

Agenda Date: 12/19/12

Agenda Item: 21

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Board of Public Utilities
44 South Clinton Avenue, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor
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Trenton, NJ 08625-0350
www.nj.gov/bpu

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IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS COMPANY FOR APPROVAL OF THE	)	ORDER EXTENDING 180 REVIEW PERIOD
EXTENSION OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS	)	
AND THE ASSOCIATED COST RECOVERY	)	
MECHANISM PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 48:3-98.1	)	DOCKET NO. GO12070640

## (NOTIFICATION LIST ATTACHED)

Tracey Thayer, Esq. Attorney for Petitioner, New Jersey Natural Gas Company Stefanie A. Brand, Esq., Director, New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel

BY THE BOARD:

By this order, the Board is considering a stipulation to extend the 180 day review period.

# BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On January 13, 2008, <u>L</u>. 2007, <u>c</u>. 340 ("Act") was signed into law by former Governor Corzine based on the New Jersey Legislature's findings that energy efficiency and conservation measures must be essential elements of the State's energy future, and that greater reliance on energy efficiency and conservation will provide significant benefits to the citizens of New Jersey. The Legislature also found that public utility involvement and competition in the conservation and energy efficiency industries are essential to maximize efficiencies. <u>N.J.S.A.</u> 26:2C-45.

Pursuant to Section 13 of the Act, codified as N.J.S.A. 48:3-98.1, an electric or gas public utility may, among other things, provide and invest in energy efficiency and conservation programs in its service territory on a regulated basis. Such investment in energy efficiency and conservation programs may be eligible for rate treatment approved by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("Board"), including a return on equity, or other incentives or rate mechanisms that decouple utility revenue from sales of electricity and gas. N.J.S.A. 48:3-98.1(b). Ratemaking treatment may include placing appropriate technology and program cost investments in the utility's rate base, or recovering the utility's technology and program costs through another ratemaking methodology approved by the Board. An electric or gas public utility seeking cost recovery for any energy efficiency and conservation programs pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:3-98.1 must file a petition with the Board.

On July 17, 2009, the Board authorized New Jersey Natural Gas Company ("NJNG" or "Company") to implement three energy efficiency programs: 1) Home Performance with

Energy Star ("HPwES") Enhancements; 2) Enhanced Warm Advantage Rebate Program; and 3) Commercial Customer Direct Install Program as part of former Governor Corzine's Economic Stimulus Plan announced in October 2008¹ ("Original Programs"). The programs were designed to complement or supplement existing New Jersey Clean Energy Program ("NJCEP") offerings including the ongoing WarmAdvantage, COOLAdvantage, HPWES, Commercial Direct Install and Smart Start Building programs. The NJNG programs were to be available to eligible customers for approximately twelve months. In the event there was still program funding available after that period, NJNG could continue to offer the approved programs through December 31, 2010.

By Order dated September 24, 2010, the Board authorized NJNG to extend and expand the Original Programs through December 31, 2011<sup>2</sup> ("September 2010 Order"). In addition to authorizing modifications to the Original Programs, the September 2010 Order also authorized the Company to implement an OPOWER pilot through which customers obtain information about their specific energy use in comparison to comparable households, an incremental incentive for Combined Heat and Power ("CHP") projects undertaken in conjunction with NJCEP, and a program with that offers eligible customers an opportunity for customized provisions, Fostering Environmental and Economic Development ("FEED") (collectively, "NJNG SAVEGREEN Project").

By Order dated January 18, 2012 the Board authorized NJNG to continue its existing SAVEGREEN Project and implement certain proposed SAVEGREEN program changes through December 31, 2012, or twelve months from the date the Board Order approving the SAVEGREEN extension was served, whichever was later.

### July 2012 Filing NJNG

On July 9, 2012, NJNG filed a petition with the Board requesting approval of an extension to the Company's existing energy-efficiency ("EE") programs offered through the SAVEGREEN Project and its associated cost recovery mechanisms. As part of the petition, the Company also requested that the Board approve certain modifications to its current programs.

NJNG's petition was accompanied by supporting schedules, program descriptions, financial and other related information. On August 8, 2012, Board Staff notified NJNG that the petition was found to be administratively complete pursuant to the terms of the Board's May 12, 2008 Order in Docket No. EO08030164 ("May 12 Order"), and that the 180-day period prescribed by N.J.S.A. 48:3-98.1 (b) for a final Board determination on cost recovery commenced as of July 9, 2012, the date of the filing. Consequently, the statutory 180-day review period shall expire on January 5, 2013 ("Review Date").

On September 13, 2012, the Board issued an Order retaining this matter for consideration and, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:2-32, designated Commissioner Mary-Anna Holden as the presiding officer. Additionally, the Board adopted a procedural schedule agreed to by the Company, Rate Counsel and Board Staff (collectively, the "Parties").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> <u>I/M/O Energy Efficiency Programs and Associated Cost Recovery Mechanisms and I/M/O the Petition of New Jersey Natural Gas Company for Approval of Energy Efficiency Programs with an Associated Cost Recovery Mechanism, BPU Docket Nos. EO09010056 and GO09010057, Order dated July 17, 2009</u>

<sup>2</sup> I/M/O the Petition of New Jersey Natural Gas for Approval of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative
Programs and Associated Cost Recovery Mechanisms Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:3-98.1, BPU Docket No. GO10030225, Order dated September 24, 2010.

The Board is informed that discovery questions in this matter have been propounded by Rate Counsel and Board Staff, and NJNG has provided responses to all requests. On October 26, 2012. Rate Counsel filed the direct testimonies of witnesses Robert J. Henkes and Robert Fagan. Public notice was provided for four public hearings scheduled for December 19, 2012 in Freehold Township and December 20, 2012 in Rockaway Township, New Jersev.

The Parties are currently discussing a possible resolution of this proceeding. In light of the fact that discovery and discussions may not be complete by January 5, 2013, the Review Date, the Parties have discussed the need for an extension to allow additional time to complete the administrative processing and review of the petition and accompanying materials, and to provide the Board with sufficient time to issue a final determination in this matter. On December 13, 2012 the Parties executed a stipulation agreeing to extend the 180 day review period to February 1, 2013.

#### DISCUSSION AND FINDING

The Board has carefully reviewed the record to date in this matter. The Board is satisfied and HEREBY FINDS that the stipulation extending the Review Date to February 1, 2013, is fair and reasonable and is in the public interest as it will provide additional time for a thorough review of the proposed extension of the SAVEGREEN Project, and allows for the development of a full and complete record for review by the Board. Accordingly, the Board HEREBY ADOPTS the attached stipulation as its own, incorporating by reference its terms and conditions as if fully set forth herein.

The Board Order shall be effective as of the date that it is served.

DATED: /2/19/12

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

PRESIDENT

OMMISSIONER

NICHOLAS ASSELTA

COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

KRISTI IZZO **SECRETARY**  IOSEPH L. FIORDALISO

COMMISSIONER

ANNA HOLDEN

**ØMMISSIONER** 

LHEREBY CERTIFY that the

# IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS COMPANY FOR APPROVAL OF THE EXTENSION OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS AND THE ASSOCIATED COST RECOVERY MECHANISM PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 48:3-98.1 DOCKET NO. GO12070640

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