

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN RE: NATIONAL GRID DISPENSATION :
OF SETTLEMENT PROCEEDS : Docket No. 3710

POSITION STATEMENT OF THE WILEY CENTER

The Wiley Center supports National Grid’s proposal to settlement \$8 million in settlement proceeds to assist low-income customers. The Wiley Center appreciates the leadership of both National Grid (NG) and of the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (the Division) in addressing the dire situation faced by low-income Rhode Islanders in light of the enormous recent increases in the cost of electric service.

The Wiley Center offers two further suggestions. First, the Wiley Center asks that the Commission consider committing more of the settlement proceeds to the most distressed customer class. The A-60 class pays as much as 20-50% of its income for utility service. People earning the state median income or more pay 6 % or less of their incomes for utility service. The Commission and National Grid are in a position to rectify this imbalance. To do so would comport with the policy expressed by the General Assembly, which has endorsed the “percentage of income” concept as the loadstar for addressing the needs of low-income Rhode Islanders. R.I.G.L. § 39-2-5(10).¹

Directing more of the settlement to the A-60 class would have a profound impact on poor Rhode Islanders’ bills. *See, NG’s Response to Wiley Center Data Request 1-2* (showing a 20.3 % decrease in monthly bills for the A-60 class if the whole settlement

¹ This provision states that “[n]othing in this section nor in any other provision of the general laws shall be construed to prohibit any public utility with the approval of the commission, from forgiving arrearages of any person in accordance with the terms of a percentage of income plan administered by the governor’s office of energy assistance for low-income households who are eligible to receive funds under the federal low income home energy assistance program.”

were used for that purpose). By contrast, directing \$8.4 million to the entire ratepayer population would have some, but very little, effect on anyone's bill. *See, NG's Response to Wiley Center Data Request 1-1* (showing that NG's proposal to use half of the settlement for all ratepayers results in a decrease of approximately 1%).²

Second, the Wiley Center suggests that the Commission apply the settlement proceeds to the A-60 class immediately, in lieu of waiting for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to sign off on the settlement. The Wiley Center makes this suggestion for three reasons: first, the Center understands that there is little doubt the the FERC will approve the settlement; second, low-income Rhode Islanders are in sufficiently dire straits that asking even interim payment of large rate increases will cause great hardship; and, third, immediate action will produce rate stability for the A-60 class, which is one of the central goals of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,
The Wiley Center
By its attorney,

B. Jean Rosiello #2886
340 Olney Street
Providence, RI 02906
401-751-5090
email: jeanrosiello@cox.net

² The data provided by NG describes these impacts without taking into account the rate increases proposed in Docket 3706. NG represents that these figures nonetheless do "reflect the impact of the Company's proposal." *NG's Response to Wiley Center Data Request 1-1*.

Certificate of Service

I certify that on the 8th day of December, 2005, I emailed a copy of this document to the following:

proberti@riag.ri.gov
RDiMeglio@riag.ri.gov
Steve.scialabba@ripuc.state.ri.us
David.stearns@ripuc.state.ri.us
wlueker@riag.ri.gov
jfarley316@hotmail.com
Laura.olton@us.ngrid.com
Thomas.robinson@us.ngrid.com
Ronald.Gerwatowski@us.ngrid.com
Joanne.scanlon@us.ngrid.com
Jstutz@tellus.org
mrusso@frlawri.com
