

January 11, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Honorable Aida Camacho-Welch, Secretary New Jersey Board of Public Utilities 44 South Clinton Avenue, 9th Floor P.O. Box 350 Trenton, NJ 08625-0350

RE: IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS COMPANY FOR APPROVAL OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS AND THE ASSOCIATED COST RECOVERY MECHANISM PURSUANT TO THE CLEAN ENERGY ACT, N.J.S.A. 48:3-87.8 et seq. and 48:3-98.1 et seq. BPU DOCKET NO. GO20090622

Dear Secretary Camacho-Welch,

On behalf of New Jersey Natural Gas Company ("NJNG" or "the Company"), attached please find the following documents in reference to the telephonic Public Hearings in the above-captioned matter.

- Notice of Public Hearings
- Notice of Public Hearings to County and Municipal Clerks
- Affidavits and Proof of Publication of the Notice of Public Hearings in Asbury Park Press and Daily Record newspapers

In accordance with the Order issued by the Board in connection with I/M/O the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities' Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic for a Temporary Waiver of Requirements for Certain Non-Essential Obligations, BPU Docket No. EO20030254, Order dated March 19, 2020, this document is being electronically filed. No paper copies will follow.

Please feel free to call me at 732-938-1073 if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

Andrew K. Dembia

Regulatory Affairs Counsel

AKD:sf Encl.

c: Service List

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Petition for Approval of Existing and Energy-Efficiency Programs and the Associated Cost Recovery Mechanism Docket No. G020090622 NOTICE OF FILING AND PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE TO NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS CUSTOMERS

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on September 25, 2020, New Jersey Natural Gas Company ("NJNG" or "Company") filed a petition with the New Jersey Board of

TO OUR CUSTOMERS:

Cumulative Increase from Current Bill

Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill

Public Utilities ("Board" or "BPU") pursuant to the Board's Order, in the Matter of the Implementation of P.L. 2018, c. 17 Regarding the Establishment of Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand Reduction Programs, et al; Order Directing the Utilities to Establish Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand Reduction Programs ("CEA Order"), BPU Docket Nos. Q019010040, Q019060748, and Q017091004 (June 10, 2020). In the petition, NJNG sought approval to extend and expand the energy-efficiency programs offered through NJNG's The SAVEGREEN Project® ("SAVEGREEN") to meet the requirement of the Clean Energy Act, and continuation of the associated cost recovery mechanism. The existing programs include discounted energy saving measures, grants, financing opportunities, technical assistance, and other resources to encourage energy saving measures and investments in energy-efficiency improvements by NJNG's residential, commercial, and industrial customers, including low-income to moderate-income customers and multi-family properties. NJNG also requested that the Board allow the Company to continue the Board-approved Energy-Efficiency ("EE") Rider, Rider F, which has been in effect since August 1, 2009 for collection of the costs associated with these programs. Those costs include funds for customer incentives and the associated incremental program investments and expenses. NJNG requested that the carrying costs associated with these programs be allowed. The Company proposed to offer these programs for a period of three years from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024. The total cost of the proposed SAVEGREEN Program is \$264.0 million, which is comprised of \$127.3 million of direct investment, \$113.3 million of On-Bill

Repayment Program and loans, and \$23.4 million of operation and maintenance expenses over the proposed three-year program. NJNG requested that the Board allow the Company to recover the costs of the SAVEGREEN program, including a return on and return of the investments associated with the program. It is estimated that NJNG would recover a total of approximately \$228.2 million from ratepayers from 2021 through 2036. In this petition, NJNG has requested a contemporaneous change to the EE Rider F rate. The Company requested that the Board approve the implementation of an increase to the after-tax rate of \$0.0214 per therm effective July 1, 2021, As compared to the current EE Rider F after-tax rate of \$0.0171 per therm, the Company's proposal would result in an overall increase of \$21.40 or 1.9 percent on a 1.000-therm annual residential bill. The annual rate impact of the program for a typical residential heating customer using 1,000 therms of natural gas per year is expected to average \$22.35 per year or 1.9 percent over the 2021-2036 period, and is expected to peak at \$41.60 in October 2023. The estimated rate impacts to customers for 2021 through 2025 are set forth in the following chart: NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS COMPANY

RATE IMPACT

. no+ 2022

\$624.00

4.0%

004 2024

\$553.50

3.5%

U~+ 3U3E

\$532.50

3.4%

Andrew K. Dembia, Esq.

1.1. 2021

\$321.00

2.0%

	July 2021	001 2022	001 2023	001 2024	UUL 2023	
Typical Annual Bill Impacts	-					
Residential Non-Heat (200 annual therms)						
Cumulative Increase from Current Bill	\$4.28	\$6.22	\$8.32	\$7.38	\$7.10	
Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill	1.4%	2.0%	2.6%	2.3%	2.3%	
Residential Heat (1,000 annual therms)						
Cumulative Increase from Current Bill	\$21.40	\$31.10	\$41.60	\$36.90	\$35.50	
Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill	1.9%	2.7%	3.6%	3.2%	3.1%	
General Service Small (1.200 annual therms)						
Cumulative Increase from Current Bill	\$25.68	\$37.32	\$49.92	\$44.28	\$42.60	
Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill	1.6%		3.1%	2.8%	2.7%	
	1.0%	2.3%	3.1%	2.0%	2.7%	
General Service Large (15,000 annual therms)						

The proposed EE recovery charge mechanism would operate and be applied in a manner consistent with existing components and	processes of the EE Rider
applicable to all jurisdictional throughput volumes. Individual customers participating in the SAVEGREEN programs are expected to	o achieve annual savings
on their energy bills.	-
Pursuant to the EE Rider, NJNG shall submit annual filings for changes to the EE rate. Additionally, the Board has the statutory aut	thority to establish the EE
rate at a level it finds just and reasonable nursuant to N. I.S. A. 48:2-21. Therefore, the Roard may establish the FF charge at a level	other than that proposed

\$466.50

3.0%

by NJNG which would have an impact on a customer's bill.

PLEASE TAKE ADDITIONAL NOTICE that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a telephonic public hearing will be conducted on the following date and times so that members of the public may present their views on the Company's filing. Information provided at the public hearings will become part of the record of this case and will be considered by the Board in making its decision.

Date: January 13, 2021 Public Hearing 1: 4:30pm Public Hearing 2: 5:30pm

Dial In: 1-888-619-1583 Access Code: 819208 If you elect to attend or participate in the telephonic public hearing, please dial the "Dial In" number above. When prompted, enter the "Access Code" listed

above. Copies of NJNG's September 25, 2020 filling can be reviewed on the Company's website, www.ning.com/regulatory in the "Fillings & Updates" subsection of

the "Regulatory Info" section listed.

Representatives of the Board's Staff and Rate Counsel will participate in the telephonic public hearing. Members of the public are invited to participate by utilizing the Virtual Access Code information set forth above and may express their views on this filing. Such comments will be made part of the final record of the proceeding to be considered by the Board. The Board will also accept email/written comments. Members of the public may file comments with the Secretary of the Board in pdf or Word format via email to board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov; or through the Board's External Access Portal after obtaining a MyNewJersey Portal ID. Once an account is established you will need an authorization code which can be obtained upon request by emailing the Board's IT Helpdesk at ITHELPDESK@bpu.ni.gov. Detailed instructions for e-Filing can be found on the Board's homepage at https://www.ni.gov/bpu/agenda/efiling. Written comments may also be submitted to the Board Secretary, Aida Camacho, at the Board of Public Utilities, 44 South Clinton Avenue, 9th Floor, P.O. Box 350, Trenton, NJ 08625-0350. All comments should include the name of the petition and the docket number. While all comments are given equal consideration

and will be made part of the final record of the proceeding, the recommended methods for the submission of comments are via email or the portal to ensure timely receipt while the Board continues to work remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hearings will continue, if necessary, on such additional dates and at such locations as the Board may designate, to ensure that all interested persons are heard. New Jersey Natural Gas Company



December 22, 2020

Via Electronic Mail

To: The Office of the County Clerk, Municipal Clerk and County Administrator

Re: IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS COMPANY FOR APPROVAL OF EXISTING AND ENERG-EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS AND THE ASSOCIATED COST RECOVERY MECHANISM PURSUANT TO THE CLEAN ENERGY ACT, N.J.S.A. 48:3-87.8 et seq. and

48:3-98.1 et seq.

BPU DOCKET NO. GO20090622

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:2-32.6, New Jersey Natural Gas Company hereby serves upon you the attached Notice of Public Hearings in the above referenced matter. The subject telephonic hearings are scheduled for January 13, 2021, at 4:30 and 5:30 P.M. with the following Dial-In instructions.

Dial In: 1-888-619-1583 Access Code: 819208

Very truly yours,

Andrew K. Dembia, Esq. Regulatory Affairs Counsel

AKD: sf

Attachment

Proof of Insertion

Name of Publication: Asbury Park Press

City, State: Neptune, NJ

Client/Advertiser: NJ Natural Gas		
Date(s) of Insertion: Tuesday, December 22,	2020	
Docket No: G020090622		
Size: 3 columns x 6.75 inches		
My signature verifies that this ad was inserted	l as scheduled according to the above speci	fications.
Melanie C Altz	1/7/21	
Signature	Date	
Melanie C Altz		
Name (Please Print)		-2-
	EXPIRES	ALXIAN 000
	= . MON. 131.	1 3

Proof of Insertion

Name of Publication: Morristown Daily Record

City, State: Neptune, NJ

Client/Advertiser: NJ Natural Gas

Date(s) of Insertion: Tuesday, December 22, 2020	
Docket No: G020090622	
Size: 3 columns x 6.75 inches	
My signature verifies that this ad was inserted as scheduled	according to the above specifications.
Melanie C Altz	1/7/21
Signature	Date
Melanie C Altz	
Name (Please Print)	EXPIRES NOV. 19, 2024 NOV. 19, 2024 NOV. 19, 2024

Avoid holiday gatherings to prevent virus spike, Murphy urges residents

Anthony Zurita NorthJersey.com USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

Limiting large holiday parties will be crucial to New Jersey's fight against the spread of COVID-19, Gov. Phil Murphy said Monday.

He said case numbers indicate that the majority of residents "did the right thing" celebrating Thanksgiving but health officials saw a 20% increase in positive cases in the first three weeks of December.

"This is not the year for Christmas as usual or New Year's Eve as usual," Murphy said.

Testing data showed an average of about 4,000 daily reported cases in the two weeks leading up to Thanksgiving but an average of about 4,800 in the weeks since, Murphy said.

In the same time span, hospitalizations went up 25%, intensive care bed usage went up 30% and ventilator usage went up 60%.

"If you insist on a big gathering this year, you're taking a real risk that when next Christmas comes, there will be fewer loved ones gathered around your tree," Murphy said.

The December holidays come at a time when the country is fully engulfed by the second wave of COVID while vaccination efforts are still in their infancy.

Most traditional holiday events were canceled this year due to the pandemic. Interstate travel has been strongly discouraged. Even sitting on Santa's lap has been put on hold, and most people are left with few ways to be festive.

State Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli encouraged residents to celebrate virtually and to avoid gatherings. "Don't let the virus come into your house for the holidays," Persichilli said. "It is an unwelcome guest."

Email: zuritaa@northjersey.com Twitter: @AnthonyRZurita

New suspect charged in

1988 Lockerbie bombing

Kevin Johnson and Kim Hjelmgaard

USA TODAY

Outgoing Attorney General William Barr unveiled new charges Monday against another suspect in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people, the majority of them Ameri-

Federal prosecutors accused Abu Agila Mohammad Masud, a Libyan intelligence officer, who is suspected of helping to make the bomb that exploded aboard the Boeing 747 while it was flying over the small Scottish town en route from London to New York.

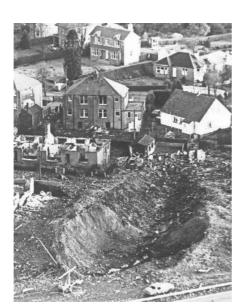
The charges add a fresh chapter to one of the world's longest and most sprawling terrorism investigations. Investigators have pursued leads in dozens of countries and interviewed thousands of people in connection with the

For Barr, who is leaving office Wednesday, the case also has been a deeply personal one. During his initial stint as attorney general in the George H.W. Bush administration, Barr announced the first charges in the case aided by Robert Mueller, then chief of the Justice Department's Criminal Di-

In addition to the 259 people killed aboard the flight less than an hour after takeoff, 11 people on the ground were killed as the plane's wreckage

scattered for miles. Masud is believed to be in custody in Libya. The U.S. was expected to seek

In 2001, Libyan intelligence officer Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi became the only person convicted for the attack. He was given a life jail sentence.



A 1988 photo shows wrecked houses and a deep gash in the ground in the village of Lockerbie, Scotland, caused by the crash of Pan Am Flight 103.

MARTIN CLEAVER/AP FILE

However, authorities in Scotland released him in 2009 on humanitarian grounds after he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He later died at his home in Libya's capital, Tripoli, at age

The Obama administration opposed the move.

Megrahi maintained he was innocent. At the time of the bombing, he was officially serving as chief of security for the state-owned Libyan Arab Airlines.

But prosecutors argued that was just a front for his role as a security officer for Jamahiriya Security Organization, Libya's intelligence branch under then-leader Moammar Gadhafi.

NOTICE TO NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS CUSTOMERS on for Approval of Existing and Energy-Efficiency Pro and the Associated Cost Recovery Mechanism Docket No. G020090622 NOTICE OF FILING AND PUBLIC HEARING

TO OUR CUSTOMERS

his extradition.

TO OUR CUSTOMERS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on September 25, 2020, New Jersey Natural Gas Company ("NJNG" or "Company") filed a petition with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("Board" or "BPU") pursuant to the Board's Order, in the Matter of the Implementation of P.L. 2018, c. 17 Regarding the Establishment of Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand Reduction Programs, et al: Order Directing the Utilities to Establish Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand Reduction Programs ("CEA Order"), BPU Docket Nos. Q019010040, 0019060748, and 0017091004 (June 10, 2020), in the petition, NJNG sought approval to extend and expand the energy-efficiency programs offered through NJNG's The SAVEGREEN Project® ("SAVEGREEN") to meet the requirement of the Clean Energy Act, and continuation of the associated cost recovery mechanism. The existing programs include discounted energy saving measures, grants, financing opportunities, technical assistance, and other resources to encourage energy saving measures and investments in energy-efficiency improvements by NJNG's residential, commercial, and industrial customers, including low-income to moderate-income eustomers and multi-family properties. NJNG also requested that the Board allow the Company to continue the Board-approved Energy-Efficiency ("EE") Rider, Rider F, which has been in effect since August 1, 2009 for collection of the costs associated with these programs. Those costs include funds for customer incentives and the associated incremental program investments and expenses. NJNG requested that the carrying costs associated with these programs for a period of three years from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024.

years from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024.

The total cost of the proposed SAVEGREEN Program is \$264.0 million, which is comprised of \$127.3 million of direct investment, \$113.3 million of On-Bill Repayment Program and loans, and \$23.4 million of operation and maintenance expenses over the proposed three-year program. NJNG requested that the Board allow the Company to recover the costs of the SAVEGREEN program, including a return on and return of the investments associated with the program. It is estimated that NJNG would recover a total of approximately \$228.2 million from ratepayers from 2021 through 2036. In this petition, NJNG has requested a contemporaneous change to the ER Rider F rate. The Company requested that the Board approve the implementation of an increase to the after-tax rate of \$0.0214 per therm effective July 1, 2021. As compared to the current EE Rider F after-tax rate of \$0.0171 per therm, the Company's proposal would result in an overall increase of \$21.40 or 1.9 percent on a 1,000-therm annual residential bill. The annual rate impact of the program for a typical residential heating customer using 1,000 therms of natural gas per year is expected to average \$22.35 per year or 1.9 percent over the 2021–2036 period, and is expected to peak at \$41.60 in October 2023. The estimated rate impacts to customers for 2021 through 2025 are set forth in the following chart:

peak at \$41.00 iii october 2020. The estimated i	ate impacts to c	ustorners for 20	21 unougn 2020	are set iorur iii	the following tha	
	NEW J		L GAS COMPAN	Y		
	RATE IMPACT					
	July 2021	Oct 2022	Oct 2023	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	
Typical Annual Bill Impacts						
Residential Non-Heat (200 annual therms)						
Cumulative Increase from Current Bill	\$4.28	\$6.22	\$8.32	\$7.38	\$7.10	
Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill	1.4%	2.0%	2.6%	2.3%	2.3%	
Residential Heat (1,000 annual therms)						
Cumulative Increase from Current Bill	\$21.40	\$31.10	\$41.60	\$36.90	\$35.50	
Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill	1.9%	2.7%	3.6%	3.2%	3.1%	
General Service Small (1.200 annual therms)						
Cumulative Increase from Current Bill	\$25.68	\$37.32	\$49.92	\$44.28	\$42.60	
Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill	1.6%	2.3%	3.1%	2.8%	2.7%	
General Service Large (15.000 annual therms)						
Cumulative Increase from Current Bill	\$321.00	\$466.50	\$624.00	\$553.50	\$532.50	
Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill	2.0%	3.0%	4.0%	3.5%	3.4%	
The proposed EE recovery charge mechanism we	ould onerate and	he annlied in a	manner consists	ent with existing	components and	n

applicable to all jurisdictional throughput volumes. Individual customers participating in the SAVEGREEN programs are expected to on their energy bills.

Pursuant to the EE Rider, NJNG shall submit annual filings for changes to the EE rate. Additionally, the Board has the statutory authority to establish the EE rate at a level it finds just and reasonable pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:2-21. Therefore, the Board may establish the EE charge at a level other than that proposed by NJNG which would have an impact on a customer's bill.

PLEASE TAKE ADDITIONAL NOTICE that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a telephonic public hearing will be conducted on the following date and times so that members of the public may present their views on the Company's filing. Information provided at the public hearings will become part of the record of this case and will be considered by the Board in making its decision.

Date: January 13, 2021 Public Hearing 1: 4:30pm Public Hearing 2: 5:30pm Dial In: 1-888-619-1583

Access Code: 819208

If you elect to attend or participate in the telephonic public hearing, please dial the "Dial In" number above. When prompted, enter the "Access Code" lister

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New Jersey Natural Gas Company Andrew K. Dembia, Esq

Chases

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be limited to the most serious crimes, as part of an overhaul of policies for police use of force.

"High-speed vehicular pursuits create a substantial risk of injury and fatalities," the new car chase policy states, noting harm to cops, pedestrians and other drivers on the road. Police expert Edward Flynn, who re-

stricted police car chases when he served as chief in Milwaukee, lauded New Jersey's new policy.

"Modifying the pursuit policy is in the interest of preservation of life," he said. "Of officers, of bystanders and of the offenders themselves."

The Press investigation also showed New Jersey and Newark led the nation for racial disparity in car chase deaths and recommended police record the race of suspects being chased.

The state is in the process of updating forms cops use to report car chases, which would include the race of the fleeing suspect, when known, according to Thomas J. Eicher, director of the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability.

The Press investigation showed in the past decade, New Jersey police car chases killed at least 55 people and injured more than 2,500. Bystanders and cops made up nearly half the people injured. The chases rarely targeted robbers or killers. When cops managed to catch a fleeing suspect, they were mostly charged with drug possession.

Under the new rules, officers will be allowed to chase cars when they suspect someone committed serious firstdegree or violent second-degree crimes. The policy "creates a strong presumption against" car chases for traffic vio-

The new policy adjusts a standard that officers can chase cars when they perceive a threat to public safety — that threat must be based on the suspect's actions before police tried to stop their car. Cops can't continue a chase because of the suspect's speed or evasive

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Force

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kind of fury, however.

Even though the Attorney General's Office has been working on the overhaul for about a year, Grewal said the George Floyd killing in May hastened the work.

"We understood that we're in the midst of a national reckoning on the issue of race, and a lot of the issues, protests and demands center on law enforcement," Grewal said. "These killings have highlighted a distrust ... and we felt that we needed to move up the work that we were doing.'

The standards formally take effect in a year, on Dec. 31, 2021, Grewal said. But their influence will be felt far sooner: All New Jersey police officers will have to attend a two-day course on the changes by the end of next year.

The attorney general doesn't expect the brief training block to burn the policy into officers' brains overnight. But he expects the data collected by the state's recently nounced use-of-force por-- an internet program departments use to report every detail of every incident — to help local, county and state law enforcement officials review, retrain and discipline officers if necessary.

"We're going to make $sure \, we \, get \, it \, right \, through \,$ the monitoring piece," Grewal said, adding that a version of the portal will be open for public review in early 2021.

The new policy requires that officers give clear warning if they intend to use force on a resisting suspect, and then use only the appropriate amount as dictated by the Grewal circumstances, said. Deadly force must be viewed as an "absolute last resort" used to end an immediate threat of death or serious injury, the guidance says. And officers will not be able to draw and point their guns unless they have a reasonable belief that deadly force may be necessary. The guidelines also reiterate that chokeholds are banned in nearly all circumstances, and defines sitting, kneeling or standing on a person's chest, back or neck as deadly force. This may be a direct nod to the Floyd killing — he died after a Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

They'll also have to report it as a "show of force," Grewal's office said.

"After hosting dozens of listening sessions and reviewing hundreds of public comments, we revised the use-of-force policy to reflect the needs and concerns of the people we serve," said Thomas Eicher, director of the state's Office of Public Integrity and Accountability. "But it's not enough to simply issue a progressive new policy. We are committed to retraining every officer in the state and ensuring that they incorporate this model into their work."

The Rev. Dr. Charles F. Boyer, founder of Salvation and Social Justice, a faith-based advocacy group, said he viewed the new policy "as a necessary first step toward accountability." The guidelines, which Grewal said were built with both community and law enforcement input, also establish a firm "duty to intervene" that requires all officers, regardless of rank, to step in if they see another officer using illegal or excessive

And they ask police to be careful when dealing with emotionally disturbed people. When they can, police should bring with them other officers or mental health experts, negotiators or workers trained in crisis intervention, the policy said.

Cumberland County Prosecutor Jennifer Webb-McRae noted that research indicates about 25% all fatal police-citizen interactions involved someone suffering a mental health crisis.

The BOROUGH OF

MATAWAN announces the

sale of 2020 delinquent

taxes through an on-line

auction on December

29,2020 - 9:00 am. For

a listing of all parcels,

delinquencies and costs,

along with bidding

instructions, please visit

https://matawan.newjerseytaxsale.com

information can be viewed free of charge

The guidelines also reiterate that chokeholds are banned in nearly all circumstances, and defines sitting, kneeling or standing on a person's chest, back or neck as deadly force. This may be a direct nod to the Floyd killing he died after a Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes. It also bars officers from firing at a moving vehicle in most circumstances; strictly limits when they can pursue a fleeing vehicle; loosens rules on using Tasers and less-than-lethal ammunition; and requires depart-

county prosecutor. The president of the New Jersey State Policemen's Benevolent Association thanked the Attorney General's Office for taking the police union's suggestions into account.

ments to conduct a thor-

ough use-of-force review

every year and send a

written report to their

"This policy makes key changes that will protect our officers on the job while assuring the public that the New Jersey police remain the best trained in the entire nation," said PBA President Pat Colligan. The policies are a "step in the right direction," said Rich Rivera, a police internal affairs expert and former West New York police officer. He added that the data needs to be constantly monitored and the policies can't be shelved.

"We also need to understand more clearly the training the officers will get," Rivera said. "It can't be rolled through in an email with all training done virtually. Use of force is too significant to be done online. This needs to be hands-on." Jiles Ship, president of the New Jersey chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, called the policy changes "very important work.'

"We realize and understand it's critically important to maintain the trust of the communities we serve," Ship said, because without the community's help, it "makes our jobs tremendously difficult."

Staff Writer Ashley Balcerzak contributed to this story.

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Rockfall

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"task-order designers" hired to assist in-house engineers. Task-order meant the scope of the designers' role was narrow. In 2010, this language changed slightly but significantly: "It is anticipated that activities will be performed utilizing both in-house and consultant engineering forces."

That tweak also came with more dollar signs.

In 2007, there was no "rockfall mitigation" budget line item in the state transportation improvement plan, which maps out how federal and state funds are to be spent each year. Instead, "rock engineering" was one of the things listed in the budget item "Design, Geotechnical Engineering Tasks," which was earmarked for \$600,000 over a four-year period.

"Rockfall mitigation" got its own budget line in 2010, starting out as \$20 million over 10 years for spending on engineering projects "to reduce the potential risk of rockfall" and maintaining the rockfall hazard mitigation system. In the years that followed, that budget item ballooned, with spending now at \$66 million over 10 years from 2020 to

In the last decade, HNTB Corp. and Dewberry Companies Inc. have become two of the most recurring names in the DOT's consulting Rolodex when it comes to rockfall projects.

The first rockfall project this duo worked is on a 0.30-mile stretch of Route 80 in Knowlton and Hardwick.

HNTB completed the concept development study for this project in 2011, and Dewberry was hired in 2013 to begin preliminary engineering. The DOT's project development process often starts with a problem statement, followed by a concept development plan, then preliminary engineering and final design, and finally construction.

HNTB's 300-page concept development report took about a year to complete. It outlined a nine-month, \$4 million to \$6 million plan, known as the preliminary preferred alternative, or PPA. HNTB, based in Missouri, was paid about \$222,000 for the work.

"The CD phase is the foundation for the remaining project phrases," according to a DOT report about executing rockfall projects. "Eliminating the formal PE phase for this approach is possible because the project scope should not change once the PPA is selected at the end of the CD phase."

Preliminary engineering was estimated to cost \$460,000, according to HNTB's 2011 concept development report. It ended up starting at \$915,614.48 when Virginia-based Dewberry signed the contract with DOT.

Dewberry's preliminary engineering report was supposed to be completed in a year, but seven years later its work is ongoing and it has racked up seven change orders through 2018, according to its contract and modification agreements. During that time, Dewberry and its subconsultants have been paid \$7,148,017.53 using federal funds more than any of the construction costs

for the agency's first seven rockfall mitigation projects. The project is now estimated to cost \$65 million and take four to five years to complete.

A public information request seeking Dewberry's change orders from 2018 through 2020 has not yet been fulfilled.

When asked to explain the justification for these change orders, DOT spokesman Stephen Schapiro wrote in an email: "Change orders are approved based on changes from the original scope of the project. For this project, the scope has changed in several areas, thus increasing costs."

Doug Hecox, a spokesman for the Federal Highway Administration, said these change orders have been reviewed by agency officials and deemed eligible for continued federal funds.

"Are we interested in making sure federal funds are used properly? Of course, but the New Jersey DOT has the responsibility for using them in a manner that is eligible for their use, and as far as we've seen they're all eligible," Hecox said.

A deeper look at the change orders

As the years have gone on, more subconsultants hired by Dewberry have been brought into the Knowlton project, creating a complex web of at least 10 additional firms reaping the benefits of federal taxpayer dollars.

Craig Geotechnical Drilling Co., hired to do boring and geologic mapping, was the only firm to put in a bid for this contract, and its fee was \$60,000 more than the estimate, but it was accepted.

Haley & Aldrich was hired to assist the DOT with conducting workshops, studying alternatives to minimize the visual effects of the project and impacts to the National Park Service property. Yet several change orders cite unmet concerns expressed by park service staff as reasons for needing more money and time. M.A. Culbertson was retained in 2015 to "create a cooperative environment" and "build consensus" for the preferred alternative, according to the fourth change order.

EcolSciences was tapped in 2015 for nearly \$50,000 via the third and fourth change orders that came months apart to survey timber rattlesnake habitats, but it is not among the firms on the DEPapproved list to do this kind of work. Another \$104,000 was approved in 2016 to do additional surveys after it became aware of additional species and survey criteria that needed to be met.

One of the state's largest lobbying firms, MBI Gluckshaw, was also retained by Dewberry to assist with public outreach, yet the DOT and the community seem more divided than ever, as locals say their ideas and concerns have been dismissed. A DOT spokesman said the firm has been involved since the project's inception, but it was not listed in Dewberry's contract or change orders from 2013 to 2018.

As for Craig Drilling's contract, Knowlton Mayor Adele Starrs said she could never get away with a non-competitive bid with her constituency. More checks need to be made on the escalating costs associated with consulting fees, she said.



The Route 80 S-curve at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in Hardwick is the subject of a state rockfall prevention plan.

TARIQ ZEHAWI/NORTHJERSEY.COM

"I find it hard to believe that a project that is national in scale, on I-80, that this couldn't have been advertised to more contractors," she said. "I think more care needs to be given to the fact that these are taxpayer funds, and automatic approval cannot be given to one contractor because he is the only one who bid on it."

'A very close relationship'

HNTB and Dewberry have cornered the DOT market on planning and engineering for ongoing rockfall mitigation projects. In addition to the three projects in Knowlton, Bethlehem and Kingwood, Dewberry and HNTB are together involved in four of the other seven ongoing projects in the state.

This is, in part, because of a group solicitation done in 2015 that chose HNTB, Dewberry and Hardesty & Hanover, after competitive bidding, to work on rockfall projects on a rotating basis, according to Schapiro.

"A group solicitation is a process where similar projects are grouped together, and multiple consultants are selected for assignment of one or more projects on a rotating basis. It is a way to increase efficiency," Schapiro wrote in an email. "Selection is a competitive process that uses quality-based criteria. It is approved by the FHWA when doing a solicitation for similar projects.'

The pattern of using the same consultants has not gone unnoticed by Deputy Mayor Richard Dodds in Kingwood.

DOT officials came to his township last year to present plans regarding the Route 29 rockfall mitigation project. When Dodds asked the DOT to provide a list of the presenters and their titles and contact information, he was denied all but a list of names. After doing his own research, Dodds realized half the presenters were consultants.

"If you look at the relationship between DOT and the contractor that's doing most of the engineering work, it seems like most of the money is going to the contractor to engineer the project than the project itself," Dodds said. "The individuals from DOT, by the way, they go to transportation conferences around the state presenting on rockfall, that's their thing, and it's always with these engineers in tow ... it's a very close relationship."

Scott Deeck, the DOT rockfall mitigation project manager, John Jamerson, a DOT geologist, and representatives from the firm Haley & Aldrich also coauthored a 16-page report in 2018 titled "Rockfall in New Jersey: A proactive and collaborative approach." Haley & Aldrich is one of the subconsultants used in the Route 80 project.

The report vaguely discusses rockfall issues, the national ranking system that determines the most at-risk slopes and how planning-to-construction phases work. But it lacks specifics about the need for rockfall mitigation in the state or specific projects that have benefited from the "proactive and collaborative approach" in New Jersey.

It emphasizes the need for "cost efficiency" and why it is "vital to explain why the project is necessary to stakeholders and the public because the need for rockfall projects is not as intuitive as pavement or bridge repair projects."

The DOT said there is no invoice or contract with Haley & Aldrich to consult on the paper.

The report was submitted for at least two conferences — a highway geology symposium in Maine and one for geoengineering in Philadelphia. Neither Deeck or Jamerson attended the latter conference, according to a public information request, though they and two people from Haley & Aldrich were listed as presenters for a March 25 workshop on the report. Jamerson did seek reimbursement of the \$400 registration fee for the Maine event, which was covered by the Federal Highway Administration, but requested no other expense reimbursements.

NOTICE TO NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS CUSTOMERS Petition for Approval of Existing and Energy-Efficienc and the Associated Cost Recovery Mechanis Docket No. G020090622 NOTICE OF FILING AND PUBLIC HEARING

TO OUR CUSTOMERS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on September 25, 2020, New Jersey Natural Gas Company ("NJNG" or "Company") filed a petition with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("Board" or "BPU") pursuant to the Board's Order, In the Matter of the Implementation of P.L. 2018, c. 17 Regarding the Establishment of Energy Efficiency, and Peak Demand Reduction Programs, et al; Order Directing the Utilities to Establish Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand Reduction Programs ("CEA Order"), BPU Docket Nos. 0019010040, 0019060748, and 0017091004 (June 10, 2020), in the petition, NJMG sought approval to extend and expand the energy-efficiency programs offered through NJNG's The SAVEGREEN Project® ("SAVEGREEN") to meet the requirement of the Clean Energy Act, and continuation of the associated cost recovery mechanism. The existing programs include discourate energy saving measures, grants, financing opportunities, technical assistance, and other resources to encourage energy saving measures and investments in energy-efficiency improvements by NJNG's residential, commercial, and industrial customers, including low-income to moderate-income customers and multi-family properties. NJNG also requested that the Board allow the Company to continue the Board-approved Energy-Efficiency ("EET"), Rider, Rider F, which has been in effect since August 1, 2009 for collection of the costs associated with these programs. Those costs include funds for customer incentives and the associated incremental program investments and expenses.

NING requested that the carrying costs, associated with these programs for a period of three NJNG requested that the carrying costs associated with these programs be allowed. The Company proposed to offer these programs for a period of three years from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024.

years from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024.

The total cost of the proposed SAVEGREEN Program is \$264.0 million, which is comprised of \$127.3 million of direct investment, \$113.3 million of On-Bill Repayment Program and loans, and \$23.4 million of operation and maintenance expenses over the proposed three-year program. NJNG requested that the Board allow the Company to recover the costs of the SAVEGREEN program, including a return on and return of the investments associated with the program. It is estimated that NJNG would recover a total of approximately \$228.2 million from ratepayers from 2021 through 2036. In this petition, NJNG has requested a contemporaneous change to the EE Rider F rate. The Company requested that the Board approve the implementation of an increase to the after-tax rate of \$0.0214 per therm effective July 1, 2021. As compared to the current EE Rider F after-tax rate of \$0.0171 per therm, the Company's proposal would result in an overall increase of \$21.40 or 1.9 percent on a 1,000-therm annual residential bill. The annual rate impact of the program for a typical residential heating customer using 1,000 therms of natural gas per year is expected to average \$22.35 per year or 1.9 percent over the 2021–2036 period, and is expected to peak at \$41.60 in October 2023. The estimated rate impacts to customers for 2021 through 2025 are set forth in the following chart:

NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS COMPANY RATE IMPACT Oct 2023 Oct 2024 Oct 2025 July 2021 Typical Annual Bill Impacts
Residential Non-Heat (200 annual therms)
Cumulative Increase from Current Bill Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill Residential Heat (1,000 annual therms) Cumulative Increase from Current Bill \$21.40 1.9% Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill General Service Small (1,200 annual ther Cumulative Increase from Current Bill \$25.68 \$37.32 \$49.92 3.1% \$44.28 \$42.60 2.7% Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill General Service Large (15,000 annual the Cumulative Increase from Current Bill \$321.00 \$466.50 \$624.00 4.0% \$553.50 \$532.50 Cumulative % Increase from Current Bill

The proposed EE recovery charge mechanism would operate and be applied in a manner consistent with existing components and processes of the EE Rider applicable to all jurisdictional throughput volumes. Individual customers participating in the SAVEGREEN programs are expected to achieve annual savings on their energy bills

Pursuant to the EE Rider, NJNG shall submit annual filings for changes to the EE rate. Additionally, the Board has the statutory authority to establish the EE rate at a level it finds just and reasonable pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:2-21. Therefore, the Board may establish the EE charge at a level other than that proposed by NJNG which would have an impact on a customer's bill.

PLEASE TAKE ADDITIONAL NOTICE that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a telephonic public hearing will be conducted on the following date and times so that members of the public may present their views on the Company's filing. Information provided at the public hearings will become part of the record of this that members of the public may present their views on the Comp case and will be considered by the Board in making its decision.

Date: January 13, 2021 Public Hearing 1: 4:30pm

Public Hearing 2: 5:30pm Dial In: 1-888-619-1583 Access Code: 819208

If you elect to attend or participate in the telephonic public hearing, please dial the "Dial In" number above. When prompted, enter the "Access Code" liste above.

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