

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN RE: THE NARRAGANSETT ELECTRIC CO. d/b/a RHODE
ISLAND ENERGY'S ADVANCED METERING
FUNCTIONALITY ("AMF") BUSINESS CASE

Docket No. 22-49-EL

ACADIA CENTER RESPONSE TO APPLICANT'S OMNIBUS RESPONSE TO MOTIONS TO INTERVENE

By its attorney, Acadia Center hereby responds to The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a Rhode Island Energy's (The Company) January 9th Omnibus Response to Motions to Intervene (Omnibus Response) in the above-captioned docket regarding the Company's Advanced metering Functionality (AMF) Business Plan. Rhode Island Energy does not oppose Acadia Center's intervention in this proceeding.¹ Acadia Center has established standing and possesses a sufficiently specific and crystalized interest in the matter and respectfully asks the Commission to grant the organization's full intervention in this docket. In further support of its December 30th motion to intervene, Acadia Center respectfully offers the following non-exhaustive perspectives on the Company's Omnibus Response:

Standing

1. Rhode Island Energy does not oppose Acadia Center's intervention in this proceeding.
2. Acadia Center appreciates the Company's acknowledgment that Acadia Center, as well as other parties, "played a significant role in the development of the AMF Business Case and, as such, their participation could be of assistance to the Commission in its review and evaluation."² This clearly

¹ RI Energy's Omnibus Response to Motions to Intervene. Page 1.

² RI Energy's Omnibus Response to Motions to Intervene. Page 2, Footnote 1.

confirms Acadia Center's role in advancing the public interest consistent with the meaning of Rule 1.14 (B)(3).³ Acadia Center's experience throughout the development of this AMF plan builds upon a history of participating in similar processes and conducting related research across the region.

3. In fact, in its Motion to Intervene, Acadia Center wrote it "has also developed expertise relating to Time-Varying Rates (TVR) and Time-of-Use (TOU) rate policy and finds modest alterations to TNEC's business plans would more quickly deliver direct economic opportunities and benefits to ratepayers, system resiliency and reliability enhancements, and emissions reduction benefits critical to meeting the state's GHG reduction and Renewable Energy Standard mandates."⁴
4. The Company correctly recites Acadia Center's longstanding specific interests and active participation in the issues and proceedings at the heart of this docket, specifically that the organization was "granted intervention in Docket Nos. 4770 and 4780, joined the Amended Settlement Agreement (ASA), and have participated in the PST Advisory Group established in connection with the ASA."⁵ Clearly, Rhode Island Energy recognizes Acadia Center's well-established interests and investment of resources in pursuing an optimal outcome for all Rhode Islanders who will be affected by this docket.
5. Interestingly, Rhode Island Energy simultaneously argues that 1) Acadia Center does not satisfy the public interest requirements for standing and 2) that our participation in this docket and ability to articulate concerns would somehow obviate the motions for intervention filed by other parties

³ Acadia Center maintains its Motion to Intervene was proper and sufficient under both Rules 1.14(B)2 and 1.14(B)3. Nonetheless, Acadia Center agrees with the Company's desire for procedural expediency and will focus on areas where the Company itself acknowledges evidence in support of Acadia Center's Motion to Intervene.

⁴ Acadia Center Motion to Intervene, Page 4.

⁵ RI Energy's Omnibus Response to Motions to Intervene. Page 12-13.

because we, in the Company's eyes, would be able to represent their interests adequately.⁶ These arguments are in conflict with each other. Specifically, the Company asserts:

"Third, Mission:data fails to demonstrate why any interest it has will not be adequately represented by other parties to the proceeding. This AMF Business Case is the product of a years-long stakeholder process with robust input from many parties, including the Division, OER, the Acadia Center, CLF and others. Many of these parties also seek to participate in, or already are participants in, this proceeding. Further, the stakeholder process included robust discussion of numerous issues, including data sharing, which Mission:data highlights as its concern. Accordingly, there is no reason to conclude that any interests that Mission:data might have – which are not clearly defined – will not be adequately represented by the parties who will be participating in this proceeding."

6. The Company also states, "The standing doctrine serves an important function to ensure that entities given full-party status in a given proceeding possess a sufficiently specific and crystallized interest in the matter so as to sharpen the presentation of the issues to the Commission."⁸ Elsewhere in the Omnibus Response, the Company recognizes one of Acadia Center's sufficiently specific and crystallized interests in the matter, which can help sharpen the presentation of the issues to the Commission: "For example, the Acadia Center has articulated a keen interest in the development and implementation of time-varying rates ("TVR")."⁹ Acadia Center also specifically identified TVR as one specific issue of concern in its Motion to Intervene and intends to help build the record in this case with regard to that issue and

⁶ To be explicitly clear, Acadia Center is not making any claims or comments on whether it is able, or willing to represent Mission:data or any other prospective intervenor's perspectives or concerns. We merely raise the point to identify an inconsistency in the Company's positions articulated in the Omnibus Response.

⁷ RI Energy's Omnibus Response to Motions to Intervene. Page 9.

⁸ RI Energy's Omnibus Response to Motions to Intervene. Page 13.

⁹ RI Energy's Omnibus Response to Motions to Intervene. Page 5. Footnote 4.

others.¹⁰ Below, Acadia Center will provide a key clarification to the Company's identification and characterization of our intentions in this particular issue area.

SCOPE OF PROCEEDING

7. Acadia Center seeks to clarify, against any potential misconceptions, that we are not seeking to evaluate or set specific time-varying (TVR) or time-of-use¹¹ rates within this docket. We have always recognized that the actual setting of those rates should and will occur in a separate docket. Acadia Center's position on the matter focuses more on the Company's proposed schedule with regards to the development of those rates and the timeframe for offering customers those structures and the ensuing benefits TVR can provide. According to the Company's business plan, ratepayers would be subjected to rate recovery for the proposed infrastructure as early as January 1, 2024. Yet the Company does not envision pursuing TVR rate structures until at least 2026 or 2027.¹² Ratepayers should not have to wait several years to enjoy the functionality and associated benefits of the infrastructure they are funding.
8. In its Omnibus Response, the Company attempts to now separate the deep connection its own business case draws between the proposed infrastructure investments and the timing and utilization of the resulting functionality and benefits it will enable: "*Rhode Island Energy requests that the Commission appropriately cabin the participation of these parties to the proper scope of this proceeding, which is whether the Commission should approve Rhode Island Energy's request for fullscale deployment of AMF throughout its electric service territory—not dictating how the Company should use AMF technology in its day-to-day operations if the Commission does approve the request.*"¹³ Acadia Center believes the

¹⁰ Acadia Center Motion to Intervene, Page 4.

¹¹ For purposes of this docket, Acadia Center will simply use the umbrella term "Time-Varying Rates" or TVR to refer to the broader set of possible rate structures, including but not limited to TVR, Time-of-Use, or Critical Peak Pricing.

¹² AMF Business Plan, Page 87. Figure 8.1: AMF Project Timeline.

¹³ RI Energy's Omnibus Response to Motions to Intervene. Page 2.

Commission shares the viewpoint that Rhode Island must fully evaluate the Company's plans for how it plans to use the AMF technology since those choices will ultimately determine how and whether new benefits and capabilities actually flow through to ratepayers. Part of that consideration should ideally result in a commitment from the Company to seek and provide all of the benefits of TVR—one such new benefit and capability—much earlier than the Company currently intends.

9. In fact, despite now seeking to avoid the Commission's examination of when the Company shall deliver the promised benefits and capabilities, Rhode Island Energy based much of their business case on the ability of AMF to, someday in the future, enable various potential TVR-type rate structures.

- “One of the major benefits that AMF offers Rhode Island Energy and the energy system at large, and ultimately and most importantly Rhode Island Energy's customers, is the ability to offer Time Varying Rates (TVR).”¹⁴
- Rhode Island Energy will need AMF to monitor near-real time conditions to recover from outages and major events safely and reliably, plan for upgrades, and offer time varying rates to shift load off the peak...¹⁵
- AMF establishes a platform to modernize the electric infrastructure and better enable customers to make informed energy choices because they will have the information to do so. As a result, Rhode Island customers would be able to:
 - Correlate their actions to bill impacts empowering them to better manage energy usage;
 - Access tools that help to optimize their energy consumption;
 - Adopt technologies that can automate their responses to time varying rates to make it easy for them to participate;

¹⁴ Rhode Island Energy Business Case. Page 179.

¹⁵ Pre-filed Testimony of David Bonenberger. Page 12. Emphasis added.

- Enjoy opportunities to reduce their energy cost burden; and
 - Easily share their energy information with third parties to expand the service and product options that are available to them.¹⁶
10. The Company also recognizes that the timing of benefit delivery to customers is a key consideration in the AMF Business Case: “Rhode Island Energy’s AMF Business Case demonstrates that customers will realize benefits that are at least as favorable on a net present value (“NPV”) basis as those defined in National Grid’s Updated AMF Business Case, meaning the benefits are greater and/or occur sooner under Rhode Island Energy’s proposal.”¹⁷
11. Further, the Company claims AMF is superior and necessary for Rhode Island because “AMR will not be capable of providing the functionality to achieve Rhode Island’s Climate Mandates because granular information that is needed to support dynamic rate offerings such as TVR would not be available.”¹⁸
12. “Third, AMR technology cannot provide the enhanced functionality or the energy usage data with the granularity and frequency of AMF meters, which is required to deliver energy insights, personalized energy efficiency, and effective demand response programs to customers. This includes an inability to realistically support time varying rate (“TVR”) structures.”¹⁹
13. The pre-filed testimony of Walnock & Reder at Bates 47-50 continues by providing a comprehensive synopsis of why TVR structures are important for Rhode Island. Figure 11.1 on Page 133 of the Business Case, as well as a table and discussion provided in Walnock & Reder’s pre-filed testimony at Bates 90-91, similarly incorporates the significant potential value of TVR. The Company notes, “The

¹⁶ Pre-filed Testimony of David Bonenberger. Page 13.

¹⁷ Pre-filed Testimony of David Bonenberger. Page 14. Emphasis added.

¹⁸ Pre-filed Testimony of David Bonenberger. Page 22.

¹⁹ Pre-filed Testimony of Philip Walnock and Wanda Reder. Pp 20-21 (Bates 46-47).

EV/TVR benefit and the Whole House TOU/ CPP benefits will require AMF meters and an approved Time Varying Rate tariff along with program costs. The program costs have been included in the overall AMF costs but filing for a tariff change will occur in the future.”

14. The Company also provides footnotes referencing previous PUC decisions noting the potential benefits of TVR but claims “TVR implementation is dependent upon additional system development investment that is estimated in the “AMF Future Functionality” phase, as discussed in Section 6.4 of the Business Case, which is scheduled for after meter deployment.”²⁰ The Company has not provided a clear explanation for why this additional system development cannot occur prior to, or in concert with, meter deployment across the territory. Given the various specializations it requires to operate a distribution utility, it is unlikely the same highly-skilled technicians deployed to install the meters and associated network infrastructure are also the same highly-skilled employees that would be responsible for developing or integrating back office software systems and proposing new rate structures.

15. As the Company has included TVR as a key benefit in support of its proposal to deploy AMF technology, it should not be beyond the scope of this proceeding for the Commission to require a more firm and accelerated commitment that TVR and TOU rate structures will actually be offered to customers as soon as that customer’s meter is replaced in order to maximize the potential consumer, system, climate, and societal benefits enabled by AMF.

WHEREFORE, based on the foregoing reasons, ACADIA CENTER asks that the Commission 1) grant its Motion to Intervene and 2) reject Rhode Island Energy’s request to limit the Commission’s examination of

²⁰ Pre-filed Testimony of Philip Walnock and Wanda Reder. Page 72 (Bates 98).

how, whether, and on what timeline the Company will use the requested investment to deliver system, climate, and ratepayer benefits.

Respectfully submitted,

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By its attorney,



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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Pursuant to Public Utilities Commission Rules 1.8 and 1.6(G), I certify that an electronic copy of the above Response to Rhode Island Energy's Omnibus Response to Motions to Intervene, was served, via electronic mail, to all parties on the current service list for this Docket on January 19, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



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