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UTAH DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Division of Public Utilities

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Action Request Response

To: Public Service Commission of Utah

From: Utah Division of Public Utilities

Chris Parker, Director
Artie Powell, Manager
Doug Wheelwright, Utility Technical Consultant Supervisor
Eric Orton, Utility Technical Consultant

Date: August 23, 2022

Re: **Docket No. 21-057-24**, Dominion Energy Utah's Snow Shelter Inspection and Placement Progress Report: Request of The Division of Public Utilities for Enforcement Action Under the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act Against Dominion Energy.

Recommendation (Acknowledge)

The Division of Public Utilities (Division) has reviewed Dominion Energy Utah's (Dominion or Company) "Snow Shelter Inspection and Placement Progress Report" (Report) and has determined that it contains the required information as ordered. The Division recommends that the Public Service Commission of Utah (Commission) acknowledge the most recent Report. While Dominion's Report is only one step in fulfilling the commitments agreed to in the Settlement Stipulation, Dominion is making progress to fulfill its obligations. No further action is required at this time.

Issue

In this docket Dominion filed its Report as agreed to in the Settlement Stipulation. In approving the Settlement Stipulation, the Commission found that "the inspection and reporting schedules outlined in the Settlement are reasonable." This filing is Dominion's third Report for this program.

Division of Public Utilities

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Background

On October 1, 2021, Dominion filed a Motion to Approve Joint Stipulation and Request for Scheduling Conference. The Settlement Stipulation resolved a Division-filed Request for Enforcement Action as a result of an incident that occurred on February 16, 2019. On October 13, 2021, the Commission issued its Scheduling Order and Notice of Virtual Hearing. On December 14, 2021, the Commission held a virtual hearing and both filing parties provided testimony supporting the Settlement Stipulation. On January 20, 2022, the Commission issued its Order Approving the Settlement Stipulation (Order).

On January 27, 2022, Dominion filed its first Report and outlined the progress made toward inspecting and placing meters that may need Snow Shelters. The Company also reiterated its commitment to file this type of report on a quarterly basis going forward until all meters that need Snow Shelters have them. The Division filed a responsive memo and on March 2, 2022, the Commission issued an Acknowledgement Letter stating that it “acknowledges the Snow Shelter Report as complying with the requirements described in the Order.”¹

On May 25, 2022, Dominion sent the second Report updating the progress toward inspecting and placing Snow Shelters representing the progress made through April 19, 2022. The Division filed a responsive memo on June 24, 2022, and the Commission issued an Acknowledgement Letter on July 1, 2022.

On July 27, 2022, Dominion sent the third Report updating its progress made through July 8, 2022. Also on that day, the Commission issued its Action Request directing the Division to review for compliance and make a recommendation on or before August 26, 2022. This memo provides the Division’s Action Request Response and recommendation.

Discussion

The Settlement Stipulation contains several commitments designed to improve safety and to help prevent an incident similar to what occurred on February 16, 2019,² from happening in the future. These commitments include:

¹ Acknowledgement Letter from the Commission, March 2, 2022.

² Order Approving Settlement Stipulation, January 20, 2022, Paragraph 1.

- (1) updating its Standard Practices for placement of meters and snow shelters;
- (2) applying the new and updated Standard Practices to future meter installations;
- (3) submitting changes to its tariff for Commission approval, within sixty days of the Order; and
- (4) updating its Operator Qualification Program relating to Snow Shelters and their need when determining the placement of its meters.

Dominion is required to provide information to the Division and Commission “related to meter snow shelters, including quarterly reports detailing its progress inspecting the remaining structures and snow shelter placements” and to inform regulators once all inspections have been completed. Dominion will also include an additional step in its regular five-year meter inspection cycle directed at determining whether snow protection is necessary. Finally, Dominion agreed to “contribute \$100,000 at shareholders’ expense to help cover the costs for the installation of new snow shelters.”³

In this filing, Dominion provides the results of its meter inspections and placements in Park City, Ogden Valley, Brian Head, and Cedar Highlands (areas most likely to experience high snowfall) as of July 8, 2022. This Report shows the following:

- Dominion employees have inspected 6,725 meters in the above-mentioned areas to determine if a Snow Shelter is needed over those meters. This number is the same as the last two reports.
- At the time of the initial inspection there were 1,903 Snow Shelters installed in these areas to protect the existing meters.
- There are 2,189 remaining meters that need Snow Shelters installed. This is seven less than the last report. This reduction is based on subsequent inspections by the Company which led to the determination that these seven did not need Snow Shelters after all.
- Of the 2,189 Snow Shelters that need to be installed, Dominion has already installed 1,494. This is showing that the Company has installed 639 since the last Report. A significant improvement over the last Report.

³ Settlement Stipulation, October 1, 2021, Paragraph 19.

- Of the 695 Snow Shelters that remain to be installed, Dominion plans to install 662 of them. This equates to roughly the same number as it installed in the previous two months (April 24, 2022 – July 8, 2022).
- There are five Snow Shelters that Dominion expects customers to self-install which is one less than the previous Report. Dominion assured the Division that all five will be “installed by September 2022” independent of who installs them.
- There are now 28 customers which object to having a Snow Shelter installed to protect their meter (two less than the last report). Dominion’s plans to address the objections of each of these customers individually.
- The current Report provides the information in the same format as the initial and second Report.

The Division has reviewed the filing and finds that the Company is complying with the Commission’s order in reporting the information.

Conclusion

The Division recommends the Commission acknowledge Dominion’s Snow Shelter Inspection and Replacement Report. This filing satisfies one part of the Settlement Stipulation agreement and Commission’s Order. The Division notes that the objective of this program is to enhance customer safety and to help ensure that snow shelters will be installed in all locations that should have Snow Shelters. The Division will continue to monitor Dominion’s compliance with its obligations under the Settlement Stipulation and the Commission’s Order. Therefore, the Division recommends the Commission acknowledge the Report as compliant. This filing is not requesting any change in the Company’s current rates.

cc: Kelly B. Mendenhall, Dominion Energy Utah
Michele Beck, Office of Consumer Services