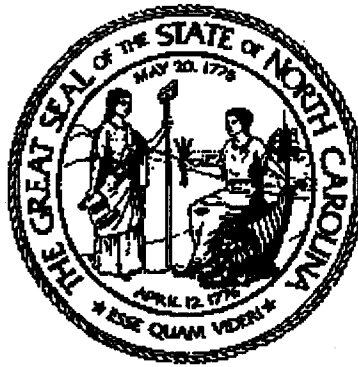


14

ATTACHMENT 4

North Carolina Public Staff

The Public Staff is an independent agency created in 1977 to review, investigate, and make appropriate recommendations to the North Carolina Utilities Commission with respect to the reasonableness of rates charged and adequacy of service provided by any public utility and with respect to the consistency with the public policy of assuring an energy supply adequate to protect the public health and safety. The public Staff shall intervene on behalf of the using and consuming public in all Commission proceedings affecting rates or service. The Public Staff will also:

- Petition the Commission to initiate proceedings when in the public interest;
 - Intervene in all certificate applications and assist the Commission in analysis;
 - Make recommendations to the Commission with respect to standards, regulations, or practices;
 - Investigate formal and informal complaints affecting the using and consuming public;
 - Intervene in all proceedings for franchise transfers, mergers, and consolidations of public utilities;
 - Review, investigate, and recommend action to the Commission regarding affiliate contracts.
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Public Staff Divisions

The Public Staff is organized into nine divisions: five exclusively concerned with specific utility industries regulated by the Commission (Communications, Electric, Natural Gas, Water and Sewer, and Transportation) and four concerned with all utilities in conjunction with the other divisions (Accounting, Consumer Services, Economic Research, and Legal). All divisions are supervised and directed by the Public Staff's Executive Director, who sets policy and guidelines, ensuring the Staff presents a unified position in the best interest of consumers on all issues before the Commission.

Online version of Annual Report to be placed here
Updated December 3, 1998

**Electric Utility Power Line Infrastructure: Feasibility of Converting Existing Overhead Lines to Underground
A Report Prepared by the Public Staff**

Project Purpose & Objective

Assess the feasibility of undergrounding overhead electric distribution systems and provide a central source document for responding to continuing inquiries from the general public.

Scope

- Address the pros and cons of undergrounding electric distribution facilities
- Determine specific conversion costs for applicable line segments that comprise an overhead distribution system from the substation bus to the customer's meter
- Address factors which impact the feasibility of conversions including physical restraints, coordination with other utilities, right-of-way requirements, design considerations, impact on public and private property, traffic flows, and environmental concerns.

Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. Statement of Problem
 - B. Plain Language Definitions
- II. Current Situation
 - A. Fact Sheet Detailing CP&L, Dominion NC Power and Duke
 1. Service Area
 2. Customers Served
 3. Employees
 4. Transmission
 5. Distribution
 - B. Current Line Extension Regulations
 1. Overhead Extensions
 2. Underground Extensions
 3. Areas Designated Underground
 - C. Distribution System
 1. Overhead
 - a. Currently Installed
 - b. Percent Overhead Added Each Year
 2. Underground
 - a. Currently Installed
 - b. Percent Underground Added Each Year
- III. Comparison of Overhead to Underground
 - A. Benefits and Issues
 - B. Reliability (Impact to normal operation and major storms)
 - C. Capital Costs
 1. Transmission
 2. Distribution
 - D. Operating and Maintenance Costs
 - E. Costs to Customer and Municipalities (as applicable)
 - F. Environmental Impacts