

STATE OF NEW YORK

Public Service Commission

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PSC EXAMINES GAS UTILITY SAFETY EMERGENCY PLANS

— Staff Review Identified Potential Violations and Shortcomings —

Albany, NY—10/23/14—The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today received an update from Department of Public Service staff regarding incorporation of a series of best practices into the emergency response plans of New York’s natural gas utilities. These best practices were developed through a collaborative process between industry and state regulators and reflect lessons learned by the utilities and Department staff from the severe storms experienced by New York State the past few years.

“In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, the natural gas utilities participated in a seminar sponsored by Department Staff to develop a list of best practices for preparing for emergencies,” said Commission Chair Audrey Zibelman. “We are now seeing the fruition of that process, with utilities incorporating these best practices in their emergency plans. As a result of this effort, we fully expect the utilities will continue to meet our standards for emergency management going forward.”

As part of its renewed effort to improve gas safety, the Commission in December 2013 ordered 11 gas utilities to review nearly 50 emergency plan best practices to determine the practices that need to be incorporated into the company’s emergency plan. Staff then conducted a thorough review of the plans submitted for compliance, which resulted in staff noting potential violations of the Commission’s gas safety requirements and areas of concerns resulting from some of the best practices not being incorporated among the plans reviewed. Most of these potential

violations and areas of concern have already been addressed by the utilities after receiving feedback following staff's initial comprehensive reviews.

It is expected that all gas utilities will address any remaining potential violations when they resubmit emergency plans. However, additional time will be necessary to put in place the best practices for use of global positioning satellite (GPS) technology and outage management systems as well as coordination with other local emergency response organizations. Staff will continue to work with the gas utilities on the adoption of best practices concerning coordination with the communities the utility serves and the use of GPS technology and outage management systems by the utilities.

Staff's report today, when issued, may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 13-G-0484 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission orders may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.