

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Case No. 19-3529-PET

Petition of Vermont Gas Systems, Inc. for approval of an Alternative Regulation Plan, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 218d	
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Order entered: 04/23/2020

PROCEDURAL ORDER GRANTING MOTION FOR ALTERNATIVE REGULATION PLAN EXTENSION

This case concerns the petition filed by Vermont Gas Systems, Inc. (“Vermont Gas” or the “Company”) for approval of an Alternative Regulation Plan (the “Proposed Plan”) pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 218d. Vermont Gas currently operates under an alternative regulation plan (the “Existing Plan”) that is scheduled to expire on September 30, 2020.

On March 5, 2020, the Commission issued a scheduling order in this proceeding. That schedule included a date for a joint public hearing with Case No. 20-0431-TF, the investigation into the Vermont Gas request for an overall firm rate increase of 2.9%. Since that time, the Commission has postponed all public hearings and public information sessions pending further order of the Commission, as part of a statewide effort to slow the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak.¹

On April 8, 2020, Vermont Gas filed a motion for a temporary stay of the proceeding and temporary extension of its Existing Plan, citing economic uncertainties stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also on April 8, 2020, the Department of Public Service (“Department”) filed a response in support of the Vermont Gas motion, pointing out that the parties and Commission should consider the economic and social impact of the pandemic on customers prior to embarking on a new three-year plan for rates and capital investment.

On April 9, 2020, the Commission held a scheduling conference in case number 20-0431-TF. The Department and Vermont Gas, the only parties in this case, both attended the scheduling conference. The parties and Commission also discussed the status of this case, 19-3529-PET, and the impediments to proceeding in this case due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ *Memorandum Re: Changes to Public Utility Commission Operations Due to COVID-19 Outbreak - Updated.* (March 20, 2020)

On April 17, 2020, the Commission granted the Vermont Gas motion for a stay in this proceeding and directed Vermont Gas to file a status update with the Commission no later than July 17, 2020, to address progress in discussions with the Department and other stakeholders and the actions Vermont Gas has taken to evaluate the Proposed Plan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Commission previously found that Vermont Gas's current Alternative Regulation Plan ("Current Plan") is in the public interest and meets the statutory criteria of 30 V.S.A. § 218d.² Given that the extension would only change the expiration date of the Current Plan, and that no parties object to the requested extension, the Commission concludes that an extension of the Current Plan also meets those standards.



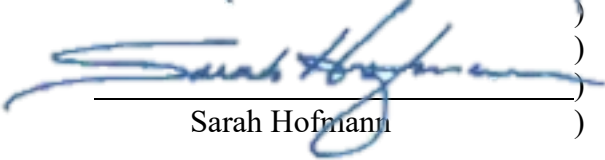
We find that the extension proposed by Vermont Gas will promote the public good and will provide an appropriate balance between the interests of the Company and ratepayers. An extension of the Current Plan provides the necessary time for the parties to evaluate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of the current Vermont Gas rate case and the Proposed Plan. The extension also provides the parties an opportunity to consider how best to weather the uncertainty and economic challenges created by the pandemic. The extension also provides sufficient time to align this case with the rate proceeding and the 2022 rate year, if needed.

Vermont Gas's motion to extend the Current Plan until such time as the Commission approves a successor plan, but not longer than one year from the expiration of the Current Plan, is granted. Vermont Gas's Current Plan is extended until such time as the Commission approves a successor plan, but not later than September 30, 2021.

SO ORDERED.

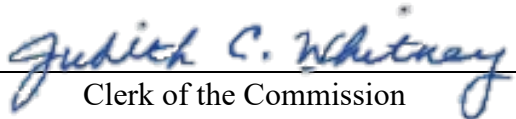
² See Case No. 19-2932-PET, Order of 8/15/19 at 3; Case No 18-2023-PET, Order of 8/14/18 at 3; Case No. 17-3861-PET, Order of 8/31/17 at 3; Docket 8698, Order of 1/20/17 at 4.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 23rd day of April, 2020.

 _____)) PUBLIC UTILITY)) COMMISSION) OF VERMONT
Anthony Z. Roisman)	
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 _____)) PUBLIC UTILITY)) COMMISSION) OF VERMONT
Margaret Cheney)	
_____)	
 _____)) PUBLIC UTILITY)) COMMISSION) OF VERMONT
Sarah Hofmann)	
_____)	

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: April 23, 2020

Attest: 
Clerk of the Commission

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PUC Case No. 19-3529-PET - SERVICE LIST

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