2008 DEC 12 AM 11:

December 9, 2008

Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02888

Re: Public Comment, Docket #4000

At its regular meeting on September 25, 2008, the Newport Energy and Environment Commission voted to endorse National Grid's proposal for a Least Cost Procurement Plan, as it applies to the State of Rhode Island, and particularly as it applies to Aquidneck Island. The commission continues to endorse this proposal.

We believe that Aquidneck Island is a strong choice for a pilot program demonstrating maximum response to both distributed generation and demand response. The three municipalities on Aquidneck Island and the Naval Station, Newport are making concerted efforts to improve energy efficiency and conservation, both in their own operations and through public education. Each has a committee or commission dedicated to such efforts. All of these entities are investigating or actualizing the incorporation of wind energy into their local power systems. Many local businesses are also making working to conserve, recycle, purchase responsibly, and to build using "green" techniques, some including solar energy in their practices. The local media outlets, both print and broadcast, are very supportive of environmental initiatives, and will provide an effective avenue for public awareness and education.

In September, representatives of the four entities gathered for a very ambitious and successful daylong energy conference at Salve Regina University on September 20, 2008. The apex of that conference was a "Town Hall Forum," at which the major recommendation was the formation of the Aquidneck Island Energy Alliance. Approximately twenty people signed up to investigate the possibilities for this alliance, and it is now in its early formative stages.

Aquidneck Island has a vested interest in maximizing energy efficiency and reducing peak demand. Energy costs are affecting municipal operations as much as they are the families who live within our borders. The new "Net Metering" law makes inclusion of renewable energy systems more advantageous than ever. Newport has potential for growth in development of its North End, and there is also great potential for all three towns in the Navy land scheduled to be excessed along the island's western coast. We want to be sure any growth realized there is as responsible and energy efficient as possible. It is also important to preserve the beauty of the area both for the health of local residents and for the economic importance of its attractiveness to visitors, by availing ourselves of the cleanest energy available, and avoiding at all cost the use of the inefficient equipment needed to meet peak demand. It is also to our advantage, in economics and in land use, to defer, and possibly avoid, building an additional electrical substation.

The communities on the island have shown a commitment to working collaboratively. The Aquidneck Island Planning Commission, which, among other accomplishments, has drafted the excellent West Side Master Plan, is a fine example of the potential for collaboration. Our Commission, created by city resolution in March 2008, is committed to collaborative action, as demonstrated by our helping organize a new Aquidneck Island Watershed Council and the above-mentioned Aquidneck Island Energy Alliance.

For all the above reasons, we feel that the National Grid System Reliability Procurement Plan is right for Rhode Island, and that Aquidneck Island is right for this plan. We strongly encourage the Public Utilities Commission to approve it as proposed.

Yours truly,
Beth Milham
Annie Everson (BM - with permission)
Beth Milham
Annie Everson
Co-Chairs,
The Newport Energy and Environment Commission