## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN RE: THE NARRAGANSETT ELECTRIC COMPANY

d/b/a NATIONAL GRID'S STANDARD OFFER :

DOCKET NO. 4935

SERVICE RATES FOR THE INDUSTRIAL, RESIDENTIAL : AND COMMERCIAL GROUPS PURSUANT TO THE :

2020 STANDARD OFFER PROCUREMENT PLAN

#### **ORDER**

#### I. Introduction

On July 17, 2019, The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid (National Grid or Company) filed its proposed Standard Offer Service (SOS) Rates for the Industrial Group for the period of October 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, and for the Residential and Commercial Groups for the winter period of October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021.

National Grid currently procures SOS supply on behalf of its customers pursuant to the 2020 SOS Procurement Plan approved by the Commission at an Open Meeting on June 12, 2019.<sup>2</sup> The procurement plan authorizes National Grid to conduct solicitations throughout the year for Standard Offer Service in varying contract lengths.<sup>3</sup> Based on these solicitations, the Company files SOS rates for the Residential Group and Commercial Group twice per year and SOS rates for the Industrial Group quarterly.<sup>4</sup> In this filing, National Grid proposed Residential and Commercial SOS retail rates for October 2020 through March 2021, and Industrial SOS retail rates for October 2020 through December 2020 (hereinafter, collectively, the Winter Period).<sup>5</sup> The Company's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> All filings in this docket are available at the PUC offices located at 89 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island or at <a href="http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935page.html">http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935page.html</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> PUC Order No. 23648; http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-NGrid-Ord23648 (8-14-19).pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The term standard offer service refers to electric service provided to distribution customers who have elected to receive service from National Grid instead of a competitive supplier.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The proposed SOS rates include the current per kWh SOS Adjustment Factor, SOS Administrative Cost Factor, and Renewable Energy Charge.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Filing; <a href="http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-NGrid-SOS Rates-Effective 10-1-2020 (R) (7-17-2020).pdf">http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-NGrid-SOS Rates-Effective 10-1-2020 (R) (7-17-2020).pdf</a>.

proposed rates are designed to recover the cost of these procurements pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-1-27.8. The Company derives no profit from the collection of standard offer service rates.<sup>6</sup>

# II. National Grid's Proposed Standard Offer Service Rates for the Winter Period The Procurement Process and Rate Components

In the Company's filing, the Company included back-up information reflecting the bidding process used to obtain the supply prices which were included in the calculation of the rates requested for approval. The Company's filing represented that the procurement and rate calculation was carried out consistently with the procurement plan approved by the Commission in this Docket on June 12, 2019. The Company further represented in its filing that it had solicited 20% of the SOS supply for the Residential Group for the period of October 2020 through March 2022; 20% of the SOS supply for the Commercial Group for the period of October 2020 through March 2022; and 100% of the SOS supply for the Industrial Group for period of October 2020 through December 2020. According to the Company, the remaining parts of the proposed rates were the result of previous solicitations and on-going spot market purchases.

The Company's filing included support showing the calculation of the rates for each of the applicable rate classes, including the relevant cost of supply, reconciliation of past costs to revenues consistent with the standard offer service adjustment provision tariff, allowed administrative costs, and the cost of procuring renewable energy certificates to meet the Company's obligations under the Renewable Energy Standard: 10

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-1-27.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Attachments 4, 5, & 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Company's filing letter dated July 17, 2020. *See* Order No. 23648, issued in this Docket on June 12, 2019, found at: <a href="http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-NGrid-Ord23648%20(8-14-19).pdf">http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-NGrid-Ord23648%20(8-14-19).pdf</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Company's filing letter dated July 17, 2020.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Filing at Attach.2.

#### **Industrial Group Rates**

The Industrial Group rate includes a current per kWh Standard Offer Adjustment Factor of \$0.00381, an Administrative Cost Factor of \$0.00186, and a Renewable Energy Charge of \$0.00866. The proposed rates vary by each month of the quarter: \$0.06198/kWh for October; \$0.07204/kWh for November; and \$0.08736/kWh for December. 11 The three-month average of these rates is \$0.07379.

## Residential Group Rates

The proposed Residential Group rate includes the current per kWh Standard Offer Adjustment Factor of (\$0.00294)/kWh, an Administrative Cost Factor of \$0.00230/kWh, and a Renewable Energy Charge of \$0.00866/kWh. The SOS rate proposed for the Residential Group for the Winter Period is \$0.10370/kWh, 12 an increase of \$0.02071/kW, compared with the April 2020 through September 2020 SOS rate of \$0.08299/kWh. The bill impact for a typical A-16 residential customer using 500 kWh per month would be an increase of \$10.78 per month, or 9.8%, over the prior six-month period. 14

While the proposed residential rate for the Winter Period is higher than the prior six-month residential rate, it is \$0.00587, or 5.4%, lower than last winter's residential rate of \$0.10957/kWh.

## Commercial Group Rates

The fixed-price option SOS rate proposed for the Commercial Group for the Winter Period is \$0.09334/kWh, an increase of \$0.01570/kWh compared with the April 2020 through September

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Filing at Attach.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Filing at Attach. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Division Memo at 2; <a href="http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-DPU Memo 8-14-20.pdf">http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-DPU Memo 8-14-20.pdf</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> *Id*.

2020 average fixed-price rate of \$0.07764/kWh.<sup>15</sup> In comparison, last winter's six-month average rate was \$0.10248/kWh.<sup>16</sup> The proposed rate of \$0.09334/kWh is \$0.00914, or 8.9%, lower than the rate for the same period last year.

The variable price option<sup>17</sup> proposed SOS rates for the Commercial Group are as follows: October 2020, \$0.06979/kWh; November 2020, \$0.07983/kWh; December 2020, \$0.09552/kWh; January 2021, \$0.11226/kWh; February 2021, \$0.11145/kWh; and March 2021, \$0.08930/kWh.<sup>18</sup>

## III. <u>Division's Position</u>

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division) serves as the ratepayer advocate in proceedings before the Public Utilities Commission (Commission or PUC). On August 14, 2020, the Division filed a memorandum summarizing National Grid's proposal and concluding that National Grid's proposed Residential, Commercial, and Industrial SOS rates were correctly calculated.<sup>19</sup> The Division further noted that it had reviewed the results of the Company's Standard Offer procurement and concluded that the process undertaken by the Company complied with the PUC-approved SOS Procurement Plan approved earlier in this docket.<sup>20</sup>

### IV. Hearing

On August 31, 2020 the Commission held a hearing to receive public comments, followed by the evidentiary hearing.<sup>21</sup> Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the hearings were conducted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Filing at Attach. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Division Memo at 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Both the fixed and variable price options include the current per kWh SOS Adjustment Factor of \$0.00094, an Administrative Cost Factor of \$0.00224/kWh, and a Renewable Energy Charge of \$0.00866/kWh.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Filing at Attach 2. In comparison, last year's Winter Period variable price option SOS rates for the Commercial Group were as follows: October 2019, \$0.07614/kWh; November 2019, \$0.08402/kWh; December 2019, \$0.10464/kWh; January 2020, \$0.12562/kWh; February 2020, \$0.12674/kWh; and March 2020, \$0.09492/kWh. See PUC Order No. 23648.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Division Memo. at 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> *Id.* at 3 (referencing Order No. 23648).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> See Hearing Transcript (Aug. 31, 2020) at 3-34. The PUC also granted the Company's motion for protective treatment of confidential materials. Id. at 36.

via a remote process, utilizing Zoom technology for participants, while streaming the proceedings live on the Commission's website.<sup>22</sup>

Eleven members of the public provided public comment. Nearly all the members of the public shared a concern about the impact on ratepayers of a rate increase during a pandemic, asking the Commission to deny the increase.<sup>23</sup>

Shortly after receiving comments from the public, the Commission conducted the evidentiary hearing. Mr. Adam Crary, Senior Pricing Analyst for National Grid USA, and Mr. James Ruebenacker, National Grid's Manager of Post-Sales Electric Supply for New England, testified for National Grid. Mr. Ruebenacker described the Company's procurement process and noted that the Company obtains energy for each of the three customers groups (residential, commercial, and industrial), by issuing requests for proposals (RFPs) to energy suppliers on a quarterly basis and extending out over a staggered 24-month period. He noted that the Company has a number of suppliers that respond to the RFPs and that the Company selects the lowest bids. The Ruebenacker explained that the cost of the obtained energy is then passed directly on to SOS customers without any markup or profit margin for the Company.

Mr. Ruebenacker also explained how the SOS rates for commercial and residential customers are adjusted twice each year – October through March is the winter period and April

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> The streamed hearings were recorded and can be found at the Commission's website at http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/index.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Many of the commenters also advocated for the Commission to establish a percentage of income payment plan program ("PIPP"). *See* Hr'g Tr. At 3-34. However, the subject of discounted rates was not within scope of this proceeding and the Commission lacks the authority to establish a PIPP in this docket. Thus, it is not addressed by the Commission in this order.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Mr. Ruebenacker also explained that the Company obtains a portion of the energy for residential and commercial customers on the spot market. Hr'g Tr.at 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Mr. Ruebenacker testified that the Company had an "average" number of suppliers respond to the RFPs. However, he noted that there had been a change in behavior of a number of the suppliers based on the possibility of municipal aggregation, and that one supplier did not bid on further out transactions for that reason. Hr'g Tr. At 51-54

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Hr'g Tr. At 43-46.

through September is the summer period. Mr. Ruebenacker explained that electricity costs are higher during the winter period because electricity prices are closely tied to natural gas prices.<sup>27</sup> Natural gas prices increase during the winter months due to heating demand from gas customers. Mr. Ruebenacker explained that during the winter months, natural gas generators are usually the marginal unit that sets the electricity price. When natural gas prices increase due to heating demand, electricity prices also rise.<sup>28</sup>

Mr. Crary testified that the bill impact on a residential SOS customer who uses 500 kWh per month would be a monthly increase of \$10.78 if the proposed rates were approved. Mr. Crary also noted that the Company has several options available for customers that may need assistance in paying their bill including a budget plan that more evenly spreads payments out over a year period and a Covid-19 payment agreement that allows customers to pay down balances over a 1 to 3 year period depending on eligibility.<sup>29</sup>

Mr. John Bell, Chief Accountant for the Division also testified. Mr. Bell testified that the procurement process used by National Grid has been in place since 2011. He also echoed Mr. Ruebenacker's testimony regarding higher electricity prices during the winter period compared to the summer period. Mr. Bell explained that this price difference was due to higher natural gas prices and pipeline limitations in the wintertime when there is high demand for natural gas.<sup>30</sup>

Mr. Bell also explained the two main portions of customers' bills and pointed out the distinctions between the energy charge, which is the charge for the electricity itself (i.e., the cost of SOS service from National Grid), and the delivery charges, which are the charges for the infrastructure needed to get the electricity to the customers. He further described that the energy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> [Need Cite]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> *Id.* at 45-46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> *Id.* at 46-50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> *Id.* at 57-71.

charge is open to competition and customers are able to obtain their energy supply, equivalent to National Grid's SOS service, from entities other than National Grid.<sup>31</sup>

## V. Response to Request Justifying Increase in Rates in Light of Economic Conditions

The Commission issued a record request to both the Company and National Grid asking each to explain why the Commission should approve a rate increase given the present economic conditions. In response, National Grid first expounded on its hearing testimony regarding customers that may need assistance in paying their bill by highlighting its Residential Low-Income Discount Rate ("Rate A-60") that is available for eligible residential customers. The Rate A-60 offers a 25% or 30% discount off a residential customer's total bill based on charges that are comparable to those of standard residential customers.<sup>32</sup>

National Grid also reiterated that pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws §39-1-27.3 the Company is required to provide electricity supply to its customers not receiving that supply from Non-Regulated Power Producers at the cost of procuring the supply. National Grid noted that the Commission has in some instances taken steps to mitigate seasonal price volatility, including deferring a portion of the increased cost for the residential and small commercial rate classes for the winter pricing period. National Grid stated it was concerned that a deferral may have unintended consequences. Recovering deferred costs over the next year's summer period would result in a SOS rate that is higher than what it would have been absent the deferral recovery. National Grid also noted concern with the recent filing of proposals by municipalities to secure

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> *Id.* Mr. Bell testified that approximately 90% of residential customers receive SOS service from National Grid, with the remaining customers receiving their energy supply from competitive suppliers. *Id.* at 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> National Grid Response to RR-1; <a href="http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-NGrid-SOSWinterRates-RR">http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-NGrid-SOSWinterRates-RR</a> (9-1-2020).pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Id. citing RIPUC Docket No. 4692, Order No. 23633.

their own electric supply via municipal aggregations that could begin sometime next year.<sup>34</sup> National Grid is concerned that there is a potential for reduced load for remaining SOS customers, which could result in higher SOS rates and, ultimately, higher electric bills for customers remaining with the Company for their electric supply.<sup>35</sup>

The Division filed a response concurring with National Grid.<sup>36</sup> The Division first noted that this docket is limited in scope and the cost-recovery process that drives these rates is dictated by law, thus the review and approval process is likewise narrow. Further, the Division's review is limited to verifying that National Grid complied with the PUC-approved procurement process and affirming that the company's calculations are accurate. The Division concluded that both conditions were met.<sup>37</sup> Next, the Division reiterated that National Grid is required by statute to provide a default SOS and the SOS charges simply reflect cost recovery of the actual charges incurred by National Grid in procuring energy supply for SOS customers without any upcharge or profit.<sup>38</sup> With respect to the impact of a rate increase, the Division concluded:

A rate increase, no matter the economic and social climate, and no matter the unfortunate and unprecedented challenges that have befallen so many during this pandemic, is never a welcomed occurrence. Notwithstanding, the energy costs as procured are passed through and must be borne by the ratepayer. The difficult timing is not lost on the Division. As ratepayer advocate, the Division tirelessly analyzes and reviews any and all utility filings subject to regulatory review and it is committed to advocate for rate reductions when legally and reasonably supportable. Notwithstanding, the Division's role is limited in the instant case; as such, it concludes that the proposed rates are supported by the data and recommends approval.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> National Grid Response to RR-1; <a href="http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-NGrid-SOSWinterRates-RR">http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-NGrid-SOSWinterRates-RR</a> (9-1-2020).pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Division Response to RR-1; <a href="http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-DPUC-RR">http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-DPUC-RR</a> 9-3-20.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> *Id*. at 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> *Id*. At 2.

#### **Commission's Analysis and Decision**

The rate increase being sought by National Grid comes at a time that is extremely difficult for consumers taking Standard Offer service across the state. It will be particularly challenging for consumers who are faced with unemployment in an economy that has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, among other economic challenges. This concern, expressed by members of the public, also is not lost on the Commission. However, as indicated in the Division's testimony, there are limits on the Commission's authority in this case.

Many consumers not familiar with the statutory requirements assume that the Commission in any case has the authority to deny any rate increase being sought by the utility if it will have a negative impact on the ratepayers of Rhode Island. Unfortunately, this assumption is inaccurate. The rate increase being sought by National Grid in this case arises from the utility's statutory obligation to provide electric supply service to consumers who have not selected a third-party competitive supplier in the market (distinguished from the duty of the utility to provide delivery service). As cited by both the utility and the Division, Rhode Island General laws §39-1-27.3 imposes an obligation on the utility to provide Standard Offer service. In turn, it provides a legal entitlement for the utility to the recover its costs for providing the service, with no mark-up for profit, as long as the statutory requirements have been met.<sup>40</sup>

As quoted by the Division, R.I.G.L. §39-1-27.3.expressly states: "The rates that are charged by the electric distribution company to customers for standard offer service shall be approved by the commission and shall be designed to recover the electric distribution company's

\_

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> The legislation that created the obligation of the electric distribution company to procure Standard Offer supply recognized the vital importance of the utility providing a form of last resort service for consumers who do not have their own competitive supplier. If the utility did not provide such service, the reliable supply of electricity would be jeopardized. The law also made clear that the utility could not earn a profit on the service. Logically, it also provided a right for the utility to recover the cost, as long as the other statutory requirements were met, since the service is being provided solely for the benefit of ratepayers with no profit margin for the utility.

costs and no more than the electric distribution company's costs; provided, that the commission may establish and/or implement a rate that averages the costs over periods of time. The electric distribution company shall not be entitled to recover any profit margin on the sale of standard offer power . . . . "

As the Division correctly noted in this case, this law requires National Grid to procure energy supply to meet the needs of standard offer customers. Specifically, it requires National Grid, as an electric distribution company, to provide a "default" standard offer service to its customers for electric supply and that the costs that National Grid incurs when procuring energy supply are directly passed through to the customer without any upcharge or profits for the company.<sup>41</sup>

The rates being sought for approval in this case were the outcome of a procurement plan undertaken by National Grid that was consistent with the statutory requirements. That plan was reviewed by the Division and found to be appropriate in advance of the undertaking. Consistent with the Division's recommendation, the Commission approved the plan after appropriate review in 2019 when the procurement plan for 2020 was reviewed in this same Docket. 42

In this case, the Division's review confirmed that National Grid complied with the procurement process and affirmed that the company's calculations were accurate.<sup>43</sup> The resulting rates are the direct costs incurred by National Grid from carrying out the procurement plan. The price that National Grid passes on to its customers through SOS rates rise and fall based on market

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Division's Response to RR-1at 2; R.I.G.L. §39-1-27.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> See Order No. 23648, issued in this Docket on June 12, 2019, found at:

http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4935-NGrid-Ord23648%20(8-14-19).pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Division's Response to RR-1at 1.

forces outside of the control of National Grid.<sup>44</sup> National Grid does not earn a profit on the sale of Standard Offer service and the price it must offer is driven completely by regional market forces. Simply put, the rates reflect the costs incurred by National Grid in carrying out its obligations – without margin or profit. Accordingly, the proposed rate changes are in complete conformity with the statutory requirements and there is no evidentiary or legal basis to reject them.

While the Commission lacks the authority to deny cost recovery to National Grid as long as the Company has complied with the statutory requirements, the Commission does have the authority to defer and spread the costs over a longer period of time. The Commission has occasionally (but rarely) done this in the past when such a deferral had the likelihood of mitigating near-term rate shock without causing higher costs to ratepayers. However, any such deferral relies on an assumption that substantially all the customers will remain on Standard Offer service. As such, the costs incurred for the near-term period that will be shifted to a later period will be recovered from the same group of customers during the period that follows. In this case, however, no party suggested such a deferral. Thus, there is no evidence that a deferral would be appropriate. In fact, the Company pointed out that attempting to spread out the costs over a longer period could substantially increase costs for Standard Offer Service Customers in 2021 because of the recent wave of municipal aggregations now pending before the Commission.

\_

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> *Id.* at 2. In addition, as explained by Mr. Ruebenacker during the hearing, the SOS rate is comprised of three wholesale market prices – the electricity price, the capacity, and insulated services – and these markets are dictated by supply and demand. Hr'g Tr. At 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> See Order in Docket 4692, found at: <a href="http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4692-NGrid-Ord23633%20(7-16-19).pdf">http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4692-NGrid-Ord23633%20(7-16-19).pdf</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> *Id.* at p. 6 (The Division witness in that case, Mr. Bell, "testified that if the PUC approved either National Grid's proposed unmitigated rate or the Division's proposed mitigated rate, he did not expect a significant migration of residential customers to alternative competitive supply for the Summer Period." p. 6)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> National Grid Response to RR-1.

The Commission notes that, while it has occasionally deferred a portion of the rate increase in prior dockets, it would not be in the public interest to do so in this case. First, the Commission is concerned that a deferral would have unintended consequences. Recovering deferred costs over next year's summer period would result in a SOS rate that is higher than what it would have been absent the deferral recovery, and there is no way of knowing how long the COVID-19 crisis and the economic downturn will last. Second, the Commission is also concerned that proposals by municipalities to secure their own electric supply via municipal aggregations could result in reduced load for remaining SOS customers, which could result in higher SOS rates and, ultimately, higher electric bills for customers remaining with the Company for their electric supply.<sup>48</sup>

The Commission is mindful of the impacts that a winter rate-hike will have on many consumers. However, the Commission is without authority to deny the utility recovery of its standard offer supply costs from a procurement that is otherwise consistent with the statutory requirements, even when economic conditions are straining the ability of consumers to pay their bills. For that reason, we must follow the statutory mandates.

The Commission points out that the rates approved in this order remain in effect through March of 2021. On April 1, 2021, there will be another rate change for the summer period. Typically, the rates for standard offer service decrease for that time of the year. Further, consumers do have the option to seek better pricing from competitive suppliers at any time. In addition, as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> See Dockets 5042, 5047, 5061, and 5062. While there was nothing in the record exploring the impacts of municipal aggregations, the Commission notes that the mathematical and practical effect of large groups of residential and small commercial accounts leaving the Standard Offer all at once to take service from the municipality, leaving behind an unrecovered cost, could either shift the cost responsibility to the remaining consumers on Standard Offer Service or result in a highly complex set of exit fees on the municipalities customers' choosing the aggregation option. Neither of these results would be desirable nor in the public interest.

identified by the Company in its response to a Commission record request, the Company offers options to assist customers with managing their bills.<sup>49</sup>

Based on the undisputed evidence in this case, the Commission finds that the new Standard Offer rates are consistent with the previously approved procurement plan and the law. Therefore, the rate request meets the requirements for approval.

Accordingly, it is hereby

(23915) ORDERED:

The proposed Standard Offer Service retail rates for the Residential and Commercial Groups for the period October 2020 through March 2021 and the proposed Standard Offer Service rates for the Industrial Group for the period October 2020 through December 2020 are approved, effective for usage on and after October 1, 2020.

13

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> National Grid Response to RR-1.

EFFECTIVE AT WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND ON OCTOBER 1, 2020 PURSUANT TO AN OPEN MEETING DECISION ON SEPTEMBER 29, 2020. WRITTEN ORDER ISSUED SEPTEMBER 30, 2020.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Ronald T. Gerwatowski, Chairman

Rould + Gentents

Marion S. Gold, Commissioner

Marion Afold

Abigail Anthony, Commissioner

Asigarl anthony

**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 seven (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.