

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

IN RE: THE NARRAGANSETT :
ELECTRIC COMPANY d/b/a :
NATIONAL GRID’S ELECTRIC : **DOCKET NO. 3628**
SERVICE QUALITY PLAN :

ORDER

On January 8, 2016, The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid (National Grid or Company) filed with the Public Utilities Commission (Commission or PUC) a Settlement Agreement entered into with the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division) agreeing to modify one part of the Company’s existing Electric Service Quality Plan (SQP).¹ Specifically, National Grid proposed to modify the Customer Contact performance standard by replacing the survey conducted by its independent survey vendor with two survey questions from an existing internal contactor survey that Company has performed since 2009. The Company also proposed to update the historical performance benchmark period and related satisfaction targets used to evaluate the survey results beginning with calendar year 2016.

Currently, the survey for Customer Contact is limited to customers whose contact with the Company was for one of eight pre-defined reasons.² The the current performance standard is based solely on the response of the customer as to how satisfied that customer was with the contact. The specific question asked how satisfied the customer was with the contact the customer had with National Grid for the single, applicable pre-defined reason). The survey is scored on a seven point scale with one being “extremely dissatisfied” and seven being

¹ National Grid’s Electric Service Quality Plan Settlement Agreement (Jan. 8, 2016). All filings in this docket are available at the PUC offices located at 89 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island or at <http://www.ripuc.org/eventsactions/docket/3628page.html>. The SQP was approved by the Commission on July 13, 2007, Order No. 19020. It is comprised of four standards. The Company’s proposed amendments are to the Customer Contact standard only.

“extremely satisfied.” The historic benchmark was set in 2007 and reflects an average of annual scores of six and higher from 1997 through 2004, which yielded a performance standard based on a mean satisfaction score of 79.1% with a standard deviation of 2.3%. To avoid penalty, the Company must attain a score of 76.8%.

The Company maintained that its proposed survey will be more inclusive and representative of its current customer interactions. It will not be limited to one interaction/call type and will include customer satisfaction with a specific interaction with a telephone representative. National Grid’s proposed language expands beyond the limited eight types of transactions thus allowing for a more representative customer population to be targeted. It includes the response regarding the telephone representative’s service in the performance standard with the responses to high level questions of satisfaction with other services provided by the Company. The two proposed questions ask 1) how satisfied the customer is with the services provided by National Grid and 2) how satisfied the customer is with the quality of the service provided by the telephone representative. The proposal provides for rating on a ten point scale with one being “dissatisfied” and ten being “satisfied.” The Company proposed updating the historic benchmark from the 2007 one to a twenty-four month period from August 2013 through July 2015 of scores eight or higher. This yields a performance standard based on a mean satisfaction score of 83.2% with a standard deviation of 4.4%.³ To avoid penalty, the Company must attain a score of 78.8%. The Company also agreed to increase the number of individuals surveyed from approximately 800 to 1,500.⁴ The requested effective date of

² The pre-defined reasons are: 1) power outage 2) meter on 3) meter off 4) meter exchange 5) collections 6) payment plan 7) meter read and 8) meter test.

³ This change is a result of the proposed change to the historical benchmark period from the mean performance standard in the 2007 SQP to the twenty-four month period of August 2013 through July 2015 as proposed by the Company.

⁴ National Grid Response to Comm. Data Request 1-2(c).

calendar year 2016 would allow for data collection throughout the entire year with results filed on May 1, 2017.

Finally, National Grid requested several clarifying changes to the language of the SQP. First, the Company requested that the title of the SQP be changed from the “2015 Amended Electric Service Quality Plan” to the “2016 Amended Electric Service Quality Plan.”⁵ Second, the Company requested that the language setting forth how long the SQP is to remain in effect be amended to read: “The performance standards set forth below shall be in effect for the calendar year 2016 and shall continue until they are further modified by the Commission.”⁶ Finally, the Company requested that the definition of “Customer Contact Survey” include that “[t]he survey is not limited to any one transaction type, and the survey results will be based on approximately 1,500 survey responses annually, thereby reaching a broad segment of the customer population.”⁷

The Division filed a detailed and thorough memorandum supporting the amendments and noting how they are an improvement to the current SQP.

At an open meeting on February 10, 2016, the Commission considered National Grid’s request and found the proposed amendments reasonable. The Commission found that the proposed changes will allow for more comprehensive sampling and will provide better information to National Grid with which it can improve its service to customers. Furthermore, the Commission found that updating the historical benchmark from the 2007 version will provide for scoring based on more current data.

⁵ National Grid Response to Comm. Data Request 1-4.

⁶ *Id.*

Accordingly, it is hereby

(22456) ORDERED:

1. The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid's proposed modifications to the Customer Contact standard of its Service Quality Plan are approved.

2. The clarifying changes requested by The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid are approved.

EFFECTIVE AT WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND ON FEBRUARY 10, 2016
PURSUANT TO AN OPEN MEETING DECISION ON FEBRUARY 10, 2016. WRITTEN
ORDER ISSUED ON JUNE 28, 2016.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION




Margaret E. Curran, Chairperson

Paul J. Roberti, Commissioner*


Herbert F. DeSimone, Jr., Commissioner

*Commissioner Roberti participated in the decision but was unavailable to sign the Order.

NOTICE OF RIGHT OF APPEAL: Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-5-1, any person aggrieved by a decision or order of the PUC may, within seven days from the date of the order, petition the Supreme Court for a Writ of Certiorari to review the legality and reasonableness of the decision or order.

⁷ *Id.* at Comm. 1-2(c).