

VIA ePUC
July 18, 2024

Ms. Holly Anderson, Clerk
VERMONT PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
People's United Bank Building, 4th Floor
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2701

Re: Petition of Vermont Transco LLC and Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc.
(collectively, "VELCO") for a waiver pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248(k) for the emergency
replacement and relocation of a structure and the addition of another on the VELCO K24-
5 Line in Waterbury, Vermont

Dear Holly:

On behalf of VELCO, today I filed via ePUC a petition under 30 V.S.A. § 248(k), along
with supporting Prefiled Testimony of William McNamara, to request permission for the
emergency replacement and relocation of a structure and the addition of another on the VELCO
K24-5 line in Waterbury, Vermont.

VELCO is respectfully requesting that you schedule a preliminary hearing pursuant to
Section 248(k)(2) at your earliest possible convenience, preferably during the morning of July
19, 2023, in order to allow VELCO to undertake the emergency work requested in its petition.
Please contact me with any questions.

Very truly yours,

SHEEHEY FURLONG & BEHM P.C.

/s/ Debra L. Bouffard

Debra L. Bouffard

DLB/

Cc: James Porter, Department of Public Service (via email)
Catherine Gjessing, Agency of Natural Resources (via email)

**STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Case No. 24- -PET

Petition of Vermont Transco LLC and Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. (collectively, “VELCO”) for a waiver pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248(k) for the emergency replacement and relocation of a structure and the addition of another on the VELCO K24-5 Line in Waterbury, Vermont	
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Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248(k), Vermont Transco LLC and Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. (collectively, “VELCO”) petition the Vermont Public Utility Commission (the “Commission”) to issue an Order waiving the prohibitions in 30 V.S.A. § 248 upon site preparation for or construction of an electric transmission facility to authorize VELCO’s installation of structures on the VELCO K24-5 Duxbury Tap-Stowe Line in Waterbury, Vermont. Testing on July 17, 2024 revealed that Structure LCP-020 requires immediate replacement to ensure the stability and reliability of the electric system in the Waterbury area pending full Commission review of the replacement structures on the K24-5 line. In support of this Petition, VELCO has submitted prefiled testimony from William F. McNamara detailing the specific issues presented here and VELCO’s proposal to address them, and VELCO further states as follows:

1. VELCO is a company as defined by 30 V.S.A. § 201, and as such is subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 203. VELCO’s office is located at 366 Pinnacle Ridge Road in Rutland, Vermont.
2. On July 17, 2024, VELCO deenergized the K24-5 line to do structural testing of laminated poles. The testing was prompted by an event that occurred in another location on this

line—a recent failure of a laminated pole structure that was only around 15 years old. The July 17, 2024 structure testing reports revealed that Structure LCP-020 on the K24-5 Duxbury Tap-Stowe Line requires immediate replacement, including relocation and an additional structure.

3. As detailed in the prefiled testimony of witness McNamara, in order for the readily available replacement of the LCP-020 structure to be installed, an additional wood pole structure approximately 150 feet north of the existing Structure LCP-020 will be required, LCP-021.

4. For the reasons detailed in the prefiled testimony of Witness McNamara, waiver should be granted here pursuant to Section 248(k) because VELCO has demonstrated:

- a. Good cause exists to grant the requested waiver because an emergency situation has occurred and this line cannot be safely re-energized without the requested structure installations. *See* 30 V.S.A. § 248(k)(4)(A).
- b. The relocation and replacement of Structure LCP-020, along with Structure LCP-021, is necessary for VELCO to provide adequate and efficient service in the Stowe, Waterbury, and Duxbury area, and doing so will promote the general good of the State. *See* 30 V.S.A. §§ 248(k)(4)(B), (D).
- c. VELCO will take measures to minimize significant adverse impacts under the criteria specified in 30 V.S.A. § 248(b)(5) and (b)(8). *See* 30 V.S.A. § 248(k)(4)(C).

5. VELCO is seeking a waiver for a period of one year. In the meantime, VELCO will evaluate whether other structures on the K24-5 line require replacement.

6. Within one year from a waiver pursuant to 248(k), VELCO will submit a request

for Commission approval of the permanent replacement of Structure LCP-020 and installation of Structure LCP-021.

7. VELCO has provided copies of this Petition and the supporting testimony to the Department of Public Service and Agency of Natural Resources pursuant to Section 248(k)(2).

WHEREFORE, VELCO respectfully requests the Commission:

(1) Promptly schedule an expedited preliminary hearing, as required by 30 V.S.A. § 248(k)(2) upon such notice as the Commission may require;

(2) Issue an Order pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248(k) finding good cause exists to waive the prohibition of 30 V.S.A. § 248 upon site preparation and construction so as to allow the immediate replacement and relocation of structures on the K24-5 line as detailed above and in VELCO witness McNamara's testimony.

(3) Take such other and further action as the Commission may find appropriate.

Dated at Burlington, Vermont this 18th day of July 2024.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

VERMONT ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY,
INC. and VERMONT TRANSCO LLC

By: /s/ Debra L. Bouffard
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**STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Case No. 24- -PET

Petition of Vermont Transco LLC and Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. (collectively, "VELCO") for a waiver pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248(k) for the emergency replacement and relocation of a structure and the addition of another on the VELCO K24-5 Line in Waterbury, Vermont	
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DIRECT TESTIMONY OF WITNESS
WILLIAM F. MCNAMARA
ON BEHALF OF VELCO

July 18, 2024

Mr. McNamara describes the need for a waiver pursuant to Section 248(k) to authorize the emergency replacement and relocation of a structure and the addition of another on the VELCO K24-5 Duxbury Tap-Stowe Line in Waterbury, Vermont.

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM F. MCNAMARA

1 **1. Q. Please state your name, occupation, and business address.**

2 **A.** My name is William F. McNamara. My business address is Vermont Electric
3 Power Company, Inc. and Vermont Transco LLC (collectively referred to as “VELCO” or the
4 “Petitioner”), 366 Pinnacle Ridge Road, Rutland, VT 05701. I am a Professional Engineer
5 employed by VELCO, currently working in the Engineering Department.

6
7 **2. Q. Please describe your background and experience.**

8 I received my Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from the University of
9 Vermont in 1987. Afterwards, I obtained registration as a Professional Engineer in the States of
10 New York and Vermont. I have performed in a variety of primarily technical roles, with periods
11 of both technical and operational responsibilities. These roles have involved both mechanical
12 and civil engineering projects. My transmission line experience began when I joined VELCO in
13 July 2005. Since then, I have been involved with transmission line projects ranging in voltages
14 from 46 kV to 345 kV, serving as the Project Engineer/Project Lead for the following
15 transmission line projects: West Rutland to New Haven 345 kV; Lamoille County (Duxbury to
16 Stowe) 115 kV; Southern Loop (Vernon to Newfane to Cavendish) 345 kV; Connecticut River
17 Valley Project K31 Line Rebuild (Cavendish to Ascutney); and various smaller new substation
18 driven line reroutes/modifications. I am currently Project Engineer for the transmission line
19 portions of the Franklin County Line Upgrade Project, which is a Section 248 project pending
20 before the Vermont Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) in Case 23-3734-PET.

1 **3. Q. Have you previously testified before the Public Utility Commission (the**
2 **“Commission”)?**

3 **A.** Yes. I provided testimony in connection with the Transmission Line Design
4 aspects of the Southern Loop Project, Docket No. 7373; the Georgia Substation Project, Docket
5 No. 7731; the Ascutney Substation Project, Docket No. 7751; the Bennington Substation Project,
6 Docket No. 7763; and the Connecticut River Valley Project, Docket No. 8605; and the Franklin
7 County Line Upgrade Project, Case 23-3734-PET.

8

9 **4. Q. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

10 **A.** My testimony demonstrates that it will promote the general good of the State to
11 permit the emergency replacement and relocation of Structure LCP-020 and the addition of
12 Structure LCP-021 on the VELCO K24-5 Duxbury Tap-Stowe Line in Waterbury, Vermont. My
13 testimony supports VELCO’s request that the Commission temporarily waive the prohibition on
14 site preparation and construction pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 248(k) to ensure the stability and
15 reliability of the electric system in the Stowe, Waterbury, and Duxbury area pending full
16 Commission review of this replacement structure on the K24 line.

17

18 **5. Q. Describe the emergency giving rise to this Section 248(k) Petition.**
19 **(248(k)(4)(A))**

20 **A.** The K24-5 Duxbury Tap-Stowe Line is an approximately 10-mile-long 115kV
21 circuit running between the VELCO K24-4 Line in Duxbury and the VELCO Stowe Substation.

22 On July 17, 2024, VELCO deenergized this line to do structural testing of laminated
23 poles. The testing was prompted by an event that occurred in another location on this line—a

1 recent failure of a laminated pole structure that was only around 15 years old. On July 17, 2024,
2 VELCO received structure testing reports indicating that Structure LCP-020 and Structure LCP-
3 006 on the K24-5 Duxbury Tap-Stowe Line require immediate replacement. The reports
4 indicated pole damage that was so significant that VELCO determined it was not safe to
5 reenergize this line until replacement poles have been put in place. Consequently, the line
6 remains deenergized—thus the need for an emergency waiver to put this line back into service.

7

8 **6. Q. Please describe VELCO's proposal for replacing and relocating Structure**
9 **LCP-020.**

10 **A.** Structure LCP-006 will be an in-kind replacement, with the replacement structure
11 being installed in the same general location as the current Structure LCP-006. Structure LCP-020
12 is being relocated approximately 30 feet west, but (as explained in more detail below) requires a
13 different design, including the addition of a structure, which triggers the need for an emergency
14 waiver of the Section 248 requirements.

15 The LCP-020 replacement structure will use a single wood pole as the existing structure
16 does, with the primary differences being it will be a smaller pole, shorter, and must be equipped
17 with guys. The existing structure is approximately 97' above grade, while the replacement
18 structure will be approximately 65' above grade, with 3 guys and 2 anchors.

19 VELCO engineering reviewed the current location for Structure LCP-020 and determined
20 that it could not be expeditiously replaced in its current location. The original structure is a very
21 specialized, custom engineered and manufactured self-supporting laminated wood assembly,
22 which is no longer available and would not be suitable for use even if it were available, since we
23 now know that this type of laminated pole is subject to failure well before the expected life of the

1 pole. (This was not known at the time this pole was installed.) A steel pole in this location
2 would require an unacceptable delivery time. In order for the readily available replacement of
3 the LCP-020 structure to be installed, an additional wood pole structure approximately 150 feet
4 north of the existing Structure LCP-020 will be required, LCP-021. It will be a typical 3-pole
5 guyed wood structure common in VELCO's system, with two poles being approximately 50'
6 above grade, and a third pole being approximately 60' above grade. The taller pole will carry a
7 shielding wire common to the system, offering protection to the phase wires during lightning
8 events.

9
10 **7. Q. Will Structure LCP-020 be replaced within VELCO's existing right-of-way**
11 **for the K24 line?**

12 **A.** Although most of the work will be within the existing right-of-way, VELCO
13 anticipates needing to use one access route that is outside the current right or way, as well as the
14 removal of five trees outside the current right of way. Those five trees would otherwise be
15 danger trees that could disrupt service if they were to fall on the line. VELCO is actively
16 working with affected landowners and understands that two landowners are unhappy with how
17 the redesign may impact their property. VELCO has designed the new structure to minimize
18 impacts to landowners, while maintaining our obligation to provide reliable electric service and
19 protect the public from the potential significant dangers that could arise from a pole falling and
20 from an extended outage.

1 **8. Q. What site preparation work will be needed for the Structure LCP-020**
2 **replacement and relocation?**

3 A. Access to the structure setting area will need to be improved, with some tree and
4 brush clearing required. There will be grading in the right of way for the new Structure LCP-021
5 for creating an access road to the structure and to install a crane pad for installing this structure.
6 VELCO will remove existing dirt as part of a cut-and-fill to create the access road and the crane
7 pad. If soil conditions necessitate it, matting will be used to stabilize soil to set up equipment.
8 VELCO will also install erosion controls as needed to stabilize the worksite. VELCO does not
9 anticipate using any road fabric, but may need to place gravel in some places. For restoration
10 after work is complete, VELCO will remove the crane pad and seed and mulch the disturbed
11 area.

12

13 **9. Q. Is the immediate replacement and relocation of Structure LCP-020 as**
14 **proposed above necessary for VELCO to provide adequate and efficient service?**
15 **(248(k)(4)(B))**

16 A. Yes, in order to ensure continued structure and circuit reliability, to remove the
17 risk of the structure failing, immediate replacement is required. Having the K24-5 Line segment
18 de-energized creates risk to system reliability. Under this condition, with no 115kV service into
19 the VELCO Stowe substation, the Stowe and surrounding areas are susceptible to potential
20 voltage collapse or manual load shedding conditions to preserve the ability to serve some load
21 under certain peak conditions. This condition has been identified through VELCO planning
22 studies where the loss of the K24 line and adjacent 34.5 kV sub-transmission line do not provide
23 for acceptable voltage performance.

1 **10. Q. Has VELCO considered whether there is any option to the immediate**
2 **replacement and relocation of Structure LCP-020? If so, what has VELCO concluded?**

3 **A.** Yes, VELCO has considered the option of replacing the structure with a concrete
4 foundation and self-supporting steel structure. However, due to the immediate need to replace
5 the structure, there is not adequate time to implement that option, as the requisite concrete
6 foundation design, and installation (including cure time), as well as the steel structure design and
7 fabrication, would cumulatively take months to obtain, all while the line remains deenergized,
8 which is an unacceptable risk to the public.

9
10 **11. Q. Is an outage necessary for the replacement and relocation of Structure LCP-**
11 **020? If so, please describe it.**

12 **A.** Yes. The K24-5 Line will be out of service to implement the structure
13 replacement and new structure addition work.

14
15 **12. Q. What measures will VELCO take to minimize any significant adverse**
16 **impacts under the Section 248 criteria specified in 248(b)(5) and (b)(8)? (248(k)(4)(C))**

17 **A.** VELCO has an in-house environmental team that has reviewed potential impacts
18 to both of these subsections of Section 248 so as to minimize those impacts. VELCO has also
19 been in communication with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources since late yesterday
20 afternoon when VELCO first learned that this work would need to occur on an emergency basis.
21 VELCO will follow the VELCO Environmental Guidance Manual while planning and
22 performing the work and anticipates that there will be no measurable impacts to most of the
23 environmental criteria under section 248. There may be minor impacts to the wetlands sub-

1 criterion of Section 248(b)(5), but VELCO has designed the new structures and available access
2 routes so that any impacts would be temporary or minimal in nature and would only impact
3 wetland buffers, not to the wetlands themselves. In addition, all anticipated impacts to the
4 wetland buffer areas will occur within existing managed areas and the areas will be restored
5 following construction.

6 VELCO understands that there are potential impacts to aesthetics associated with
7 relocation of Structure LCP-020 and the addition of Structure LCP-021 and that neighboring
8 landowners have expressed concerns about the proposed design. However, VELCO is
9 continuing discussions with the landowners and is working in good faith to address their
10 concerns and minimize impacts to the extent possible.

11 There are no outstanding resource waters located within or proximate to the work
12 locations. As such, there will be no effect to Outstanding Resource Waters.

13

14 **13. Q. Does VELCO have a long-term plan to replace other poles along the K24**
15 **line?**

16 A. Yes. Structures LCP-006, LCP-108, and LCP-112 are being planned for
17 replacement now. However, the plan is for those to be in-kind replacements that do not trigger
18 the need for review under Section 248.

19

20 **14. Q. For what period of time is VELCO seeking a waiver?**

21 A. VELCO is seeking a waiver for a period of one year. In the meantime, VELCO
22 will evaluate its options for a permanent solution, including whether other poles along the K24-5
23 Duxbury Tap-Stowe Line need to be replaced in the near term. VELCO will seek Commission

1 approval for the permanent installation of Structure LCP-020 and possibly other structures along
2 the K24-5 Duxbury Tap-Stowe Line where replacement in kind cannot be accomplished.

3

4 **15. Q. Does this conclude your testimony?**

5 **A. Yes.**

DECLARATION OF WILLIAM F. MCNAMARA

I declare that the above statements are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
I understand that if the above statements are false, I may be subject to sanctions by the
Commission pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 30.

07/18/24
Date

/s/ William F. McNamara
William F. McNamara