

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

NH-PUC 40CT19#254

September 20, 2019 - 1:09 p.m.  
Concord, New Hampshire

RE: DE 19-133  
EVERSOURCE ENERGY:  
Petition for preauthorization of  
Westmoreland Clean Innovation  
Project. (Prehearing conference)

PRESENT: Cmsr. Michael S. Giaimo, Presiding  
Cmsr. Kathryn M. Bailey

Sandy Deno, Clerk

APPEARANCES: Reptg. Public Service Co. of N.H.  
d/b/a Eversource Energy:  
Matthew J. Fossum, Esq.

Reptg. Clean Energy New Hampshire:  
Madeleine Mineau, Executive Director

Reptg. Residential Ratepayers:  
D. Maurice Kreis, Esq., Consumer Adv.  
Pradip Chattopadhyay, Asst. Cons. Adv.  
James Brennan, Finance Director  
Office of Consumer Advocate

Reptg. PUC Staff:  
Brian D. Buckley, Esq.  
Richard Chagnon, Asst. Dir./Elec. Div.  
Kurt Demmer, Electric Division  
Jay Dudley, Electric Division  
Elizabeth Nixon, Electric Division

Court Reporter: Steven E. Patnaude, LCR No. 52

CERTIFIED  
ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

**I N D E X****PAGE NO.****DISCUSSION REGARDING INTERVENTIONS**

4

**STATEMENTS OF PRELIMINARY POSITION BY:**

Mr. Fossum

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Ms. Mineau

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Mr. Kreis

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Mr. Buckley

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**QUESTIONS BY:**

Cmsr. Bailey

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**P R O C E E D I N G**

CMSR. GIAIMO: Good afternoon. We're here today in Docket DE 19-133 relative to Public Service Company of New Hampshire's Petition for Preauthorization of the Westmoreland Clean Innovation Project.

The Commission has received the Company's Affidavit of Publication. And, to date, we have received Eversource's Petition, the Consumer Advocate's Letter of Participation, and the intervention requests of Clean Energy New Hampshire and Sunrun.

Are there any preliminary matters we need to deal with?

*[No verbal response.]*

CMSR. GIAIMO: Hearing silence, we'll move to take appearances. Mr. Fossum.

MR. FOSSUM: Good afternoon, Commissioners. Matthew Fossum, here for Public Service Company of New Hampshire, doing business as Eversource Energy.

CMSR. GIAIMO: Thank you.  
Ms. Mineau.

MS. MINEAU: Madeleine Mineau, for

1 Clean Energy New Hampshire.

2 CMSR. GIAIMO: Thank you.

3 MR. KREIS: I guess it's my turn.

4 I'm D. Maurice Kreis, the Consumer Advocate,  
5 here on behalf of residential utility customers  
6 pursuant to RSA 363:28. And with me today is  
7 Jim Brennan and Pradip Chattopadhyay, my  
8 excellent team of analysts.

9 CMSR. GIAIMO: Thank you. And  
10 congratulations.

11 MR. KREIS: Thank you.

12 MR. BUCKLEY: Good afternoon,  
13 Commissioners Bailey and Giaimo. My name is  
14 Brian D. Buckley. I'm a Staff Attorney with  
15 the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission.  
16 And, here with me today, representing the  
17 Staff's Electric Division are Mr. Richard  
18 Chagnon, Mr. Kurt Demmer, Mr. Jay Dudley, and  
19 Ms. Elizabeth Nixon.

20 CMSR. GIAIMO: Thank you. So, are  
21 there any objections to the motions to  
22 intervene?

23 MR. FOSSUM: None.

24 CMSR. GIAIMO: Seeing none, we'll

1 grant those motions.

2 (Cmsr. Giaimo and Cmsr. Bailey  
3 conferring.)

4 CMSR. GIAIMO: So, it has been  
5 brought to my attention that Attorney Birchard  
6 is not here, and neither is anyone from Sunrun,  
7 looking around the room. That doesn't change  
8 your positions? It's still the same?

9 MR. FOSSUM: No objection.

10 CMSR. GIAIMO: All right.

11 (Cmsr. Giaimo and Cmsr. Bailey  
12 conferring.)

13 CMSR. GIAIMO: Commissioner Bailey  
14 and I have discussed this. And we think it is  
15 prudent to accept Ms. Mineau's request for  
16 intervention, and we'll keep the Sunrun  
17 intervention request under advisement.

18 Let's start with initial positions.

19 MR. FOSSUM: Thank you,  
20 Commissioners, and good afternoon.

21 The Company is here today and is  
22 pleased to present today this Westmoreland  
23 Clean Innovation Project, and we'll highlight a  
24 few issues of it this afternoon.

1           We believe this is an innovative  
2           proposal for New Hampshire. It incorporates a  
3           number of proposals that, taken as a whole,  
4           both address reliability needs in the  
5           Westmoreland area and presents savings for  
6           customers.

7           As described in the testimony that we  
8           have filed, it's a three-part proposal;  
9           including targeted energy efficiency and a  
10          "bring-your-own-device" proposal for customers  
11          to use their own customer-sited devices. The  
12          combination of the targeted energy efficiency  
13          and the "bring-your-own-device" proposal work  
14          together to help control both the size and the  
15          cost of the third part of this proposal, the  
16          utility-scale battery.

17          Taken as a group, these proposals  
18          address a real and persistent reliability need  
19          in the Westmoreland area that would otherwise  
20          be addressed through a traditional  
21          poles-and-wires solution, and it will do so at  
22          a cost lower than a traditional wires-and-poles  
23          solution. We believe this proposal presents  
24          the better course both for Westmoreland and,

1           hopefully, over the long term, for the state.

2                       From some initial feedback we have  
3           received, we understand there may some question  
4           about the underlying reliability issue. It is  
5           a real, genuine, and continuing issue in that  
6           area, and we are prepared to address questions  
7           that may arise about it.

8                       We understand there may also be some  
9           questions about the benefits as calculated by  
10          the Company in this case. Those benefits we  
11          believe are fair and appropriate. And we're  
12          prepared to validate those for the Commission  
13          and the parties.

14                      This is an important and an  
15          innovative proposal the Company is proud to  
16          present. And we're pleased to work with the  
17          others, the other parties to this case, to  
18          resolve their concerns and move this matter  
19          forward. And we ask that the Commission  
20          approve our proposal.

21                      Thank you.

22                      CMSR. GIAIMO: Commissioner Bailey  
23          has a question.

24                      CMSR. BAILEY: Mr. Fossum, do you

1 know if the proposal includes a new form of  
2 metering?

3 MR. FOSSUM: I don't believe it --  
4 from what is in the testimony, no. We are not,  
5 at this point, proposing to change or bring in  
6 new forms of customer metering, no.

7 CMSR. BAILEY: Okay. To the extent  
8 that the meters have the ability to control the  
9 discharge of electricity upon your -- the  
10 Company's call, I ask that you pay careful  
11 attention to cybersecurity, and inform the  
12 Commission about what the Company has done to  
13 ensure that cybersecurity issues are addressed.

14 MR. FOSSUM: Absolutely.  
15 Cybersecurity is of paramount concern to the  
16 Company. We are not, to the extent that there  
17 is going to be things like load reductions,  
18 essentially at the call of the Company, those  
19 would not be through Company meters.

20 But, regardless of how they happen,  
21 we are dedicated to ensuring the safety and  
22 integrity both of our system and of customer  
23 information. And we will certainly update the  
24 Commission, as necessary, with any of that



1 information.

2 CMSR. BAILEY: Thank you.

3 CMSR. GIAIMO: Thank you.

4 Ms. Mineau.

5 MS. MINEAU: Thank you.

6 As advocating for clean energy  
7 innovation is a central part of our mission,  
8 we're very interested in this docket and the  
9 proposal that Eversource has brought forward.  
10 But we don't wish to take a position at this  
11 time.

12 CMSR. GIAIMO: Thank you. Mr. Kreis.

13 MR. KREIS: Thank you, Commissioner  
14 Giaimo.

15 I went on record some time ago as  
16 referring to this project and the Company's  
17 proposal for a micro grid in Portsmouth, when  
18 filed in the Company's rate case, as a couple  
19 of "glitter bombs". And the Company was quite  
20 responsive to that expression of a concern, and  
21 agreed to move this project and the micro grid  
22 project out of the rate case and into  
23 freestanding dockets.

24 Here, in this context of the

1 freestanding docket, a cynic might say that the  
2 BYOD and energy efficiency portions of the  
3 Company's proposal are glitter bombs within the  
4 bigger glitter bomb, because they surely don't  
5 really have any impact on whether or not to  
6 green light a \$6 million investment in a big  
7 battery.

8 So, at its heart, this is really a  
9 docket about "whether it is good public policy  
10 and consistent with the statutory requirements  
11 to allow Eversource to make a major investment  
12 in utility-scale batteries?" And the answer to  
13 that question, from my standpoint, is "maybe".

14 I heard Mr. Fossum say that  
15 Eversource intends to address concerns about  
16 the claimed benefits of the project and about  
17 the reliability implications. And I'm willing  
18 to say that, if the Company can address all of  
19 those concerns, and make a credible case that  
20 this is a project that should move forward,  
21 even though the Commission's approval,  
22 preapproval for most investments are not  
23 required, I think preapproval would be  
24 appropriate here. And we are willing to listen

1 to the Company's proposal to talk about it, to  
2 conduct discovery with an open mind. And we  
3 reserve judgment about whether it is in the  
4 best interests of the Company's residential  
5 customers.

6 CMSR. GIAIMO: Mr. Buckley.

7 MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Commissioner  
8 Giaimo.

9 Staff is still evaluating the issues  
10 presented by the Company in the instant  
11 petition, including, but not limited to, those  
12 relating to how the avoided back tie is  
13 accounted for in the Company's cost/benefit  
14 analysis; how that same cost/benefit analysis  
15 considers round trip efficiency of the proposed  
16 battery storage investments for the purposes of  
17 RSA 374-G; issues relating to customer privacy  
18 and cybersecurity; and the prudence of the  
19 targeted investments in energy efficiency and  
20 demand response, and how those investments  
21 relate to the rest of the project described in  
22 the Company's petition.

23 That said, we look forward to working  
24 with the Company to answer our initial

1 questions on these and other issues in the  
2 technical session that follows today's  
3 prehearing conference.

4 Thank you.

5 CMSR. GIAIMO: Thank you, Mr.  
6 Buckley.

7 Are there any -- is there any  
8 additional business we need to take care of  
9 before the technical session?

10 [No verbal response.]

11 CMSR. GIAIMO: All right. Seeing  
12 none, we'll leave you to the technical session.  
13 Have a great weekend. We have under advisement  
14 the intervention, which we'll take care of as  
15 soon as we can. Thank you.

16 **(Whereupon the prehearing**  
17 **conference was adjourned at**  
18 **1:19 p.m., and a technical**  
19 **session was held thereafter.)**  
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