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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Public Utilities Commission

Chairman Ronald T. Gerwatowski
Commissioner Abigail Anthony
Commissioner John C. Revens, Jr.

August 31, 2022

Investigation into the Future of the Regulated Gas Distribution Business in Rhode Island in Light of the Act on Climate (Docket No. 22-01-NG)

The Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission has opened a proceeding to consider the future of natural gas service in light of the recently enacted Act on Climate, which establishes important mandates to reduce Rhode Island's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to net zero by 2050.

The information gathering accomplished through this process is critical work and could provide the foundation for initiatives that are taken up formally in the future. The Commission is not presupposing the adoption of any particular initiatives at this stage. However, the types of policy matters that will be under review could ultimately result in changes to the gas distribution system that are wide-ranging and significantly impactful. For example, they could include moratoriums on new natural gas services, substituting natural gas service with other heating services, incentivizing renewable natural gas alternatives, accounting for the price of carbon in rates, and implementing adjustments to ratemaking policy that could impact the cost of heating with natural gas over the long term, among many other potential policies.

The Commission will not be making any final determinations on regulatory matters during the initial stages of this policy proceeding, which will be explorative in nature. However, the types of initiatives that would be under consideration could eventually affect the availability and price of natural gas service over the long-term, as Rhode Island responds to the imperatives of the Act on Climate and moves to reduce dependency on this fossil fuel.

The proceeding is being designed for stakeholder participation and is likely to be a multi-staged process lasting well into 2023. The first step is to obtain public input on the scope. A draft scope and an additional explanation of what type of public input is being sought at this time is available in a document published at the following link:

<https://ripuc.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur841/files/2022-08/2201-FutureOfGas-StaffScope-Notice.pdf>

Rhode Islanders are being asked to comment on whether this draft scope, including the proposed evaluation process, addresses the most important issues on this topic. Future requests will prompt participants to provide their opinions on more substantive and/or technical matters.

Instructions on how and when to provide comments are included in the document. Responses to this first request for comments are due by Friday, October 7, 2022.