
16 you were talking about "other partners", they  
17 bring their requirements separately?

18 MR. EISFELLER: It includes everything  
19 contemplated for the Energy Data Platform. So,  
20 the back-end design work, back-end build work,  
21 the hub design work, the hub build work, as well  
22 as monies for providing services as designed in  
23 the proposal.

24 So, and as Sam had mentioned, our

1           expectation is that we -- those, the funds, the  
2           grant funds would be split 50/50 approximately,  
3           between buying down the cost of the platform  
4           design and build, which includes all those  
5           components, including the utilities' back-end  
6           work, and 50 percent to the services being  
7           provided.

8                         We're working through those details  
9           now. You know, that's not an exact formula. We  
10          will see what the actual costs bring to the  
11          table, and we'll make a proposal to the  
12          Commission at some point.

13                        CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: So, is it fair to  
14          say, I'm trying to process the information, this  
15          is going to be a comprehensive approach, rather  
16          than expecting others to also, even though they  
17          may tag on, but, you know, they may request  
18          additional money through the funding?

19                        MR. EISFELLER: It's hard for me to  
20          speculate what additional vendors may come along  
21          as we start to roll this thing out.

22                        CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay.

23                        MR. EISFELLER: But I would expect, if  
24          we are able to get some early traction in the use



1 of the platform, that we will have vendors that  
2 come to us seeking assistance. Depending on how  
3 the grant monies are structured, there may be  
4 monies available for vendors that come along  
5 later on. But I don't have those details right  
6 now, and I'd rather not speculate too much.  
7 We'll be budgeting money for, you know, those  
8 types of efforts as we roll this thing out.

9 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Thank you.

10 MR. EISFELLER: With just one more  
11 comment. Yes, our goal is to make this  
12 comprehensive, and as beneficial as possible, in  
13 order to be selected as, you know, for the grant  
14 receipt. So, that's our goal.

15 MR. EVANS BROWN: So, just briefly on  
16 this slide. I would suggest that, if you have  
17 questions about what's going on in other states,  
18 they should be directed to Michael Murray, who is  
19 on the phone.

20 But I'll speak to it, just because I'm  
21 in the room, and it's easier than going through  
22 the Teams.

23 New Hampshire is not alone in pursuing  
24 a multi-utility approach. Early efforts in

1 getting customers access to their data tended to  
2 pursue individual utility platforms. But Texas  
3 and New York, you know, beginning with Texas, and  
4 next New York, has started to pursue  
5 multi-utility approaches, like the one New  
6 Hampshire is following now.

7 New Hampshire's is actually sort of an  
8 evolution on top of what is happening in Texas  
9 and New York, because of the use of an API, as  
10 opposed to having data be centralized at a  
11 single -- at a single hub. And, so, you know,  
12 it's the next step along the way, in terms of how  
13 these programs are being rolled out.

14 And I think, actually, that has bearing  
15 on this regional approach, because the use of  
16 APIs, theoretically, as Justin has said multiple  
17 times, is easily extensible to other utilities  
18 throughout the region, which is a benefit of the  
19 architecture that's been selected, or  
20 "envisioned" perhaps is a better word than  
21 "selected".

22 Next slide.

23 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: I'm sorry, just a  
24 couple of questions for this slide.

1           So, first of all, this is a very  
2 helpful slide. It's a nice visual. Thank you  
3 for that.

4           And maybe I'll direct my question to  
5 Mr. Murray. But it seems like, if Texas did the  
6 multi-utility data platform in 2012, it didn't  
7 seem to be very popular, because nobody else did  
8 anything for eleven years, then New York did  
9 something. And, then, that's kind of it so far.  
10 And, then, those two states also, it's,  
11 obviously, not across multiple states. And,  
12 then, that "API versus centralized storage" is  
13 different. So, I'm always nervous when I see  
14 something that's different than what you've seen  
15 before, because that means it's harder.

16           So, I would just like to maybe address  
17 those questions to Mr. Murray, and ask him about,  
18 you know, why, if Texas's program was great, why  
19 nobody else did it until 2023? And, then, you  
20 know, why are there only two states on the map,  
21 other than New Hampshire?

22           MR. MURRAY: That's a great question,  
23 Mr. Chairman.

24           I think the real answer is, it has to

1 do with local policy. So, Texas is the, you  
2 know, fully unbundled electricity market, which  
3 began in 2007. No other, as, you know, you  
4 probably know, no other state has a power grid  
5 and a market structure like Texas. And, so, you  
6 know, they're not FERC-jurisdictional. They, you  
7 know, have retail choice. If you were to move  
8 into a new home in Texas, in the competitive  
9 regions, there is no default service provider.  
10 So, you do not get electricity until you choose  
11 one from the competitive market.

12 The statewide platform, which is called  
13 "Smart Meter Texas", was, in addition to serving  
14 the non-supply distributed energy resources, it  
15 was also used to facilitate switching between  
16 different suppliers. And, so, that -- that sort  
17 of, you know, that's a unique structure to Texas.  
18 I think that's the reason why it wasn't adopted  
19 elsewhere.

20 And, as these other states, the ones in  
21 orange, have implemented, you know, individual  
22 utility approaches. I think that's what pushed  
23 New York most recently to say "Wait a second."  
24 This is going to be really difficult and hard to

1 manage with five utilities." Electric and gas  
2 are the major ones in New York. And they said  
3 that there's a lot of inefficiency and problems,  
4 and, you know, idiosyncrasies between each of  
5 them. And, so, they really, you know, needed to  
6 have a -- sort of a centralized platform.

7 Those discussions are certainly  
8 happening right now in other states where there's  
9 a lot of utilities involved. Because the more  
10 utilities, the more software, you know,  
11 interactions can be difficult from a distributed  
12 energy resources perspective.

13 So, that's why I think Mr. Evans Brown  
14 was saying it is an "evolution". I wouldn't say  
15 it's a departure from what other states are  
16 doing. I think it's just when you have, you  
17 know, multiple utilities involved, it makes sense  
18 to have a common data model and a common  
19 language. And that's, you know, that seems to be  
20 the direction in which things are moving.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And how's it going  
22 in New York? It looks like they just implemented  
23 it. How's that going?

24 MR. MURRAY: Yes. It's still very

1 early. The contract was awarded I believe it was  
2 early 2023. And, so, there's many different  
3 software releases that are associated with it.

4 I would -- my view is that the New York  
5 platform is much more ambitious than what's being  
6 envisioned in New Hampshire. There are just more  
7 features. So for example, the New York one  
8 includes hosting capacity maps. So, where could,  
9 you know, solar and distributed energy resources  
10 be deployed in different areas of the state.  
11 That's just not something that was, you know,  
12 was, you know, part of our project here in New  
13 Hampshire.

14 They're also looking at things like  
15 machine-readable rates, so that software  
16 developers could offer services or answer "what  
17 if" questions for customers. Like, if you're in  
18 Central Hudson's territory, and you install a  
19 heat pump, what is the actual bill savings going  
20 to be based on the computer's analysis of the  
21 rate?

22 So, it's much larger in scope.  
23 There's, I think, five or six different products,  
24 if you will, in New York that are being released.

1           The most -- the one that's the most analogous to  
2           New Hampshire is, I believe, going live this  
3           month, and that's the permission-based exchange  
4           of individual customer data. That was only  
5           really made possible through some enabling orders  
6           from their commission just in the past few  
7           months. So, I think it's still very early to  
8           see, you know, what's going to happen with that.

9                         But, so far, the reception, and the --  
10           you know, there's a lot of excitement about it.  
11           And I think the distributed energy resources, in  
12           particular, are, you know, for them, it's  
13           one-stop shopping for this information. So, they  
14           have one place to go to, instead of five. And  
15           that's very attractive.

16                        CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.  
17           Yes, it would be -- we would -- obviously,  
18           following the New York development of the  
19           software that's applicable is very interesting  
20           and important.

21                        And I'll just add that it's, you know,  
22           terrifying to be first in a new software  
23           implementation. So, I think I've mentioned that  
24           before. But, you know, being first is -- often

1 doesn't go well.

2 Last question on this side, and anyone  
3 can answer. Do we know who else is applying for  
4 GRIP grants on this map of the United States?  
5 Or, is that sort of proprietary or unknown?

6 MS. HASTINGS: That's not known. Only  
7 U.S. DOE knows that.

8 But I will say that New Hampshire is  
9 one of the few states that didn't get an award in  
10 Round 1.

11 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: That did not?

12 MS. HASTINGS: That did not.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. And why was  
14 that? What would you hazard to say that New  
15 Hampshire did not get something in Round 1?

16 MS. HASTINGS: I don't know. I guess  
17 they didn't have any competitive applications  
18 that came in.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Okay.

20 Commissioner Chattopadhyay, any  
21 questions on this slide?

22 *[Cmsr. Chattopadhyay indicating in the*  
23 *negative.]*

24 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Yes. Please



1 proceed, Mr. Evans Brown.

2 MR. EVANS BROWN: So, next slide,  
3 please. And --

4 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm  
5 having my Columbo moment.

6 The "API versus the centralized", can  
7 anyone address that, that change, Mr. Murray,  
8 maybe, or anyone else? I'm just -- I'm nervous  
9 that we are, you know, we're in new ground here.

10 MR. MURRAY: I'll speak to it briefly,  
11 and then maybe Mr. Eisfeller can chime in.

12 And, beginning with Texas, really, the  
13 only way that this was viewed as being possible  
14 at the time was by having a copy of all of the  
15 meter data, in particular, taken from each  
16 utility, and then put into a single database. In  
17 the case of Texas, that was actually an  
18 on-premise database. So, it was not cloud-based  
19 at all. It actually just made that transition to  
20 the cloud within the last 30 days. And there's a  
21 lot of costs associated with that. There's a lot  
22 of sort of reproducing security controls and, you  
23 know, just constant maintenance of a system that  
24 is centralized and that is different from the

1 existing utilities', you know, meter data  
2 management systems, customer information systems,  
3 *et cetera*.

4 And what was -- has been designed in  
5 New Hampshire, you know, since, I think, you  
6 know, 2018, 2016 perhaps, and memorialized in our  
7 Settlement Agreement, it is this API approach,  
8 which just avoids that central, you know,  
9 additional piece of data storage that needs to  
10 be, you know, cared for and secured properly.  
11 And, so, when you have a consistent data model,  
12 then it becomes possible to offer that. I think  
13 it's a lot more streamlined. There's a lot of  
14 efficiencies to that approach. You know, we've  
15 gotten some very good responses from vendors in  
16 the request for information that we did a number  
17 of months ago.

18 So, you know, there are different  
19 schools of thought on the approaches. But I  
20 think our thinking, at least behind the  
21 Settlement Agreement, on this approach, was that  
22 it was just going to be, you know, simpler, less  
23 costs, more efficient, and one less system that  
24 needed to be, you know, maintained.

1                   CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you. Mr.  
2                   Eisfeller, would you like to comment?

3                   And I'm always interested in why, you  
4                   know, we are more clever than others, in terms of  
5                   choosing the API versus centralized? Why  
6                   wouldn't the other folks use the API system, you  
7                   know, in prior generations?

8                   MR. EISFELLER: So, I will speculate a  
9                   little bit now.

10                  The design that we've chosen, as part  
11                  of the Settlement Agreement, is a simple design.  
12                  If you compare and contrast it to New York, for  
13                  example, which New York's model, if you saw the  
14                  RFP that went out, has thousands of data fields,  
15                  has built-on services layered on top of the  
16                  platform. Will -- will never be finished, in my  
17                  opinion, because it's so large. It will provide  
18                  many services. And I'm sure they will be very  
19                  interesting services. But it will be very  
20                  complex, very hard to manage, and very expensive.

21                  Our design is simple. That was the  
22                  concept, initially, was to keep it simple. Have  
23                  a -- move forward with a minimum viable product,  
24                  so a reduced set of data fields that provide, you

1 know, the essential components for customer usage  
2 information and interval data, and to enable the  
3 markets not to build the services into the  
4 system. Enable the markets to use that data,  
5 have them build those systems, that are riskier,  
6 require a lot of maintenance and investment. And  
7 those -- hopefully, those investments provide  
8 value, so they can be funded by other means than  
9 the utilities.

10 So, our design is a "Keep it simple,  
11 stupid" design. It's very simple. It sounds  
12 complex, but, essentially, it is simple. The  
13 APIs that we're using, they're based on national  
14 standards. They have been used elsewhere, they  
15 have been tested and tried. And we understand  
16 some of the challenges with the design that we're  
17 going to have to compensate for. It does require  
18 a certain amount of data throughput. We're going  
19 to have to design for that as well. But,  
20 essentially, it's much simpler. So, our  
21 likelihood of success should be higher as a  
22 result.

23 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Excellent. Thank  
24 you. Thank you.

1                   Mr. Evans Brown, please proceed.

2                   MR. EVANS BROWN: Yes. So, if we go to  
3 the next slide.

4                   We've actually already dug in a little  
5 bit to the content of this slide, based on the  
6 Commissioners' questions. But, essentially, I  
7 think the point here is that, again, there is a  
8 "balance of costs versus benefits" question. So,  
9 we could, theoretically, just develop the bare  
10 platform, put it out in the world, and hope that  
11 service providers take it up and start to use it.  
12 But the hope is that, through a concerted effort  
13 of outreach, that will result in more benefits  
14 accruing to ratepayers.

15                   And, so, while there may be some more  
16 costs associated with those outreach efforts,  
17 hopefully, many of those costs will be covered by  
18 this DOE GRIP grant, as well as by the match from  
19 the folks that are doing that outreach work, and  
20 will result in greater benefits to ratepayers  
21 writ large.

22                   I, personally, am excited about the  
23 idea of being able to collaborate with folks in  
24 southern Massachusetts -- southern New England,

1           for instance, that have access to companies that  
2           are larger and have more means, and being able to  
3           get in front of those third parties and tell them  
4           about this exciting opportunity. I think we'll  
5           be -- we'll have more impact if we're doing it  
6           with -- throughout the whole region.

7                        I also think that, you know, when I  
8           think of the work of our staff, who are engaging  
9           with municipalities here in New Hampshire, and  
10          helping them work on projects in their local  
11          community to reduce the energy burden for  
12          residents or for, you know, municipal meters,  
13          municipal buildings. A lot of those projects  
14          will be much easier when we have free access to  
15          data.

16                       I'm thinking, right now, we have staff  
17          who are working on trying to develop Community  
18          Resilience Centers that have solar on the roofs  
19          and battery backup, that we can -- we can have  
20          running during, you know, prolonged power outage  
21          events. And the main problem in trying to do  
22          those projects is not having -- not having meter  
23          data that you can use to run a model on how big  
24          the battery needs to be and how big the solar

1 array needs to be.

2 Also, one of the uses that's  
3 contemplated under the platform is the ability to  
4 create community dashboards. So, anonymized  
5 communitywide data that we can then work with  
6 community leaders, on select boards, on town  
7 councils or city councils, to identify where the  
8 low-hanging fruit, if they want to reduce the  
9 energy burden of the residents, is. And that's  
10 exactly the type of use that we think will have a  
11 really positive impact and realizing more  
12 benefits for New Hampshire ratepayers.

13 And, so, again, to restate the initial  
14 point, I think there's two ways to do this math.  
15 One is to just look at the costs, and the other  
16 is to look at the costs of the bare platform,  
17 versus the costs and the benefit of doing the  
18 bare platform with the community outreach work.

19 And, so, with that, I think I'm handing  
20 it back to the utilities.

21 MR. EISFELLER: Okay.

22 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: What is CENH's  
23 "Circuit Rider Program"?

24 MR. EVANS BROWN: I'm so glad you

1           asked.

2                       So, we have staff that largely are  
3 funded through USDA dollars, to work with  
4 low-income, rural communities, to try to do  
5 energy projects in their communities. Those  
6 projects, it's sort of waves or fads of what  
7 communities want to work on. Early on, it was  
8 largely helping them to do LED lighting  
9 retrofits. You know, we helped the Town of  
10 Whitefield get \$100,000 to swap out all the  
11 lights in their -- in the White Mountain Regional  
12 High School, for instance.

13                      But the circuit riders essentially are  
14 *pro bono* grant writers that work on behalf of  
15 low-income rural communities.

16                      CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Thank you.

17                      MR. EISFELLER: Okay. Thank you, Sam.  
18 Michael, next slide, please.

19                      So, with any complex project, and with  
20 our efforts to expand the scope of the Grant  
21 proposal to a regional effort, there are some  
22 risks that we want to be aware of and try to  
23 mitigate. You know, two of the risks here, the  
24 first two risks here are itemized, essentially,



1 point to the requirements in New Hampshire. And  
2 the Governance Council is charged with ensuring  
3 that we provide all the functionality and  
4 requirements of both the statute, as well as the  
5 order, so that we are heavily engaged in this  
6 process, and essentially controlling the  
7 development of the proposal.

8 "Cost allocation considerations",  
9 there's another potential risk. We hope to  
10 mitigate that risk. And, through transparency,  
11 essentially, we hope to be able to propose a New  
12 Hampshire-only solution or a regional solution.  
13 So, our RFPs and the various cost estimates will  
14 include both perspectives.

15 We do expect that there will be an  
16 impact on the New Hampshire schedule, as a result  
17 of this effort with the regional grant proposal.  
18 There's a fair amount of work involved in  
19 developing that proposal, and coordinating the  
20 regional effort. And we will have to expand some  
21 of our work on the RFP, to ensure that we have,  
22 you know, those dual costs to share and consider.

23 So -- but we have worked with the  
24 consultant on a reasonable schedule to facilitate

1 the development of the regional proposal. You'll  
2 see that on the next slide.

3 And we've also been working with them,  
4 the consultant, as well as the regional players,  
5 on a fair distribution of the costs associated  
6 with the increased effort, and, eventually, the  
7 costs of the platform, as well as the operations  
8 of the platform.

9 Our expectation is that information  
10 will be transparent to the Commission, and we'll  
11 provide that information as it develops through  
12 some type of periodic reporting.

13 Any questions on this slide? Next  
14 slide.

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: I just want a quick  
16 clarification one the consultant costs.

17 So, the consultant is now being asked  
18 to do more, because, originally, it was just the  
19 New Hampshire project, now it's regional. I'm  
20 glad to see that there's no intent to increase  
21 costs.

22 What's the strategy or the plan moving  
23 forward? Should the Commission expect to see  
24 anything in addition to the 190,000 already

1 approved?

2 MR. EISFELLER: We are not asking for  
3 any additional monies for the development of the  
4 proposal.

5 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Okay, thank  
6 you.

7 MR. EISFELLER: Our said maybe another  
8 way, the incremental costs should be covered by  
9 the incremental participants.

10 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: But what happens if  
11 Massachusetts or Connecticut or the others decide  
12 not to participate? Then, your -- then, West  
13 Monroe, your consultant, is going to do a bunch  
14 of work, and then you'll be back here, I suppose,  
15 asking for more money? Is that -- if no other  
16 states participate?

17 MR. EISFELLER: If no other states  
18 participate, we don't have a grant to propose.  
19 The interest expressed by the other states has  
20 been very strong.

21 We've gotten quite a bit of interest  
22 from National Grid. They have agreed to have  
23 their name on the grant as well. We've gotten  
24 sort of additional interest from some other

1 utilities, based upon whether we receive a letter  
2 of recommendation or a continuance from the DOE  
3 on the Concept Paper.

4 So, the expectation is that that  
5 interest will result in a sharing of the costs.  
6 And, in fact, those discussions of sharings of  
7 the costs have already started, and I would  
8 expect they will continue.

9 Now, there is risk. Those same  
10 entities need to have similar discussions with  
11 their regulators. But the regulators, or at  
12 least staff, and other interested parties,  
13 participating in similar discussions in other  
14 states, have all shown interest in this platform.

15 Unitil and Eversource have presented on  
16 this platform in Massachusetts to the AMI Working  
17 Group there, and participants in that group have  
18 expressed interest, along with the utilities,  
19 Grid, in particular.

20 So, I would expect that that will  
21 continue. But it's not without some risk.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. I think, from  
23 a Commission perspective, we're expecting not to  
24 see anything other than the 190,000 already

1 approved. And, if there is something that  
2 changes, we would expect an immediate flare on  
3 that. So, thank you.

4 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: The periodic, you  
5 know, updates, and I'm assuming they have to  
6 happen before May -- I forget what the date was,  
7 the 21st or something. So, those periodic  
8 updates, do you have any thought, like, when you  
9 will have those?

10 MR. EISFELLER: So, we are proposing  
11 monthly updates.

12 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay.

13 MR. EISFELLER: We may provide *ad hoc*  
14 updates, if something changes or something of  
15 interest happened. But our proposal today is to  
16 provide monthly updates. Some type of project  
17 plan update, that would give you a sense of  
18 progress to date, upcoming work, *et cetera*.

19 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: So, at this  
20 point, you are confident that the remaining time,  
21 whatever, like two and a half months, yes,  
22 it's -- you will be able to do that, given all of  
23 these elements that you will try and address?

24 MR. EISFELLER: Yes. Definitely, I

1 can't do it.

2 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay.

3 MR. EISFELLER: The discussions with  
4 the consultant, who is facilitating this effort,  
5 has a -- this is a nine -- they propose a  
6 nine-week schedule. You'll see that on the next  
7 slide. And there is confidence amongst the  
8 Governance Council, as well as the consultant,  
9 that we can achieve that. There's a lot of work  
10 to be done between now and then. You know, we're  
11 doing work now to prepare for those discussions.

12 But, yes, that's the plan. I think we  
13 have a workable plan at this point in time.

14 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Thank you.

15 MR. EISFELLER: So, any more questions  
16 on the previous slide?

17 *[No verbal response.]*

18 MR. EISFELLER: Okay. So, this is a  
19 slide on the schedule. Like I said, we've  
20 partnered with West Monroe. They have been part  
21 of this discussion and effort. They have  
22 actually helped facilitate some of the  
23 discussions with the regional partners already.  
24 They have good contacts with other utilities and

1           some of the regional service providers. So, they  
2           have been helping already with those discussions  
3           for a regional effort.

4                        We've proposed a rough Governance  
5           approach with some of the regional participants.  
6           That requires some additional work. We're still  
7           going to work through that. Like, the basic  
8           concept is that the Governance Council will  
9           provide direct -- will be working very closely  
10          with the consultant on the development of the  
11          proposal. And it will have a, basically, like a  
12          PMO, Project Management Office, that works with  
13          the other regional stakeholders to get their  
14          input and their view of the proposal. So, they  
15          will be involved. But the direction of the  
16          proposal will be driven by the Governance  
17          Council, is the expectation.

18                       We expect to begin that work in due  
19          course. That's one of the reasons that we wanted  
20          to meet with the Commission right away, to seek  
21          some approval to move forward.

22                       The deadline for the submittal is May  
23          22nd. We'd like to try to beat that by a day or  
24          two, of course, to make sure that there's no

1 issues with the application.

2 We've got a schedule from the  
3 consultant here, this is actually their schedule  
4 that they proposed for a regional effort. It's a  
5 nine-week schedule. So, you do the math, we've  
6 got to get started pretty soon.

7 Any questions on the schedule?

8 *[No verbal response.]*

9 MR. EISFELLER: Next slide. So, and,  
10 then, provided we get the grant, here's the rough  
11 schedule for moving forward with implementation  
12 of the Grant proposal and the platform.

13 We expect the first two years to be  
14 focused on the build of the platform, and the  
15 build of the services that we expect to layer on  
16 as part of the proposal. And, then, the next two  
17 years to be on leveraging the platform and  
18 achieving the community benefits.

19 So, this is just a rough schedule of  
20 what we expect to roll out following approval.

21 And I think that's basically it.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: One last slide.

23 MR. EISFELLER: One other slide?

24 Michael. Oh, yes. The most important slide,



1           sorry.

2                       So, you know, the key ask here is the  
3 first sentence: "The Council requests that the  
4 Commission give approval to continue with the  
5 consultant in developing a grant application that  
6 includes a regional approach to the Data  
7 Platform."

8                       That is what we're asking. We will not  
9 proceed with a grant without that approval.

10                      CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And just to recap  
11 what we talked about before here.

12                      You believe you have other states lined  
13 up. So, New Hampshire shouldn't expect any  
14 increase in consulting costs. Of course,  
15 everyone could hit the ejection seat, and then  
16 New Hampshire would be left with some kind of  
17 additional cost. And that's -- I think that's  
18 where we left it. Is that right?

19                      MR. EISFELLER: At this time, we do not  
20 expect any increased cost to New Hampshire, and  
21 we're not asking for any additional monies.

22                      CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.

23                      CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: If the regional  
24 approach works out fine, is it possible that we

1           might save even more, New Hampshire?

2                       MR. EISFELLER: I think that's the area  
3           that I was asked not to speculate on, because we  
4           don't have, you know, signed contracts and  
5           agreements yet. We are working for a fair  
6           distribution of those costs.

7                       There's sort of two considerations  
8           here. We are trying to solicit interest in  
9           participation as well. So, there's a balancing  
10          act of trying not to burden too much the  
11          incremental participants with the effort, nor the  
12          cost, of development of the proposal.

13                      But we would expect that they would not  
14          increase our costs.

15                      CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: I'm thinking  
16          beyond the implementation costs, I think, going  
17          the regional approach, given how the benefits  
18          would play out differently than if you just  
19          pursued only New Hampshire. I think, do you have  
20          the confidence it will end up providing New  
21          Hampshire more benefits, relative to, you know,  
22          the approach where New Hampshire goes alone?

23                      MR. EISFELLER: Sure. I think the best  
24          slide for that --

1                    *[Court reporter interruption.]*

2                    MR. EISFELLER: The best slide that  
3 might give you a perspective on increasing  
4 benefits to New Hampshire customers, is the  
5 Appendix slide, where we look at the benefits to  
6 customers over a period of time. You know, one  
7 of the major components of the Grant proposal is  
8 to layer on services to get those benefits to  
9 customers sooner.

10                    So, yes. I would expect just the  
11 approach of expediting the use of the platform  
12 will provide customers an incremental benefit  
13 earlier.

14                    I don't want to speculate too much on  
15 whether the regional approach would provide more  
16 benefit to New Hampshire customers. But,  
17 inherently, there will be more interest in the  
18 platform, and, potentially, more services offered  
19 as a result. Okay?

20                    But I don't, you know, I'm not a  
21 service provider, that type of service provider.  
22 I don't operate in those markets. But,  
23 generally, that's the expectation.

24                    I think Michael Murray would probably

1 mirror that observation. He works in those  
2 environments.

3 You know, the more interest, the more  
4 likelihood that service providers are going to  
5 develop new services, offer them to all  
6 customers, and use the platform, which is the  
7 goal. All that's good for our New Hampshire  
8 customers.

9 And, I would say, if you do the math,  
10 New Hampshire is small, relative to the other  
11 participants we're pursuing. And, you know, the  
12 cost-share should reflect that as well.

13 I don't have that exact math right now.  
14 But the objective is a fair distribution of costs  
15 of the platform. And, so, my expectation is that  
16 our cost-share should be smaller proportionally.

17 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: Okay.

18 MR. EISFELLER: And we can go back to  
19 the last slide of the presentation, too, not the  
20 Appendix, Michael.

21 So that the second bullet gets to our  
22 desire to be transparent about the process. To  
23 pursue, you know, both a New Hampshire-only  
24 approach, as well as a regional approach, and to

1 provide updates to the Commission, so you can see  
2 how we're progressing. We've got a tight  
3 schedule. It's going to be a lot of work. But  
4 you'll get a sense, as we go through this, of how  
5 things are developing.

6 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And just quickly, in  
7 the last meeting, we talked about the Dunsky  
8 Report, and the Commission approved a few  
9 thousand dollars to complete some tasks.

10 Has the Dunsky Report been completed?  
11 Should we expect to see it in the file soon?

12 MR. EISFELLER: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: In another week or  
14 two?

15 MR. EISFELLER: We are shooting for a  
16 February 16th draft to us of the new model.

17 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay.

18 MR. EISFELLER: Which was the  
19 additional, you know, a thousand dollars plus.

20 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Yes.

21 MR. EISFELLER: And, so, we're  
22 expecting the Council to see that first, and  
23 we'll review it, and then we'll share that with  
24 the Commission.

1           We are also expecting to get the Final  
2 Report on the third-party use of the platform.  
3 That's due as well. Dunsky has been working on  
4 that, and you should see that as well.

5           In addition, the RFP is getting close  
6 to being completed. We have some edits to make  
7 to address some of these considerations. We  
8 would expect that that's going to come along here  
9 before too long, and we would share the draft of  
10 that as well, as required by the order.

11           So, yes. We are still progressing on  
12 the other components, the other workstreams of  
13 this big project. And we would expect to share  
14 that information, as planned.

15           CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.

16           MR. EISFELLER: The Council is also  
17 aware of the risks. And we had another slide on  
18 the risks, you know, associated with  
19 regionalization. The Governance Council expects  
20 to be heavily engaged in that process, directing  
21 that process, and reflecting the interests of New  
22 Hampshire consumers. So, I expect that to  
23 continue.

24           Yes. So, the last item is, we would

1           expect that we won't move forward with building  
2           this platform without the approval of the  
3           Commissioner. That's part of the order. The  
4           goal is to have all these costs and benefits come  
5           together with a recommendation to the Commission.  
6           We hope that that will happen in the late  
7           October/November timeframe, and you'll be able to  
8           see all the costs and benefits, and weigh in on  
9           whether we should move forward or not.

10                   A similar discussion that will need to  
11           be had at the other states, that's one of the  
12           risks, they will need to get their own approvals.  
13           And, so, that's part of the effort as well.

14                   I can say, in Massachusetts at least,  
15           that I represent Unitil in that Massachusetts  
16           effort, as well as some of my colleagues. And  
17           we're heavily engaged there as well. So, I'll  
18           know how that's being perceived personally. And  
19           that will be shared as part of our updates as  
20           well, how are things going with the other -- in  
21           the other states.

22                   Okay. Any discussion, any questions on  
23           this section?

24                   *[No verbal response.]*

1 MR. EISFELLER: And I think that  
2 concludes the presentation.

3 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: I do have a  
4 question on the last slide, where you have the  
5 benefits, cumulative benefits being shown.

6 Is it possible to break this up into  
7 commercial and residential, commercial/industrial  
8 and residential?

9 MR. EISFELLER: I'll be able to answer  
10 that better after we see the model. How's that?

11 You know, both -- those investigations  
12 or that discovery was done for both types of  
13 customers. But I have yet to see the model in  
14 any great detail. So, I can't answer that yet.

15 CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: It would be good  
16 to have that information.

17 MR. EISFELLER: So, that might -- if  
18 it's not there, then we may have to go back and  
19 ask for some additional work to be done. But  
20 we'll make sure that that is the case.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Yes. I think what  
22 Commissioner Chattopadhyay is communicating, and  
23 I would just augment it by saying that we're  
24 always interested in the assumptions, how we got



1           there, what the breakout is. It's important.  
2           These are very large numbers. They look great,  
3           but they don't mean much, unless there's a good  
4           understanding of what's behind them.

5                       MR. EISFELLER: The Dunsky Report does  
6           have all the assumptions and the inputs to the  
7           model. And we'll actually have the model in  
8           hand.

9                       We do expect to -- one of the reasons  
10          we asked for that incremental expense was to  
11          develop a model that we could build in some  
12          sensitivity analysis into. So, the final  
13          presentation will include some sensitivity  
14          analysis. You can see the effect of varying the  
15          inputs. And I think that will give you a good  
16          idea of how sensitive the model is to various  
17          changes and the assumptions that were made.

18                      CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Excellent. Thank  
19          you.

20                      CMSR. CHATTOPADHYAY: I think, like I  
21          pointed, it would be good to know the breakup of  
22          residential, commercial and industrial. Really,  
23          it is -- that question is in the spirit of kind  
24          of understanding what are the key contributors to

1 the benefits. So, there may be a different way  
2 to slice that, not necessarily across rate  
3 classes. So, what are the contributing factors?

4 So that, I'm just -- you know, anything  
5 that helps to provide that kind of information in  
6 a summary form, it's very helpful.

7 So, thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: And I'd just like to  
9 add, before we move to the DOE, that I'd like to  
10 compliment the Governance Council, and all the  
11 parties here, in terms of creating this  
12 presentation to the Commission. Started with  
13 pencils, then we moved to computers. And, now,  
14 we have nice PowerPoint presentations to help us  
15 understand what's going on. And that's a lot  
16 easier than reading, you know, 3,000 pages of  
17 words.

18 So, thank for that. This was a very,  
19 very good presentation, and extremely helpful.  
20 So, thank you for the work that went into it.

21 I know that the Department had some  
22 concerns that they would like to share. Would  
23 this be a good time, Attorney Schwarzer?

24 MS. SCHWARZER: Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman. It would.

2 And I think it's also a good time to  
3 note that, in the work that's gone into coming to  
4 the hearing today, certainly, the Department  
5 wishes to make it clear that we very much support  
6 and approve expanding the scope of the grant to a  
7 regional grant approach. That's important. We  
8 know the price has changed, as you heard today,  
9 and there are certain risks.

10 This, because the letter that was filed  
11 on January 26th included a suggestion in the  
12 middle that the Commission be asked for approval  
13 to pursue a regional approach to the Data  
14 Platform itself, the Department does wish to  
15 indicate on the record that we think it's too  
16 early for the Commission to be asked to approve  
17 an actual Regional Data Platform itself today.

18 Certainly, that may happen. As has  
19 been indicated, there are unknowns. At this  
20 time, there's no firm commitment from other  
21 states. Cost allocation is unknown. Regional  
22 approaches would include other states' Public  
23 Utilities Commissions or the equivalent, which  
24 certainly may expand the timeline. And there's

1 not a guarantee that the New Hampshire database  
2 would be implemented first.

3 That said, there's certainly every  
4 reason to think a lot of those issues will be  
5 addressed before the May filing deadline for the  
6 federal grant. And, so, we would anticipate,  
7 within the Governance Council, there will be a  
8 vote at a future time, on whether the entire  
9 grant application is to be submitted. So, we are  
10 not addressing that here today, just to highlight  
11 that. Similarly, there will be another vote, as  
12 Justin had indicated, on the regional platform as  
13 a whole.

14 So, with those restricted focus today,  
15 the Department certainly supports the expansion  
16 of the regional approach for the U.S. DOE grant.

17 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Okay. Thank you.

18 Before we wrap up for the day, would  
19 any other parties like to comment on anything  
20 that we discussed today?

21 Attorney Kreis.

22 MR. KREIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I  
23 just have a really brief comment.

24 And I think it really is just to echo

1 something that Mr. Eisfeller said to you at the  
2 end of his presentation. And that is that the  
3 ask that is before you is actually pretty  
4 limited. Simply, I think it was prudent of the  
5 Governance Council to make sure that it is  
6 keeping you fully apprised of how the project is  
7 evolving, and what possibilities are opening up,  
8 and which ones are closing up.

9 And, so, it wouldn't feel comfortable  
10 to be pursuing a regional approach, even as a  
11 theoretical possibility, unless you knew about  
12 that. And, I guess, if the Commission finds that  
13 to be an objectionable approach for some reason,  
14 you should definitely indicate that, because it  
15 would save a lot of people a fair amount of  
16 trouble.

17 But all that you're being asked to do  
18 now is simply indicate your approval of the idea  
19 that the Governance Council can continue to  
20 explore a GRIP grant that would envision the  
21 creation of a Regional Data Platform.

22 From my perspective, a New Hampshire  
23 Data Platform, whether it reaches into other  
24 states or not, remains an important objective.

1 And the statute that triggered all of this says  
2 the same thing. So, that's what we'll be  
3 pursuing.

4 I'm optimistic that, one way or  
5 another, the Data Platform will come into  
6 existence. And really appreciate the  
7 Commission's help and thoughtful oversight.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: Thank you.

9 Anyone else like to comment, before we  
10 consider adjournment?

11 *[No verbal response.]*

12 CHAIRMAN GOLDNER: All right. Well,  
13 I'll thank everyone for their participation and  
14 feedback today. As I said before, this was  
15 extremely helpful. And the PowerPoint  
16 presentation was exemplary, and it got us to a  
17 good place very efficiently, very quickly. So,  
18 thank you for that.

19 So, we'll issue an order in due course.  
20 We are anticipating issuing something in the next  
21 few days. So, it won't be very long. No later  
22 than mid next week, depending on our load.

23 Thank you very much again. We are  
24 adjourned.

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*(Whereupon the status conference was  
adjourned at 10:29 a.m.)*