



April 21, 2025

Via Email

Select Board of the Town of Charlemont
157 Main St
Charlemont, MA 01339
Attention: Jared Bellows, Kim Blakeslee, and Valentine Reid

Re: Petition of Massachusetts Electric Company to Locate Poles and Wires for
19W1 Electrical Distribution Line

Dear Members of the Select Board of the Town of Charlemont:

On February 10, 2025, National Grid presented the Charlemont-to-Heath Improvement Project to the Select Board at a pole petition hearing continued from December 9, 2024. The meeting resulted in a further continuance, as the Select Board requested more information about the project. This letter responds to those questions. Together with this letter, I am filing a letter from National Grid Legal Counsel which addresses relevant questions raised by the Select Board.

This project includes reconductoring significant sections of the 1019W1 feeder, as well as closing a gap in Heath, MA to create a loop scheme. This loop scheme provides feeder redundancy and the ability to perform switching to back feed areas experiencing an outage in the area. Additionally, this loop scheme will allow National Grid to install a Fault Location, Isolation, and Service Restoration (FLISR) scheme which allows the system to automatically detect faults and restore customers within minutes while crews are able to safely repair any damages. This work is designed to enhance the safety and reliability of the circuit for the benefit of residents of Charlemont, Heath, Rowe, Hawley, and Monroe.

The Select Board and other attendees at the pole hearing requested that National Grid provide a cost analysis for the proposed overhead plan compared to the installation of underground infrastructure as well as long term benefits and annual maintenance costs for each. A request was also made for National Grid to retain a third-party consultant to investigate these cost analyses as well as environmental impacts. For the reasons set forth in the letter sent by National Grid Legal Counsel, the Company will not be providing this information.

As stated in past correspondence, National Grid is mandated to provide safe, reliable, and cost-effective service to our customers. Over the past 5 years, the 1019W1 feeder has been consistently at the bottom 5% of reliability metrics. Approximately 75% of outage cases were related to vegetation, e.g., trees falling, broken limbs, and tree growth. The remaining 25% were split between various non-vegetation related causes: lightning, device failure, vehicle, and unknown. Table 1 below displays the outage numbers from 2019-2024.

Table 1: Charlemont Outage Data 2019-2024

Year	Total Number of Outages	Number of Customers	Average Total Duration (Hrs)	Avg Duration Per Outage (Hrs)
2019	> 10 Outages	0	0	0
	> 5 & ≤ 10 Outages	0	0	0
	≥1 & ≤ 5 Outages	278	13.5	6.1
	0 Outages	4	0	0
2020	> 10 Outages	0	0	0
	> 5 & ≤ 10 Outages	1	54.1	9
	≥1 & ≤ 5 Outages	279	9.1	3.4
	0 Outages	2	0	0
2021	> 10 Outages	0	0	0
	> 5 & ≤ 10 Outages	3	11.2	1.9
	≥1 & ≤ 5 Outages	276	6.6	1.8
	0 Outages	3	0	0
2022	> 10 Outages	0	0	0
	> 5 & ≤ 10 Outages	0	0	0
	≥1 & ≤ 5 Outages	277	2.9	1.3
	0 Outages	5	0	0
2023	> 10 Outages	0	0	0
	> 5 & ≤ 10 Outages	0	0	0
	≥1 & ≤ 5 Outages	124	22.2	13.7
	0 Outages	158	0	0
2024	> 10 Outages	0	0	0
	> 5 & ≤ 10 Outages	0	0	0
	≥1 & ≤ 5 Outages	148	6.2	4.1
	0 Outages	134	0	0

The project emerged from a rigid options solution analysis and was determined to be the best option to address reliability concerns in the safest and most cost-effective manner. The option of undergrounding the line was evaluated but ultimately rejected because it was significantly more expensive without providing any additional reliability benefits. Investment recovery for this project will be through standard rate recovery mechanisms as approved by appropriate regulatory agencies.

It is worth noting that on the weekend of February 15, 2025, a severe outage occurred on the 1019W1 line resulting in the loss of power to approximately 1500 customers in Charlemont, Rowe, Heath, Hawley and Monroe. This outage was caused by damage to poles in the Right-of-Way directly outside the Bear Swamp Substation. Due to the damage and access issues, power restoration required days to complete. Had our proposed upgrade been in place, nearly all of the customers would have been restored within minutes.

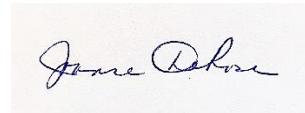
The majority of Charlemont is currently fed via an overhead system in the street with service lines also running overhead from pole to house. As noted in the accompanying letter, if the Town wanted National Grid to convert this area to underground, it would first have to comply with the statutory procedures. In addition, each affected customer would be required to contract a private electrician and incur any costs related to a new underground service including a trench from a handhole in the street to the house, service wire, and a new meter socket suitable for underground. As a reference, during the hearing on 2/10, a resident mentioned that they recently rebuilt their service as underground which cost ~\$25k for 100 feet. I would also note that if National Grid were to underground the infrastructure in this location, the Town of Charlemont MLP would need to also build an underground system for their broadband in a separate duct bank.

A request was also made to provide a scope for tree trimming and removals for this project. This scope has gone through the appropriate approval process with the Town Tree Warden. National Grid

purposefully designs and engineers its infrastructure to limit the Forestry and Environmental impact. While an important piece of the reliability solution, vegetation management will provide a temporary solution for the poor reliability of the feeder. The project will make the system and its assets more robust by offering more switching capabilities and hardening the infrastructure, so that in any event, including severe weather and tree contact, outages can be restored quickly or avoided.

Thank you for your continued partnership as we work towards improving the reliability of the electric infrastructure within the region. I am available for any additional questions or comments you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joanne DeRose", is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Joanne DeRose

Director, Community Engagement

Cc: Sarah Reynolds, Town Administrator
Robert Ide, Community Engagement Manager
Pat Shea, Project Manager