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April 12, 2019

Ms. Luly Massaro, Clerk
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02888

**Re: *Docket No. 4898- The Narragansett Bay Commission
Tariff Advice Filing***

Dear Ms. Massaro:

Enclosed please find an original and nine copies of the following document:

1. The Narragansett Bay Commission's Response to the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission's Data Requests (Set Four).

Please note that an electronic copy of this document has been provided to the service list.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph A. Keough, Jr.

JAK/kf

cc: Docket 4898 Service List (*via electronic mail*)

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
DOCKET NO. 4898
Response Of The
Narragansett Bay Commission
To The Rhode Island
Public Utilities Commission's
Data Requests
Set 4

PUC 4-1 On an annual basis, how many checks of any sort does NBC issue? An estimate is sufficient.

Response: NBC issues approximately 4,700 checks annually.

Prepared by: Karen Giebink

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Data Requests
Set 4

PUC 4-2 Is the new Customer Service Software currently being used by NBC?

Response: Yes.

Prepared by: Brendon McLean

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PUC 4-3 For the 13,700 accounts referenced in response to PUC 1-2, are these accounts currently receiving 2 estimated and one actual bill per quarter?

Response: No, NBC is billing based on actual meter readings. In addition, the City of East Providence has now converted to monthly meter readings (approximately 3,294 of the 13,700 accounts).

Prepared by: Clara Casimiro

PUC 4-4 Can the new Customer Service Software be configured to true up bills on a quarterly basis? If so, what is the estimated cost to modify the software?

Response: Conceivably, NBC's customer service software could true up bills. The problem is not the software as much as it is time consuming process to true up the large number of accounts. Even with East Providence converting to monthly billing, there are still 10,406 accounts for which NBC does not receive actual monthly billing information.

As set forth in NBC's response to PUC 1-2, NBC did consider the continued use of estimated readings for these customers with a true-up based on an actual read. Use of estimated readings; however, would require the cancellation and rebill of thousands of accounts as part of the true-up process. This double bill calculation process is prohibitive and likely to cause performance problems due to the time it would take to process the updating of all the tables in the database. NBC's customer service database contains hundreds of thousands of records in hundreds of tables. In order to "true-up" estimated meter readings, NBC must first cancel the bill based on the estimated reading and then rebill the account using the new meter reading. While this may seem simple, it is in fact quite complicated due to the number of records and tables that must be accessed and updated. The system can easily handle the cancel and rebill of small numbers of accounts. However, the processing time required to access and modify records for thousands of accounts makes the process infeasible. NBC estimates that it would take 80 hours to "true-up" a billing cycle, assuming that there are no billing errors or system disruptions during the process. This would be a strain on system computer resources (process and memory) for the duration of the process. In addition, accounts are "locked" during the cancel and rebill processing period precluding any collection or other account maintenance activity such as real estate closings.

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Most water utilities would not need to “true-up” large numbers of meter readings since they have control over the meter reading function. NBC’s billing situation is considerably more complicated since NBC does not own or read its own meters. In fact, NBC must obtain meter readings from seven different water suppliers, in different file formats, with different frequency and in some cases different units of measure.

Prepared by: Brendon McLean

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PUC 4-5 Is the new Customer Service Software configured to true up a customer's bill at the end of a budget payment plan? If not, how will NBC true up bills at the end of a budget period.

Response: Yes.

Prepared by: Clara Casimiro

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- PUC 4-6** Please reconcile the following:
- a. PUC 1-1 part (f) "average quarterly consumption bill for a residential customer is estimated to approximately \$95."
 - b. PUC 3-1 which presents quarterly consumption of \$66.54.
 - c. Docket 4890, Schedule HJS-29, current annual consumption charge for 73.2 HCF customer of \$266.16 (\$66.54 quarterly)

Response: The estimated quarterly consumption fee based on usage of 73.2 HCF is \$66.54. The answer to PUC 1-1 appears to be an error/typo and I apologize for any confusion.

Prepared by: Karen Giebink

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that on April 12, 2019, I sent a copy of the within to all parties set forth on the attached Service List by electronic mail and copies to Luly Massaro, Commission Clerk, by electronic mail and regular mail.

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