

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DG 20-013

GAS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Consideration of Program Design Changes

Procedural Order Re: Request for Status Update

On August 27, 2020, in Order No. 26,397, the Commission approved proposed modifications to the residential low-income assistance program for natural gas customers, which was renamed as the "Gas Assistance Program" (GAP). The two regulated natural gas utilities in New Hampshire, Northern Utilities, Inc. (Northern) and Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty (Liberty), administer the GAP.

In Order No. 26,397, the Commission approved a settlement agreement, pursuant to which the existing 60 percent bill credit on distribution rates (exclusive of the Local Distribution Adjustment Charge (LDAC)) was replaced with a 45 percent bill credit on distribution and supply rates (exclusive of the LDAC) during the winter months: November 1 to April 30. *Id.* at 6-8. The limit on the benefits to be paid to GAP participants remained at one percent of the utility's gross annual revenues, or one percent of a typical customer's annual bill. *Id.* at 7-8. The settlement agreement also provided for future review of the GAP as a whole, as well as a review of appropriate program costs. *Id.* at 7.

On June 9, 2021, then Commission Staff (now with the New Hampshire Department of Energy (DOE)) filed a letter indicating that Northern and Liberty had exceeded the one percent cap on GAP expenditures and requesting a technical session to be scheduled. Following a technical session scheduled on June 22, 2021, Commission Staff filed a request for additional process that included data requests and a further technical session. On July 20, 2021, the Commission approved the DOE's proposed

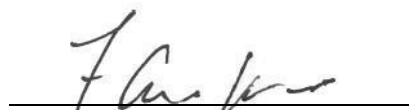
procedural schedule with a second technical session scheduled on July 22, 2021, and a request for a specific hearing date to follow. There have been no further requests or recommendations from the parties in this docket.

Accordingly, on or before June 23, 2022, Northern and Liberty shall each file an accounting of GAP expenditures on a monthly basis beginning on November 1, 2020, and continuing through April 30, 2022, together with the corresponding gross utility revenues for both winter periods in order to verify that the expenditures have not exceeded the one percent maximum. For both winter periods, Northern and Liberty shall also calculate the GAP expenditures as a percentage of a typical customer bill, which also has a one percent maximum. Further, on or before June 30, 2022, the parties are requested to file comments regarding: (1) whether Northern and Liberty are currently administering the GAP in compliance with the requirements of Order No. 26,397; (2) the manner in which amounts spent on the GAP in excess of the one percent cap can be returned to customers; (3) whether changes to the GAP should be made to ensure that Northern and Liberty's GAP expenditures remain within the one percent cap; and (4) whether there are any other outstanding issues concerning administration of the GAP, which require further Commission review.

So ordered, this twenty-third day of May, 2022.



Daniel C. Goldner
Chairman



F. Anne Ross
Special Commissioner

Service List - Docket Related

Docket# : 20-013

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