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VT PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

April 10, 2017

Ms. Judith C. Whitney, Clerk
Vermont Public Service Board
112 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2701

RE: Request for Workshop on Utility Rate Regulation

Dear Ms. Whitney:

The Department of Public Service (Department) respectfully requests that the Public Service Board (Board) undertake a workshop process to broadly review emerging trends in the utility sector and to evaluate existing forms of Vermont regulation in light of these trends.

During the past 10 years, one or more Vermont utilities have operated under alternative regulation plans, approved pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 218d. Also during this period, there have been significant developments in the utility sector, including:

- The enactment of significant renewable development goals and requirements, through the Renewable Energy Standard, Net Metering Program, and Standard Offer Program;
- Shifts in enabling technologies, through the deployment of advanced metering infrastructure and the emergence of electric vehicles, battery storage, and heat pumps;
- A more dynamic energy environment, in which end users and third-party aggregators have greater ability to manage loads in real time;
- The merger of the state's two largest electric utilities; and
- The expansion of the state's only natural gas utility to a new part of the state, as well as its designation as an efficiency utility.

The Department believes this is an appropriate time to step back and evaluate the way utilities are regulated in Vermont in light of past regulatory practices (both traditional and alternative) and the changing utility landscape. Accordingly, the Department requests that the Board convene one or more workshops, similar to the December 2013 workshop at which the Board and interested stakeholders broadly examined issues related to alternative regulation as well as options for enhancing the value of alternative regulation.¹

¹ Memorandum from Judith C. Whitney, Deputy Clerk of the Board, to Electric Utilities and Vermont Gas Systems, Inc., dated 10/24/13.



The Department has copied the electric and natural gas utilities on this letter, as well as other stakeholders who often appear before the Board. The Department asks that the Board establish a date for an initial workshop and at the same time solicit comments on potential items for discussion. The Department recommends the following topics for discussion at the workshop:

- Review of regulatory practices and performance in Vermont as well as in other jurisdictions;
- Identification of emerging industry trends and opportunities; and
- Discussion of regulatory goals, how they can be articulated and measured, and how they overlap with existing statutory criteria.

The Department would be pleased to coordinate with other participants, as well as Board staff, to develop an agenda for the workshop. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

James Porter, Esq.
Director for Public Advocacy

cc: Attached List (by email)

Utility Rate Regulation Workshop Service List

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