



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

D.P.U. 17-05

February 10, 2017

Petition of NSTAR Electric Company and Western Massachusetts Electric Company, each doing business as Eversource Energy, pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 94 and 220 C.M.R. § 5.00 et seq., for Approval of General Increases in Base Distribution Rates for Electric Service and a Performance Based Ratemaking Mechanism.

HEARING OFFICER RULING ON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S MOTION FOR EXPEDITED CONSIDERATION OF EXPERT RETENTION

I. INTRODUCTION

On January 17, 2017, NSTAR Electric Company and Western Massachusetts Electric Company, each doing business as Eversource Energy (collectively referred to as "Companies") filed a petition with the Department of Public Utilities ("Department") for an increase base distribution rates for electric customers. The Department has docketed this matter as D.P.U. 17-05.

On January 25, 2017, the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ("Attorney General") submitted a notice of intervention on behalf of the Companies' ratepayers in this case. Further, pursuant to G.L. c. 12, § 11E(b), the Attorney General filed a notice of retention of experts and consultants to assist in her investigation of the Companies' filing. The Attorney General has requested Department approval to spend up to \$550,000.

On January 30, 2017, the Department issued a Notice of Filing, Procedural Conference and Public Hearings ("Notice"). In the Notice, the Department directed anyone seeking to intervene in this matter to file the appropriate petition no later than the close of business (5:00 p.m.) February 24, 2017. Notice at 8. Further, the Department directed anyone seeking to intervene in this matter and also desiring to comment on the Attorney General's notice of retention of experts and consultants to file such comments no later than the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on February 24, 2017. Notice at 8.

On February 8, 2017, the Department issued the Procedural Schedule and Ground Rules governing this case. On February 10, 2017, the Attorney General filed a Motion for Expedited Consideration of Expert Retention ("Motion"). The Attorney General argues that due to the "extremely compressed" procedural schedule and the number of issues raised in the Companies' filing, additional time is needed for the Attorney General's experts to begin work on this case (Motion at 2). Thus, the Attorney General requests that the Department expedite the comment

deadline relative to the notice of retention of experts and consultants to no later than February 15, 2017 (Motion at 2). The Attorney General also requests that the Department issue an Order on her notice of retention of experts and consultants by February 17, 2017 (Motion at 2). The Companies do not object to the Motion, nor do they intend to file comments on the notice of retention of experts and consultants (Motion at 3).

II. RULING

Based on the circumstances of this case, I find that it is appropriate to allow for an expedited process with respect to the filing of comments on the Attorney General's notice of retention of experts and consultants. Accordingly, anyone seeking to intervene in this matter and also desiring to comment on the Attorney General's notice of retention of experts and consultants shall file such comments no later than the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on **February 15, 2017**. Comments shall be filed according to the instructions set forth in the Notice. The intervention deadline shall remain set at February 24, 2017.

This Ruling in no way modifies the Procedural Schedule issued on February 8, 2017, nor should it be construed as a departure from the Department's usual treatment of the Attorney General's notice of retention of experts and consultants.

Finally, the Companies are directed to immediately place a copy of this Ruling on the home page of their website, www.eversource.com. In doing so, the Companies are directed to conspicuously reference this Ruling as associated with the base rate filing and provide a link to the Ruling. The attached Notice shall be made available for viewing on the website through at least February 15, 2017.

/s/

Marc J. Tassone, Hearing Officer