

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN RE: OFFICE OF ENERGY RESOURCES :
PROPOSED LIHEAP ENHANCEMENT : DOCKET NO. 4290
CHARGE FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2018 :

REPORT AND ORDER

On July 13, 2011, Governor Chafee signed into law the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Enhancement Plan, R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-1-27.12. The purpose of the LIHEAP Enhancement Plan was to create a separate fund through the creation of a new surcharge on all electric and gas customers' bills. The money collected would be used to supplement the federal LIHEAP funding that the State receives to assist low income customers in paying their energy bills. During the 2016 legislative session, the statute was amended to set aside a portion of the LIHEAP Enhancement Plan funding to be allocated for customers seeking certification to enter into an arrearage plan between April 15 and September 30 of each year and who are "homeless families or individuals who are transitioning from a shelter into housing who provide acceptable documentation to the Department of Human Services (DHS)."¹ The surcharge applies only to customers of The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid (National Grid or Company).

On October 2, 2017, National Grid filed its reconciliation of the LIHEAP Enhancement Plan for the period September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017.² The reconciliation compared actual LIHEAP Enhancement Charge revenue to the actual LIHEAP Enhancement Credits issued to customers during the same period. The filing reported a beginning balance of \$975,422, as of

¹ R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-1-27.12(c)(3).

² National Grid's LIHEAP Enhancement Plan Reconciliation Filing (Oct. 2, 2017); http://www.ripuc.org/eventsactions/docket/4290-NGrid-LIHEAPReconciliation-Sept2017_10-2-17.pdf. In Order No. 22670 (Docket No. 4290 issued on February 16, 2017, the PUC ordered the Company to file semi-annual reconciliations no later than May 31 and September 30.

September 1, 2016, and an ending balance of \$2,548,975, as of August 31, 2017.³ According to the Company, the net fund balance was \$1,573,553 as of August 31, 2017.⁴ A combined total of 22,439 gas and electric customers received fuel assistance. That was a decrease of 1,642 customers or 6.8% compared to the previous year's combined total of 24,081 customers.⁵

On November 2, 2017, DHS filed with the PUC its recommended LIHEAP Enhancement Charge for calendar year 2018 (2018 Charge). DHS proposed a charge of \$0.81 per month for each customer, the same charge approved by the PUC for calendar year 2017.⁶ The LIHEAP Enhancement Plan requires the 2018 Charge to produce revenues between \$6.5 million and \$7.5 million from electric and gas customers, combined. In response to a data request, National Grid estimated that the recommended 2018 Charge, if made effective January 1, 2018, would generate \$7,479,115 million in total revenues from electric and gas customers.⁷ As a result of this calculation, the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division) recommended that the monthly LIHEAP Enhancement Charge be set at the requested amount of \$0.81 per month.⁸

At an Open Meeting held on December 20, 2017, based on the recommendation of the Division, the PUC voted unanimously to approve a rate of \$0.81 per month for each customer for calendar year 2018.

³ National Grid's LIHEAP Enhancement Plan Reconciliation Filing at 1. The beginning balance was adjusted for April 30, 2014 credits of \$594,900 which were previously omitted. *Id.* at 1, n. (a).

⁴ National Grid's LIHEAP Enhancement Plan Reconciliation Filing at 1.

⁵ Letter of Robert Humm at 2 (Oct. 2, 2017); http://www.ripuc.org/eventsactions/docket/4290-NGrid-LIHEAPReconciliation-Sept2017_10-2-17.pdf;

⁶ PUC Order No. 22670 (Docket No. 4290) (Feb. 16, 2017).

⁷ National Grid's Response to Division 1-3; http://www.ripuc.org/eventsactions/docket/4290-NGrid-DR-PUC1_12-11-17.pdf.

⁸ Division Mem. at 2 (Dec. 12, 2017); [http://www.ripuc.org/eventsactions/docket/4290-DPU-Memo\(12-13-17\).pdf](http://www.ripuc.org/eventsactions/docket/4290-DPU-Memo(12-13-17).pdf).

Accordingly, it is

(23016) ORDERED:

A LIHEAP Enhancement Charge of \$0.81 per month for each customer for the calendar year 2018, with the term 'customer' defined as any person taking service from an electric or gas distribution company at a single point of electricity or gas delivery or electric or gas meter, is hereby approved for bills issued on and after January 1, 2018.

EFFECTIVE AT WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND ON JANUARY 1, 2018 PURSUANT TO AN OPEN MEETING DECISION ON DECEMBER 20, 2017. WRITTEN ORDER ISSUED JANUARY 18, 2018.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION



Margaret E. Curran, Chairperson

Marion S. Gold, Commissioner

Abigail Anthony, Commissioner

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 7 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.