STATE OF RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN RE: REVIEW OF PROPOSED TOWN OF NEW SHOREHAM PROJECT PURSUANT TO RHODE ISLAND GENERAL LAWS § 39-26.1-7

PREFILED SUPPLEMENTAL REBUTTAL TESTIMONY

OF

WILLIAM M. MOORE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER DEEPWATER WIND HOLDINGS, LLC

FOR

DEEPWATER WIND BLOCK ISLAND, LLC

FEBRUARY 24, 2010

1 Q. What is your purpose in filing this testimony?

- 2 A. Since the filing of my original rebuttal testimony, I have had the opportunity to review
- 3 the materials and information supplied by Mr. Hahn in response to Deepwater Wind's
- 4 First Set of Data Request to the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers. I would like to
- 5 respond to that information based on analysis performed by Deepwater Wind.

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7 Q. In his analysis, Mr. Hahn examined projected rates of return on a levered basis.

- Do you agree with this approach?
- 9 A. No. Deepwater Wind believes that the proper reference point for considering an
- appropriate projected rate of return is the project-level, or unlevered, rate of return, which
- does not take into account debt financing and associated tax consequences, such as tax
- benefits resulting from interest expenses, because to do so at this point in time would be a
- purely hypothetical exercise. The rationale is simple. No offshore wind farm has ever
- been financed in the United States. There is no precedent for terms that would be offered
- by banks to finance such a project, including the size of the loan, interest costs, the kind
- and volume of required reserves, tenor or duration of loan, applicable coverage ratios,
- and the wind case that the bank will credit in the financial model. As such, any financial
- model making assumptions as to levered returns will be highly speculative, and highly
- 19 variable, depending on the assumptions used. We believe focusing on project level
- 20 returns reduces the risk of confusion and eliminates at least one speculative dimension
- 21 from what is an inherently speculative exercise. As such, the remainder of my testimony
- will discuss Deepwater Wind's rate of return from the perspective of the project's
- 23 unlevered rate of return, with the exception of two sections, in which I address the
- levered rates of return calculated by Mr. Hahn.

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26 O. On that basis, what is Deepwater Wind's projected unlevered rate of return on

- 27 the Block Island Wind Farm?
- A. Deepwater Wind's projected unlevered rate of return, and the information used to
- build up and calculate that rate of return, is confidential. One of the most important

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commercial reasons that we have elected to maintain the confidentiality of such 1 2 information is that we are concurrently negotiating with equipment, materials and services suppliers for the Block Island Wind Farm Project. If information about our cost 3 4 and cash flow assumptions, which are intrinsic to any returns analysis, were to become public, it could have a severe adverse impact on our ongoing negotiations with these 5 6 suppliers and undermine our ability to develop the project. 7 8 These concerns notwithstanding, we are comfortable stating that Deepwater Wind's 9 estimated project level rate of return is in a range from the high single digits to the low 10 teens. On a confidential basis, a projected rate of return was discussed with National Grid during the course of negotiations, as well as disclosed to the Division and the 11 Commission in the course of the proceeding in this Docket. Deepwater Wind believes 12 that its rate of return is well within the range of appropriate returns as established by the 13 Division's own expert, especially taking into account that the project is a first-of-its kind 14 15 project in the United States with risk factors that are materially different from those associated with building other renewable energy projects, such as an onshore wind farm 16 with an established supply chain and a lengthy servicing track record within the United 17 18 States. 19 20 Q. What are the results of Deepwater Wind's review of Richard Hahn's opinions and conclusions concerning Deepwater Wind's rate of return on the Block Island 21 Wind Farm Project? 22 23 A. We believe that Mr. Hahn made a number of important errors in arriving at his 24 conclusions. I would group these into two broad categories. First, Mr. Hahn made a number of very significant errors in his cash flow model, relating to how the certain 25 26 Federal tax benefits are calculated and used, and with respect to the timing of capital expenditures. Together, these errors account for most of the disparity between Mr. 27 Hahn's projected rates of return and Deepwater Wind's projections of the same. Second, 28

Mr. Hahn's analysis relied on four mistaken assumptions that, individually and

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- 1 collectively, give rise to the false impression that Deepwater Wind will earn a higher rate
- 2 of return than is in fact the case. These errors are material and make Mr. Hahn's
- 3 conclusions about Deepwater Wind's project rate of return incorrect.

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O. Please elaborate.

- 6 A. First, I would like to address the errors made in how the Federal tax credits available
- 7 to the Block Island Wind Farm are treated.

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Q. Can you describe the Federal tax credit you are referring to?

- 10 A. Yes. As part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act passed by Congress in
- 11 2009, the U.S. government allowed wind energy projects to claim a credit known as an
- investment tax credit in lieu of a pre-existing tax incentive, the production tax credit. The
- value of the investment tax credit is based on the cost of putting certain kinds of energy
- property into service. The government will allow an owner of a wind project to claim a
- tax credit of up to 30% of the value of such property. For reasons I will go into later, it is
- important to note that not all the property used to build the Block Island Wind Farm will
- 17 qualify for the tax credit, but a significant proportion of it will. The investment tax credit
- 18 for wind projects expires in 2012.

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Q. What is the relevance of the investment tax credit to the Block Island Wind

21 Farm?

- A. For 2009 and 2010, the government has established a program, sometimes referred to
- as the Section 1603 Treasury Cash Grant program, which converts the investment tax
- 24 credit into a direct cash payment, or cash grant. This is important because most wind
- 25 developers do not generate enough taxable income to fully utilize the tax credits. The
- Section 1603 program makes it possible for developers of wind projects to monetize the
- 27 full value of Federal tax credits even if they do not have such income.

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It is important to note that the government only pays out this grant after the project has 1 2 completed construction and an application has been filed with the U.S. Treasury. This 3 means that the portion of the construction cost that is covered by the cash grant has to be 4 'bridged' during the construction period, typically using a bank loan. That also means that banks expect to be repaid the 'bridge loan' once the project has received the cash 5 6 grant. Generally speaking, the industry has regarded the Section 1603 program as a 7 success because it put a floor under the renewable energy industry, by encouraging 8 banks to extend temporary construction credit, knowing that the U.S. government would later pay the grant, enabling projects to repay their bridge loans. 9 10 Under current rules, wind projects must make certain equipment purchases in 2010 in 11 order to take advantage of the Section 1603 program through 2012. This is Deepwater 12 Wind's current plan, and why it is important to have the PPA approved soon so it can take 13 14 the next step of making financial commitments on equipment contracts. By doing so, 15 Deepwater Wind will take a step in the direction of ensuring that the Block Island Wind Farm qualifies for this important Federal incentive. 16 17 O. Has Deepwater Wind factored this "Section 1603" cash grant into its PPA price? 18 19 A. Yes. Deepwater Wind has already made the assumption that the Federal incentive will 20 be available, and has passed on the value of that incentive to ratepayers in the overall 21 PPA pricing. If Deepwater Wind does not meet the deadline to qualify for the incentive, 22 the PPA price will not go up. Rather, Deepwater Wind's expected rate of return will be 23 severely reduced, potentially putting the project in jeopardy. 24 Q. Has Mr. Hahn treated the Section 1603 cash grant correctly in his calculations? 25 26 A. No. Mr. Hahn has made two erroneous assumptions that have a significant impact on

the calculation of the project's return profile. Mr. Hahn's errors regarding the Section

1603 cash grant are material and, accordingly, his conclusions about Deepwater Wind's

29 rate of return are incorrect.

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First, he has assumed that 100% of the entire capital cost will be qualified for the Section 1 2 1603 program. In fact, only a portion of the capital cost will qualify, that portion that meets the definition of "energy property" under IRS tax rules. Much of the cost qualifies, 3 4 but a significant portion of it does not. For example, real estate leasing costs, whether related to the electrical collection system or the site lease for the wind farm, do not 5 6 qualify. In addition, certain portions of the electrical collection system itself are not 7 treated as energy property for the purposes of the program. Also, special tax rules govern 8 what financing costs are eligible or not eligible for capitalization in a project's tax basis. 9 Non-capitalized costs do not qualify for the Section 1603 program. By treating a higher 10 percentage of capital expenditures as "grant eligible", Mr. Hahn has, in effect, overstated the value of the Federal tax incentive. On paper, this shows up as giving the project 11 credit for money that it cannot claim and will not ultimately receive. Remediating this 12 incorrect enhancement to the project's cash flow by making a downward revision to the 13 14 estimated cash grant amount would lower the rate of return projected by Mr. Hahn. 15 The second, and perhaps more important, error is that Mr. Hahn has assumed that all, or a 16 majority, of the Section 1603 cash grant will be paid out to the equity investors once it is 17 18 received from the government. This is an incorrect assumption and leads to a 19 dramatically high estimated *leveraged* rate of return of close to, or in excess of, 100%. 20 As I have explained, when the Section 1603 cash grant is received from the U.S. 21 Treasury, it will not be distributed in its entirety to Deepwater Wind's investors. Instead, 22 the prevailing practice is that lending institutions that provide the debt to build wind 23 projects will ask that the cash grant be used to pay down their debt. 24 Banks will simply not allow Deepwater Wind's investors to withdraw the entire cash 25 26 grant from the project. For example, if the lending bank has provided a bridge loan in an amount equal to the estimated cash grant amount to fund the construction of the project, it 27 will expect that the cash grant amount be paid to the bank in its entirety. Alternatively, if 28 29 no special bridge facility has been arranged, the bank will likely require that the cash

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1 grant amount, or at least a significant portion of it, be used to pre-pay the loan and thus 2 de-risk the bank's position in the project. If the bank allowed Deepwater Wind to 3 distribute the entire cash grant to its investors, it would be akin to a homeowner being 4 able to take a home equity loan that would reduce his or her interest in the home to zero percent, or even negative equity. This is clearly not prudent for banks, and they do not 5 6 permit it. Instead, as I have explained, most, if not all, of the cash grant will be used to 7 pay down the bank loans. 8 9 The treatment of how the cash grant proceeds will be used has a dramatic impact on the 10 rate of return analysis. For example, in one case, Mr. Hahn had estimated that in the year after the project is completed, approximately \$69 million would be received by the 11 project in the form of a cash grant and distributed to investors as free cash flow, even 12 though Deepwater Wind would have only invested approximately \$46 million by way of 13 14 equity contributions to the project. Obviously, in such a case, Deepwater Wind would earn a very high rate of return, since it would receive all its capital back in a very short 15 period of time, and any future earnings would be 'cream off the top'. In reality, 16 Deepwater Wind will not receive a \$69 million payout as a result of the cash grant. That 17 amount will either be entirely paid to lenders, or shared between lenders and Deepwater 18 19 Wind, likely in proportion to the debt-to-equity ratio. In the latter case, less than \$14 20 million would be paid to Deepwater Wind, and \$55 million would be used to pay down 21 the loan. Deepwater Wind's levered rate of return in such a case would be nowhere near 22 the triple digit figures suggested by Mr. Hahn, as it would take many more years before 23 Deepwater Wind can even recover its principal, much less start to collect profits. (Please note that the above figures ignore the fact that the \$69 million cash grant estimated by 24 Mr. Hahn is overstated by the extent of non-qualified capital expenses). 25 26 27 In summary, we believe that if Mr. Hahn recalculated his projected rate of return to show the effects of excluding non-eligible capital expenditures from the cash grant 28 29 computation, and revised his treatment of how the cash grant proceeds are paid, his

- 1 estimates of Deepwater Wind's projected rate of return would be dramatically reduced.
- 2 On a project-level return basis, his revised calculations would be consistent with the
- 3 return estimate we have disclosed to the Commission and Division.

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- Q. You also mentioned that Mr. Hahn made an error with respect to the timing of
- 6 capital expenditures. Can you explain?
- 7 A. Yes. Mr. Hahn made an erroneous assumption about the timing of capital
- 8 expenditures, in particular, expenditures that are funded by Deepwater Wind using equity
- 9 investments. An equity rate of return is highly sensitive to timing of expenditures. The
- earlier expenditures are made, the lower the ultimate rate of return, since the capital that
- funded the expenditures "waits" longer to be repaid and earns nothing in the interim. Mr.
- Hahn assumed that all of the expenditures for the Block Island Wind Farm would be
- made in 2012, when, in fact, Deepwater Wind started making significant expenditures in
- 14 2009, as detailed below.

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 In 2009, Deepwater Wind invested millions of dollars developing the Block Island Wind Farm, paying for environmental studies, permitting processes and engineering services. In addition, Deepwater Wind purchased and installed equipment to measure the wind resource on Block Island, and hired a vessel to perform sophisticated subsea geological surveys to ascertain the soil conditions for potential sites around Block Island.

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In 2010, under the current rules governing available Federal tax incentives,
Deepwater Wind potentially needs to incur tens of millions of dollars in
equipment down-payments to qualify for the Federal tax incentives under that
program. In addition, we have budgeted hundreds of thousands of dollars in
program fees and expenses to cover the costs of preparing and negotiating for a
Department of Energy loan guarantee.

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 In 2011, Deepwater Wind will need to make milestone payments under our equipment contracts, secure vessel charters for 2012, and commence onshore construction of the jacket foundations, procuring steel and incurring fabrication costs.

 Finally, in 2012, Deepwater Wind will need to make additional payments for equipment, and enter the offshore construction phase, incurring construction costs, vessel charter costs and associated labor costs.

Unlike an onshore wind farm, which can be financed and completed within a period of several months, the offshore wind construction timetable is very different, and the "spending curve" for the project is correspondingly different. If adjustments were made to Mr. Hahn's model to account for this, we believe it would significantly reduce the rate of return calculated by Mr. Hahn. Mr. Hahn's error on the timing of expenditures is material and, accordingly, his conclusions about Deepwater Wind's rate of return are incorrect.

Q. What is the impact of these errors?

A. If you contrast the Block Island Wind Farm project, as modeled by Mr. Hahn, in which all of the equity capital is invested just before commercial operation, the entire project capital expense qualifies for Federal tax incentives, and the entire Federal tax incentive is paid out to the equity investor, with a project model that adopts more realistic assumptions, in that the equity capital is invested over several years, a portion of the project capital expense does not qualify for Federal tax incentives, and the Federal tax incentives are distributed both to equity investors and the project's lenders, the calculated rate of return for the latter project is going to be significantly lower than for the former project. As I have already noted, Deepwater Wind's projected project level return,

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calculated using correct assumptions, is well within the range of market-appropriate 1 2 returns, and has been disclosed to National Grid, the Division and the Commission. 3 4 O. You also mentioned that Mr. Hahn made a number of mistaken assumptions that impact his returns analysis. Can you elaborate? 5 A. Yes. The errors identified in my testimony above account for most of the discrepancy 6 between Mr. Hahn's calculations and our own calculations. However, there are a number 7 8 of important, but erroneous, assumptions made by Mr. Hahn that, if corrected, would 9 result in an even lower projected rate of return. I believe these are worthy of note and 10 consideration by the Commission. 11 First, as noted above, Mr. Hahn assumed that the entire capital cost of the project would 12 qualify for the investment tax credit. Mr. Hahn compounds this error by assuming that 13 14 the entire capital cost of the project would qualify for depreciation under the Modified Accelerated Cost Recovery System (MACRS). MACRS is a system of accelerated 15 depreciation for renewable energy projects available under Federal tax law. This system 16 effectively enhances a project's value by allowing it to claim tax benefits much earlier 17 18 than would otherwise be the case under ordinary tax law. However, to the extent that Mr. 19 Hahn has assumed that more costs qualify for this special treatment than would otherwise be the case, he has incorrectly overstated the value of MACRS to the project (and hence, 20 21 he has overstated the equity investor's rate of return). 22 23 Second, Mr. Hahn assumes that the entire value of tax deductions (such as MACRS 24 depreciation) are fully monetized as cash flow to Deepwater Wind. While this assumption is not entirely incorrect, it is aggressive. Deepwater Wind would only be able 25 26 to monetize the value of such tax deductions if it was earning significant profits from 27 other projects - in the order of tens of millions of dollars - to offset such tax deductions. Deepwater Wind, like the vast majority of other renewable energy developers, will not be 28 29 in a position to do so. As such, Deepwater Wind will only be able to directly monetize

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the value of such tax deductions by incurring significant transaction costs that will reduce 1 2 the value of such tax credits. In practical terms, this will further reduce the equity investor's rate of return. 3 4 Third, Mr. Hahn took issue with the operation and maintenance (O&M) costs assumed in 5 6 our model. Again, we have asked that these costs be kept confidential as we negotiate the 7 cost and scope of O&M arrangements, so I am not going to address this issue with 8 specific details. However, our O&M cost assumptions are based on extensive research and have been vetted by Noble Denton, a firm with direct, first-hand experience with 9 10 these costs kinds of in the context of offshore wind projects built in Europe. Mr. Hahn has stated that the lower O&M cost assumptions he used as an alternative to Deepwater 11 Wind's estimates were based on a confidential study of another offshore wind project. In 12 his reply to Deepwater Wind's First Set Of Data Request to the Division of Public 13 14 Utilities and Carriers, request 1-13, Mr. Hahn did not state the scale of the offshore wind 15 project referenced, nor did he discuss how such a change of scale would impact O&M costs. Since the confidential study was not disclosed to Deepwater Wind, we have no 16 way of reviewing the basis for his assumptions. However, scale is one of the most 17 18 significant drivers of O&M costs as certain fixed costs associated with the operation and 19 maintenance regime can be more effectively spread out over a large project than a smaller project. If Mr. Hahn did not make these adjustments, then I believe the marginally higher 20 21 rates of return associated with the assumed lower O&M costs, as shown by Mr. Hahn, are likely to be significantly moderated, if not eliminated in their entirety. 22 23 Fourth, with respect to the calculation of a levered rate of return, it does not appear that a 24 number of critical features of a project financing have been correctly modeled in Mr. 25 Hahn's calculation of the levered return. For example, the model does not include any of 26 the typical debt reserves that would be required by a lending institution, for example, to 27 cover debt service or maintenance costs. Since such reserves are set aside in a bank 28 account "in escrow", rather than being used productively to generate revenue, the 29

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inclusion of bank reserves in any analysis has a negative impact on a project's levered 1 2 rate of return. 3 4 As I have noted, other errors account for most of the discrepancy between Mr. Hahn's calculations and our projections. However, these additional factors further artificially 5 6 inflate the projected rate of return and mistakenly give the incorrect impression that 7 Deepwater Wind is earning a higher rate of return than is in fact the case. 8 Q. Based on your analysis of Mr. Hahn's calculations, do you agree with his 9 10 assertion on page 26, lines 8-10 of his testimony that "the Deepwater project could be successfully developed, constructed and operated at a lower PPA price than is 11 included in the current version of the contract"? 12 A. No. I believe his conclusion was based on the factors I have discussed above that, 13 14 based on our analysis, artificially and incorrectly suggest that the Block Island Wind 15 Farm is either earning a higher rate of return that is in fact the case, or that the projects used for the basis for comparison could produce power more cheaply than in reality. In 16 fact, the Block Island Wind Farm has a project-level return that is lower than what Mr. 17 18 Hahn has suggested, and compares more favorably to the other renewable energy projects 19 that he has identified. Deepwater Wind's rate of return on this project is the well within 20 the range of appropriate returns as established by the Division's own expert and has been 21 disclosed to National Grid, the Commission, and the Division. We are asking the Commission to approve the PPA without any adjustments to the negotiated pricing 22 23 schedule, and we believe that outcome is appropriate. 24 Q. Do the errors and mistaken assumptions that Mr. Hahn made also impact 25 26 levelized-price comparisons made between the Block Island Wind Farm and the other projects listed by Mr. Hahn? 27

A. Yes. Mr. Hahn calculated the real levelized prices for the group of "comparison

projects" using the same erroneous and mistaken assumptions. As such, the cash flow

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- 1 profile of those comparison projects is actually worse than Mr. Hahn has calculated. To
- 2 use an example, if the cash grant is not paid to the project, but used to repay a bridge
- 3 loan, then a higher real levelized price would be required for the project to offset that
- 4 adjustment. As such, the real levelized prices used in Mr. Hahn's analysis are
- 5 understated (i.e. are erroneous on the low side) and cannot be used as a valid basis for
- 6 comparison with the levelized price of power under the Deepwater Wind PPA.

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- 8 Q. Does this conclude your supplemental rebuttal testimony?
- 9 A. Yes.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that on February 24, 2010, 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.

Name/Address	E-mail Distribution	Phone/FAX
Thomas R. Teehan, Esq.	Thomas.teehan@us.ngrid.com	401-784-7667
National Grid.		401-784-4321
280 Melrose St.	Joanne.scanlon@us.ngrid.com	
Providence, RI 02907		
Ronald T. Gerwatowski, Esq.	Ronald.gerwatowski@us.ngrid.com	
National Grid	Celia.obrien@us.ngrid.com	
40 Sylvan Rd.		
Waltham, MA 02451	Jennifer.brooks@us.ngrid.com	
Alan Mandl, Esq.	amandl@smithduggan.com	617-228-4464
Smith & Duggan LLP		781-259-1112
Lincoln North		
55 Old Bedford Road		
Lincoln, MA 01773		
Jerry Elmer, Esq.	Jelmer@clf.org	401-351-1102
Conservation Law Foundation		401-351-1130
55 Dorrance Street		
Providence, RI 02903		
Katherine A. Merolla, Esq.,	KAMLAW2344@aol.com	401-739-2900
Merolla & Accetturo		401-739-2906
469 Centerville Road Suite 206		
Warwick, RI 02886		
Richard A. Sinapi, Esq.	dicks@sfclaw.com	401-944-9690
Sinapi Formisano & Company, Ltd.		401-943-9040
100 Midway Place, Suite 1		
Cranston, RI 02920-5707		
Alan Shoer, Esq.	Ashoer@apslaw.com	401-274-7200
Adler Pollock & Sheehan		401-751-0604
One Citizens Plaza, 8 th Floor		
Providence, RI 02903-1345		
Leo Wold, Esq.	lwold@riag.ri.gov	401-222-2424
Dept. of Attorney General	Steve.scialabba@ripuc.state.ri.us	401-222-3016
150 South Main St.	·	
Providence, RI 02903	Al.contente@ripuc.state.ri.us	
Jon Hagopian, Esq.	jhagopian@riag.ri.gov	
Dept. of Attorney General	Dmacrae@riag.ri.gov	
150 South Main St.	Mtobin@riag.ri.gov	
Providence, RI 02903	Miconie Hag.H.gov	

Paul Rich, Deepwater Wind	Prich@dwwind.com	401-648-0604
Bill Moore, Deepwater Wind	Wmoore@dwwind.com	401-648-0604
Susan Demacedo, Deepwater Wind	susan@dwwind.com	401-648-0606
David Schwartz, Deepwater Wind	dschwartz@dwwind.com	
David Nickerson from Mystic River	dave@nickersons.org	
Energy Group, LLC		
Richard LaCapra, LaCapra Associates	Rlacapra@lacapra.com	212-675-8123
Richard Hahn	rhahn@lacapra.com	
Mary Neal		
Lacapra Associates	mneal@lacapra.com	
1 Washington Mall, 9th floor		
Boston, MA 02108		
Original & nine (9) copies w/:	Lmassaro@puc.state.ri.us	401-780-2017
Luly E. Massaro, Commission Clerk	Cwilson@puc.state.ri.us	401-941-1691
Public Utilities Commission	<u>Cwitsoff@puc.state.ii.us</u>	
89 Jefferson Blvd.	Nucci@puc.state.ri.us	
Warwick RI 02889	Anault@puc.state.ri.us	
	Allaunt@puc.state.m.us	
	Sccamara@puc.state.ri.us	
Thomas Kogut, DPU	tkogut@ripuc.state.ri.us	
Matt Auten, Office of Lt. Governor	mauten@ltgov.state.ri.us	
Julian Dash, RIEDC	jdash@riedc.com	
Rep. Ehrhardt	rep-ehrhardt@rilin.state.ri.us	

/s/____ Joseph A. Keough, Jr., Esquire # 4925 KEOUGH & SWEENEY, LTD. 100 Armistice Boulevard Pawtucket, RI 02860 (401) 724-3600