

Liberty Utilities (EnergyNorth Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty

DG 21-130

Winter 2021/2022 Cost of Gas and Summer 2022 Cost of Gas

New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission Record Requests - Set 2

Date Request Received: 10/25/21
Request No. PUC RR 2-1

Date of Response: 10/27/21
Respondent: Steven Mullen

REQUEST:

Please describe the actions taken by the company to reduce the bill impact on customers caused by the rising commodity prices.

RESPONSE:

In light of the anticipated high natural gas prices this winter, due to global market factors such as the high demand for US LNG exports to Europe and Asia, the Company has available the following options to help customers mitigate the impact of commodity increases.

First, the Commission-sponsored Gas Assistance Program provides a substantial discount on the total bills of those who qualify.

Second, Liberty offers customers a budget billing program that allows customers to spread out payments over the course of the year to spread out the impact of high winter costs.

Third, for those customers who find themselves falling behind in their bills, the Company offers a range of payment plans to enable customers to maintain service and allow them to catch up on the bill over the course of the following summer and fall. The Company has also posted on the Liberty website tips for saving energy.

Fourth, the Fixed Price Option offered customers the ability to fix their fuel price throughout the winter period.

The Company is also working on adding a new page on its website highlighting why the price increase is happening and what customers can do if they are struggling to pay their bills. A link to the page will be emailed to customers in the Company's electronic newsletter that will go out the week of November 1.

The Company also considers that it has an ongoing responsibility to manage and mitigate operating costs, including limiting travel costs to the extent possible, making sure that headcount aligns efficiently with the work that needs to be done, and executing on capital projects with rigorous cost control strategies in place. Management of operating costs assists customers at the

time that base rates are set and are not passed through to customers coincident with ongoing increases in commodity costs. Therefore, the Company's main focus when commodity costs are fluctuating is to assure that customers have options for managing their bills and handling payments over time.