# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

D.P.U. 11-119 November 8, 2011

Investigation by the Department of Public Utilities on its Own Motion into the Preparation and Response of Massachusetts Electric Company and Nantucket Electric Company, each d/b/a National Grid, NSTAR Electric Company, and Western Massachusetts Electric Company to the October 29, 2011 snowstorm.

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VOTE AND ORDER TO OPEN INVESTIGATION

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Public Utilities ("Department") hereby opens investigations into efforts by Massachusetts Electric Company and Nantucket Electric Company, each d/b/a National Grid (jointly "National Grid"), NSTAR Electric Company ("NSTAR"), and Western Massachusetts Electric Company ("WMECo") (jointly "Companies") to prepare for and restore power following the October 29, 2011 snowstorm ("October Snowstorm"). The Department conducts these investigations pursuant to its authority to open an investigation upon its own initiative[1] to determine whether an electric or gas distribution company has violated the Department's standards regarding acceptable performance for emergency preparedness and restoration of service, G.L. c. 164, § 1J, 220 C.M.R. § 19.00 et seq.; the Department's authority to review the performance of an electric or gas distribution company in restoring service during an emergency event, G.L. c. 164, § 85B; and the Department's general supervisory authority over electric distribution companies, G.L. c. 164, § 76.

The Department will review the Companies' compliance with the Department's performance standards regarding emergency preparation and restoration of service, 220 C.M.R. § 19.00 et seq., by evaluating the Companies' preparation for the October Snowstorm and the Companies' implementation of their emergency response plans ("ERPs").

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[1] General Laws c. 164, § 1J also requires the Department to open a full investigation regarding a violation of the Department's standards of acceptable performance upon petition of the Attorney General of the Commonwealth or by a city council or board of selectman of an affected municipality. On November 4, 2011, the Department received a letter from Mayor Setti D. Warren of Newton regarding an investigation into NSTAR's storm response efforts.

The Department's inquiry in these matters will focus on the Companies' compliance with the Department's performance standards for emergency preparedness and restoration of service, including: (1) preparation for and management of the restoration efforts with respect to the October Snowstorm; (2) allocation of company resources in the affected communities; (3) communications with state, municipal and public safety officials and with the Department; (4) dissemination of timely information to the public; and (5) identification of company practices that require improvement, if any.

## II. PROCEDURAL MATTERS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As part of the adjudicatory proceeding, the Department will hold public hearings within each company's service territory to provide the opportunity for comment. In addition, the Department will seek written comments from interested persons in these matters. The Department will issue a subsequent notice identifying the time and place of the public hearings and deadlines for written comments and intervention petitions.

## III. ORDER

Accordingly, the Department

VOTES: To open investigations into efforts by Massachusetts Electric Company and Nantucket Electric Company, each d/b/a National Grid, by NSTAR Electric Company, and by Western Massachusetts Electric Company to prepare for and restore power following the October 29, 2011, snowstorm; and it is

ORDERED: That the Secretary of the Department shall serve this Order on Massachusetts Electric Company and Nantucket Electric Company, each d/b/a National Grid, NSTAR Electric Company, and Western Massachusetts Electric Company; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED: That the Secretary of the Department shall serve a copy of this Order upon all persons on the Department's service list; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED: That Massachusetts Electric Company and Nantucket Electric Company, each d/b/a National Grid, NSTAR Electric Company, and Western Massachusetts Electric Company shall comply with all directives in this Order.

By Order of the Department,

/s/
Ann G. Berwick, Chair

/s/
Jolette A. Westbrook, Commissioner

/s/
David W. Cash, Commissioner