

Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities & Carriers

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....2

ADMINISTRATOR’S LETTER3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY4

AGENCY HISTORY4

CURRENT ADMINISTRATOR.....6

2023 HIGHLIGHTS7

DIVISION ORGANIZATION18

 MOTOR CARRIERS SECTION..... 18

 CONSUMER SECTION 19

 LEGAL SECTION..... 19

 RATE ACCOUNTING SECTION 20

 ENGINEERING & PIPELINE SAFETY SECTION 21

 CABLE TV (CATV) SECTION..... 22

APPENDIX A – REGULATED ENTITIES24

APPENDIX B – DIVISION JURISDICTION27

ADMINISTRATOR’S LETTER

I am pleased to report on the accomplishments achieved by the Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers during calendar year 2023. Pursuant to Title 39 of the General Laws, the Division is charged with representing and advancing the interests of all ratepayers of public utilities within the state, which is achieved through the proper administration of applicable laws and regulations governing the affairs of utilities and carriers that provide essential services, such as electricity, natural gas, water, sewer, transportation, and telecommunications.

The year 2023 represented a challenging period during which we continued our longstanding efforts to maintain affordable, safe, and reliable services to Rhode Island residents, while simultaneously seeking to advance the clean-energy transition occurring in our state and across New England. While implementation of Rhode Island’s Act on Climate has been a front-and-center issue for the Division in concert with other state agencies, we continue to face the challenge of prioritizing significant investments in electric and gas infrastructure in the near term to ensure the continuous supply of affordable and reliable energy essential to our economy. At the same time, 2023 witnessed additional efforts to expand renewable energy resources across the state, including efforts to advance substantial additions to offshore wind resources that will be vital in achieving decarbonization of the electric and natural gas sectors.

This report provides an overview of the work conducted by our agency during 2023 in effectuating the legislature’s intent across multiple industry sectors in Rhode Island. Exemplified herein are multiple efforts to reduce costs, and initiatives to conduct independent audits to ensure and verify the accuracy of accounting entries and financial reporting. Lastly, the Division’s efforts on behalf of utility ratepayers are always guided by our number-one priority: to protect public safety and ensure that our energy delivery systems provide safe and reliable service both in the near term and long term. The Division also serves as the federally delegated authority charged with ensuring compliance with federal and state pipeline safety regulations, and ensuring, as well, that utilities subject to our jurisdiction always have the capacity to invest in keeping their systems safe. On the electric side, we strive to provide a strong voice in regional electricity affairs by advocating for prudent spending that balances affordability against the need to invest in transmission infrastructure that will help decarbonize our energy systems and power our future.

Despite the Division’s demanding caseload and ever-growing legislative requirements, the agency diligently handled all challenges in 2023 through an exceptional staff work ethic, coupled with a deep-rooted commitment to serving and protecting the utility ratepayers of Rhode Island.

The 2023 Highlights Section of the report begins on Page Seven and summarizes the more noteworthy cases and initiatives that occurred during the year. I am grateful for our hard-earned achievements during 2023 and look forward to continued progress and successes in 2024.

Sincerely,

Linda D. George, Esq.

Division Administrator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (“Division”), exercises the jurisdiction, supervision, powers and duties not specifically assigned to the Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”), including the execution of all laws relating to utilities and carriers, and all regulations and orders of the commission governing the conduct and charges of public utilities. The Division also holds exclusive jurisdiction over the rates, tariffs, tolls and charges and the sufficiency and reasonableness of facilities and accommodations of common carriers of property and passengers over the state's public roadways and waterways. The Division additionally supervises and regulates Community Antenna Television Systems (CATV) in Rhode Island; certifies all public utilities; and has exclusive regulatory authority over the transactions between public utilities and affiliates, and all public utility equity and debt issuances.

AGENCY HISTORY

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (“Division”) was disjoined from the Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) through passage of the Utility Restructuring Act (“URA”) of 1996. Prior to the passage of the URA, the Chairperson of the Commission also acted as the Administrator of the Division. The URA established the Division as an independent regulatory agency that works cooperatively with the Commission to achieve the state’s collective utility and transportation regulatory goals as set forth in R.I.G.L. §39-1-1, *et seq.* That is: “to provide fair regulation of public utilities and carriers in the interest of the public, to promote availability of adequate, efficient, and economical energy, communication, and transportation services and water supplies to the inhabitants of the state, to provide just and reasonable rates and charges for such services and supplies, without unjust discrimination, undue preferences or advantages, or unfair or destructive competitive practices.”

The Division is headed by an administrator, who is not a commissioner, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate for a 6-year term, and statutorily declared to be an indispensable party to all Commission matters. One of the Division’s functions is to serve the Commission by “bringing to it all relevant evidence to allow the Commission to reach a just result,” *see Providence Gas Co. v. Burke*, 419 A.2d 263 (1980), to function as the enforcement arm of the Commission, and also to exercise “jurisdiction over all regulatory matters not specifically assigned to the Commission.” R.I. Gen. Laws §39-1-3.

To that end, the Division is an active party in all Commission proceedings connected to electric distribution service, natural gas service, water and sewer service, regulated telecommunications services, and ferry services. In ratemaking matters before the Commission, the Division is responsible for serving as the “ratepayer advocate” to assist the Commission in rendering a fair and equitable decision. Additionally, the Division is responsible for enforcing Commission rulings relative to rates, service, reliability, and safety of utility services. In this capacity, the Division defends all Commission decisions that are appealed to the RI Supreme Court.

In addition to its party status before the Commission, the Division has exclusive and plenary jurisdiction over the State’s adherence to federally mandated pipeline safety programs for natural gas distribution systems (the storage, transportation and distribution of natural gas); cable television licensing and public access; all utility matters before federal agencies; the State’s interest in regional energy matters; non-regulated power producers; transactions between utilities, and between utilities and affiliates; utility issuance of bonds, loans and other evidences of indebtedness; excavations near underground utility facilities; electric and gas utility emergency response plans; utility collection practices; as well as the licensing and regulating of all for-hire motor carriers transporting passengers or property from point-to-point within Rhode Island (intrastate). Such passenger carriers include ferry companies, taxicabs, public motor vehicles, jitneys, and transportation network companies (like Uber and Lyft); such property carriers include ferry companies, towing companies, household goods movers, courier services, tanker trucks transporting petroleum and non-petroleum products, and bulk commodity (sand, gravel, mulch, etc.) carriers. The Division also has broad authority over the water services and water quality provided by the State’s largest water utilities (i.e., Providence, Kent County, Pawtucket, Newport, Woonsocket, and Veolia Water – Rhode Island), railroads, and the R.I. Telecommunications Education Access Fund. The Division and Commission each plays a role in ensuring the safety and reliability of infrastructure used by electric and gas distribution utilities in Rhode Island.

To carry out its charges under the law, the Division has police powers and broad authority to promulgate rules and regulations; issue subpoenas; conduct audits and investigations; fix standards for service; require utilities to furnish safe, reasonable, and adequate services and facilities; prescribe a system of uniform accounts; and require information on utility bills.

CURRENT ADMINISTRATOR

Linda D. George was appointed Administrator of the Division of Public Utilities & Carriers ("Division") in June 2020 by former Governor Gina Raimondo. Prior to her appointment, she had served as Acting Administrator for the Division since the Fall of 2019. Administrator George also served as Deputy Chief of Legal Services for the Division and Senior Legal Counsel for the Public Utilities Commission ("Commission"), where she was responsible for dockets focused on water and electric utility regulation, including energy efficiency, system reliability, and renewable energy. Before that, she served as a policy analyst and attorney for the Rhode Island Senate, providing support for the Committee on Environment and Agriculture and the Committee on Government Oversight. She brings 29 years of legal experience to the position.

Administrator George graduated magna cum laude from Vermont Law School in 1991, where she also served as Head Notes Editor of the Vermont Law Review. She also earned a Bachelor of Arts in Government in 1987 from Dartmouth College. While at Dartmouth College, she was a four-year starter for the Women's Hockey team, and Team Captain in 1987.

Administrator George is married with three children and lives in North Kingstown, R.I.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- **DIVISION EMPLOYEE NAMED VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE END USER SECTION WITHIN NEPOOL**

In December of 2022, Division Chief Economic and Policy Advisor Paul Roberti was re-elected to a second term as Vice-Chair of the End User Sector within NEPOOL (New England Power Pool). NEPOOL serves an important regional role as New England’s independent, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”)-approved stakeholder advisory group on all matters relating to the design and implementation of competitive wholesale market rules and transmission tariff design. Paul’s appointment ensures that the Division remains informed on regional issues that impact RI Ratepayers. Over the course of his 30 years of experience in the transportation, energy and utility sectors, Paul has held various positions in government and the private sector, including: Chief Counsel at the U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration; Commissioner at the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission; Assistant Attorney General and Chief of the Regulatory Division at the Rhode Island Attorney General’s Office; and Executive Director at Ernst & Young, where he advised clients across North America. Paul is a graduate of Holy Cross College (B.A. Chemistry) and Suffolk University School of Law (cum laude). He has been admitted to practice law in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Florida, the U.S. Court of Appeals (DC and 1st Circuits), and the United States Supreme Court.

- **REGULATORY TOPIC INITIATIVE LAUNCHED**

Beginning in calendar year 2023, the Division began to publish Regulatory Topics on our webpage. These Regulatory Topics are brief summaries of various issues/matters that fall within the Division’s jurisdiction. Mindful that the regulation of utilities is a very esoteric and complex field, these Regulatory Topics are meant to be short, concise summaries in plain language that are easily understood by all readers. The audience for these Regulatory Topics varies. They are intended to educate/inform the various energy/regulatory stakeholders, elected officials, and the general public. 2023 was the Division’s pilot year, and we published sixteen (16) topics. We have updated many of these for 2024 already and aim to publish one (1) new Regulatory Topic per month¹.

- **DIVISION CREATES NEW BILINGUAL CONSUMER AGENT POSITION TO BETTER SERVE THE PUBLIC**

In 2023, the Division worked with the R.I. Division of Human Resources to create the new job classification of Bilingual Consumer Agent. Before the creation of this new position, the Division encountered difficulty recruiting bilingual candidates for the Agency’s Consumer Department. According to the 2020 Census, Rhode Island’s Hispanic/Latino population has

¹ These Regulatory Topics can be found on the Division’s website: <https://ripuc.ri.gov/node/15731>

grown by nearly 40 percent since 2010. Although only making up about 17 percent of the state’s population, a disproportionate percentage of the Hispanic/Latino community is living in poverty (nearly one-quarter of households) and accounts for a large percentage of the ratepayers serviced by the Division’s agents. The Division created a dedicated bilingual Consumer Agent classification to address this disparity. Presently, three of the Division’s five full-time Consumer Agents are bilingual.

- **FUTURE OF GAS – DOCKET 22-01-NG**

On June 9, 2022, the Commission opened Docket 22-01-NG, Investigation into the Future of the Regulated Gas Distribution Business in Rhode Island in Light of The Act on Climate. The “Notice of Commencement of Docket” provides:

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC or Commission) hereby gives notice that it has opened a docket to investigate the effect of the Act on Climate (Act), R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-6.2, on the regulated gas distribution business in Rhode Island. The purpose of the docket is to examine the extent to which the requirements of the Act impact the conduct, regulation, ratemaking, and the future of gas supply and gas distribution within Rhode Island. The investigation will include, but not be limited to, a stakeholder process that identifies goals for the future of the gas system in light of the Act, identifies or updates principles for ratemaking and regulation that would reasonably facilitate the achievement of the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in the Act, and develops the scope for a report on the future of gas distribution business operations and investments in the state.

While this was opened as a Commission docket, and titled an investigation, the initial format for this docket is that of a stakeholder group (not an evidentiary-based hearing) requiring testimony and information presented under oath before the Commission. At some point in the future, the Commission may hold evidentiary hearings. The first Stakeholder Committee meeting was held on March 10, 2023, and these stakeholder meetings have continued throughout 2023 into 2024. As a stakeholder, the Division and has actively participated in these meetings. Through its participation and with the retained assistance of leading economists, the Division seeks to ensure that the interests of all ratepayers are properly represented and protected as the Commission explores and evaluates various decarbonization pathways through the lens of affordability, reliability and safety. It is expected that this proceeding will last into 2024, with a “Future of Gas” report to be issued by the Commission.

- **DIVISION AUDIT PROGRAM**

The Division has broad statutory authority to conduct audits on regulated utilities in Rhode Island. As funding permitted, the Division expanded its Audit program in 2023. These audits are still ongoing and will not be completed until later in 2024. Ongoing audits are intended to verify utility accounting entries and financial reporting to ensure that rates are calculated appropriately to reflect legitimate costs. The Division is strongly committed to the auditing process, as our audits serve as a resource to the Commission and/or other regulatory bodies before which the Division appears. These audits provide an assessment of risk and provide assurance and transparency into regulated utilities’ operations and/or financial records.

- **ENERGY FACILITY SITING BOARD: OLD MILL LANE- DOCKETS SB-2021-04 & 22-42-NG**

On May 19, 2021, an application for a License to Construct and Alter Major Energy Facilities was filed by Rhode Island Energy’s (“Rhode Island Energy” or “RIE”) predecessor, National Grid, and submitted to the Energy Facilities Siting Board (“EFSB”). More specifically, Rhode Island Energy is seeking to construct a liquified natural gas (“LNG”) vaporization facility at its property located on Old Mill Lane, Portsmouth, R.I. The EFSB directed the Commission to issue an advisory opinion on this matter. The Commission opened Docket 22-42-NG to consider the need and cost of the facility, as well as an evaluation of how the facility would impact greenhouse gas emissions, so that it could render an advisory opinion to the Board. The Division was a party in both the EFSB docket and the Commission docket. The Division’s position is that there continues to be a reliability need for ongoing operations of the existing portable LNG vaporization facilities on Old Mill Lane, but that the long-term need was not proven by the Company, and, thus, there was no proven justification for constructing facilities that are estimated to cost \$15 million. The EFSB will consider all advisory opinions and convene final hearings before rendering a decision on the merits.

- **FY2024 ELECTRIC AND GAS INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY, & RELIABILITY PLANS (“ISR”) – DOCKETS 22-53-EL & 22-54-NG**

Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, Rhode Island’s sole natural gas utility and the state’s dominant electric distribution company (Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a Rhode Island Energy, often referred to as “the Company”) must submit plans to the Division containing infrastructure, safety, and reliability (“ISR”) spending for the following year. Per statute, the ISR plan must propose capital spending on utility infrastructure and costs related to maintaining safety and reliability. Specifically for electric operations, the plan should also include operation and maintenance expenses on vegetation management and system inspections, including expenses associated with anticipated repairs.

Both the Gas and Electric ISR plans are first submitted to the Division, whereupon the Division has sixty days to review the various categories of costs. Given the breadth and complexity of

these plans, the Division often employs expert consultants to help evaluate the engineering, reliability, and safety aspects to assist with developing conclusions about the need, cost, and prioritization of proposed investments and to testify before the Commission. To the extent that the Company and the Division mutually agree on a plan, the plan is then filed with the Commission for review and approval within ninety (90) days. If the Company and the Division do not agree on a plan, the company will file its proposed plan with the Commission and the Commission shall hold hearings to review and determine whether the proposed investments should be approved, with consideration of the Division's recommendations.

Electric Sector FY2024 ISR Plan:

Since the inception of the ISR legislated program, FY2024 represented the first time that the Division and Rhode Island Energy did not reach agreement on the capital budget for the electric sector. Rhode Island Energy proposed a budget of \$190 million, which included expenditures for vegetation management, Inspection & Maintenance (I&M), Volt/Var Optimization and Conservation Voltage Reduction Expansion (VVO/CVR), and a new Operations and Maintenance (O&M) category for grid modernization investments. After a contested hearing before the Commission, during which the Division presented recommendations from a nationally recognized power systems engineer along with other financial and accounting experts, the Commission ultimately lowered the capital budget in line with the Division's recommendation. The final approved budget for electric sector spending was set at \$127 million, or approximately \$60 million less than what the Company had initially proposed.

Gas Sector FY2024 ISR Plan:

For the FY2024 Gas ISR spending plan, Rhode Island Energy proposed a budget of \$186.5 million, which represented a significant increase in spending compared to the prior year. This also represented the first year in which the Division and the Company were unable to reach a consensus of spending levels for the following year. The matter was considered by the Commission during contested hearings. The Division's experts provided testimony assessing the overall condition of the Company's infrastructure, leak trends on the Company's distribution system and the efficacy of the replacement programs to reduce leaks, and the relationship between methane emission reduction and proactive pipe replacement. Notably, it emphasized that Rhode Island's natural gas system is one of the oldest in the country with a large inventory of leak-prone and deteriorating infrastructure, which can have a profound impact on the safety and reliability of the system in the absence of systemic investments to maintain the integrity of the system. Ultimately, the Division reached consensus with the Company and agreed to a budget of \$171 million, which was approximately \$15 million less than what the Company originally proposed and almost \$5 million less than the FY2023 approved budget. More specifically, the Division and the Company agreed to reduce the total pipe installation to 65 miles, and further to allow an increase in the Large Diameter Leak Prone Cast Iron (LPCI) Rehabilitation Program by 0.7 miles. This budget level would allow the

Company to remain on track to replace the remaining leak-prone pipe within its system by 2035, a target that was set by the Commission at the inception of the accelerated pipeline replacement program which began approximately ten years ago. The need for systematic investment in the gas system remains: As of December 2022, the Company had approximately 880 miles of leak-prone pipe consisting of legacy cast iron and bare steel systems. Nearly 500 miles is more than 100 years old and represents a continuing safety and reliability risk, in addition to the fact that fugitive methane emissions qualify as potent greenhouse gas emissions. Federal guidelines target replacement of both types of pipes.

- **ADVANCED METERING FUNCTIONALITY (“AMF”) – DOCKET 22-49-EL**

The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a Rhode Island Energy (“RIE”) filed a proposal with the Commission seeking approval to begin full scale deployment of advanced metering functionality (“AMF”) across its electric service territory in Rhode Island. The cost of replacing 524,677 legacy meters with new advanced meters is estimated at \$188 million. Given the magnitude of the costs, the Division engaged a team of experts to review the meter program from an operational and functionality perspective, and ultimately concluded that the need for full scale AMF deployment was justified by a number of factors, including: (1) the current fleet of existing meters is approaching obsolescence; (2) the need for RIE to have greater visibility and control over two-way power flows and resulting voltage fluctuations across the grid, particularly as increasing penetrations of distributed energy resources are connected to the system; and (3) the ability of AMF technology to empower customers with more understanding concerning their energy consumption and use profile that should enable customers to reduce costs, particularly as demand response and time varying rate options become available. The Commission approved the AMF program in late 2023. Once fully functional, the AMF technology platform will be vital for optimizing the capacity of distributed renewable energy resources to connect to the distribution system and maximize the generation and delivery of clean electricity to consumers.

- **AUDIT OF NATIONAL GRID’S ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM: FRAUD - DOCKET 22-05-EE**

In 2022, Rhode Island regulators discovered inappropriate accounting practices by Rhode Island Energy’s predecessor, National Grid, in connection with the administration of energy efficiency programs. On the electric sector alone, these programs entail annual ratepayer funding of approximately \$100 million for the delivery of efficient measures for lighting, heating, appliances, and insulation for qualifying residential, commercial, and industrial customers. The Commission initiated Docket 22-05-EE to investigate the Company’s apparent practice of “invoice stacking” that helped the company maximize financial performance incentives spanning a period of more than eight years.² The misreporting of financial data, coupled with the observed misconduct of employees and management, led the Division to

² The Company manipulated the timing of when vendors were paid to maximize its profit incentive.

retain the services of a forensic accountant and utility regulatory expert to assist with an investigation to determine the extent and impact on ratepayers, which the Division concluded likely exceed \$10 million before application of interest and statutory penalties. Ultimately, the Division submitted a detailed report with testimony and recommendations to the Commission. The Commission is in the process of scheduling hearings for 2024.

- **OFFSHORE WIND RFP**

On October 13, 2023, The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a Rhode Island Energy (“RIE”), in consultation with the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (“OER”) and the Division, issued a Request for Proposal (“RFP”) for Long-term Contracts for Offshore Wind Energy Projects pursuant to the Affordable Clean Energy Security Act, R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 39-31. The original RFP was issued in October 2022, but there was only one bidder. RIE rejected the single bid after conducting an extensive quantitative analysis, which revealed that the costs of the wind power substantially exceed the projected benefits, and further, that execution of a purchase power contract would not meet the minimum requirements of the procurement law. A second RFP was released a year later in October of 2023 that includes the option for a regional procurement with Massachusetts and Connecticut. Bidder responses are expected to be received in the second quarter of 2024, and the Division, along with OER, is working closely with RIE as the Company conducts the requisite review of any bids, coupled with the undertaking of another comprehensive quantitative analysis that will be essential to any determination regarding whether one or more bid proposals should be accepted and submitted to the Commission for approval.

- **RELIABILITY AND COORDINATION OF POSSIBLE ISO-NEW ENGLAND DIRECTED CONTROLLED OUTAGES**

Rhode Island and the region continue to plan for multiple energy adequacy scenarios that include consideration of possible electricity shortages during winter seasons. The risk is heightened by the effects of extreme-cold temperatures over an extended period, which is expected to result in heavy demand for power across the New England region, thereby depleting natural gas supplies available through pipelines and liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities. Currently, natural gas-fired power plants produce more than 50 percent of the electricity consumed by residents and businesses in Rhode Island and across the five other New England states. Gas pipelines that serve New England operate at maximum capacity during the winter months. During extreme cold weather, increased demand for natural gas to heat homes and businesses often limits the availability of gas for power plants. These facilities depend on imports of LNG or alternatively resort to burning oil if the specific power plant maintains dual fuel capability.

The Division continues to plan and work cooperatively with ISO New England (“ISO-NE”), state emergency management officials, and regulated utilities in Rhode Island to remain prepared for the possibility of weather-induced reliability challenges this winter season, including the following:

- a. Close coordination with ISO-NE to monitor grid reliability status with respect to the 21-day weather forecast, particularly extreme cold temperatures.
- b. Engagement with all electric and gas utilities to stay prepared for the possibility that an energy shortage may require the need to reduce electric demand via load shedding (i.e., rotating outages on a feeder-by-feeder basis) and ensuring feeder map prioritization is integrated into R.I. Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) systems.
- c. Participation in Table-Top exercises with RI gas and electric utilities in conjunction with RI Emergency and Providence Emergency Management officials, the Governor’s office, state energy agencies, and others to ensure the highest degree of coordination regarding the need for communications and public messaging for urgent calls for conservation, and a strategic approach to load shedding to ensure support for critical care facilities, emergency facilities and designated warming centers to maintain continuity of electric service.
- d. Convening winter gas operations meetings with Rhode Island Energy to review the following planned efforts:
 - i. Coordinated timing to electric service restorations to avoid potential pressure drops that could jeopardize reliability on the gas system (i.e., avoid triggering a 2019 Aquidneck Island pressure collapse and extended outage).
 - ii. Ongoing monitoring of RIE’s inspection, testing and maintenance of LNG facilities.
 - iii. Review demand response protocols for non-firm customers.
 - iv. Engage with Northeast Gas Association to monitor Interstate Pipeline systems regarding incidents or significant supply losses that could affect RIE’s gas system reliability.
 - v. Continuing with follow-up briefings with ISO-NE regarding system status information for resource and fuel adequacy.

- **ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION COST CONTROL STRATEGIES**

Effective oversight of transmission costs in New England has been a top priority of the Division. Under Rhode Island law, the Division is the proper party to represent the state’s consumers before federal agencies, including the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”), which has jurisdiction over transmission infrastructure. Consequently, the Division is working in concert with other consumer advocates and stakeholders across the New England states to advance process enhancements that will improve transparency as it relates to the

purported need and cost justification for asset condition projects³. Within Rhode Island, the Division has been engaging directly with Rhode Island Energy, which owns and controls the approximate 300 miles of high voltage transmission lines operating within the state. We are now in the process of requesting asset condition spending plans that include forward-looking forecasts of planned projects so that we can independently evaluate the pace, scale, and cost of transmission upgrades. Our efforts to carefully scrutinize asset condition projects will help to ensure that any project not only comports with good utility and engineering practices, but also will ensure that projects are sufficiently “right sized” to accommodate decarbonized energy solutions that best advance Rhode Island’s clean energy transition.

- **DIVISION EMPLOYEE NAMED VICE CHAIRMAN OF FEDERAL UNIFIED CARRIER REGISTRATION PLAN’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

In late 2023, Division Associate Administrator Terrence Mercer was appointed Vice-Chair of the Unified Carrier Registration Plan’s Board of Directors. Terry is the Division’s Associate Public Utilities Administrator for Regulatory Enforcement and Ratepayer Affairs and has been involved with UCR since its inception. Rhode Island has been a participating state in the Federal Unified Carrier Registration System (“UCR”) since its inception in 2007. The UCR Agreement is found in 49 United States Code (USC) section 14504a. The UCR Agreement is established by federal law in the UCR Act, which is part of the Federal Highway Reauthorization bill known as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETE-LU). The Division is the custodian for collecting these Motor Carrier fees for Rhode Island. The UCR system replaced the Single State Registration System in 2007. Under the UCR, each state is entitled to collect a certain amount of registration fees (a CAP) based loosely on how much money each state collected prior to implementing the UCR program. Rhode Island is entitled to collect no more than \$2,285,486 on an annual registration year (calendar) basis. These funds go to the State’s General Fund and must be used to support state enforcement activities, such as roadside inspections, audits, and investigations.

- **NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSION RATE CASE – DOCKET 22-47-WW**

In late 2022, the Narragansett Bay Commission (“NBC”) filed a rate case and sought Commission approval to implement a multiyear rate plan that would increase rates in five phases. NBC’s proposed rates in the first year were designed to collect additional operating revenue in the amount of \$11,257,959 to support a total revenue requirement of \$115,574,327, which represents an increase of 11.1 percent for residential and commercial rates. After engaging in an intensive review of the rate filing, the Division filed testimony and recommendations to the Commission that lowered the revenue increase in the first year of the

³ Repair, replacement, and upgrades of aging, existing high-voltage transmission lines and facilities.

rate plan from \$11.3 million to \$3.1 million. NBC ultimately accepted many of the Division’s recommended adjustments, as set forth below:

- NBC withdrew its request for rate increases in FYs 2026, 2027 and 2028;
- Agreement that \$3,862,859 of Operating Capital amounts was erroneously included in NBC’s originally proposed Rate Year Revenue Requirement and should be removed;
- Agreement that Subscription/Lease expense of \$113,400 was erroneously excluded in NBC’s originally proposed Rate Year Revenue Requirement and should be included;
- Agreement to decrease expense for Vehicle Fuel and Maintenance by \$166,232 and reduction of Service Agreement by \$125,600;
- Agreement to decrease insurance expense by \$46,379; and
- Agreement to reduce Workers’ Compensation expense by \$422,405;

In light of NBC’s concessions and following a series of settlement discussions between NBC and the Division, a formal settlement agreement was reached between the parties that would permit NBC to increase its revenue requirement by \$9.6 million representing an approximate rate increase of 9 percent. The Commission ultimately approved the settlement.

THREE-YEAR (2024-2026) ENERGY EFFICIENCY PLAN

The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a Rhode Island Energy filed its three-year (2024-2026) Energy Efficiency and Conservation Procurement Plan (“Three-Year Plan”) and separately proposed an Annual Energy Efficiency and Conservation Procurement Program for the 2024 calendar year. The Plans were submitted to the Commission in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-1-27.7(c) and the Least Cost Procurement Standards as approved and adopted previously by the Commission.

The Annual Plan was approved at a combined budget of \$129.4 million (\$95.3 million for Electric and \$34.1 million for Gas) for energy efficiency programs that cover electric and gas operations. According to the Company, successful implementation of the programs will create an estimated \$273 million in benefits over the life of the installed electric and natural gas energy efficiency measures (\$193.3 million for Electric and \$80.3 million for Gas). The Division engaged in a thorough review of the programmatic aspects of the planned programs, including whether the plan (1) complies with R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-1-27.1 (the Least Cost Procurement Statute); (2) adheres to the newly adopted PUC’s Least Cost Procurement (LCP) Standards adopted in Docket No. 23-07-EE; (3) advances Rhode Island’s Energy policies and the goals of R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-6.2-2 (the Act on Climate); and (4) promotes the general interest and welfare of Rhode Island ratepayers. The Division recognizes the importance of advancing energy efficiency investments that have been verified to meet both the cost

estimation and cost effectiveness criteria as required by the Public Utilities Commission. Successful implementation of these programs are estimated to reduce Rhode Island’s greenhouse gas inventory by 0.91 percent, consistent with the goals of the Act on Climate.

- **INVESTIGATION INTO THE BLOCK ISLAND CABLE OUTAGES**

On May 1, 2017, the Block Island Utility District d/b/a Block Island Power Company (“BIPCo”) began receiving its power supply from the mainland through the newly constructed Block Island undersea transmission cable, which connected Block Island (situated approximately twelve miles off the southern coast of Rhode Island) to the mainland electric grid. Prior to the connection, BIPCo used four (4) on-island diesel generators for 100 percent of its supply needs and consumed nearly *one million gallons* of diesel fuel annually. BIPCo still owns and maintains generators as back-up in the event of a cable outage. The undersea transmission cable is also the only connection to the Nation’s first and largest offshore wind farm, commonly referred to as Deepwater Wind.

The undersea transmission cable experienced two outages over the course of eight weeks in late 2022 into 2023, causing the Division to investigate with a view to ensuring there was not a systematic problem with the cable. The reliability of the cable is more important than ever given the passage of the Act on Climate. A cable outage requires BIPCo to run its backup diesel generators that produce higher carbon emissions than the power supplied from the mainland and prevents the renewable power from the offshore wind farm from being transmitted to the mainland. The Division concluded through its investigations that the two outages were not related, and there does not appear to be a systematic problem with the cable.⁴

- **DIVISION’S ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT AND PIPELINE SAFETY PROGRAM ISSUES \$489,626.41 IN NOPVs IN CY-2023**

The Rhode Island Pipeline Safety Program is a Federal Program under the direct responsibility of the U.S. Department of Transportation (“DOT”). The Pipeline Safety Act (“Federal Act”) provides jurisdiction over all gas pipeline safety in the U.S. to the Secretary of Transportation (“Secretary”). However, the Federal Act also provides that any state with a law comparable to the Federal Act in scope and intent could enter into an agreement (“Certification”) with the Secretary to carry out safety enforcement in its respective state. The mission of the Division’s Gas Pipeline Safety Program is to ensure the safe construction, operation, and maintenance of intrastate natural gas pipelines in Rhode Island. This is accomplished through education, inspection, enforcement, and investigation of incidents/accidents. Our ultimate responsibility is protecting the public and the environment from the dangers of natural gas in transportation. Goals are set for all state programs by the Federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (“PHMSA”) and enforcement of those goals is attained by reductions in Federal grant-in-aid funding and the potential loss of our federal certification if those goals are

⁴ The report can be found on the Division’s website: <https://ripuc.ri.gov/node/16401>

not met. If state certification is lost, responsibility for pipeline safety within the state falls back to DOT/PHMSA. Each state is required to have standards at least as stringent as the Federal Standards. The issuance of Notice of Probable Violations (“NOPV”) to Gas Distribution companies, Master Meter Operators, and Commercial Propane Operators results in fines/penalties. These fines and penalties are issued and collected by the Division and deposited to the RI General Fund. In CY 2023, the Division issued 28 NOPVs which resulted in the collection of \$334,976.41 in fines.

Pursuant to Chapters 39-1.2, the Division is also responsible for the enforcement of the State’s DigSafe program. DigSafe is a clearinghouse that notifies participating utility companies of your plans to dig. In turn, these utilities (or their contract locating companies) respond to mark out the location of their underground facilities. Dig Safe is a free service, funded entirely by its member utility companies. The Division investigates all non-compliance and issues fines where appropriate. These fines and penalties are issued and collected by the Division and deposited to the RI General Fund. In CY 2023, the Division issued 149 NOPVs which resulted in the collection of \$154,650.00 in fines.

DIVISION ORGANIZATION

MOTOR CARRIERS SECTION

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (“Division” or “DPUC”) Motor Carriers Section oversees the regulatory framework and compliance of all services that transport people or property from one point within Rhode Island to another point within Rhode Island (intra-state) – whether on land or water – in exchange for compensation (for-hire).

The Motor Carriers Section is responsible for ensuring that each for-hire carrier in the state obtains the proper agency licensure and operates in accordance with all state statutes and properly established rules and regulations. There are different services authorized – both for passengers and for property – and each authorized service type has a different regulatory framework. Taxicabs are regulated differently than towing companies; ferry operations are regulated differently than household goods moving companies.

Such regulation is important to maintain a level playing field for all carriers, but it is *absolutely essential* in certain industries to protect the public regarding the safety, efficiency, and pricing of service. For example, *Passenger Carriers* like licensed Jitney, Taxicab and Public Motor Vehicle (“PMV”) companies must adhere to strict vehicle standards, driver vetting, insurance coverage, and approved pricing schemes, while Transportation Network Companies (“TNCs”) like Uber and Lyft must conduct their own national background checks on potential drivers and maintain increased liability coverage (although pricing is not regulated). While much of the *Property Carrier* universe deals with business-to-business shipping of freight, parcels and packages, sand-and-gravel, and petroleum products, etc., two types of property carriers – household goods movers and towing companies – deal almost exclusively with the general public; accordingly, the Motor Carriers Section is tasked with ensuring that adequate service and pricing protections are in place and enforced uniformly to benefit the public. Ferry operations are unique among the regulated carriers; ferries are treated much more like traditional “public utilities” when it comes to ratemaking, and service.

The Motor Carriers Section oversees all aspects of the for-hire intrastate transportation industries, from processing applications, conducting application hearings, issuing operator’s licenses to Taxi and PMV drivers, testing/sealing taximeters, approving pricing tariffs, ensuring proper insurance coverage, investigating complaints, and enforcing all regulatory requirements and imposing punitive measures (fines, suspensions, revocations...) against carriers when warranted.

The Motor Carriers Section also is charged with administering the Unified Carrier Registration (“UCR”) program for Rhode Island. UCR is a federally mandated registration program for all carriers of property or passengers engaged in interstate commerce under USDOT authority. The program generates \$2.85 million in general revenue to the state, although the equivalent amount

must be used to offset Rhode Island expenses on appropriate transportation and highway safety initiatives and regulatory initiatives.

CONSUMER SECTION

The Division's Consumer Section provides a number of services for consumers, also referred to as ratepayers. The Consumer Section staff helps ratepayers resolve disputes with investor-owned electric, natural gas, for-profit water supply utilities, wastewater utilities, CATV providers, intrastate telephone service providers, for-hire property & passenger transportation companies, and ferry services. The Consumer Section also provides information about energy efficiency, consumer protection and guidance on making wise utility choices. The section also offers guidance and referrals if a consumer is having difficulty paying a utility bill.

Consumers who receive utility service have a legal responsibility to pay for that service. There are occasions, however, when some consumers may have difficulty meeting that financial obligation to the utility provider. Several assistance programs offer qualifying ratepayers discounts or other help to keep the lights, heat, and phone on. In addition, many electric and natural gas providers offer a balanced-billing option as a household budget aid.

On occasion consumers may have a dispute with, or complaint about, a utility provider. Common areas of dispute include termination of utility service for non-payment, billing, meter reading, deposits for utility service, quality of service, and delayed connection of service. The Division encourages such-situated consumers to resolve the issue with the company on their own, if at all possible. If that is unsuccessful, Division Consumer representatives can attempt to assist both parties in reaching a resolution.

Lastly, the Consumer Section is also accountable for organizing informal review meetings between a utility and a dissatisfied customer. The reviewing officer eventually renders a written decision absent a mutual satisfactory resolution by the parties.

LEGAL SECTION

The Division is charged under the Rhode Island General Laws with the responsibility of regulating and supervising public utilities and cable television companies doing business in the State⁵. To quickly summarize some (Appendix B lists **all** of the Division's jurisdiction) of the work done by the Division's Legal Department: The Division participates as an indispensable party in cases before the Commission, including EFSB⁶ requests to the PUC for advisory opinions, represents the State in proceedings before agencies of the federal government on all matters affecting public

⁵ See generally, R.I. Gen. Laws. Chapters 39-1 through 39-14.1, and 39-19.

⁶ See R.I. Gen. Laws §§39-1-11 and 42-98-2 and 9.

utility services rendered or to be rendered in the State⁷, enforces the State's "DigSafe" laws⁸, enforces the provisions of the "Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act"⁹, reviews the financing aspects of water supply and transmission projects under the State's "Water Facilities Assistance Program"¹⁰, and conducts reviews and comments on water supply management and infrastructure replacement plans filed with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management under the State's "Water Supply Management" and "Clean Water Infrastructure" Acts¹¹.

In the Division's regulation and supervision of public utilities and cable television companies, the Division's legal staff performs a variety of functions, which include acting as hearing officers in cases within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Division. The Division's legal staff conducts approximately 100-plus common carrier-related hearings each year (i.e., licensing, fitness, insurance, transfers, etc.), along with a variety of many more docket hearings related to public utility financing and merger petitions, cable television company licensing and regulatory matters, fitness and quality of service adjudications, Dig Safe violations, and billing disputes. Each docket hearing results in a formal record and the issuance of a final written decision reviewed and signed by the Administrator.

The Legal Section also provides representation in proceedings before other state and federal agencies (chiefly the Commission and the FERC), appellate work before the State's Supreme and Superior Courts, legal and policy opinions to the Division's Administrator and management staff, comments on draft legislation, opinions on personnel matters, and responses to information requests from government officials and the public.

The types and numbers of public utilities that the Division regulates are diverse and considerable and requires depth and breadth of legal expertise. They include a local gas distribution company (i.e. Rhode Island Energy - Gas); electric distribution companies (e.g. the Rhode Island Energy – Electric); local exchange carriers (e.g. Verizon) and resellers of telephone service (approximately 200); for-profit water suppliers and governmental water suppliers that sell water beyond their political boundaries (e.g. Providence Water Supply Board); cable television companies (e.g. Cox Cable); ferry boats (e.g. Interstate Navigation Company); tow trucks; taxicabs; jitneys; public motor vehicles; household goods movers; trucks that carry freight, boats, packages, bulk commodities and petroleum products; railroads; and the Narragansett Bay Commission.

RATE ACCOUNTING SECTION

The Regulatory Accounting Section is responsible for the identification and presentation of financial, rate, accounting, and market issues which may affect the rates developed for the various

⁷ See R.I. Gen. Laws §39-1-29.

⁸ See R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 39-1.2.

⁹ See R.I. Gen. Laws §39-3-40.

¹⁰ See R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 46-15.2.

¹¹ See R.I. Gen. Laws Chapters 46-15.4 and 46-15.6.

electric and natural gas distribution companies, water, sewer, ferry, and telephone companies regulated by the Commission and the Division. The section participates in the various aspects of regulation which affect not just *accounting functions*, but also matters affecting rates, costs, service quality, market development, and many other aspects of a utility’s business and interaction with customers. This overview provides a general description of activities and a few specific examples of activities and is not intended to detail the accounting section's participation in all the various Commission dockets.

The Division is an active intervener in all cases before the Commission. The regulatory accounting section of the Division is responsible for conducting a thorough review of requests for rate increases submitted to the Commission. Typically, working through staff and expert witnesses, extensive discovery is performed as part of the process to determine if the requested rates are consistent with the provision of safe and reliable service at the lowest reasonable cost. The Division will present prefiled testimony and exhibits to the Commission in response to a utility general rate increase request and other docketed matters. That testimony will present the Division’s recommendation to the Commission after completing the review of the utility filing. The Regulatory Accounting Section seeks to ensure that all rate requests are supported by sound evidence and reasonable assumptions of future cost and sales projections, as well as appropriate regulatory treatment of matters such as reasonable amortization periods, asset useful lives and depreciation rates, costs of common equity and capital structure, and allowance of only prudent expenses. The Division's recommendation is weighed and considered by the Commission, along with the case presented by the utility and other interveners who may have participated in the docket. Ultimately, the final jurisdiction over the rates of the utility rests with the Commission.

ENGINEERING & PIPELINE SAFETY SECTION

The Engineering Section's functions cover a wide array of duties, such as performing engineering analyses on all utility matters to ensure effective and efficient utility operations, collecting relevant data and statistics, monitoring compliance with all pertinent state and federal laws, rules, regulations and engineering standards, investigating customer service complaints, etc. These complaints can vary amongst the regulated utilities, but are frequently related to water, wastewater, natural gas and electric. These investigations can be lengthy, as these can be very complex engineering issues. A supplementary function of the Engineering Section is to participate and testify in formal proceedings conducted by the Commission or the Division.

The Engineering Section is also responsible for administering Rhode Island’s Pipeline Safety Program through delegated authority from the U.S. Department of Transportation (“DOT”).

The Engineering Section carries forth the safety mission over pipelines and ensures that Rhode Island Energy engages in safe practices concerning the construction, operation, and maintenance of intrastate natural gas pipelines in Rhode Island. The safety mission is also advanced through education, inspection, enforcement, and investigation of incidents/accidents. Our ultimate

responsibility is protecting the public and the environment from the dangers of natural gas transportation.

Pursuant to Chapters 39-1.2, the Division is also responsible for the enforcement of the State’s DigSafe program. DigSafe is a clearinghouse that notifies participating utility companies of your plans to dig. In turn, these utilities (or their contract locating companies) respond to mark out the location of their underground facilities. Dig Safe is a free service, funded entirely by its member utility companies. The Division investigates all non-compliance and issues fines where appropriate in order to hold excavators accountable for damage to underground utility facilities due to negligence. These fines and penalties are issued and collected by the Division and deposited to the RI General Fund. A violation provision in the law authorizes the Division to assess a civil penalty of \$200 for the first offense and not less than \$500 or more than \$1,000 for any subsequent offense to excavators.

CABLE TV (CATV) SECTION

Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-19-2, every company owning or operating a CATV (Community Antenna Television Systems) plant in Rhode Island is subject to the jurisdiction and reasonable rules and regulations of the Division. In accordance with its regulatory authority under state law, the Division promulgated the *Rules Governing Community Antenna Television Systems (815-RICR-10-0501)* (“Rules”). Pursuant to the Rules, the Division has divided Rhode Island into nine CATV service areas. Except for now-dormant Area 9 (Block Island), three cable providers currently operate in the eight remaining territories. Cox Communications operates statewide. Verizon operates in Washington, Kent, and Providence Counties (Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6). i3 Broadband operates in Bristol County (Area 5). Only Newport County (Area 7) has a single provider, which is Cox.

What We Regulate:

PEG Channels – Studios: The Rules prescribe the requisite number of channels that are set aside for Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) purposes. There are six studios in five locations: two on the Cranston/Providence line, one in Portsmouth, one in Lincoln, and two recently relocated studios in East Providence and Ashaway. i3 Broadband operates its own studios though a \$0.55/month per-subscriber PEG fee. The other providers remit a monthly fee of \$0.55 per subscriber to Rhode Island Public Broadcasting Station (RIPBS). A 2023 Division proceeding corrected an under-remittance to RIPBS from one provider. The additional revenue and interest paid by the provider means this fee will very likely not rise in the near-term future. Overall, however, fees remitted to RIPBS have generally declined with cable subscriber numbers. This local and national trend and changes in technology pose questions of long-term sustainability of PEG services as currently constituted. The Division strongly supports live (where possible) and re-broadcasted public meetings. The Division manages the Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU), tracks the PEG fee collections, reviews annual reports on studio use, and resolves disputes when necessary.

Service Area Certificates: Absent any unanticipated cable system expansion, the Division reviews proposed ownership and/or transfers of control under standards set forth in the Rules. The two most recent cable dockets involved the transfer of the control and/or ownership of the incumbent Service Area 5 CATV company’s operations, the first transfer occurring in 2016-17 and the most recent in 2020.

General Rule Provisions: The Division possesses the authority to ensure compliance with the Rules on other matters within its jurisdiction, like line-extension requirements, service terminations, and outage refunds, as well as sales and service office requirements.

What We Don’t Regulate:

Rates: With Verizon’s entry into the video programming market in Rhode Island in the mid-2000’s via its FiOS network upgrade, the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) standard of “effective competition” has been satisfied for most of the state. Several years ago, Cox successfully petitioned the FCC to declare effective competition from other video programming suppliers to end basic cable rate regulation. In a subsequent FCC ruling, effective competition has since become the national standard in all but a few areas.

Broadband: Broadband regulation – the regulation of data, streaming services and the like – resides within the purview of the FCC, not the states. States that have established entities to manage state and municipal broadband systems, however, do maintain a regulatory function within the broader FCC jurisdiction. **Grey Area – Our “Ombudsman” Role:** While we have in recent years a more limited regulatory role due to the advent of effective competition and streaming services, Division staff continues to endeavor to assist customers navigate service and billing issues that are brought to our attention.

APPENDIX A – REGULATED ENTITIES

Electric

Greg Cornett, President
[Rhode Island Energy](#)
280 Melrose St.
Providence RI 02907
Administration: 401-784-7000
Customer Service: 800-322-3223

Michael R. Kirkwood, General Manager/CEO
[Pascoag Utility District](#)
253 Pascoag Main St.
PO Box 107
Pascoag RI 02859
Administration: 401-568-6222
Customer Service: 401-568-6222

Jeffery Wright, President
[Block Island Utility District d/b/a Block Island Power Company](#)
100 Ocean Rd.
PO Box 518
Block Island RI 02807
Administration: 401-466-5851
Customer Service: 401-466-5851

Gas

Greg Cornett, President
[Rhode Island Energy](#)
280 Melrose St.
Providence RI 02907
Administration: 401-272-5040
Customer Service: 800-322-3223

Water

Ricky Caruolo, General Manager
[Providence Water Supply Board](#)
552 Academy Ave.
Providence, RI 02908
Administration: 401-521-6300
Customer Service: 401-521-5070

James DeCelles, Chief Engineer, Mgr.
[Pawtucket Water Supply Board](#)
85 Branch St.
Pawtucket, RI 02860
Administration: 401-729-5000
Customer Service: 401-725-9492

Robert Schultz Jr., Director Utilities
[City of Newport Water Division](#)
70 Halsey St.
Newport, RI 02840
Administration: 401-845-5600
Customer Service: 401-845-5604

Mark Viggiani, Superintendent
[City of Woonsocket Water Division](#)
169 Main St.
Woonsocket, RI 02895
Administration: 401-767-1411
Customer Service: 401-767-21411

David L. Simmons Executive Director/Chief Engineer.
[Kent County Water Authority](#)
1072 Main St.
PO Box 192
West Warwick RI 02893
Administration: 401-821-9300
Customer Service: 401-821-9300

Christopher Jacobs/ Operations Manager
[Veolia Water Rhode Island, Inc.](#)
17 Arnold St.
PO Box 429
Wakefield, RI 02880
Administration: 401-789-0271
Customer Service: 401-789-0271

Telecommunications

Hans Vestberg, Chairman and CEO
[Verizon New England d/b/a Verizon Rhode Island](#)
234 Washington St.
Providence RI 02903
Administration: 401-525-3830
Customer Service: 1-800-837-4966

Ross Nelson, V.P. and Region Manager
[Cox Rhode Island Telcom, LLC d/b/a Cox Communications, Inc.](#)
9 J.P. Murphy Highway
West Warwick, RI 02893
Administration: 401-383-2082
Customer Service: 401-383-2000

Cable Television

Ross Nelson, V.P. and Region Manager
[Cox Cox.Com, Inc. d/b/a Cox Communications, Inc.](#)
9 J.P. Murphy Highway
West Warwick, RI 02893
Administration: 401-383-2082
Customer Service: 401-383-2000

Matt Torrenti, General Manager
[I3 Broadband](#)
57 Everett St.
Warren, RI 02885
Administration: 401-247-2250
Customer Service: 800-328-8289

Hans Vestberg, Chairman and CEO
[Verizon New England d/b/a Verizon Rhode Island](#)
234 Washington St.
Providence RI 02903
Administration: 401-525-3830
Customer Service: 1-800-837-4966

Wastewater Treatment

Laurie Horridge, Executive Director
[Narragansett Bay Commission](#)
One Service Road
Providence, RI 02905
Administration: 401-461-8848
Customer Service: 401-461-8828

Water Carriers

Susan Linda, President
[Interstate Navigation Co. d/b/a Block Island Ferry](#)
Interstate Navigation, Inc.
PO Box 482
New London CT 06320
Administration: 860-442-7891
Customer Service: 401-783-4613

Stephen Antaya, President
[A&R Marine Corp. - Prudence and Bay Islands Transport](#)
894 Neck Farm Rd.
Prudence Island, RI 02872
Administration: 401-474-7960 e-mail ARmarine-Office@pi-ferry.com
Customer Service: 401-683-0430

William Munger, President
[Jamestown & Newport Ferry Co.](#)

Bruce Shaw, President
[Shaw's Water Taxi, Inc.](#)

One Ferry Wharf
Jamestown, RI 02835
Administration: 401-423-7154
Customer Service: 401-423-9900

PO Box 314
Prudence, RI 02872
Administration: 401-683-2021
Customer Service: 401-683-2021

Matt Gineo, General Manager
[Oldport Marine Services, Inc.](#)
PO Box 141
Newport, RI 02840
Telephone (401) 423-2983

Robert Billington, President
[Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.](#)
175 Main St.
Pawtucket, RI 02860
Administration: 401-724-2200
Customer Service: 401-724-2200

Common Carriers

The Division regulates all for-hire intrastate carriers of passengers and property. The carriers are referred to as Common Carriers and defined in Title 39 of Rhode Island General Law as “Public Utilities.” The Division regulates hundreds of carriers, like taxicabs, towing companies, limousine companies, household goods movers, tanker-truck petroleum carriers, transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft, and many others. Contact information for certain types of carriers are listed on the Division’s website at: www.ripuc.ri.gov.

Telecommunications Providers

The Division regulates all intrastate telecommunications providers. Telecommunications provider means any person, firm or corporation providing, inter alia, intrastate telecommunications services. These providers are defined in Title 39 of Rhode Island General Law as “Public Utilities.” Contact information for these providers can be found on the Division’s website at: www.ripuc.ri.gov.

APPENDIX B – DIVISION JURISDICTION

- 1) Ratepayer Advocate and Indispensable Party in all cases before the Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”)
 - a. 39-1-11; *See Providence Gas Co. v. Burke*, 419 A.2d. 263 (1980).
- 2) Defends all appeals in the R.I. Supreme Court taken from Commission decisions.
 - a. *See Narragansett Electric v. Harsch*, 368 A.2d 1194 (1977).
- 3) Rates
 - a. 39-1-1, 39-2-5, 39-3-10, 39-3-13, 39-3-13.1, 39-4-7, 39-4-9, 39-4-11.1, 39-4-17, 39-12-12, 39-14-2.2, 39-14.1-6.
- 4) Authority to conduct investigations and audits
 - a. 39-1-15, 39-1-20, 39-1-21, 39-3-14, 39-3-30, 39-4-1, 39-4-3, 39-4-5, 39-4-7, 39-4-10, 39-4-11, 39-4-13, 39-4-14.
- 5) Authority to Promulgate Rules and Regulations for the
 - a. Regulation of Public Utilities
 - b. 39-3-33, 39-12-4, 39-13-2, 39-14-2, 39-14.1-2, 39-14.2-3.
- 6) Exclusive Authority to grant operating certificates
 - a. 39-3-1, 39-3-3, 39-12-6, 39-13-3, 39-14-3, 39-14.1-3, 39-14.2-5.
- 7) Regulatory Compliance Enforcement Authority
 - a. 39-1.2-13, 39-1.2-13.1, 39-2-8, 39-2-11, 39-3-21, 39-3-31, 39-4-22, 39-4-23, 39-4-24, 39-12-36, 39-14-11, 39-14.1-9, 39-14.2-22, 39-19-8.1._
- 8) Subpoena Powers
 - a. 39-1-13, 39-1-15, 39-1-16.
- 9) Police Powers
 - a. 39-1-15.1, 39-1-15.2.
- 10) Broad and Incidental Powers
 - a. 39-1-38, 39-4-23.
- 11) Exclusive Authority over Non-Regulated Power Producers
 - a. 39-1-27.1.
- 12) Exclusive Authority to Represent the State on all Utility matters before Federal Agencies
 - a. 39-1-29.
- 13) Exclusive Authority over the Storage, Transportation and Distribution of Natural Gas

- a. 39-1-40, 39-2-18.
- 14) Authority over Railroads
 - a. 39-4-18, 39-6-18, 39-6-23, 39-6-27, 39-6-30, 39-7-1, *et seq.*
- 15) Exclusive Authority over Carriers of Property (household goods movers, towing, dry freight, bulk commodities, etc.)
 - a. 39-12-1, *et seq.*, 39-12.1, *et seq.*
- 16) Exclusive Authority over Jitneys
 - a. 39-13-1, *et seq.*
- 17) Exclusive Authority over Public Motor Vehicles
 - a. 39-14.1, *et seq.*
- 18) Exclusive Authority over Transportation Network Company Services (Uber and Lyft)
 - a. 39-14.2, *et seq.*
- 19) Authority over Water Carriers (ferries, water taxis, launches, tour boats)
 - a. 39-3-3, 39-3-3.1, 39-3-4.
- 20) Exclusive Authority over Taxicabs
 - a. 39-14-1, *et seq.*
- 21) Authority to Require Public Utilities to Furnish Safe, Reasonable, and Adequate Services and Facilities
 - a. Reasonable, and Adequate Services and Facilities
 - b. 39-4-10, 39-4-13
- 22) Exclusive Authority over Excavations Near Underground Utility Facilities (DigSafe)
 - a. 39-1.2, *et seq.*
- 23) Authority over Infrastructure, Safety and Reliability of Electric Distribution Companies
 - a. 39-1-27.7.1, 39-2-25.
- 24) Authority over Electric and Gas Utility Emergency Response Plans
 - a. 39-2-26, 39-2-27, 39-2-28.
- 25) Authority over R.I. Telecommunications Education Access Fund
 - a. 39-1-61.
- 26) Authority to Fix Standards for Service
 - a. 39-3-8, 39-3-9.
- 27) Authority to Prescribe a System of Forms and Accounts
 - a. 39-3-14.

- 28) Exclusive Authority to Approve Bond Issues, Loans and “Other Evidences of Indebtedness”
 - a. of Indebtedness”
 - b. 39-3-15, 39-3-16, 39-3-17, 39-3-18, 39-3-19, 39-3-22.

- 29) Exclusive Authority to Approve Transactions between Public Utilities
 - a. 39-3-24, 39-3-25.

- 30) Exclusive Authority to Approve Transactions between Public Utilities and Affiliates
 - a. and Affiliates
 - b. 39-3-27, 39-3-28, 39-3-29, 39-3-30, 39-3-31, 39-3-32.

- 31) Exclusive Authority over Cable Television Licensing and Public Access
 - a. 39-19-1, *et seq.*

- 32) Authority over Public Utilities’ Customer Terminations and Collections Practices
 - a. 39-1.1-2, 39-1.1-3, 39-2-1.

- 33) Liaison to the Ratepayers Advisory Board
 - a. 39-1-37.1, *et seq.*

- 34) Exclusive Authority over the Emergency Restoration Plans of Electric and Natural Gas Distribution Companies
 - a. Gas Distribution Companies
 - b. 39-2-26, 39-2-27, 39-2-28.

- 35) Authority to require Information on Utility Bills
 - a. 39-3-37, 39-3-37.1, 39-3-37.2, 39-3-37.3.

- 36) Authority Regarding Water Quality
 - a. 39-4-3, 39-4-4, 39-4-5, 39-4-10, 39-4-11, 39-4-13.

- 37) Authority to Review/Approve Water Projects Seeking Funding Under The Water Facilities Assistance Program
 - a. Water Facilities Assistance Program
 - b. 46-15.2-4, 46-15.2-5, 46-15.2-6.

- 38) Authority to Comment on Water Supply Management Plans
 - a. 46-15.3-7.6, 46-15.3-19.

- 39) Authority to Enforce Compliance with Water Supply Management Plans Requirements
 - a. Management Plans Requirements
 - b. 46-15.3-20.

- 40) Authority to Comment on Clean Water Infrastructure Plans
 - a. 46-15.6-5.

- 41) Authority over Town Public Utility Franchises
 - a. 39-17-7.