

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



JOE ARESIMOWICZ
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

December 12, 2013

Arthur H. House, Chairman
Public Utilities Regulatory Authority
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

Dear Chairman House:

Please accept this letter as an official submission for the purposes of Docket No. 13-11-13, Joint Petition of George Jepsen, Attorney General for the State of Connecticut and Elin Swanson Katz, Consumer Counsel for a Review of Outsourcing by Northeast Utilities.

I write to express my alarm over the plan by Northeast Utilities ("NU") to outsource hundreds of information technology jobs. I am deeply concerned that this action will diminish the utility's storm response capabilities, jeopardize the security of its infrastructure and customer information, degrade the quality of customer service, lead to violations of foreign worker laws, and violate the merger agreement.

First, the plan to outsource these jobs currently held by local workers to foreign companies will result in fewer workers to assist with the utility's storm response efforts. As we know, when a major storm hits, the utility has an "all hands on deck" policy that sends available workers out into the field to support the line workers as they work to restore power to customers. Fewer local workers means fewer "hands on deck" to perform this important role. Although the agency has argued that it can make up for this loss of local employees by bringing in workers from neighboring states, this strategy seems implausible given that major storms generally impact the entire region, not just Connecticut. Those workers will be needed in their home states to support storm restoration efforts there, and will not be available to make the trek to Connecticut, should a major storm result in significant power outages. Thus, it is inevitable that outsourcing so many local jobs to foreign locations will reduce NU's ability to provide a robust and prompt storm response.

Second, the decision to have foreign contractors access and manage sensitive infrastructure and customer information seems foolhardy. In fact, it would be much more prudent to limit access to sensitive information about the utility's infrastructure to employees of the utility itself, rather than any contractor and the subcontractors it chooses to engage. Anything less exposes our all-important electric grid to the possibility of attack. Similarly, customers routinely provide sensitive information to NU, such as information related to their finances and health conditions. Customers should not have to worry that access to and management of this personal information has been contracted out to the highest bidder. Customers reasonably expect that such information will be seen only by the employees of the company to which they entrusted it, and this expectation should be respected.

Third, customers who contact the utility in the midst of a crisis, or even with a routine issue concerning their access to the modern necessity of electricity, will not be well served by reaching a worker located in a foreign country, or even one who has been transplanted to Connecticut, but who lacks the local knowledge of the utility's current workers. Foreign workers who come to the state on a temporary basis to fulfill the contractor's customer service obligations will not possess the context and understanding necessary to respond effectively to the utility's customers.

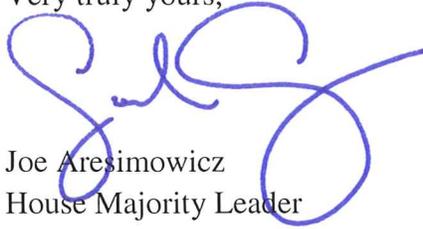
Moreover, these contractors have a history of questionable practices related to foreign workers, which has subjected them to federal investigation and civil litigation. I ask that the agency carefully consider the impact on the utility's provision of service if such alleged practices were to be carried out in our state.

Finally, we ask that you closely examine whether this planned outsourcing violates the terms and spirit of the agreement between the state and the utility resulting from the merger between NU and NStar. As that agreement was negotiated, NU promised that job reductions would come through attrition and retirement, not layoffs. The utility has publicly acknowledged that the current plan to eliminate so many jobs results from pressure to achieve savings from the merger. The use of outsourcing to accomplish the utility's financial goals flies in the face of the explicit promises made as the state agreed to accept the merger between the two entities.

For these reasons, I am highly distressed by the announced plan to outsource hundreds of jobs currently held by middle-class workers here in Connecticut, for the sake of corporate profit. I believe that such action may have a deep negative impact on the state's utility customers. I strongly urge you to closely investigate this proposal and to recommend its rejection.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joe Aresimowicz', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Joe Aresimowicz
House Majority Leader

Cc: John W. Betkoski III, Vice Chairman
Michael A. Caron, Commissioner
Nicholas E. Neeley, Acting Executive Secretary