

H.39

An act relating the Public Service Board and the Department of Public Service

The Senate proposes to the House to amend the bill by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

* * * Electronic Filings and Case Management * * *

Sec. 1. 30 V.S.A. § 11(a) is amended to read:

(a) The forms, pleadings, and rules of practice and procedure before the ~~board~~ Board shall be prescribed by it. The ~~board~~ Board shall promulgate and adopt rules which include, among other things, provisions that:

(1) A utility whose rates are suspended under the provisions of section 226 of this title shall, within 30 days from the date of the suspension order, file with the ~~board~~ Board all exhibits it intends to use in the hearing thereon together with the names of witnesses it intends to produce in its direct case and a short statement of the purposes of the testimony of each witness. Except in the discretion of the ~~board~~ Board, a utility shall not be permitted to introduce into evidence in its direct case exhibits which are not filed in accordance with this rule.

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Sec. 2. 30 V.S.A. § 11a is added to read:

§ 11a. ELECTRONIC FILING AND ISSUANCE

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Confidential document” means a document containing information for which confidentiality has been asserted and that has been filed with the Board and parties in a proceeding subject to a protective order duly issued by the Board.

(2) “Document” means information inscribed on a tangible medium or stored in an electronic or other medium and retrievable in perceivable form.

(3) “Electronic filing” means the transmission of documents to the Board by electronic means.

(4) “Electronic filing system” means a board-designated system that provides for the electronic filing of documents with the Board and for the electronic issuance of documents by the Board. If the system provides for the filing or issuance of confidential documents, it shall be capable of maintaining the confidentiality of confidential documents and of limiting access to confidential documents to individuals explicitly authorized to access such confidential documents.

(5) “Electronic issuance” means:

(A) the transmission by electronic means of a document that the Board has issued, including an order, proposal for decision, or notice; or

(B) the transmission of a message from the Board by electronic means informing the recipients that the Board has issued a document, including an order, proposal for decision, or notice, and that it is available for viewing and retrieval from an electronic filing system.

(6) "Electronic means" means any Board-authorized method of electronic transmission of a document.

(b) The Board by order, rule, procedure, or practice may:

(1) provide for electronic issuance of any notice, order, proposal for decision, or other process issued by the Board, notwithstanding any other service requirements set forth in this title or in 10 V.S.A. chapter 43;

(2) require electronic filing of documents with the Board;

(3) for any filing or submittal to the Board for which the filing or submitting entity is required to provide notice or a copy to another state agency under this title or under 10 V.S.A. chapter 43, waive such requirement if the state agency will receive notice of and access to the filing or submittal through an electronic filing system; and

(4) for any filing, order, proposal for decision, notice, or other process required to be served or delivered by first-class mail or personal delivery under this title or under 10 V.S.A. chapter 43, waive such requirement to the extent the required recipients will receive the filing, order, proposal of decision, notice, or other process by electronic means or will receive notice of and

access to the filing, order, proposal for decision, notice, or other process through an electronic filing system.

(c) Any order, rule, procedure, or practice issued under subsection (b) of this section shall include exceptions to accommodate parties and other participants who are unable to file or receive documents by electronic means.

(d) Subsection (b) of this section shall not apply to the requirements for service of citations and notices in writing as set forth in sections 111(b), 111a(i), and 2804 of this title.

Sec. 3. 30 V.S.A. § 20(a) is amended to read:

(a)(1) The ~~board or department~~ Board or Department may authorize or retain legal counsel, ~~official stenographers~~, expert witnesses, advisors, temporary employees, and other research services:

* * *

(4) The Board or Department may authorize or retain official stenographers in any proceeding within their jurisdiction, including proceedings listed in subsection (b) of this section.

* * * Condemnation Hearing: Service of Citation * * *

Sec. 4. 30 V.S.A. § 111(b) is amended to read:

(b) The citation shall be served upon each person having any legal interest in the property, ~~including each municipality and each planning body where the property is situate like a summons~~, or on absent persons in such manner as the

~~supreme court~~ Supreme Court may by rule provide for service of process in civil actions. The Board shall also give notice of the hearing to each municipality and each planning body where the property is located. The ~~board~~ Board, in its discretion, may schedule a joint hearing of some or all petitions relating to the same project and concerning properties or rights located in the same town or abutting towns.

* * * Filing Rate Schedules with the Board * * *

Sec. 5. 30 V.S.A. § 225 is amended to read:

§ 225. RATE SCHEDULES

(a) Within a time to be fixed by the board, each company subject to the provisions of this chapter shall file with the ~~department~~ Department and the Board, with separate filings to the ~~directors for regulated utility planning and public advocacy~~ Directors for Regulated Utility Planning and for Public Advocacy, schedules which shall be open to public inspection, showing all rates including joint rates for any service performed or any product furnished by it within the ~~state~~ State, and as a part thereof shall file the rules and regulations that in any manner affect the tolls or rates charged or to be charged for any such service or product. Those schedules, or summaries of the schedules approved by the ~~department~~ Department, shall be published by the company in two newspapers with general circulation in the ~~state~~ State within 15 days after such filing. A change shall not thereafter be made in any such

schedules, including schedules of joint rates or in any such rules and regulations, except upon 45 days notice to the ~~board and to the department of public service~~ Board and the Department, and such notice to parties affected by such schedules as the ~~board~~ Board shall direct. The ~~board~~ Board shall consider the ~~department's~~ Department's recommendation and take action pursuant to sections 226 and 227 of this title before the date on which the changed rate is to become effective. All such changes shall be plainly indicated upon existing schedules, or by filing new schedules in lieu thereof 45 days prior to the time the same are to take effect. Subject only to temporary increases, rates may not thereafter be raised without strictly complying with the notice and filing requirements set forth in this section. In no event may a company amend, supplement, or alter an existing filing or substantially revise the proof in support of such filing in order to increase, decrease, or substantiate a pending rate request, unless, upon opportunity for hearing, the company demonstrates that such a change in filing or proof is necessary for the purpose of providing adequate and efficient service. However, upon application of any company subject to the provisions of this chapter, and with the consent of the ~~department of public service~~ Department, the ~~board~~ Board may for good cause shown prescribe a shorter time within which such change may be made; but a change which in effect decreases such tolls or rates may be made upon five days'

notice to the ~~board and the department of public service~~ Board and the Department and such notice to parties affected as the ~~board~~ Board shall direct.

(b) Immediately upon receipt of notice of a change in a rate schedule filed by a company, the ~~department~~ Department shall investigate the justness and reasonableness of that change. At least 15 days prior to the date on which the change is to become effective, the ~~department~~ Department shall either report to the ~~board~~ Board the results of its investigations together with its recommendation for acceptance of the change, or it shall notify the ~~board~~ Board and other parties that it opposes the change. If the ~~department of public service~~ Department reports its acceptance of the change in rates, the ~~board~~ Board may accept the change, or it may on its own motion conduct an investigation into the justness and reasonableness of the change, or it may order the ~~department~~ Department to appear before it to justify its recommendation to accept the change. In no event shall a change go into effect without the approval of the ~~board~~ Board, except when a rate change is suspended and temporary or permanent rates are allowed to go into effect pursuant to subsection 226(a) or 227(a) of this title. The ~~board~~ Board shall consider the ~~department's~~ Department's recommendation and take action pursuant to sections 226 and 227 of this title before the date on which the changed rate is to become effective. In the event that the ~~department~~ Department opposes the change, the ~~board~~ Board shall hear evidence on the

matter and make such orders as justice and law require. In any hearing on a change in rates, whether or not opposed by the ~~department~~ Department, the ~~board~~ Board may request the appearance of the ~~attorney general~~ Attorney General or appoint a member of the Vermont ~~bar~~ Bar to represent the public or the ~~state~~ State.

* * * CPG: Recommendations of Municipal and Regional

Planning Commissions * * *

Sec. 6. 30 V.S.A. § 248 is amended to read:

§ 248. NEW GAS AND ELECTRIC PURCHASES, INVESTMENTS, AND
FACILITIES; CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC GOOD

(a)(1) No company, as defined in section 201 of this title, may:

* * *

(4)(A) With respect to a facility located in the ~~state~~ State, the ~~public service board~~ Public Service Board shall hold a nontechnical public hearing on each petition for such finding and certificate in at least one county in which any portion of the construction of the facility is proposed to be located.

(B) The ~~public service board~~ Public Service Board shall hold technical hearings at locations which it selects.

(C) At the time of filing its application with the ~~board~~ Board, copies shall be given by the petitioner to the ~~attorney general~~ Attorney General and the ~~department of public service~~ Department of Public Service, and, with

respect to facilities within the ~~state~~ State, the ~~department of health, agency of natural resources, historic preservation division, agency of transportation, the agency of agriculture, food and markets~~ Department of Health, Agency of Natural Resources, Division for Historic Preservation, Agency of Transportation, and Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and to the chairperson or director of the municipal and regional planning commissions and the municipal legislative body for each town and city in which the proposed facility will be located. At the time of filing its application with the ~~board~~ Board, the petitioner shall give the ~~byways advisory council~~ Byways Advisory Council notice of the filing.

(D) Notice of the public hearing shall be published and maintained on the board's website for at least 12 days before the day appointed for the hearing. Notice of the public hearing shall be published once in a newspaper of general circulation in the county or counties in which the proposed facility will be located, and the notice shall include an Internet address where more information regarding the proposed facility may be viewed.

(E) The ~~agency of natural resources~~ Agency of Natural Resources shall appear as a party in any proceedings held under this subsection, shall provide evidence and recommendations concerning any findings to be made under subdivision (b)(5) of this section, and may provide evidence and

recommendations concerning any other matters to be determined by the ~~byways advisory council~~ Byways Advisory Council in such a proceeding.

(F) With respect to an in-state facility, the legislative body and municipal and regional planning commissions for each municipality in which the proposed facility will be located shall be parties to any proceedings held under this subsection (a) and may provide evidence and recommendations on any findings to be made under this section.

(i) If requested by letter submitted to the Board by such a body or commission on or before 15 days after filing of an application for a certificate of public good under this subsection (a), the Board shall stay any proceedings on the application for a period of 45 days from the date on which the application was filed. Such body or commission shall provide a copy of the letter to the petitioner and to those persons entitled to receive a copy of the application under subdivision (C) of this subdivision (4).

(ii) During the 45-day period under this subdivision (4)(F), the Board may schedule a prehearing conference to occur after the end of the period and may issue a notice of that prehearing conference.

(iii) The 45-day period under this subdivision (4)(F) shall not be required for a facility that the Board determines to be eligible for treatment under subsection (j) (facilities of limited size and scope) of this section.

(G) The Public Service Board shall provide written guidance on participation in proceedings under this section to the legislative body and municipal and regional planning commissions for each municipality in which the proposed facility will be located and to all persons who seek to become a party to such a proceeding.

* * *

(f) ~~However, the~~

(1) The petitioner shall submit a notice of intent to construct such a facility within the State to the municipal and regional planning commissions at least six months prior to an application for a certificate of public good under this section. The Board shall specify by rule the content of such a notice of intent, which shall be designed to provide a reasonable description of the facility to be built, its size and location, and related infrastructure to be constructed. A notice of intent under this subdivision shall not be required for a facility that the Board determines to be eligible for treatment under subsection (j) (facilities of limited size and scope) of this section.

(2) The petitioner shall submit plans for the construction of such a facility within the state must be submitted by the petitioner State to the municipal and regional planning commissions no less than 45 days prior to application for a certificate of public good under this section, unless the municipal and regional planning commissions shall waive such requirement.

Such municipal or regional planning commission may hold a public hearing on the proposed plans. Such commissions ~~shall~~ may make recommendations, ~~if any,~~ to the ~~public service board~~ Public Service Board and to the petitioner ~~at least seven days prior to filing of the petition~~ within 21 days after the date the petition is filed with the ~~public service board~~ Board. However, if the 45-day period under subdivision (a)(4)(F) of this section is invoked, such recommendations may be made at the end of that period.

Sec. 6a. APPLICATION

(a) In Sec. 6, 30 V.S.A. § 248(f)(1) (notice of intent) shall apply to applications for a certificate of public good filed with the Public Service Board on or after January 1, 2014 and shall not apply to complete applications filed with the Board before that date.

(b) The Public Service Board shall commence rulemaking under 30 V.S.A. § 248(f)(1) (notice of intent) within 21 days after this act's effective date and shall make all reasonable efforts to adopt a final rule under that section before January 1, 2014.

* * *

* * * Participation in Federal Proceedings * * *

Sec. 7. 30 V.S.A. § 2(b) is amended to read:

(b) In cases requiring hearings by the ~~board~~ Board, the ~~department~~ Department, through the ~~director for public advocacy~~ Director for Public

Advocacy, shall represent the interests of the people of the ~~state~~ State, unless otherwise specified by law. In any hearing, the ~~board~~ Board may, if it determines that the public interest would be served, request the ~~attorney general~~ Attorney General or a member of the Vermont ~~bar~~ Bar to represent the public or the ~~state~~ State. In addition, the Department may intervene, appear, and participate in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission proceedings, Federal Communications Commission proceedings, or other federal administrative proceedings on behalf of the Vermont public.

* * * Coordination of Energy Planning * * *

Sec. 8. 30 V.S.A. § 202 is amended to read:

§ 202. ELECTRICAL ENERGY PLANNING

(a) The ~~department of public service~~ Department of Public Service, through the ~~director for regulated utility planning~~ Director for Regulated Utility Planning, shall constitute the responsible utility planning agency of the ~~state~~ State for the purpose of obtaining for all consumers in the ~~state~~ State proper utility service at minimum cost under efficient and economical management consistent with other public policy of the ~~state~~ State. The ~~director~~ Director shall be responsible for the provision of plans for meeting emerging trends related to electrical energy demand, supply, safety, and conservation.

(b) The ~~department~~ Department, through the ~~director~~ Director, shall prepare an electrical energy plan for the ~~state~~ State. The plan shall be for a 20-year

period and shall serve as a basis for state electrical energy policy. The electric energy plan shall be based on the principles of “least cost integrated planning” set out in and developed under section 218c of this title. The plan shall include at a minimum:

(1) an overview, looking 20 years ahead, of statewide growth and development as they relate to future requirements for electrical energy, including patterns of urban expansion, statewide and service area economic growth, shifts in transportation modes, modifications in housing types and design, conservation and other trends and factors which, as determined by the ~~director~~ Director, will significantly affect state electrical energy policy and programs;

(2) an assessment of all energy resources available to the ~~state~~ State for electrical generation or to supply electrical power, including, among others, fossil fuels, nuclear, hydro-electric, biomass, wind, fuel cells, and solar energy and strategies for minimizing the economic and environmental costs of energy supply, including the production of pollutants, by means of efficiency and emission improvements, fuel shifting, and other appropriate means;

(3) estimates of the projected level of electrical energy demand;

(4) a detailed exposition, including capital requirements and the estimated cost to consumers, of how such demand shall be met based on the

assumptions made in subdivision (1) of this subsection and the policies set out in subsection (c) of this section; and

(5) specific strategies for reducing electric rates to the greatest extent possible in Vermont over the most immediate ~~five-year~~ six-year period, for the next succeeding ~~five-year~~ six-year period, and long-term sustainable strategies for achieving and maintaining the lowest possible electric rates over the full 20-year planning horizon consistent with the goal of maintaining a financially stable electric utility industry in Vermont.

(c) In developing the plan, the ~~department~~ Department shall take into account the protection of public health and safety; preservation of environmental quality; the potential for reduction of rates paid by all retail electricity customers; the potential for reduction of electrical demand through conservation, including alternative utility rate structures; use of load management technologies; efficiency of electrical usage; utilization of waste heat from generation; and utility assistance to consumers in energy conservation.

(d) In establishing plans, the ~~director~~ Director shall:

- (1) Consult with:
 - (A) the public;
 - (B) Vermont municipal utilities;
 - (C) Vermont cooperative utilities;

- (D) Vermont investor-owned utilities;
- (E) Vermont electric transmission companies;
- (F) environmental and residential consumer advocacy groups active in electricity issues;
- (G) industrial customer representatives;
- (H) commercial customer representatives;
- (I) the ~~public service board~~ Public Service Board;
- (J) an entity designated to meet the public's need for energy efficiency services under subdivision 218c(a)(2) of this title;
- (K) other interested state agencies; and
- (L) other energy providers.

(2) To the extent necessary, include in the plan surveys to determine needed and desirable plant improvements and extensions and coordination between utility systems, joint construction of facilities by two or more utilities, methods of operations, and any change that will produce better service or reduce costs. To this end, the ~~director~~ Director may require the submission of data by each company subject to supervision, of its anticipated electrical demand, including load fluctuation, supplies, costs, and its plan to meet that demand and such other information as the ~~director~~ Director deems desirable.

(e) The ~~department~~ Department shall conduct public hearings on the final draft and shall consider the evidence presented at such hearings in preparing

the final plan. The plan shall be adopted no later than January 1, ~~2004~~ 2016 and readopted in accordance with this section by every sixth January 1 ~~thereafter~~, and shall be submitted to the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly each time the plan is adopted or readopted. The provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d) (expiration of required reports) shall not apply to the submission to be made under this subsection.

(f) After adoption by the ~~department~~ Department of a final plan, any company seeking ~~board~~ Board authority to make investments, to finance, to site or construct a generation or transmission facility or to purchase electricity or rights to future electricity, shall notify the ~~department~~ Department of the proposed action and request a determination by the ~~department~~ Department whether the proposed action is consistent with the plan. In its determination whether to permit the proposed action, the ~~board~~ Board shall consider the ~~department's~~ Department's determination of its consistency with the plan along with all other factors required by law or relevant to the ~~board's~~ Board's decision on the proposed action. If the proposed action is inconsistent with the plan, the ~~board~~ Board may nevertheless authorize the proposed action if it finds that there is good cause to do so. The ~~department~~ Department shall be a party to any proceeding on the proposed action, except that this section shall not be construed to require a hearing if not otherwise required by law.

(g) The ~~director~~ Director shall annually review that portion of a plan extending over the next ~~five~~ six years. The ~~department~~ Department, through the ~~director~~ Director, shall ~~annually~~ biennially extend the plan by ~~one~~ two additional ~~year~~ years; and from time to time, ~~but in no~~ and in any event ~~less than every five years~~ sixth year, institute proceedings to review a plan and make revisions, where necessary. The ~~five-year~~ six-year review and any interim revisions shall be made according to the procedures established in this section for initial adoption of the plan. The six-year review and any revisions made in connection with that review shall be performed contemporaneously with readoption of the comprehensive energy plan under section 202b of this title.

(h) The plans adopted under this section ~~shall be submitted to the energy committees of the general assembly and~~ shall become the electrical energy portion of the state energy plan.

(i) It shall be a goal of the electrical energy plan to assure, by 2028, that at least 60 MW of power are generated within the ~~state~~ State by combined heat and power (CHP) facilities powered by renewable fuels ~~or by nonqualifying SPEED resources~~, as defined in section 8002 of this title. In order to meet this goal, the plan shall include incentives for development and strategies to identify locations in the ~~state~~ State that would be suitable for CHP. The plan

shall include strategies to assure the consideration of CHP potential during any process related to the expansion of natural gas services in the ~~state~~ State.

Sec. 9. 30 V.S.A. § 202b is amended to read:

§ 202b. STATE COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY PLAN

(a) The ~~department of public service~~ Department of Public Service, in conjunction with other state agencies designated by the ~~governor~~ Governor, shall prepare a comprehensive state energy plan covering at least a 20-year period. The plan shall seek to implement the state energy policy set forth in section 202a of this title. The plan shall include:

(1) A comprehensive analysis and projections regarding the use, cost, supply, and environmental effects of all forms of energy resources used within Vermont.

(2) Recommendations for ~~state~~ State implementation actions, regulation, legislation, and other public and private action to carry out the comprehensive energy plan.

(b) In developing or updating the plan's recommendations, the ~~department of public service~~ Department of Public Service shall seek public comment by holding public hearings in at least five different geographic regions of the ~~state~~ State on at least three different dates, and by providing notice through publication once a week and at least seven days apart for two or more successive weeks in a newspaper or newspapers of general circulation in the

regions where the hearings will be held, and by delivering notices to all licensed commercial radio and television stations with transmitting facilities within the ~~state~~ State, plus Vermont Public Radio and Vermont Educational Television.

(c) The ~~department~~ Department shall adopt a state energy plan by ~~no later than~~ January 1, 1994 2016 and shall readopt the plan by every sixth January 1 thereafter. On adoption or readoption, the plan shall be submitted to the General Assembly. The provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d) (expiration of required reports) shall not apply to such submission.

(1) Upon adoption of the plan, analytical portions of the plan may be updated annually and published biennially.

(2) Every fourth year after the adoption or readoption of a plan under this section, the Department shall publish the manner in which the Department will engage the public in the process of readopting the plan under this section.

(3) The publication requirements of subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection may be met by inclusion of the subject matter in the Department's biennial report.

(4) The plan's implementation recommendations shall be updated by the ~~department~~ Department no less frequently than every ~~five~~ six years. These recommendations shall be updated prior to the expiration of ~~five~~ six years if the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly passes a joint resolution making a

request to that effect. If the ~~department~~ Department proposes or the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly requests the revision of implementation recommendations, the ~~department~~ Department shall hold public hearings on the proposed revisions.

(d) ~~Any distribution~~ Distribution of the plan to members of the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly shall be in accordance with the provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20 ~~(a)-(c)~~.

Sec. 10. INTENT; RETROACTIVE APPLICATION

In enacting Secs. 8 (20-year electric plan) and 9 (comprehensive energy plan) of this act, the General Assembly intends to set the readoption of these plans by the Department of Public Service on a regular six-year cycle.

* * * Smart Meter Report * * *

Sec. 11. 30 V.S.A. § 2811(c) is amended to read:

(c) Reports.

(1) On January 1, 2014 and again on January 1, 2016, the ~~commissioner of public service~~ Commissioner of Public Service shall publish a report on:

(A) the savings realized through the use of smart meters, ~~as well as~~
~~on;~~

(B) the occurrence of any breaches to a company's cyber-security infrastructure;

(C) the number of customers who have chosen not to have a wireless smart meter installed on their premises or who have had one removed; and

(D) the number of complaints received by the Department related to smart meters beginning in calendar year 2012, including a brief description of each complaint, its status, and action taken by the Department in response, if any.

(2) The reports shall be based on electric company data requested by and provided to the ~~commissioner of public service~~ Commissioner of Public Service and shall be in a form and in a manner the ~~commissioner~~ Commissioner deems necessary to accomplish the purposes of this subsection. The reports shall be submitted to the ~~senate committees on finance~~ Senate Committees on Finance and on ~~natural resources and energy~~ Natural Resources and Energy and the ~~house committees on commerce and economic development~~ House Committees on Commerce and Economic Development and on ~~natural resources and energy~~ Natural Resources and Energy.

* * * Joint Energy and Utility Committee * * *

Sec. 12. 2 V.S.A. chapter 17 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 17. JOINT ENERGY AND UTILITY COMMITTEE

§ 601. CREATION OF COMMITTEE; MEETINGS

(a) There is created a ~~joint energy committee~~ Joint Energy and Utility Committee whose membership shall be appointed each biennial session of the

~~general assembly~~ General Assembly. The ~~committee~~ Committee shall consist of ~~four representatives, at least one from each major party, appointed by the speaker of the house, and four members of the senate, at least one from each major party, appointed by the committee on committees~~ five Representatives representing at least two major parties and five members of the Senate representing at least two major parties. The Representatives shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House and the members of the Senate by the Committee on Committees. Of the appointed Representatives from the House, two shall be members of the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development and two shall be members of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Energy. Of the appointed members from the Senate, two shall be members of the Senate Committee on Finance and two shall be members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

(b) The ~~committee~~ Committee shall elect a chair, ~~vice chair~~ vice chair, and clerk and shall adopt rules of procedure. The ~~chair~~ Chair shall rotate biennially between the ~~house~~ House and the ~~senate~~ Senate members. The ~~committee~~ Committee may meet during a session of the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly at the call of the ~~chair~~ Chair or a majority of the members of the ~~committee~~ Committee. The ~~committee~~ Committee may meet no more than four times during adjournment ~~subject to approval of the speaker of the house and the president pro tempore of the senate,~~ except that the Speaker of the

House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate may approve one or more additional meetings of the Committee during adjournment.

(c) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum. Committee action shall be taken only if there is a quorum and the proposed action is approved by majority vote of those members physically present and voting.

§ 602. ~~EMPLOYEES; RULES~~ SUPPORT; PER DIEMS; MINUTES

~~(a) The joint energy committee shall meet following the appointment of its membership to organize and begin the conduct of its business.~~

~~(b) The staff of the legislative council~~ Office of Legislative Council shall provide professional and clerical assistance to the ~~joint committee~~ Joint Energy and Utility Committee.

~~(e)(b)~~ For attendance at a meeting when the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly is not in session, members of the ~~joint energy committee~~ Committee shall be entitled to the same per diem compensation and reimbursement for necessary expenses as provided members of standing committees under section 406 of this title.

~~(d)(c)~~ The ~~joint energy committee~~ Committee shall keep minutes of its meetings and maintain a file thereof.

§ 603. ~~FUNCTIONS~~ DUTIES

(a) The ~~joint energy committee~~ Joint Energy and Utility Committee shall:

(1) carry on a continuing review of all energy and utility matters in the ~~state~~ State and energy matters in the northeast region of the United States, including energy sources, energy distribution, energy costs, energy planning, energy conservation, and ~~pertinent~~ related subjects;

(2) work with, assist, and advise other committees of the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly, the ~~executive~~ Executive Branch, and the public in ~~energy-related~~ energy- and utility-related matters within their respective responsibilities;

(3) provide a continuing review of State energy and utility policies.

(b) In conducting its tasks, the Committee may consult the following:

(1) the Public Service Board;

(2) the Commissioner of Public Service;

(3) ratepayers and advocacy groups;

(4) public service companies subject to regulation by the Public Service Board;

(5) the Vermont State Nuclear Advisory Panel created under chapter 34 of Title 18; and

(6) any other person or entity as determined by the Committee.

(c) On or before December 15 of each year, the Committee shall report its activities, together with its recommendations, if any, to the General Assembly.

The Committee may submit more than one report in any given year.

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* * * Department of Public Service Report on Siting of New Electric
Transmission Facilities * * *

Sec. 13. REPORT; NEW ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION FACILITIES

(a) Report; proposed legislation. On or before November 15, 2013, the Department of Public Service shall submit a report to the Joint Energy and Utility Committee under 2 V.S.A. chapter 17, the House and Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Energy, the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate Committee on Finance that contains each of the following:

(1) An assessment of:

(A) setback requirements on electric transmission facilities adopted by other jurisdictions in and outside the United States;

(B) methods to integrate state energy planning with local and regional land use planning as they apply to new electric transmission facilities; and

(C) the relative merits of “intervenor funding” and possible methods to fund intervenors in the siting review process for new electric transmission facilities.

(2) The Department’s findings resulting from each assessment under this section.

(3) The Department’s recommendations resulting from its findings under this section and proposed legislation, if necessary, to carry out those recommendations.

(b) The Department shall have the assistance of the Agencies of Commerce and Community Development and of Natural Resources in completing its tasks under this section.

* * * Public Service Board Ratemaking * * *

Sec. 14. 30 V.S.A. § 218(h) is added to read:

(h) When the Public Service Board has authorized an increase in rates expressly to prevent the bankruptcy or financial instability of a utility, any excess rates incurred above what ordinarily would have been incurred under a traditional cost-of-service methodology shall be returned to ratepayers in the form of a credit or refund, in a manner to be determined by the Board, and shall not be recoverable in future rates charged to ratepayers.

Sec. 15. APPLICATION

Sec. 14 of this act shall not apply to or alter any Public Service Board order issued prior to the effective date of this act.

* * * Effective Date * * *

Sec. 16. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.