

**STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Case No. 26-1130-TF

Tariff filing of Town of Stowe Electric Department, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 225 and 227(a), for a 14.6% rate increase effective on service rendered on or after August 1, 2026	
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RESPONSE OF THE VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO THE TOWN OF STOWE ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT'S MOTION FOR ALTERNATIVE NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS

On June 5, 2026, the Town of Stowe Electric Department (“Stowe”) filed a motion with the Vermont Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) requesting approval of an alternative publication and customer notice regarding Stowe’s concurrently filed petition for a 14.6% rate increase, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 225, 226, and 227, effective with service rendered on and after August 1, 2026 (The “Rate Change”). Stowe included a proposed notice with its motion. Stowe’s motion asserts that 30 V.S.A. § 225 requires that notice of the Rate Change “shall be published by the company in two newspapers with general circulation in the State within 15 days” of its petition. In the alternative, Stowe requests Commission approval to publish notice of the Rate Change in its customer’s monthly bills, to be issued in the two billing cycles during July 2026, and via publication in the Stowe Reporter on June 16, 2026. The Department of Public Service (“Department”) understands that Stowe has correspondingly taken steps to publish its proposed notice of the Rate Change in the Stowe Reporter, even though the Commission has yet to issue an order approving Stowe’s proposed notice and its means of publication.

As explained herein, the Department maintains that 30 V.S.A. § 225(a) affords the Commission the discretion to direct notice regarding rate changes “to parties affected” and recommends that the Commission direct Stowe to publish a modified version of its proposed notice on its website, and as Stowe proposed alongside its customer’s bills.

Legal Standard

Under 30 V.S.A. § 225(a), existing tariffs or rates may not be changed “except upon 45 days’ notice to the Commission and to the Department of Public Service, and notice to parties affected by the schedules *as the Commission shall direct*” (emphasis added). In a decision concerning materially identical language from 30 V.S.A. § 225, the Vermont Supreme Court stated “[i]t is the position of the appellants that Title 30 requires direct notice to the customers of every rate change. In fact, 30 V.S.A. § 225 leaves that to the decision of the [Commission]. Without an order from the [Commission] public notice is accomplished by filing with the [Commission] under 30 V.S.A. § 225’ . . . [o]ur holding in that case did not require a separate finding concerning such a decision, but allowed the absence of an additional public notice requirement to be inferred from the Commission order in question.”¹ In other words, the provision of customer notice for the Rate Change is subject to the Commission’s discretion and the act of filing a petition for a rate increase has been held to also be notice thereof. The Commission expressly exercised this discretion in approving Stowe’s notice in *Petition of Town of Stowe Elec. Dep’t, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 225 and 227(a), for a 7.9% rate increase to take effect on a service-rendered basis August 15, 2018*, Case No. 18-2372-TF, Order of 07/05/2012 at 1-2.

Department’s Recommended Notice

Because a Rate Change is subject to “notice to parties affected by the schedules as the Commission shall direct,”² the Department recommends that Stowe’s request for alternative publication and notice be approved in a further modified form. Specifically, the Department recommends that Stowe’s proposed notice be revised not only to contain a hyperlink to the exact ePUC internet address for this case but that

¹ *Ratepayers Coal. of Rochester v. Rochester Elec. Light & Power Co.*, 153 Vt. 327, 329–30, 571 A.2d 606, 607–08 (Vt., 1989) (quoting *In re Allied Power & Light Co.*, 133 Vt. 586, 350 A.2d 360 (Vt., 1975) (notice in this matter was provided by publicly filing with the Commission with service to a public advocate)). See also *In re Tariff Filing of Cent. Vermont Pub. Serv. Corp.*, 167 Vt. 626, 628, 711 A.2d 1158, 1160–61 (Vt., 1998) (holding compliance with 30 V.S.A. § 225 notice requirements satisfies due process).

² 30 V.S.A. 225(a).

a citation to the Rate Change's docket number, Case No. 26-1130-TF, also be added. If the notice is changed accordingly, the Department is not opposed to publication in the Stowe Reporter but maintains the notice would be most effective if also published on Stowe's website in addition to the on-bill notice Stowe contemplates. With these modifications to the language of the proposed notice and the addition of website publication, thorough notice of this case and the Rate Change will be achieved.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 19th day of June 2026

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE

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cc: ePUC Service List