

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DE 24-094

PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE d/b/a EVERSOURCE ENERGY

Petition for Change in Pole Plant Adjustment Mechanism Rates

COMMENCEMENT OF ADJUDICATIVE PROCEEDING AND NOTICE OF HEARING

On August 1, 2024, Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy (Eversource) filed a Petition for Change in Pole Plant Adjustment Mechanism Rates. In support of its petition, Eversource filed the joint direct testimony of Eversource employees Yi-An Chen, Scott R. Anderson, Joshua D. Letourneau, and Ian J. Farley (Joint Testimony) and related attachments. All docket filings, other than any information subject to confidential treatment, are available on the Commission's website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2024/24-094.html>.

I. BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Commission authorized the transfer of certain utility pole assets from Consolidated Communications of Northern New England Company, LLC d/b/a Consolidated Communications (Consolidated) to Eversource pursuant to a Settlement and Pole Asset Purchase Agreement in Order No. 26,729, issued on November 18, 2022 in Docket No. DE 21-020. In this order, the Commission also approved Eversource's proposed PPAM, which would allow Eversource to recover the incrementally higher costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the transferred poles, pole inspection and replacement, and vegetation management (VM) following completion of the pole asset transfer. *Id.* at 15, 17-19, 21. As proposed by Eversource, these costs would be subject to prudence reviews by the Commission, and

they would be offset by any incremental pole attachment revenues received by Eversource following the transfer. Id. at 6, 17-18.

Eversource and Consolidated notified the Commission that the pole asset transfer transaction closed on May 1, 2023. On August 2, 2023, Eversource filed an initial PPAM in Docket No. DE 23-075, seeking only to recover VM costs billed to Consolidated from February 10, 2021 through December 31, 2022. The Commission approved those initial PPAM rates by Order No. 26,892 (September 29, 2023).

In its current petition for approval of PPAM rates, Eversource requested recovery through the PPAM of \$7,156,419 associated with expenses associated with operation and maintenance of the transferred poles, pole inspections, and vegetation management incurred during the calendar year 2023. Petition, ¶¶ 6, 8. Effective October 1, 2024, Eversource proposed implementing a total average PPAM rate of 0.093 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh). Id., ¶ 8. According to the Joint Testimony, implementation of the proposed PPAM rates would result in an overall average decrease to current rates of 0.5 percent. Joint Testimony dated August 1, 2024 at 9. If Eversource's proposed PPAM rates are approved, the average residential ratepayer using 650 kWh per month would see a decrease in their monthly bill of approximately \$0.92. See Joint Testimony dated August 1, 2024, Attachment YC/SRA/JDL/IJF-6, page 5.

II. ISSUES PRESENTED

The filing presents, *inter alia*, the following issues: whether Eversource's proposed PPAM rates are consistent with the PPAM approved by the Commission in Order No. 26,729; whether Eversource appropriately calculated the proposed PPAM rates; and whether implementation of the proposed PPAM rates will result in just and

reasonable rates as required by RSA 374:2, and RSA 378:5 and :7. Accordingly, an adjudicative proceeding will be convened to address these issues.

The Commission will be conducting any hearings scheduled in this matter in person. The Commission will consider requests to conduct hearings using a hybrid format to permit remote participation by a specific individual only if the Commission has determined that a sufficient reason has been provided for why that individual would be unable to attend in person. Any party requesting that a specific individual be permitted to participate remotely should file a written request with the Commission's Clerk's Office no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing date. If the Commission determines that one or more individuals will be permitted to appear remotely, then individuals in the Commission's hearing room, including the Commissioners, will be broadcast on a web-enabled platform.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED, that an adjudicative proceeding be commenced for the purpose of reviewing and resolving the foregoing issues pursuant to RSA chapter 541-A, RSA 374:2, and RSA 378:5 and :7, and the Commission's procedural rules; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that the Commission will hold a hearing in this matter at its offices located at 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire, on September 13, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. Three hours shall be allotted for this hearing; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that the New Hampshire Department of Energy shall file its position regarding Eversource's petition, including the reasons for this position, on or before August 30, 2024; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any entity or individual may petition to intervene and seek to be admitted as a party in this proceeding. Each party has the right to have an attorney represent the party at the party's own expense; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that, consistent with N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.17 and Puc 203.02, any entity or individual seeking to intervene in the proceeding shall file with the Commission a petition to intervene with copies sent to Eversource and any other parties on the service list, on or before August 23, 2024. The petition shall state the facts demonstrating how the petitioner's rights, duties, privileges, immunities, or other substantial interests may be affected by the proceeding, consistent with N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.17; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party objecting to a petition to intervene make said objection on or before September 3, 2024; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that parties shall file any proposed exhibits, written testimony, motions, or other documents intended to become part of the record in this proceeding with the Commission. Pursuant to the secretarial letter issued on March 17, 2020, which is posted on the Commission's website at <https://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Secretarial%20Letters/20200317-SecLtr-Temp-Changes-in-Filing-Requirements.pdf>, all Commission rules requiring the filing of paper copies are suspended until further notice. Parties may elect to submit any filing in electronic form unless otherwise ordered by the Commission. Filings will be considered filed as of the time the electronic copy is received by the Commission; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that routine procedural inquiries may be made by contacting the Commission's Clerk's Office at (603) 271-2431 or ClerksOffice@puc.nh.gov. All requests to the Commission should be made in a written

pleading filed with the Commission. Unless otherwise authorized by law, *ex parte* communications are prohibited; and it is

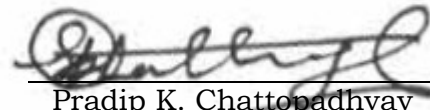
FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to N.H. Admin. R., Puc 203.12, Eversource shall notify all entities and individuals desiring to be heard at this hearing by publishing a copy of this order of notice on its website no later than two business days after the date of issue, such publication to be documented by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before August 19, 2024. In addition, the Clerk shall publish this order of notice on the Commission's website no later than two business days after the date of issue; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any hearings in this matter shall be conducted in accordance with the attached hearing guidelines.

So ordered, this eighth day of August, 2024.



Daniel C. Goldner
Chairman



Pradip K. Chattopadhyay
Commissioner

Individuals needing assistance or auxiliary communication aids due to sensory impairment or other disability should contact the NHPUC, 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire 03301-2429; 603-271-2431; TDD Access: Relay N.H. 1-800-735-2964. Notification of the need for assistance should be made one week prior to the scheduled event.

Service List - Docket Related

Docket#: 24-094

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Email Addresses

ClerksOffice@puc.nh.gov
scott.anderson@eversource.com
yi-an.chen@eversource.com
Energy-Litigation@energy.nh.gov
ian.farley@eversource.com
ian.farley@eversource.com
sandra.gagnon@eversource.com
donald.m.kreis@oca.nh.gov
joshua.letourneau@eversource.com
nhregulatory@eversource.com
ocalitigation@oca.nh.gov
bryant.robinson@eversource.com
david.wiesner@eversource.com