

65 - INDEPENDENT AGENCIES - REGULATORY

407 - PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

CHAPTER 301 - STANDARD OFFER SERVICE

SUMMARY - This rule establishes terms and conditions for standard offer service for electric generation, and establishes a methodology for selecting standard offer providers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

§1	GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS.....	8
A.	<u>Scope of Rule</u>	8
B.	<u>Definitions</u>	8
1.	<u>Aggregator</u>	8
2.	<u>Competitive Electricity Provider</u>	8
3.	<u>Core Customer Classes</u>	8
4.	<u>Large, Investor-Owned Transmission and Distribution Utility</u>	8
5.	<u>Maritimes Control Area</u>	8
6.	<u>Northern Maine</u>	8
7.	<u>Retail Access</u>	9
8.	<u>Standard Offer Service</u>	9
9.	<u>Standard Offer Classes</u>	9
10.	<u>Standard Offer Provider</u>	9
11.	<u>Transmission and Distribution Utility</u>	9
C.	<u>Availability of Standard Offer Service</u>	9

§2	RATES, CHARGES AND PROCEDURES FOR INITIATING AND TERMINATING STANDARD OFFER SERVICE	10
A.	<u>Rates and Rate Schedules</u>	10
1.	<u>Establishment and Filing of Rates</u>	10
2.	<u>Standard Offer Classes</u>	10
a.	<u>Investor-Owned Transmission and Distribution Utility Service Territories</u>	10
i.	<u>Residential and small non-residential</u>	10
ii.	<u>Medium non-residential</u>	10
iii.	<u>Large non-residential</u>	10
b.	<u>Consumer-Owned Transmission and Distribution Utility Service Territories</u>	10
3.	<u>Rate Structure</u>	11
4.	<u>Division of Load; Averaged Rates</u>	11
5.	<u>Geographic Averaging of Rates</u>	11
6.	<u>Charges for Billing and Administration</u>	11
B.	<u>Establishment and Re-establishment of Standard Offer Service</u>	12
1.	<u>For Nonselecting Customers Existing on March 1, 2000.....</u>	12
2.	<u>For New Customers After March 1, 2000.....</u>	12
3.	<u>For Customers Returning from Competitive Service</u>	12
C.	<u>Termination of Standard Offer Service</u>	12
1.	<u>Unlimited Termination of Standard Offer Service by Residential and Small Non-Residential Customers</u>	12

2.	<u>Termination of Standard Offer Service by Medium and Large Non-Residential Customers, and Aggregated Sets of Customers; Applicable of Opt-Out Fee</u>	13
a.	<u>Applicability of Paragraph</u>	13
b.	<u>Termination of Standard Offer Service by Original Standard Offer Customer</u>	13
c.	<u>Termination of Standard Offer Service Prior to March 1, 2001 by Previous Competitive Market Customer; Opt-Out Charge</u>	13
d.	<u>Termination of Standard Offer Service on or After March 1, 2001 By Previous Competitive Market Customer; Opt-Out Fee</u>	14
e.	<u>Establishment of Higher Opt-Out Fee</u>	15
3.	<u>Application of Fees or Restrictions to Residential and Small Non-Residential Customers and Customers in Northern Maine</u>	15
D.	<u>Notice; Transfer of Service; Bill Calculation</u>	15
1.	<u>Notice of Transfer Into Standard Offer Service</u>	15
2.	<u>Transfer Into Standard Offer Service</u>	15
3.	<u>Notice of Transfer out of Standard Offer Service</u>	16
4.	<u>Transfer out of Standard Offer Service</u>	16
5.	<u>Calculation of Bill for Transfer on Other Than Meter-Reading Date</u>	16
E.	<u>Charges for Costs of Transfer</u>	16
§3	ELIGIBILITY AND OBLIGATIONS OF STANDARD OFFER SERVICE PROVIDERS	17
A.	<u>Eligibility Requirements to Provide Standard Offer Service</u>	17
1.	<u>Licensing</u>	17

2.	<u>Financial Capability Requirement</u>	17
a.	<u>Bond, Letter of Credit or Corporate Guarantee; Amount</u>	17
b.	<u>Requirements for Corporate Guarantees</u>	17
c.	<u>Use of Proceeds</u>	18
B.	<u>Obligations of Standard Offer Service Providers</u>	18
1.	<u>Delivery to Transmission Deliver Point(s)</u>	18
2.	<u>Provision of Generation, Line Losses</u>	19
3.	<u>Renewable Resource Portfolio</u>	19
4.	<u>Independent System Operator - New England and NEPOOL Requirements</u>	19
5.	<u>General Obligations</u>	19
6.	<u>Technical and Financial Capability</u>	19
§4	CREDIT AND COLLECTION; CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS	
	UNCOLLECTIBLE ACCOUNTS	20
A.	<u>Residential Utility Service Regulations for Credit and Collection, Disconnection and Deposits</u>	20
B.	<u>Nonresidential Utility Service Regulations for Credit and Collection, Disconnection and Deposits</u>	20
C.	<u>Late Payment Charges, Interest Rates to be Paid on Customer Deposits, and Charges for Returned Checks</u>	20
D.	<u>Allocation of Uncollectible Accounts to Standard Offer Providers</u>	20
§5	OBLIGATIONS OF THE TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION UTILITY	21
A.	<u>Power Delivery</u>	21

B.	<u>Billing and Metering</u>	21
C.	<u>Administration of Service Connections and Terminations</u>	21
D.	<u>Standard Contract Between Transmission and Distribution Company and Standard Offer Providers</u>	21
1.	<u>Filing of Proposed Contract</u>	21
2.	<u>Review; Comments; Approval</u>	22
E.	<u>Provision of Standard Offer Service by an Affiliate of a Large Transmission and Distribution Utility</u>	22
§6	INFORMATION PROVIDED BY TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS	23
A.	<u>Required Information</u>	23
B.	<u>General Requirements and Conditions</u>	23
1.	<u>Aggregation</u>	23
2.	<u>Historic Data Period</u>	24
3.	<u>Due Care; Corrections</u>	24
4.	<u>Affiliated Interests</u>	24
5.	<u>Electronic Form; Standard Software</u>	24
6.	<u>Scope and Format</u>	24
§7	STANDARD OFFER BID REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS; CONTENTS OF BID	25
A.	<u>General Requirements</u>	25
1.	<u>Duration of Standard Offer Obligation</u>	25
2.	<u>Form of Pricing</u>	25
3.	<u>Limitation on Bids by Affiliates of Large Transmission and Distribution Utilities</u>	25

B.	<u>Contents of Bids</u>	25
1.	<u>Bid for Standard Offer Classes</u>	25
2.	<u>Rate Structure and Design</u>	25
3.	<u>Bids for Portions of Standard Offer Class Requirements</u>	25
4.	<u>Price for Meeting Obligations</u>	26
5.	<u>Statement of Ability to Satisfy Financial Capability Requirements</u>	26
§8	BIDDING PROCEDURE AND SELECTION	26
A.	<u>Bidding Procedure</u>	26
1.	<u>Process</u>	26
2.	<u>Request for Bids</u>	26
3.	<u>Provision of Information Required by Section 6</u>	27
4.	<u>Time Frames</u>	27
5.	<u>Duration of Proposals</u>	27
B.	<u>Rejection of Noncompliance or Untimely Bids</u>	27
C.	<u>Selection</u>	27
1.	<u>Selection Date</u>	27
2.	<u>Selection Criteria</u>	27
3.	<u>Identical Bids</u>	28
4.	<u>Multiple Providers for a Standard Offer Class</u>	28
5.	<u>Payment</u>	28
D.	<u>Insufficient Bids; Rejection of Bids</u>	28

1.	<u>No Bids</u>	28
2.	<u>Inadequate Bids</u>	29
3.	<u>Standard Offer Rates</u>	29
E.	<u>Consumer-owned Utilities</u>	29
1.	<u>Option</u>	29
2.	<u>Single Provider</u>	30
3.	<u>Notification</u>	30
§9	FAILURE OF STANDARD OFFER PROVIDER TO PROVIDE SERVICE	30
A.	<u>Default; Replacement Service</u>	30
B.	<u>Temporary Provision of Service</u>	30
C.	<u>Bond, Letter of Credit, or Corporate Guarantee Proceeds</u>	31
D.	<u>Cost Recovery</u>	31
§10	WAIVER OR EXEMPTION	31

§1 GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS**A. Scope of Rule**

The following provisions shall govern all standard offer service and the process for selecting standard offer providers, except to the extent they are modified as permitted under § 10.

B. Definitions**1. Aggregator**

Aggregator means an entity that gathers individual customers together for the purpose of purchasing electricity, provided such entity is not engaged in the purchase or resale of electricity directly with a competitive electricity provider, and provided further that such customers contract for electricity directly with a competitive electricity provider.

2. Competitive Electricity Provider

Competitive electricity provider means a marketer, broker, aggregator or any other entity selling electricity to the public at retail in Maine.

3. Core Customer Classes

Core customer classes means customer classes of a transmission and distribution utility which are not optional rate classes.

4. Large, Investor-Owned Transmission and Distribution Utility

Large, investor-owned transmission and distribution utility means an investor-owned transmission and distribution utility serving more than 50,000 retail customers.

5. Maritimes Control Area

Maritimes control area means the area in which New Brunswick Power Corporation operates the Maritimes bulk power system.

6. Northern Maine

Northern Maine means the area of Maine that is located in the Maritimes control area.

7. Retail Access

Retail access means the right of a retail consumer of electricity to purchase generation service from a competitive electricity provider.

8. Standard Offer Service

Standard offer service means electric generation service provided to any electricity consumer who does not obtain electric generation service from a competitive electricity provider or who has terminated service from a competitive electricity provider.

9. Standard Offer Classes

Standard offer classes means the customer groupings within a transmission and distribution utility service territory as specified in section 2(A)(2).

10. Standard Offer Provider

Standard offer provider means an entity selected pursuant to Section 8 to provide all or a specified portion of electric generation service to consumers receiving standard offer service.

11. Transmission and Distribution Utility

Transmission and distribution utility means a person, its lessees, trustees, receivers or trustees appointed by a court, owning, controlling, operating or managing a transmission and distribution plant for compensation within the State.

C. Availability of Standard Offer Service

Standard offer service shall be available to any consumer who does not obtain electric generation service from a competitive electricity provider. Standard offer service is not available to an electricity consumer in amounts less than the consumer's total retail electricity purchases, except that, if a consumer has multiple service accounts with a transmission and distribution utility, standard offer service is available for amounts corresponding to one or more specified accounts. Standard offer service shall be available at least until March 1, 2005, unless further extended pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 3212(4).

§2 RATES, CHARGES AND PROCEDURES FOR INITIATING AND TERMINATING STANDARD OFFER SERVICE**A. Rates and Rate Schedules****1. Establishment and Filing of Rates**

Rates for standard offer service shall be established, maintained and modified pursuant to the provisions of this subsection and the bidding and selection processes of section 8. Rates for standard offer service shall be available for public inspection at the Commission's office, and at the office maintained by the transmission and distribution utility in whose service territory the standard offer providers are authorized to provide service.

2. Standard Offer Classes**a. Investor-Owned Transmission and Distribution Utility Service Territories**

For each investor-owned transmission and distribution utility service territory there shall be three standard offer classes:

i. Residential and small non-residential. This standard offer class shall contain customers defined as residential by the terms and conditions of the transmission and distribution utility and non-residential customers that meet the availability criteria to take service under a core customer class of the transmission and distribution utility that does not include a demand charge.

ii. Medium non-residential. This standard offer class shall contain non-residential customers that do not meet the criteria for a small non-residential customer and that meet the availability criteria to take service under a core customer class of the transmission and distribution utility that includes a demand charge and in which a customer's maximum demand shall not exceed 500 kW, or the kW breakpoint that is closest to but does not exceed 500 kW.

iii. Large non-residential. This standard offer class shall contain non-residential customers that are not small non-residential or medium non-residential customers.

b. Consumer-Owned Transmission and Distribution Utility Service Territories

For each consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility service territory there may be, at the utility's option, a single standard offer service class

that shall contain all customers in the service territory of the consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility or the three standard offer classes specified in section 2(A)(2).

3. Rate Structure

For the residential and small non-residential standard offer class and for all standard offer service in a consumer-owned utility service territory with a single standard offer class, the standard offer rate shall be an amount per kWh that does not vary by level of usage, or by time of year or day. The rate structure shall not include any demand charges nor any amounts charged on a per customer or fixed-charge basis.

For the medium and large non-residential standard offer classes, the rate structure may include demand and kWh charges and may reflect seasonal and time-of-day differentiation. The time-of-day differentiation must be compatible with the transmission and distribution utility's core rate structure for customers in the standard offer class. The rate structure for the medium and large non-residential standard offer classes shall not include any amounts charged on a per customer or fixed-charge basis.

4. Division of Load; Averaged Rates

If the Commission selects more than one standard offer provider for a standard offer class within a transmission and distribution utility's service territory, each standard offer provider shall be responsible for a specified portion of the total standard offer requirement of the class. Rates for the standard offer class and for each rate element within the standard offer class shall be equal to the weighted average of the rates of all standard offer providers selected for the class. Customers shall not be assigned to a specified standard offer provider.

5. Geographic Averaging of Rates

Rates, terms and conditions for standard offer service shall not vary within the transmission and distribution utility's service territory on the basis of customer location.

6. Charges for Billing and Administration

The transmission and distribution utility shall charge the standard offer provider(s) the utility's incremental costs of administering standard offer service, including providing basic bill issuance, bill calculation, and collections. These charges shall be consistent with Chapter 322 of the Commission's Rules. .

B. Establishment and Re-establishment of Standard Offer Service

1. For Nonselecting Customers Existing on March 1, 2000

Standard offer service shall be provided beginning on March 1, 2000 to any customer who has not obtained electric generation service from a competitive electricity provider on that date. There shall be no fee for a customer to establish standard offer service in this manner.

2. For New Customers After March 1, 2000

Standard offer service shall be provided to any customer who establishes a new service within a transmission and distribution utility's service territory after March 1, 2000, and who does not obtain electric generation service from a competitive electricity provider at that time. There shall be no fee for a customer to establish standard offer service in this manner. Nothing in this paragraph shall relieve the customer from Commission-authorized charges for the construction of transmission and distribution facilities to serve any new location pursuant to the terms and conditions of the transmission and distribution utility on file with the Commission.

3. For Customers Returning from Competitive Service

Any customer taking service from a competitive electricity provider may terminate service with a competitive electricity provider and elect standard offer service at any time, upon notice to the customer's transmission and distribution utility as required by subsection D and subject to any applicable transfer fees required by subsection E.

C. Termination of Standard Offer Service

1. Unlimited Termination of Standard Offer Service by Residential and Small Non-residential Customers

Any individual customer or account in a residential and small non-residential standard offer class or any customer or account with a demand of 50 kilowatts or less in the service territory of a consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility having a single standard offer class may terminate standard offer service and obtain generation service from a competitive electricity provider, at any time, by obtaining service from a competitive electricity provider under the provisions in subsection D and subject to any applicable transfer fees required by subsection E. No opt-out fee shall be required unless the Commission establishes such a fee pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 3 below.

2. Termination of Standard Offer Service by Medium and Large Non-Residential Customers and Aggregated Sets of Customers; Applicability of Opt-Out Fee

a. Applicability of Paragraph

The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to all individual customers or accounts in a medium or large non-residential standard offer class, to any customer or account with a demand of greater than 50 kilowatts in the service territory of a consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility with a single standard offer class, and to any competitive electricity provider or aggregator that serves a set of customers whose demand in the aggregate is greater than 50 kilowatts.

b. Termination of Standard Offer Service By Original Standard Offer Customer

Any customer in a medium or large non-residential standard offer class, any customer with a demand of greater than 50 kilowatts in the service territory of a consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility with a single standard offer class, or any set of customers having a demand of greater than 50 kilowatts who has never obtained generation service from a competitive electricity provider may terminate standard offer service by obtaining generation service from a competitive electricity provider under the provisions in subsection D and subject to any applicable fees required by subsection E.

c. Termination of Standard Offer Service Prior to March 1, 2001 By Previous Competitive Market Customer; Opt-Out Charge

A customer or account in a medium or large non-residential standard offer class, a customer or account with a demand of greater than 50 kilowatts in the service territory of a consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility with a single standard offer class or an aggregated group of customers having a demand of greater than 50 kilowatts who has previously obtained generation service from a competitive electricity provider and who has reestablished standard offer service may, prior to March 1, 2001, terminate standard offer service and return to competitive provider service upon payment of an opt-out charge.

The opt-out charge shall equal the amount of that customer's, or aggregated group of customers', average monthly bill for the most recent period that the customer has taken standard offer service. If the customer has not taken standard offer service for a full month, the transmission and distribution utility shall calculate a monthly bill amount using the customer's average daily consumption. All opt-out charges shall be collected by the transmission and distribution utility and paid to the standard offer service provider(s). Any customer or aggregator terminating standard offer service pursuant to this paragraph shall provide notice to the transmission and distribution utility

and pay any applicable administrative fees as provided in subsection E. An aggregator shall be responsible for the payment of any charge applicable to an aggregated group due under this subsection.

d. Termination of Standard Offer Service on or After March 1, 2001 By Previous Competitive Market Customer; Opt-Out Fee

A customer in a medium or large non-residential standard offer class, or a customer with a demand of greater than 50 kilowatts in the service territory of a consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility with a single standard offer class who has previously obtained generation service from a competitive electricity provider and who has transferred to standard offer service may, on or after March 1, 2001, terminate standard offer service and return to competitive provider service:

- i. without payment of an opt-out fee if 12 months or more have elapsed since the customer most recently established standard offer service; or
- ii. without payment of an opt-out fee if the customer takes service in northern Maine unless the Commission establishes a charge pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 3 below; or
- iii. upon payment of an opt-out fee.

The opt-out fee shall equal two times the amount of the highest standard offer bill of the customer during the most recent period that the customer has taken standard offer service unless the Commission has increased the amount of the opt-out fee pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 3 below. If the customer has not taken standard offer service for a full month, the transmission and distribution utility shall calculate a monthly bill amount using the customer's average daily consumption. The transmission and distribution utility shall make reasonable efforts to collect the opt-out charge. In the event the customer during its return to standard offer service was served by more than one standard offer provider, the utility shall apportion the fee among the standard offer providers on the basis of the number of months each provider provided service to the customer. The customer shall notify the transmission and distribution utility that is required to pay an opt-out fee pursuant to this provision prior to the termination of standard offer service.

e. Establishment of Higher Opt-Out Fee

The Commission may establish a higher opt-out fee by order upon a finding that such action is necessary to accomplish the deterrent purposes of this paragraph or to obtain reasonably priced standard offer service.

3. Application of Fees or Restrictions to Residential and Small Non-Residential Customers and Customers in Northern Maine

a. The opt-out requirements provided for in paragraph 2(d) shall apply to a competitive electricity provider or an aggregator who serves a set of customers in the residential and small non-residential standard offer class, which set has an aggregate demand of greater than 50 kilowatts, and who induces that set of customers to re-enter standard offer service, and within 12 months of such re-entry, to return to competitive service. This provision shall not apply if the customers are in northern Maine unless the Commission otherwise provides pursuant to paragraph 3(b).

b. If the Commission finds that there is good cause to deter frequent transfers in or out of standard offer service by customers in the residential and small non-residential standard offer class, customers having a demand of 50 kilowatts or less in the service territory of a consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility with a single standard offer class, or customers in northern Maine, the Commission by order may impose an opt-out charge, a re-entry charge, or other deterrent measures. The Commission may require transmission and distribution utilities to include any charges or other measures required pursuant to this paragraph in their terms and conditions.

D. Notice; Transfer of Service; Bill Calculation

1. Notice of Transfer into Standard Offer Service

A customer who intends to transfer into standard offer service shall do so by notifying the transmission and distribution utility or by cancelling service with its competitive electricity provider.

2. Transfer into Standard Offer Service

If the customer notifies the transmission and distribution utility no less than 2 business days before the customer's next normally scheduled meter read date, the transmission and distribution utility shall transfer the customer on the customer's next meter read date. Otherwise, transfer will occur on the following meter read date. Upon request by the customer, the transmission and distribution utility shall assign the customer's usage to the standard offer provider(s) on a date that is not the customer's meter read date pursuant to section 2(D)(5). The transmission and distribution utility shall accommodate the request to the greatest extent practicable.

3. Notice of Transfer out of Standard Offer Service

Notice that a standard offer service customer will terminate standard offer service and obtain service from a competitive electricity provider shall be provided to the transmission and distribution utility by the customer's competitive electricity provider pursuant to provisions in Chapter 322 of the Commission's Rules.

4. Transfer out of Standard Offer Service

If the competitive electricity provider notifies the transmission and distribution utility no less than two business days before the customer's next meter read date, the transmission and distribution utility shall transfer the customer on the customer's next meter read date. Otherwise, transfer will occur on the subsequent read date.

5. Calculation of Bill for Transfer on Other Than Meter-Reading Date

For any transfer into standard offer service on a date other than the next meter read date for that customer, the transmission and distribution utility shall determine the customer's consumption from the date of the previous meter reading to the date of the change of service by prorating the customer's metered consumption from the date of the last meter reading to the date of the next meter reading, and shall prorate demand levels by a method determined in its contract with the competitive electricity provider. Alternatively, if requested by the customer, the transmission and distribution utility shall perform an unscheduled meter reading. For either service, the transmission and distribution utility shall charge a transfer fee as provided in subsection E.

E. Charges for Costs of Transfer

The transmission and distribution utility shall charge the customer its incremental cost for transferring the customer into standard offer service on a date other than the meter read date. Alternatively, if the competitive electricity provider requested the transfer pursuant to provisions in Chapter 322, the charge shall be paid by the competitive electricity provider. The transmission and distribution utility shall establish these charges in its terms and conditions on file with the Commission. Separate charges shall be established for bill proration and unscheduled meter reading services described in subsection D(4).

§3 ELIGIBILITY AND OBLIGATIONS OF STANDARD OFFER SERVICE PROVIDERS**A. Eligibility Requirements to Provide Standard Offer Service****1. Licensing**

Each standard offer provider must have a license authorizing to it provide standard offer service issued pursuant to Chapter 305 of the Commission's Rules.

2. Financial Capability Requirement**a. Bond, Letter of Credit or Corporate Guarantee; Amount**

Each standard offer provider shall obtain and file a bond, a letter of credit or a corporate guarantee with the Commission that will provide funding for replacement generation service in the event that the standard offer provider fails to provide for uninterrupted service to consumers. The proceeds of the bond, or letter of credit, or corporate guarantee shall be payable to the transmission and distribution utility in whose service territory the standard offer provider is obligated to provide service. The amount of the financial capability requirement for a standard offer provider in a transmission and distribution utility's service territory shall be equal to \$0.01 per kilowatt-hour multiplied by the appropriate billing units for the standard offer class the provider will serve in the service territory of the transmission and distribution utility multiplied by the number of years the provider will serve multiplied by the class share that is assigned to the provider. The Commission will determine the appropriate billing units for this purpose and specify those billing units in the requests for standard offer bids. The Commission will allow the amount of the bond, letter of credit, or corporate guarantee to decline as the remaining term of the standard offer obligation decreases.

b. Requirements for Corporate Guarantees

A corporate guarantee permitted by subparagraph (a) must be issued by the standard offer provider, a corporation affiliated with the standard offer provider, the standard offer provider's wholesale supplier or a corporation affiliated with the standard offer provider's wholesale supplier. The corporate guarantee must meet all of the requirements of subparagraph (a), and shall be unconditional and irrevocable for the period of the standard offer term. A corporate guarantee may be used to satisfy the requirement of subparagraph (a) if the corporate guarantor meets the following financial qualifications and capabilities:

- i. The senior secured debt obligations of the guarantor shall be publicly rated, at a minimum, at "BBB+" from Standard & Poor's, Fitch or "Baa1" from Moody's;

- ii. The total assets of the guarantor must be at least 5.0 times the amount of the corporate guarantee amount required by subparagraph (a); and
- iii. The total common equity of the guarantor must be at least 2.5 times the amount of the corporate guarantee amount required by subparagraph (a).

If a corporate guarantor's senior secured debt obligations are rated by two of the agencies listed above, the guarantor's rating will be determined by the lower assigned rating. If a corporate guarantor's senior secured debt obligations are rated by all three of the agencies listed above, two of those agencies must have assigned ratings equal to or higher than the required ratings described above.

If, at any time, the senior secured debt obligations of the corporate guarantor fail to meet the minimum credit rating requirements, the corporate guarantor or the standard offer provider shall immediately notify the Commission in writing. If the corporate guarantor fails to meet any of the financial capability requirements, the Commission may require the standard offer provider to post a bond or file a letter of credit as described in subparagraph (a).

c. Use of Proceeds

The proceeds of the bond, letter of credit or corporate guarantee shall only be used to defray the additional costs of replacement standard offer service. For purposes of this provision, additional costs of replacement standard offer service are all costs that are incurred or will be incurred to acquire replacement standard offer service, including supply and administrative costs, through the remaining standard offer term that exceed the amounts paid or to be paid by standard offer customers at the standard offer rates in effect at the time of the Commission's declaration of a standard offer provider's default.

B. Obligations of Standard Offer Service Providers

1. Delivery to Transmission Deliver Point(s)

Standard offer providers shall deliver generation required by standard offer customers to the transmission delivery point(s) established by the contract between the standard offer service provider and the transmission and distribution utility described in section 5(D) below. The standard offer provider shall make all arrangements for and be responsible for all costs associated with delivery of its capacity and energy to the transmission delivery point(s).

2. Provision of Generation; Line Losses

Standard offer providers shall provide all or the specified portion of the standard offer requirements of each standard offer class for which it is selected at its accepted bid price. Standard offer service shall include all line losses associated with delivery to the customers' meters .

3. Renewable Resource Portfolio

Each standard offer provider shall comply with the renewable resource portfolio requirements pursuant to Chapter 311 of the Commission's Rules.

4. Independent System Operator - New England and NEPOOL Requirements

Each standard offer provider that serves within a service area of a transmission and distribution utility within the New England bulk power system control area shall comply with all applicable Independent System Operator - New England and NEPOOL rules and requirements; and shall be a designated load serving entity with a settlements account pursuant to Independent System Operator - New England rules for its standard offer load obligations. Each standard offer provider that serves within an area that is within the Maritimes control area shall comply with all applicable rules and requirements of the Northern Maine Independent System Administrator.

5. General Obligations

Each standard offer provider shall comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements applicable to standard offer service, applicable provisions in the requests for standard offer bids, and the requirements of the standard offer contract between the transmission and distribution utility and standard offer providers, approved by the Commission pursuant to section 5(D) below.

6. Technical and Financial Capability

Each standard offer provider shall maintain the technical and financial capability to fulfill its obligations under this section.

§4 CREDIT AND COLLECTION; CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS; UNCOLLECTIBLE ACCOUNTS**A. Residential Utility Service Regulations for Credit and Collection, Disconnection and Deposits**

Chapter 81 of the Commission's rules shall apply to residential standard offer service customers. For the purpose of this section, residential customers shall be defined by Chapter 81 of the Commission's rules. Pursuant to the standard offer contract established under section 5(D) of this rule, the transmission and distribution utility shall undertake all necessary actions under the provisions of Chapter 81 on behalf of standard offer providers.

B. Nonresidential Utility Service Regulations for Credit and Collection, Disconnection and Deposits

Chapter 86 of the Commission's rules shall apply to nonresidential standard offer service customers. For the purpose of this section, nonresidential customers are all customers not defined as residential customers by Chapter 81 of the Commission's rules. The transmission and distribution utility shall undertake all necessary actions under the provisions of Chapter 86.

C. Late Payment Charges, Interest Rates to be Paid on Customer Deposits, and Charges for Returned Checks

Chapter 870 of the Commission's rules shall apply to standard offer service customers. The transmission and distribution utility shall undertake all necessary actions under the provisions of Chapter 870.

D. Allocation of Uncollectible Accounts to Standard Offer Providers

Each standard offer provider shall be allocated a share of the uncollectible accounts in the standard offer class or classes the provider serves. The allocated amount of each standard offer provider shall be determined by a pre-established percentage applied to the product of the standard offer provider's price multiplied by the provider's share of sales in that standard offer class. The pre-established percentages shall be set forth in the standard offer contract between the transmission and distribution utility and standard offer providers, and shall reflect the average uncollectible accounts of customers in the standard offer class during a representative historic period. The Commission will allow for the recovery of reasonable costs incurred by a transmission and distribution utility associated with standard offer uncollectible accounts.

§5 OBLIGATIONS OF THE TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION UTILITY**A. Power Delivery**

The transmission and distribution utility shall provide transmission and distribution services within its service territory to all standard offer service customers.

B. Billing and Metering

Each customer receiving standard offer service shall receive a single bill from the transmission and distribution utility pursuant to provisions governing consolidated utility billing in Chapter 322 of the Commission's Rules. The bill shall separately state charges for generation service supplied by the standard offer service providers and charges for services supplied by the transmission and distribution utility pursuant to section 4(H) of Chapter 305 of the Commission's Rules. The bill shall prominently display the names of the standard offer service providers that provide standard offer generation service to the customer's standard offer class. The transmission and distribution utility shall provide all meters, perform all metering and meter reading and provide all billing for standard offer service customers within its service area until such time as those services may be provided by other authorized entities.

C. Administration of Service Connections and Terminations

The transmission and distribution utility shall administer all billing, metering and other functions described in this rule in association with transfers to or from standard offer service.

D. Standard Contract Between Transmission and Distribution Company and Standard Offer Providers**1. Filing of Proposed Contract**

The Commission shall establish a filing date for each transmission and distribution utility in the State to file with the Commission a proposed standard form contract between itself and standard offer providers. The standard form contract shall include terms governing and providing compensation for at least the following items:

- ◆ metering and billing requirements;
- ◆ the manner that the standard offer providers will be identified on bills issued by the transmission and distribution utility;
- ◆ terms governing entry and exit of customers from standard offer service and notice of entry and exit to the extent not governed by section 2 of this Chapter;

- ◆ notice to the standard offer provider of the entry and exit of standard offer service customers;
- ◆ the undertaking of all actions pursuant to Chapters 81, 86 and 870 of the Commission's rules by the transmission and distribution utility on behalf of standard offer providers;
- ◆ collections, distribution of revenues, payment processing and transfer of funds including the implementation of the uncollectible accounts allocation required by section 4(D);
- ◆ protocols for the transfer of data between the transmission and distribution utility and the standard offer service providers;
- ◆ transmission delivery point(s); and
- ◆ limitations placed on standard offer providers concerning use of data.

2. Review; Comments; Approval

The Commission will review the proposed standard form contract filed by each transmission and distribution utility and approve the proposed or a modified version. The Commission shall provide an opportunity for interested persons to comment on the proposed standard form contracts. The Commission may allow standard offer bidders to propose alternatives to the provisions in the standard form contracts during the bid process, but may only accept alternative provisions to the contract after consultation with the applicable transmission and distribution utility.

E. Provision of Standard Offer Service by an Affiliate of a Large Transmission and Distribution Utility

1. Pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 3212(2)(C), a large investor-owned transmission and distribution utility may not provide standard offer service except through an affiliate, and the affiliate may submit a bid for only 20% of a standard offer class within the service territory of the affiliated large transmission and distribution utility.

2. An affiliate of a large investor-owned transmission and distribution utility may not provide a greater share of the standard offer service, within the service territory of the affiliated large transmission and distribution utility, than has been authorized pursuant to the selection process described in section 6.

3. Each large investor-owned transmission and distribution utility in the State shall submit reports twice each year to the Commission demonstrating that it did not

provide more than the authorized amount of standard offer service requirements in the previous six months.

4. If the Commission finds that an affiliate of a large investor-owned transmission and distribution utility provided more than the authorized amount of the standard offer service within the service area of its affiliate, the Commission may impose penalties as provided in 35-A M.R.S.A. § 3205(5).

§6 INFORMATION PROVIDED BY TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS

A. Required Information

Each transmission and distribution utility shall provide to potential standard offer bidders the following information on a date specified by the Commission. The Commission may direct that the information be provided through either the Commission's or the utilities' website :

1. monthly demand and energy consumption data, as defined by the Commission, for each standard offer class and transmission and distribution utility customer class.

2. number of customers in each standard offer class and core customer class and the number of customers taking standard offer service within each customer class.

3. representative load shapes for each profile group as defined in Chapter 321 by month.

4. other information as determined by the Commission to be necessary or useful to standard offer bidders.

B. General Requirements and Conditions

1. Aggregation

All information required to be provided by subsection A shall be provided on an aggregate class basis. Individual customer information shall not be provided.

2. Historic Data Period

All information provided will reflect usage during a period of time specified by the Commission. Information describing factors that would cause the

information to be unrepresentative of electricity usage in the transmission and distribution service territory during the standard offer period shall also be provided.

3. Due Care; Corrections

Transmission and distribution utilities shall use due care in compiling the information for their service territory with the understanding that bidders will be relying on the data to formulate standard offer bids. Transmission and distribution utilities shall have the duty to correct any inaccuracies promptly upon discovery.

4. Affiliated Interests

Investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities shall not provide any information to an affiliated competitive provider that is not provided to all potential standard offer bidders for its service territory. Consumer-owned transmission and distribution utilities shall provide all information that it uses in preparing its standard offer bids to interested standard offer bidders. All transmission and distribution utilities must comply with codes of conduct contained in or adopted pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. §§ 3205, 3206 and 3207.

5. Electronic Form; Standard Software

Transmission and distribution utilities shall provide all information in electronic form usable by standard personal computer software packages.

6. Scope and Format

The Commission shall determine the scope and detail of the information required by subsection A and subsection B, paragraphs 1 and 2, and the format required by subsection B, paragraph 5.

§7 STANDARD OFFER BID REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS; CONTENTS OF BID

A. General Requirements

1. Duration of Standard Offer Obligation

The duration of the standard offer period beginning March 1, 2000 will be one year and bids shall be for that one-year period. For subsequent standard offer periods, the Commission may establish different durations for standard offer bids.

2. Form of Pricing

Standard offer bids must specify prices or a set of prices for the entire standard offer period. Prices may not be defined by a formula or reference to market or economic indices.

3. Limitation on Bids by Affiliates of Large Transmission and Distribution Utilities

Standard offer bids made by an affiliate of a large investor-owned transmission and distribution utility shall not exceed 20% of any standard offer class within the service territory of the affiliated large investor-owned transmission and distribution utility.

B. Contents of Bids

1. Bids for Standard Offer Classes

Standard offer bids must separately specify bids for each of that transmission and distribution utility's standard offer classes as specified in section 2(A)(2)(a) that the bidder is proposing to serve.

2. Rate Structure and Design

Standard offer bid prices and rate design must conform to the requirements of sections 2(A)(2), (3) and (5).

3. Bids for Portions of Standard Offer Class Requirements

Standard offer bids may be for a portion of the requirements of a standard offer class, but must be in multiples of 20% of the total standard offer class requirements. Standard offer bids may be to provide 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, or 100% of a standard offer class's requirements. Any bid for a percentage of the standard offer

requirement of a standard offer class that is greater than 20% shall also include a bid for each 20% multiple of the class's standard offer requirement up to the highest bid percentage. The bid prices may be different for each percentage of the standard offer class requirements.

4. Price for Meeting Obligations

Standard offer bids, either for all or a portion of the standard offer service requirements of a standard offer class, shall include the bidder's price for meeting all the obligations described in section 3(B) and in the requests for standard offer bids.

5. Statement of Ability to Satisfy Financial Capability Requirements

Standard offer bids must contain either a certified statement from a federal or state licensed financial institution authorized to conduct business in Maine that it will provide a bond or letter of credit for the standard offer bidder in an amount equal to that specified in section 3(A)(2) of this Chapter; or a certified statement of the bidder, an affiliated corporation of the bidder, the wholesale supplier or an affiliated corporation of the wholesale supplier satisfying the requirements of section 3(A)(2)(b) that it will provide a corporate guarantee for the standard offer bidder in an amount equal to that specified in section 3(A) of this Chapter.

§8 BIDDING PROCEDURE AND SELECTION

A. Bidding Procedure

1. Process

The Commission shall establish the process and procedures to solicit and evaluate bids to provide standard offer service. The process and procedures shall be designed to maximize participation from qualified bidders. The Commission may establish a process whereby the non-price portions of proposals are evaluated for conformance prior to the submission of bid prices.

2. Request for Bids

The Commission shall develop and issue a request for standard offer bids for each applicable transmission and distribution utility service territory. The request for standard offer bids shall specify the standard offer bid process and procedures and shall include a copy of the standard form contract between transmission and distribution utilities and standard offer service providers approved pursuant to section 5(D). The request shall prominently state the deadline for the submission of bids.

3. Provision of Information Required by Section 6

Transmission and distribution utilities shall provide the information required under section 6 of this rule as determined by the Commission. All information shall be made available to each interested standard offer bidder at the same time.

4. Time Frames

The Commission shall establish reasonable timeframes for the issuance of the requests for standard offer bids, the submission of bids, and the evaluation and selection of the winning bidders.

5. Duration of Proposals

The Commission shall establish the allowed durations for standard offer service proposals in the request for standard offer bids. The duration of the standard offer service proposals shall not be less than one year. The Commission may allow bidders to submit proposals for differing durations.

B. Rejection of Noncompliance or Untimely Bids

The Commission shall reject all bids that do not comply with the requirements of this Chapter or the requests for standard offer bids, or that are not submitted before the deadline for submitting bids established pursuant to subsection A of this section.

C. Selection

For each transmission and distribution utility service territory:

1. Selection Date

The Commission, by order, shall select the standard offer provider or providers for each transmission and distribution utility service on the selection date. The selection date for the initial standard offer period shall be December 1, 1999. The Commission shall establish the selection date for subsequent standard offer periods. This selection date shall not be less than 45 days before the beginning of the standard offer period.

2. Selection Criteria

The Commission shall select the standard offer provider or combination of standard offer providers for each standard offer class based on the objectives of obtaining the lowest price for standard offer service for each standard offer class, the lowest cost for standard offer service overall, and the stability of standard offer

prices. In the event there are bids for a standard offer class or portion of a standard offer class that reflect different rate structures or rate designs, the Commission shall compare the bids by applying the bid prices to the usage of the standard offer class as reflected in the information provided pursuant to section 6(A).

3. Identical Bids

In the event that two or more acceptable bids are identical, the Commission shall establish a reasonable means to determine the standard offer provider or providers that may include, but not be limited to, an agreed-upon arrangement with bidders, or a required re-bid by the tied bidders.

4. Multiple Providers for a Standard Offer Class

If the selection of standard offer providers in accordance with section 8(C)(2) does not result in at least three providers in the transmission and distribution service territory, the Commission shall consider further bids. The Commission shall select further providers for a standard offer class in a manner that minimizes any increase to the total cost of standard offer service in the transmission and distribution utility's service territory. The Commission shall select at least three standard offer providers in each transmission and distribution utility service territory unless such a selection increases the standard offer prices in any standard offer class by more than 1.5%. If at least three standard offer providers cannot be selected without increasing the standard offer prices in a standard offer class by more than 1.5%, the Commission shall select two standard offer providers unless such a selection increases the standard offer prices in a standard offer class by more than 1.5%.

5. Payment

Each selected standard offer provider will receive its accepted bid price for the standard offer requirements it serves, adjusted by its allocated share of uncollectible accounts pursuant to section 4(D), notwithstanding the rate averaging requirement of section 2(A)(4) if more than one provider is selected.

D. Insufficient Bids; Rejection of Bids

1. No Bids

In the event the Commission receives no bids for a standard offer class, it will either select a standard offer provider for that class through alternative means or issue an order directing the transmission and distribution utility to provide standard offer service to that class through purchases from the regional wholesale bulk power markets, contracts with wholesale suppliers or other appropriate arrangements, as specified by the Commission, until the selection of a standard offer provider is made through a new bid process.

2. Inadequate Bids

The Commission may reject standard offer bids for any standard offer class if it finds that the bids are unreasonably high and acceptance would not be in the public interest. In the event the Commission rejects standard offer bids, it will either select a standard offer provider for the applicable standard offer class(es) through alternative means or issue an order directing the transmission and distribution utility to provide standard offer service to the applicable standard offer class(es) through purchases from the regional wholesale bulk power markets, contracts with wholesale suppliers or other appropriate arrangements, as specified by the Commission, until the selection of a standard offer provider is made through a new bid process.

3. Standard Offer Rates

In the event the Commission acts pursuant to paragraphs 1 or 2 above, it shall establish the standard offer rates for the applicable standard offer class(es). The standard offer rates shall reflect the costs of the supply arrangement(s) made pursuant to this section and the incremental administrative costs of the transmission and distribution utility to procure and manage the supply arrangements. The Commission shall, through full reconciliation, ensure recovery by the transmission and distribution utility of all costs of providing standard offer service pursuant to this section, including, but not limited to, the costs of the supply arrangement(s), any incremental administrative costs of procuring and managing the purchases and all applicable carrying costs. After an appropriate period, which period will not exceed one year, the Commission shall make appropriate adjustments in standard offer rates or other rates charged by the transmission and distribution utility to allow recovery of any difference between the actual costs incurred by the transmission and distribution utility to provide standard offer service and actual revenue from standard offer service in that period.

E. Consumer-owned Utilities

1. Option

A consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility may conduct a competitive bidding process to select one or more standard offer service providers for its territory, in accordance with the Commission's rules on selection of a standard offer service provider. If a consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility chooses to select a standard offer provider pursuant to this subsection, the Commission will not conduct a competitive bidding process or select a standard offer service provider for that utility's service territory. A consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility's selection of a standard offer provider in accordance with this subsection is not subject to Commission approval.

2. Single Provider

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, a consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility may choose a single standard offer provider for its service territory.

3. Notification

A consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility must notify the Commission of its intent to choose a standard offer provider(s) in accordance with this subsection no later than 30 days prior to the Commission's issuance of a request for bids pursuant to subsection A(2).

§9 FAILURE OF STANDARD OFFER PROVIDER TO PROVIDE SERVICE

A. Default; Replacement Service

In the event a standard offer provider fails to provide service as required, the Commission will act as quickly as practicable to secure alternative service. The Commission may take any one of the following actions:

1. inquire whether other standard offer providers in the service territory are willing and able to provide service at the defaulting providers prices.
2. inquire whether other standard offer providers in the State are willing and able to provide service at the defaulting providers prices.
3. conduct and complete a new bid process as soon as possible.
4. issue an order directing the transmission and distribution utility to provide standard offer service through purchases from the regional wholesale bulk power markets, contracts with wholesale suppliers or other appropriate arrangements, as specified by the Commission, until the selection of a new standard offer provider is made through a new bid process.

B. Temporary Provision of Service

In the time period before replacement standard offer service begins, the transmission and distribution utility shall use the revenue from standard offer customers that it would otherwise transfer to the defaulting standard offer provider to cover any costs it incurs to serve the standard offer requirements pursuant to the rules of the Independent System Operator - New England or the Maritime control area, as applicable.

C. Bond, Letter of Credit, or Corporate Guarantee Proceeds

Proceeds from the bond, letter of credit, or corporate guarantee provided by the defaulting standard offer provider will be used only to defray any additional costs of the replacement standard offer service so as to avoid the need for standard offer prices to increase.

D. Cost Recovery

If the Commission directs the transmission and distribution utility to provide replacement standard offer service pursuant to subsection (A)(4) above, the transmission and distribution utility shall use the revenue from standard offer, customers that it would otherwise transfer to the defaulting standard offer provider to cover the cost of providing replacement service. If the costs to the transmission and distribution utility of providing replacement standard offer service pursuant to this section exceed the amount available from standard offer service revenue and the proceeds from the defaulting provider's bond, letter of credit or corporate guarantee, the Commission may adjust standard offer rates such that the rates will cover the excess costs of providing the replacement standard offer service. The Commission shall, through full reconciliation, ensure recovery by the transmission and distribution utility of all costs of providing standard offer service pursuant to this section consistent with § 8(D)(3).

§10 WAIVER OR EXEMPTION

Upon the request of any person subject to the provisions of this Chapter or upon its own motion, the Commission may waive any of the requirements of this Chapter that are not required by statute. Where good cause exists, the Commission, the Director of Technical Analysis, or the Hearing Examiner assigned to a proceeding related to this rule may grant the requested waiver, provided that the granting of the waiver would not be inconsistent with the purposes of this Chapter or Chapter 32 of Title 35-A.

BASIS STATEMENT: The factual and policy basis for this rule is set forth in the Commission's Order Adopting Rule and Statement of Factual and Policy Basis, Docket No. 2000-904, issued on January 24, 2001; Order Adopting Rule and Statement of Factual and Policy Basis, Docket No. 2000-489, issued on August 16, 2000; Order Provisionally Adopting Rule and Statement of Factual and Policy Basis, Docket No. 97-739, issued on February 11, 1998 and in the Commission's Order Finally Adopting Rule and Statement of Factual and Policy Basis, issued on April 22, 1998; and in the Commission's Order Provisionally Adopting Rule and Statement of Factual and Policy Basis, Docket No. 98-576 issued December 10, 1998, and in the Commission's Order Finally Adopting Rule and Statement of Policy Basis issued on June 29, 1999. Copies of these Orders and Statements have been filed with this rule at the Office of the Secretary of State. Copies may also be obtained from the Administrative Director, Public Utilities Commission, 242 State Street, 18 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0018.

AUTHORITY: 35-A M.R.S.A. §§ 104, 111, 1301, 1306, and 3212.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This rule was approved as to form and legality by the Attorney General on 01/26/01. It was filed with the Secretary of State on 01/29/01 and will be effective on 02/03/01.