

STATE OF VERMONT  
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Case No. 20-0789-INV

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Vermont Public Utility Commission orders and memoranda issued in response to COVID-19 pandemic	
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Order entered: 05/21/2020

**ORDER EXTENDING APPLICABILITY OF GUIDANCE ON MAKING CERTAIN FILINGS AND ANNOUNCING THAT COMMISSION WILL SCHEDULE REMOTE PUBLIC HEARINGS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS**

Both the State of Vermont and the federal government have declared a state of emergency due to the outbreak of the new coronavirus known as COVID-19. The Vermont Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) recognizes the importance of helping to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Vermont.

Social distancing is one step that helps slow the spread of this virus. As a result, the Commission examined its procedural requirements to identify those that require close personal contact and to review whether those requirements could be temporarily modified during this public health emergency without adversely affecting other parties’ procedural rights.

The Commission promulgated Emergency Rule 2.500 to modify those procedural requirements that were contained in the Commission’s rules. Emergency Rule 2.500 will be in effect until October 27, 2020, unless the Commission withdraws it sooner.

The Commission also previously provided additional guidance on how to file certain types of documents with the Commission during the pandemic. That guidance currently applies to filings made through June 1, 2020. In this order, the Commission extends the applicability of that guidance to filings made through October 27, 2020.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the Commission extends:

- The guidance on how to file **confidential documents** with the Commission that is contained in the Commission’s March 31, 2020, order in this proceeding. The Commission similarly extends the waiver of the portion of Section IV.(c) of the Commission’s “Standards and Procedures Applicable to Electronic Filing Using

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<sup>1</sup> This aligns the time period that the filing guidance will be in effect with the time period that Emergency Rule 2.500 will be in effect.

ePUC” that requires hard copies of confidential documents to be filed with the Commission within one business day of the date on which the non-confidential version of the document was filed using ePUC.<sup>2</sup>

- The guidance on how to file **notices of appeal** with the Commission that is contained in the Commission’s April 23, 2020, order in this proceeding.

In addition, the Commission previously announced that it would be postponing all public hearings, site visits, and public information sessions scheduled through the end of May 2020.

This order confirms that the Commission does not intend to hold any site visits through the end of June 2020. The Commission anticipates that it would be difficult to maintain proper social distancing requirements at an in-person site visit. In addition, because the purpose of a site visit is for Commissioners or hearing officers to see the actual physical site of a proposed project, the Commission does not believe that remote site visits will fulfill that purpose.

Social-distancing requirements also continue to make it impractical to hold in-person public hearings. However, the purpose of a public hearing is to hear from members of the public, and this could be accomplished through a remote public hearing. As a result, the Commission will begin scheduling remote public hearings as soon as practicable. The remote events will be video conferences using the GoToMeeting platform and will also have a telephone call-in option so those members of the public without high-speed internet access can participate.

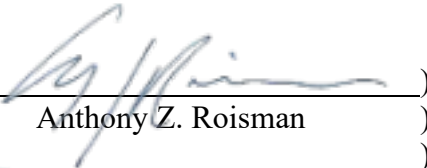
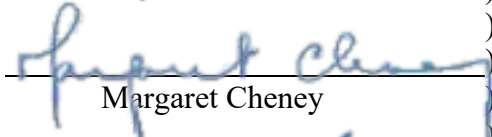
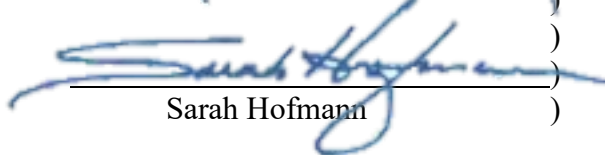
The Commission will consider on a case-by-case basis whether to hold remote public information sessions immediately prior to scheduled remote public hearings.

**SO ORDERED.**

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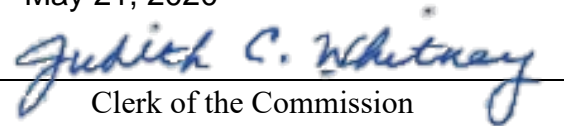
<sup>2</sup> Emergency Rule 2.503 also addresses how to file documents with the Commission.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 21st day of May, 2020.

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: May 21, 2020

Attest:   
Clerk of the Commission

*Notice to Readers: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Commission (by e-mail, telephone, or in writing) of any apparent errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: [puc.clerk@vermont.gov](mailto:puc.clerk@vermont.gov))*