

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

Inquiry of the Department of Public Utilities)
into Establishing Policies and Practices for)
Electric and Gas Companies Regarding Customer)
Assistance and Ratemaking Measures in)
Connection to the State of Emergency)
Regarding the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19))
Pandemic.)
_____)

GRANTED

Rachel Cottle AUGUST 24, 2020
Hearing Officer

D.P.U. 20-58

JOINT MOTION FOR AN EXTENSION OF TIME

Fitchburg Gas and Electric Light Company d/b/a Unitil (“Unitil”), Massachusetts Electric Company and Nantucket Electric Company, Boston Gas Company and Colonial Gas Company, each d/b/a National Grid (“National Grid”), and NSTAR Gas Company and NSTAR Electric Company, each d/b/a Eversource Energy (“Eversource”), Bay State Gas Company d/b/a Columbia Gas of Massachusetts (“CMA”), Liberty Utilities (New England Natural Gas Company) Corp. d/b/a Liberty (“Liberty”), and The Berkshire Gas Company (“Berkshire”)(together, the “Distribution Companies”) pursuant to 220 C.M.R. 1.02(5) hereby request an extension to file the third update to the Working Group’s Customer Assistance Report (“Third Updated Report”).

On May 11, 2020, the Department of Public Utilities issued a Notice of Inquiry into establishing policies and practices for electric and gas companies regarding customer assistance and ratemaking measures in connection to the State of Emergency regarding the novel Coronavirus (“COVID-19”) Pandemic (“NOI”). The NOI directed the Working Group to create a Customer Assistance Report followed by a consensus ratemaking proposal to support customer assistance initiatives and to maintain the financial integrity of the utilities in response to COVID-19. The Working Group submitted the Customer Assistance report on May 29, 2020. On June 26, 2020,

the Department issued D.P.U. 20-58-A directing the Working Group to update the Customer Assistance Report “identify such information as additional details, specific timelines, revisions, and any new approaches, including plans to progress to a new phase of the four-phase general plan at least ten business days prior to each progression” by July 30, 2020 (D.P.U. 20-58-A Order at 8).

In addition, the Department issued an order in D.P.U. 20-58-B, directing the Working Group to report to the Department in its next Update Report, as results are available, regarding the following issues:

- eligibility criteria for a proposed 18-month payment plan for small C&I customers (First Report at 9, n.6);
- the specific timeframe according to which notices that lead up to termination of service, such as the second and final notices described in 220 CMR 25.02(b) and (c), may be sent to customers (First Report at 10); and
- eligibility criteria for large C&I customers (NOI at 10, n.7).

D.P.U. 20-58-B at 17-18.

The Department directed the Working Group to file updates to the Customer Assistance Report at two-week intervals (D.P.U. 20-58-A Order at 8). The Working Group filed the first update to the Report on August 4, 2020. On this date, the Working Group is filing its second update to the Report. As a result, the Third Updated Report would be due September 4, 2020.

The Distribution Companies would like additional time to engage the full Working Group to develop the Third Updated Report, as contemplated by the Department’s directives. Given the time needed to coordinate amongst the Distribution Company members and the other members of the Working Group, and considering intervening summer vacations, the Distribution Companies respectfully request an extension of ten business days to submit the Third Updated Report to the

Department. This extension will result in moving the current deadline from Friday, September 4, 2020 to Friday, September 18, 2020. The Distribution Companies are authorized the represent that the other members of the Working Group do not object to this request.

Respectfully Submitted,

DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES

By their attorneys,

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Dated: August 21, 2020