



**For Immediate Release:** 05/12/2022

Rory M. Christian, Chair

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**22043 / 20-G-0131**

## **PSC Begins Groundbreaking Planning Process to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from the State's Natural Gas Delivery System**

### **Commission Sets Forth Rules Regarding Potential Natural Gas Moratoriums**

**ALBANY** — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today adopted gas planning procedures that will result in plans being submitted by natural gas utilities that comply with the State's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. The Commission also adopted new rules that set forth the process for initiating, operating, and lifting a natural gas moratorium.

"The gas planning procedures we are adopting today will ensure that gas utilities continue to provide safe, adequate, and reliable service while striving to meet the State's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets," **said Commission Chair Rory M. Christian.** "Furthermore, our new procedures will allow for enhanced stakeholder engagement by creating opportunities for timely and meaningful input to ensure all voices and positions are heard."

Modernizing the gas planning procedures is important so that local gas distribution companies' long-term plans are subjected to transparent review and ensure that they conform to State policies while ensuring that the gas utilities can continue to provide safe and adequate service. This critically important gas planning proceeding has been in the works for more than two years; numerous parties, including those representing large customers, environmental advocates, individuals, and the affected local gas distribution utilities have filed comments. Staff held a stakeholder conference to discuss the proposal on March 25, 2021, and public statement hearings were held in May 2021.

Going forward, utilities will be required to make filings with proposed long-term plans every three years. The filings must include at least one scenario with no new traditional gas infrastructure and quantify greenhouse gas emissions. Each filing will begin a stakeholder engagement process, aimed at developing a consensus long-term plan. Utilities will also be required to provide annual updates to their long-term plans. Additional phases of this proceeding will deal with issues such as the avoided cost of gas, depreciation, and statutory/legal changes necessary to ensure greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

In a related decision, the Commission today adopted new rules that set forth the process for initiating, operating, and lifting a natural gas moratorium, and covers issues including the metrics used to identify supply shortfall, communications, a Customer Bill of Rights, training materials and outreach, and information on low- and moderate-income customer and disadvantaged community impacts.

These new rules are important given the fact that in certain areas of the State, gas distribution utilities are already operating under moratorium conditions based upon natural gas supply constraints, and such circumstances may reoccur in the future. Accordingly, moratoria management procedures should be implemented expeditiously in the event of additional moratorium enactment or rescission.

By providing a uniform, transparent, and streamlined process for the initiation, operation, and lifting of a natural gas moratorium, the Commission can minimize impacts to customers while ensuring safe and adequate utility service. Recent experience with moratoria in various gas utilities' service territories demonstrates the need to have clear procedures in place should moratoria be deemed necessary in the future. The moratorium management procedures adopted today will ensure that customers throughout the State understand when, where, and how a natural gas moratorium may be imposed, and will provide details and a Customer Bill of Rights to ensure that all moratoria are invoked, managed, and released in a fair, equitable, and transparent manner for all consumers, including underserved and disadvantaged communities.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at [www.dps.ny.gov](http://www.dps.ny.gov) and entering Case Number 20-G-0131 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents 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.