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To the Vermont Public Utility Commission:

We all have seen the severe impacts from climate change here and across the country. This year alone, our customers have experienced six major storms, including this summer's historic flooding. The impacts on our neighbors, friends, and colleagues are heartbreaking. The status quo is no longer enough. We must rapidly accelerate proven solutions because a changed climate means more and more of this severe weather in the years ahead. And, now, more than ever, we rely on electricity to power our lives – for our transportation, our heating, working from home, for school, or for life-saving medical equipment.

We submit today for your consideration the first phase of a comprehensive, data-driven plan to provide greater reliability and resiliency for all our customers called our “Zero Outages Initiative.” This Initiative builds on our approved Climate Plan by accelerating the following three major components that work together to create an energy system by 2030 where customers can experience zero outages, all while reducing costs:

1. Undergrounding lines;
2. Storm hardening overhead lines with insulated, stronger wire; and
3. Energy storage for all.

This Initiative addresses the impacts of climate change head on, benefitting all our customers in an equitable way. It creates layers of resiliency across Vermont using the latest technologies, by building on GMP's successful and proactive undergrounding and storm hardening of lines, and by continued deployment of energy storage through batteries and microgrids to keep customers and communities connected. The Initiative will rapidly accelerate this resiliency work through 2030, with the first phase you see today presenting a plan to tackle the hardest hit areas first in rural central and southern Vermont.

We are motivated to do all we can to combat climate change and create a Vermont that is sustainable and affordable, but we must move faster. Together with our customers, regulators, our communities, and that Vermont spirit that manages to innovate despite all odds, we have all we need to revolutionize the energy system and ensure a stronger, more affordable Vermont.

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