

September 10, 2021

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

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

Re: In the Matter of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities' Response to

The COVID-19 Pandemic BPU Docket No. AO20060471

Dear Secretary Camacho-Welch:

Please accept this letter motion on behalf of Jersey Central Power & Light Company ("JCP&L") in the above-referenced matter.

On July 6, 2021, Public Service Electric and Gas Company, South Jersey Gas Company and Elizabethtown Gas Company (collectively, "Movants") filed a motion ("July 6 Motion") requesting that the Board of Public Utilities ("Board" or "BPU") amend its July 2, 2020 Order Authorizing Establishment of a Regulatory Asset for Incremental COVID-19 Related Expenses ("Covid Regulatory Asset Order"). The Movants request that the Board extend the regulatory asset period for incremental Covid-related expenses from the current end date of September 30, 2021 through the end of 2023, based on a number of developments that have occurred since the Board issued the Covid Regulatory Asset Order. Several New Jersey public utilities subsequently filed replies in support of the July 6, 2021 Motion. Until now, JCP&L had not taken a position in regard to the Movant's request.

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However, based on developments since the filing of the Motion on July 6, 2021, JCP&L is hereby filing a request for an extension of the regulatory asset period.¹ These developments include:

- Due to the recent increase in infection rates, the return-to-work timeframe for FirstEnergy/JCP&L employees has been delayed. Until recently, it was expected that the majority of JCP&L/FirstEnergy employees would return to work in the office as of September 20, 2021. However, that date has now been delayed to February 28, 2022. As a result of this delay, many of the incremental Covid-related expenses that JCP&L has deferred pursuant to the Covid Regulatory Asset Order will continue to accrue at least through early 2022 and perhaps longer, until the Company can return to normal operations.
- As the Board is well-aware, due largely to the Delta variant, the number of new Covid-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths has continued to increase during the summer of 2021, both nationwide and in New Jersey. As of July 6, 2021, the national 7-day daily average of new cases was 12,499; as of August 30, 2021, it had increased to 158,946.² In New Jersey, the July 6, 2021 7-day daily average was 181; as of August 30th it was 1,987.³ In short, the pandemic is on an alarming, worsening trend. When the Board established the September 30, 2021 deferral end date, it could not have expected the pandemic would be worsening, rather than nearly over, in early September 2021.
- JCP&L continues to incur incremental Covid-19-related expenses. As of the most recent quarterly report filed with the Board, JCP&L had deferred \$18.2 million. Based on data since the last report, JCP&L's deferral has increased to \$18.7 million. Furthermore, based on JCP&L's experience to date, it forecasts that the deferral will continue at approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000 per month for at least the next five months, through the currently scheduled return-to-work date. Many of these expenses are associated with measures designed to promote social distancing, so as to minimize the potential for spread of the virus amongst employees, particularly those bargaining unit employees working in field operations. The Company has worked closely with bargaining unit leadership to put these protocols in place for the benefit and protection of its employees. For example, to protect its field operations employees, JCP&L has divided its field workforces into PODS (i.e., groups of no

¹ JCP&L also supports the Movant's July 6 Motion. In doing so, JCP&L notes that all of the arguments listed in the July 6 Motion are not necessarily applicable to JCP&L.

² https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/covid-cases.html

³ https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/new-jersey-covid-cases.html

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greater than 5 employees). Each POD is assigned its own reporting location (e.g., at a substation), including portable restroom facilities. Further, rental vehicles are provided to commute from the reporting location to the work location to limit the number of persons traveling in a vehicle. The Board's original rationale for authorizing deferral of incremental Covid-19 expenses in July 2020 is still fully-applicable to these ongoing, incremental expenses that will continue to accrue beyond September 30, 2021.

Accordingly, JCP&L requests that the Board amend its Covid Regulatory Asset Order so that the deferral period for Covid-19-related incremental expenses is extended until JCP&L returns to normal operations.

This letter is being filed in electronic format only, consistent with the Board's Order dated March 19, 2020 (Docket No. EO20030254) directing that all submissions to the Board, of any kind, be submitted electronically. No paper copies will follow and we would appreciate if the Board Secretary's office would please acknowledge receipt of this filing. Your anticipated courtesies and cooperation are very much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Cozen O'Connor Attorneys for JCP&L

c: Service List (via electronic mail)

AFFIDAVIT OF VERIFICATION

Mark A. Mader, being duly sworn upon his oath, deposes and says:

- I am Director of Rates and Regulatory Affairs for First Energy Service Company,
 and I am duly authorized to make this Affidavit of Verification on behalf of Jersey Central Power
 Light Company ("JCP&L"), the party named in the foregoing letter motion.
- 2. I have read the contents of the foregoing letter motion, and I hereby verify that the statements of fact and other information contained therein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Mark A. Mader

Sworn to and subscribed electronically this 10th day of September, 2021

Lynx Eintl

Gregory Eisenstark Attorney-at-Law, State of New Jersey

The undersigned attorney, Gregory Eisenstark, certifies that the affiant electronically acknowledged the genuineness of the signature.

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Gregory Eisenstark, Esquire

BPU Dkt. No. AO20060471 (and BPU Docket No. EO20100629U)

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