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To: Eversource Energy
From: Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General
Cc: New England States Committee on Electricity, ISO New England, Planning Advisory Committee
Date: May 16, 2025
Re: Response to Eversource Energy's Memorandum Regarding Asset Condition Reviewer and Underground Cable Modernization Program

The Massachusetts Attorney General's Office ("Massachusetts AGO") writes in response to Eversource Energy's ("Eversource") May 2, 2025 Memo to the New England States Committee on Electricity ("NESCOE"), ISO New England ("ISO-NE"), and the Planning Advisory Committee ("PAC") regarding Eversource's support for an independent reviewer for asset condition projects ("ACP") and its revised plans for further PAC presentations regarding its proposed Underground Cable Modernization Program ("UCMP").¹

The Massachusetts AGO appreciates Eversource's recent engagement with stakeholders on ACPs generally, and specifically, the UCMP. As noted in Eversource's memo, the ACP process improvements implemented by Eversource and the other New England transmission owners in recent years have helped provide needed transparency into the ACP planning process. However, particularly given the significant anticipated spending on ACPs in the coming years,² additional action is necessary to ensure that New England ratepayers' investments in the region's transmission system are as efficient and cost effective as possible. Therefore, the Massachusetts AGO is greatly encouraged by Eversource's support for the development of an independent "reviewer."³ We

¹ The Massachusetts AGO also acknowledges ISO-NE's May 15, 2025 Memo regarding an "Update on Asset Condition Project Process." The Massachusetts AGO appreciates ISO-NE's commitment to "explor[e] [this] issue further," and we look forward to reviewing the ISO's proposed framework and engaging with the ISO and other stakeholders to define the structure and function of any entity that is created.

² See ISO New England, *RSP Project List and Asset Condition List March 2025 Update*, at 19 (March 19, 2025, updated April 10, 2025) (showing, as of March 2025, over \$5 billion of under construction, planned, or proposed ACPs through 2030).

³ Eversource's May 2, 2025 Memo and ISO-NE's May 15, 2025 Memo both describe an "Asset Condition Reviewer," whereas other stakeholders, including the Massachusetts AGO, have previously discussed an "Independent Transmission Monitor." While these various terms may be somewhat interchangeable at this stage, the Massachusetts AGO believes the ultimate entity must have some ongoing monitoring function to meaningfully and comprehensively address the needs of the region. We look forward to working with the ISO and other stakeholders to define the scope

recognize that the company’s commitment to engage with stakeholders on this important topic is a critical step toward achieving a stakeholder-driven solution that is tailored to the region’s needs. Conceptually, the Massachusetts AGO also agrees with Eversource that the region would benefit from a reliable, independent source of technical and regional expertise and objectivity.⁴

We write to emphasize that any independent reviewer proposal should be developed through an open stakeholder process that gives interested parties, including, in particular, regional ratepayer and consumer advocates,⁵ opportunities to influence the structure, functions, roles, and responsibilities of the ultimate entity. Including stakeholders in the early stages of and throughout the development process will help ensure that any final design promotes transparent, efficient, and cost-effective transmission planning for the region and that the entity meaningfully addresses stakeholders’ existing concerns about the current ACP process.

In the meantime, with respect to the UCMP, the Massachusetts AGO supports Eversource’s request that ISO-NE review the program and provide input on the prioritization and scoping of the UCMP projects. To provide transparency to stakeholders, ISO-NE should provide a summary of any such review—including any conclusions and / or “advice” provided to Eversource—to the PAC and make itself available for stakeholder questions related to its review and opinion(s). Finally, the Massachusetts AGO appreciates that Eversource has provided written responses to stakeholder questions and—in response to stakeholder feedback and engagement—decided to defer the company’s planned follow-up PAC presentation.

of a proactive monitoring function which does not impede or interfere with the existing roles and responsibilities of the transmission owners and relevant regulators.

⁴ The designs of the ISO-NE Internal and External Market Monitors could provide useful models to draw from to achieve these objectives.

⁵ The consumer advocates from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island—all of which are members of NEPOOL’s End User Sector—collectively represent roughly 96 percent of New England’s ratepayers and in that capacity have a unique and vested interest in influencing the design and implementation of a robust and effective monitoring entity.