Date Filed: October 28, 2026

Witness: David L. Gladey and Steven Lamontagne
Request from: Office of Consumer Counsel

Question:

(UNDERGROUNDING) Has the Company investigated the costs of undergrounding power lines? If yes, please provide the most recent estimates obtained and indicate when these estimates were obtained.

Response:

Underground lines (UG) are far more expensive than installing overhead lines (OH) because of the many aspects involved in their constructions. Trenching to install conduits, vaults and a duct bank is not an easy process; it consists of the entire "upheaval" and rebuild of the area including the road, sidewalks, parking areas, and driveways.

In addition, trees may need to be removed. Many other underground utilities including sewer, water, communication, and gas lines may need to be relocated to install the conduit and vaults. Real estate easements may be required to be able to place equipment on or under customers property, for all the facilities. Along with the construction of the new facilities, the existing lines and equipment must also be removed. Lastly, undergrounding of overhead lines involves a cost to the customer since home and business service entrance equipment must also be converted. The Company's construction standard is open wire OH construction.

The Company's most recent study for new construction was completed in year 2022 resulting in the following:

- The average cost to underground single phase laterals is $1.5M / mile.
- The average cost to underground three phase laterals is $3.2M / mile.
- The average cost to underground three phase backbone is $8.24M / mile.
- The cost estimate to replace an overhead line with an underground line ranges from $1 million in a rural, single phase, lateral area to $14 million in a densely populated downtown backbone area with an average of $3.8 million per mile.