

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BEFORE THE  
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**

**Middletown Energy Storage LLC**

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**Docket No. ER23-915-000**

**MOTION TO INTERVENE AND PROTEST OF  
THE NEW YORK INDEPENDENT SYSTEM OPERATOR, INC.**

Pursuant to Rules 211 and 212 of the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure,<sup>1</sup> the New York Independent System Operator, Inc. (“NYISO”) moves to intervene and protests the request of Middletown Energy Storage LLC (“Middletown”) in the above-captioned proceeding for a waiver of certain requirements of the NYISO’s Open Access Transmission Tariff (“OATT”) related to the eligibility of a Large Facility to enter the NYISO’s Class Year Interconnection Facilities Study (“Class Year Study”) (the “Waiver Request”).<sup>2</sup> As described below, the NYISO opposes the Waiver Request as it would modify a substantive entry requirement for the NYISO’s Class Year Study process, is not limited in scope, and could lead to delays in the Class Year Study, which would harm other Developers.<sup>3</sup> As also described below, the NYISO supports expedited action in this proceeding.

**I. Motion to Intervene**

The NYISO is the independent body responsible for providing open access transmission service, maintaining reliability, and administering competitive wholesale markets for electricity, capacity, and ancillary services in New York State. Additionally, the NYISO administers the interconnection process pursuant to its Commission-approved tariffs. The NYISO, therefore, has a

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<sup>1</sup> 18 C.F.R. §§ 385.211 and 385.212 (2022).

<sup>2</sup> *Middletown Energy Storage LLC*, Request of Middletown Energy Storage LLC for Prospective Tariff Waiver, Shortened Comment Period, and Expedited Action, Docket No. ER23-915-000 (Jan. 20, 2023) (“Waiver Request”).

<sup>3</sup> Capitalized terms that are not otherwise defined in these comments shall have the meaning specified in Attachments S or X to the NYISO OATT, and if not defined therein, in the NYISO OATT and NYISO Market Administration and Control Area Services Tariff.

unique interest in this proceeding that cannot be adequately represented by any other entity and requests that the Commission permit the NYISO to intervene with all the rights of a party.

## **II. Background**

The Class Year Study is the NYISO’s final interconnection study that is performed on a clustered basis for a “Class Year” of projects. A Large Facility<sup>4</sup> becomes eligible to enter a Class Year Study when it has satisfied, among other entry requirements, two developmental milestones established in Section 25.6.2.3.1 of Attachment S to the OATT. Specifically, a Large Facility must, on or before the Class Year Start Date: (i) have received Operating Committee approval of its Interconnection System Reliability Impact Study (“SRIS”), and (ii) have satisfied the applicable regulatory milestone for its project prescribed in Attachment S or, in lieu of satisfying such milestone, must submit a two-part deposit or demonstrate that it has obtained a qualifying contract.<sup>5</sup> The Class Year Start Date for Class Year 2023 is February 13, 2023.<sup>6</sup>

On October 28, 2022, Clean Path New York LLC (“Clean Path”) requested a waiver of the timing requirement in Section 25.6.2.3.1 that a Large Facility must have an SRIS approved by the NYISO’s Operating Committee on or before the Class Year Start Date to be eligible to enter a Class Year Study.<sup>7</sup> Clean Path sought the waiver as its project may not obtain Operating Committee approval of its ongoing SRIS prior to the Class Year Start Date. On November 15, 2022, the NYISO

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<sup>4</sup> A Large Facility includes Large Generating Facilities and Class Year Transmission Projects. See OATT Attach. S § 25.1.2 (definition of “Large Facility”). Middletown’s project is a Large Generating Facility.

<sup>5</sup> OATT § 25.6.2.3.1. If a Developer elects to submit a two-part deposit or to demonstrate a qualifying contract to satisfy the regulatory requirement, the Developer must do so within 10 Business Days of the NYISO’s tendering of a Class Year Study Agreement. See OATT § 30.8.1. In such case, the Developer must still satisfy the regulatory milestone within 6 months of the NYISO’s tendering of the draft Standard Large Generator Interconnection Agreement for the project, or the project will be withdrawn from the NYISO’s interconnection queue. See OATT §§ 25.6.2.3.2, 25.6.2.3.3.

<sup>6</sup> The Class Year Start Date is tied to the completion of the prior Class Year Study. Class Year 2021 completed on January 11, 2023. The Class Year Study for Class Year 2023 will commence on February 13, 2023 – the first Business Day after thirty Calendar Days following the completion of Class Year 2021. See OATT § 25.5.9.1.

<sup>7</sup> *Clean Path New York LLC*, Request of Clean Path New York LLC for Prospective Tariff Waiver and Expedited Action, Docket No. ER23-253-000 (October 28, 2022).

submitted comments supporting Clean Path’s requested waiver.<sup>8</sup> The NYISO noted in its comments the complexity of the proposed interconnection and the change in the scope of the project’s SRIS due to a NYISO initiative to streamline SRISs by eliminating unnecessary or duplicative analysis.<sup>9</sup> The NYISO requested that any waiver granted by the Commission be subject to certain conditions.<sup>10</sup> In particular, to minimize impacts on the NYISO’s Class Year Study process, the NYISO requested that any waiver: (i) clarify that the Developer has until the completion date of the Annual Transmission Baseline Assessment (“ATBA”) base cases to have its SRIS report approved by the Operating Committee to satisfy the SRIS approval tariff requirement for Class Year 2023, and (ii) make clear that, notwithstanding the waiver, the Developer must satisfy the other tariff requirements for entering Class Year 2023 in accordance with the existing rules and timing requirements established in Attachments X and S of the OATT.<sup>11</sup> In addition, to ensure equal treatment across Developers participating in the NYISO’s interconnection queue, the NYISO requested that the Commission apply any waiver to all Developers similarly situated to Clean Path – *i.e.*, projects with an SRIS currently in progress.<sup>12</sup>

On December 16, 2022, the Commission issued an order, granting Clean Path’s requested waiver, providing that “Clean Path may enter the upcoming 2023 Class Year Study if Clean Path has its SRIS by the completion date of the Annual Transmission Baseline Assessment base cases and satisfies the other requirements for entering a Class Year Study in accordance with NYISO’s OATT.”<sup>13</sup> The Commission, however, declined to extend the waiver to other Developers with an

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<sup>8</sup> *Clean Path New York LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the New York Independent System Operator, Inc., Docket No. ER23-253 (November 15, 2022) (“NYISO Comments”).

<sup>9</sup> NYISO Comments at 2-3, 6.

<sup>10</sup> NYISO Comments at 6-7.

<sup>11</sup> NYISO Comments at 6-10.

<sup>12</sup> NYISO Comments at 6-7. The NYISO identified such SRISs as those that had an initial scope approved by the Operating Committee as of the date of Clean Path’s submission of its requested waiver. NYISO Comments at 7 n 13.

<sup>13</sup> *Clean Path New York LLC*, Order Granting Waiver, 181 FERC ¶ 61,236 at P 20 (2022) (“Clean Path Order”).

SRIS in progress, finding that the NYISO had not provided sufficient justification for applying the waiver to such Developers.<sup>14</sup>

Middletown is the Developer of a proposed 100 MW energy storage facility – a Large Facility in the NYISO’s interconnection queue with Queue Position No. 1346 (“Project”). The scope for the SRIS for the Project has not yet been approved, and the Project will not have the opportunity to obtain Operating Committee approval of its SRIS prior to the upcoming Class Year Start Date for Class Year 2023 on February 13, 2023.

On January 20, 2023, Middletown filed the Waiver Request. The NYISO understands Middletown to be requesting waiver of the requirement in Section 25.6.2.3.1 of Attachment S to the OATT that a Large Facility must have an SRIS approved by the NYISO’s Operating Committee on or before the Class Year Start Date to be eligible to enter a Class Year Study.<sup>15</sup> In particular, the NYISO understands that Middletown is requesting that it be permitted to enter Class Year 2023 prior to Operating Committee approval of its SRIS and that it will proceed in parallel with the performance of the Class Year Study to obtain such approval by an undefined, future date.<sup>16</sup>

### **III. Protest**

The Commission evaluates a waiver request based on the specific facts and circumstances of the request, and upon a number of factors, including (i) whether the requestor is acting in good faith; (ii) whether the request will remedy a concrete problem; (iii) whether the request is of limited scope; and (iv) whether the waiver, if granted, will have undesirable consequences such as harming third parties.<sup>17</sup> The Commission’s evaluation of a waiver request is highly dependent on the specifics of a

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<sup>14</sup> Clean Path Order at P 26 (“We decline to extend the grant of waiver to any other developers with an SRIS in progress, as NYISO requests. We find that, unlike in *NYPA*, NYISO did not identify the entities it asserts are similarly situated and further did not sufficiently justify how all projects with an SRIS in progress are similarly situated and satisfy the four waiver criteria.”)

<sup>15</sup> See Waiver Request at 16.

<sup>16</sup> See Waiver Request at 19.

<sup>17</sup> See *PJM Interconnection, L.L.C. and Trans-Allegheny Interstate Line Company*, 144 FERC ¶ 61,060 at P 17 (2013); *Air Energy TCI, Inc.*, 143 FERC ¶ 61,172 at P 16 (2013); *Hudson Transmission Partner, LLC*, 131 FERC ¶ 61,157 at P 10 (2010).

particular request, and the Commission has recognized that the granting of a waiver request is not precedent for granting future waiver requests.<sup>18</sup>

The NYISO opposes the Commission granting Middletown's Waiver Request as it modifies a substantive entry requirement for the NYISO's Class Year Study process, is not limited in scope, and could lead to delays in the Class Year Study, which would harm other Developers. Middletown asks that it be permitted to enter Class Year 2023 without an approved SRIS and be provided an unlimited amount of time to obtain Operating Committee approval of its SRIS in parallel with the performance of the Class Year Study.<sup>19</sup> This would essentially eliminate this Class Year entry tariff requirement for this Project.<sup>20</sup> If the Commission grants the Waiver Request, it would open the door for other Developers to seek to bypass an important entry requirement for Class Year 2023 and for future Class Years, nullifying core processes established in the OATT.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to the Waiver Request, Clean Path and certain other Developers asked for only a modest amount of additional time to obtain Operating Committee approval of their SRISs by a set deadline. The NYISO's support of those requests has been explicitly tied to the condition that such projects have only until the completion of the ATBA base cases to obtain Operating Committee approval of their SRISs. Projects that receive such waivers would not be permitted to enter Class Year 2023 if their SRISs were approved by the Operating Committee after that deadline. The

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<sup>18</sup> See *PJM Interconnection, L.L.C. and Trans-Allegheny Interstate Line Company*, 144 FERC ¶ 61,060 at P 17 (2013) (noting that the granting of the requested waiver "is based on the specific facts and circumstances of the request"); see also *Air Energy TCI, Inc.*, 143 FERC ¶ 61,172 at P 16 (2013) (noting that "our grant of waiver is limited to the facts and circumstances of the case before us").

<sup>19</sup> The Commission should similarly reject Middletown's alternative request to permit it to enter the Class Year 2023 on a temporary basis pending a Commission determination in this proceeding. Waiver Request at 3, 21. This request is not limited to a particular deadline and, therefore, not limited in scope and could result in modifications to the Class Year that result in delays and harm to third parties.

<sup>20</sup> This entry requirement is important as it, among other findings, identifies system impacts and determines whether a project is physically feasible to interconnect at the Point of Interconnection studied.

<sup>21</sup> The results of the SRIS often inform the analysis done in the Class Year Study. Not having the SRIS results prior to the Class Year could expand the necessary scope of work, and time required, for the Class Year Study.

NYISO has explained that this deadline is necessary to minimize the impact of such waivers on the NYISO's Class Year Study process.

This ATBA deadline is crucial for the NYISO's timely implementation of its Class Year Study process.<sup>22</sup> If the NYISO were required to revisit the membership in the Class Year after completion of the ATBA base cases, including subsequent additions or removals of participants, such action could disrupt study work, could require re-starting study work midway through the process, and could delay the ultimate completion of the Class Year Study. Such delays could harm other members of the Class Year that have timely satisfied the entry requirements specified in the tariff.<sup>23</sup> The likelihood and magnitude of delays, and associated harm, will increase the further into the study

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<sup>22</sup> As the NYISO described in the Clean Path proceeding, its development of the ATBA base cases is its initial step in the Class Year Study process and takes approximately 60 days from the Class Year Start Date. The ATBA establishes the pre-existing baseline system before Class Year Projects are included. During the initial period in which the NYISO develops the ATBA, the NYISO performs the following actions: (1) confirms Class Year entrants have satisfied all applicable entry requirements (*e.g.*, execution of the Class Year Study Agreement and submission of required deposits and technical data); (2) reviews project data submitted by Class Year Projects with their Class Year Study Agreements and confirms all required technical data has been provided and there are no deficiencies or inconsistencies in such data; (3) builds the new Class Year Study ATBA base cases (*i.e.*, short circuit, steady state, dynamics and deliverability base cases) reflecting the Existing System Representation, including the prior Class Year Projects that accepted their Project Cost Allocations and posted Security, together with their associated System Upgrade Facilities and System Deliverability Upgrades; and (4) prepares the auxiliary study files to perform the short circuit, steady state, dynamics and deliverability analyses. The NYISO subsequently develops an Annual Transmission Reliability Assessment ("ATRA"), which adds the Class Year Projects to the ATBA baseline to determine any upgrades required as a result of these projects and to allocate the cost of such upgrades among the Class Year Projects.

<sup>23</sup> If the NYISO were required to change the membership in the Class Year after completion of the ATBA base cases, such action could disrupt finished study work and delay the ultimate completion of the Class Year Study for participating members. As the NYISO described in the Clean Path proceeding, similar to the SRIS, it takes time for the NYISO to review and confirm data with Developers of the Class Year Projects and to address any issues with the models provided by Developers. In addition, after the NYISO completes the ATBA, it begins to add the Class Year Projects to the model to develop the ATRA. If new Class Year Projects are subsequently modified, the NYISO may need to re-open the ATRA for each occurrence, which would delay the start of the NYISO's analysis conducted for the Class Year. Moreover, as part of the Class Year process, the NYISO performs individual "Part 1" studies of each project to identify the Attachment Facilities and local System Upgrade Facilities required solely for that project. Adding Class Year members late in the process could delay the start of these project-specific studies. Avoiding delays related to a single project or a small number of projects protects the process and benefits all of the projects in the Class Year Study and other projects in the interconnection queue.

process any changes were to occur. Thus, the requested waiver is not limited in scope and is likely to harm third parties.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, the Project is not similarly situated to Clean Path's Project and other projects where the NYISO has supported waiver requests.<sup>25</sup> The Project has not met the same interconnection study process milestones as those other projects. In particular, the initial scope of the Project's SRIS has not yet been approved by the Operating Committee, and the SRIS for the Project has not commenced. As described below, Middletown's Project has not yet advanced to these milestones largely due to the date it submitted its Interconnection Request and the delays in its submission of the required data and information.

Middletown alleges that the Project's status in the interconnection process is the fault of the NYISO, asserting that the NYISO has exercised a different level of effort concerning its Project in comparison to Clean Path project.<sup>26</sup> There is absolutely no basis for this allegation. As required by its OATT, the NYISO has provided comparable treatment to all projects participating in its

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<sup>24</sup> Middletown references the waiver the Commission granted in the *Silver Lake Solar* proceeding to argue that granting a waiver in this instance will not have undesirable consequences. Waiver Request at 20. However, in the *Silver Lake Solar* proceeding, the NYISO made clear, and the Commission acknowledged in its order, that Commission action was required by a certain date in the early phases of the Class Year Study process to ensure the other Developers participating in the Class Year Study were not harmed. See *Silver Lake Solar, LLC*, 169 FERC ¶ 61,106 at P18 (2019).

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., *York Run Solar, LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-787-000 (Jan. 13, 2023); *Microgrid Networks, LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-785-000 (Jan. 13, 2023); *ConnectGen Montgomery County LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-786-000 (Jan. 13, 2023); *Thousand Island Solar LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-780-000 (Jan. 13, 2023); *Rhynland Companies*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-783-000 (Jan. 13, 2023); *Boralex, Inc.*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-798-000 (Jan. 17, 2023); *Gravel Road Solar LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-830-000 (Jan. 19, 2023); *Invenergy Solar Project Development LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-803-000 (Jan. 20, 2023); *North Country Wind, LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-860-000 (Jan. 20, 2023); *Innisfree Storage LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-867-000 (Jan. 20, 2023); *Union Energy Center LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-859-000 (Jan. 23, 2023); *North Seneca Solar Project LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-894-000 (Jan. 25, 2023); and *Crane Brook Solar Project, LLC*, Motion to Intervene and Comments of the NYISO, Docket No. ER23-893-000 (Jan. 25, 2023).

<sup>26</sup> Waiver Request at 10-14.

interconnection queue, acting independently and impartially in administering the interconnection process including Middletown's Project.<sup>27</sup>

Middletown's "evidence" for the alleged discriminatory treatment of its Project is that certain projects that entered the NYISO's interconnection queue before its Project are further along in the process than its Project. Clean Path's project, and the other projects with waiver requests the NYISO has supported, all submitted their Interconnection Requests before Middletown's project.<sup>28</sup> It is not unusual or unexpected that projects that entered the NYISO's interconnection queue earlier are further along in the process.<sup>29</sup>

The NYISO recognizes the need to process Interconnection Requests quickly and has used, and continues to use, Reasonable Effort to process the Interconnection Request for this Project.<sup>30</sup> Middletown's own recitation of the correspondence between it and the NYISO shows that the NYISO has acted diligently in responding to Middletown and in processing the Project's Interconnection Request.<sup>31</sup> However, certain actions by Middletown have contributed to the current status of its Project. As is fairly common with Developers, Middletown did not initially submit adequate data with its Interconnection Request to enable the NYISO to validate the request. As Middletown alludes to in the Waiver Request,<sup>32</sup> the NYISO had to request, and Middletown had to provide, several rounds of additional data before the NYISO could validate the request. Later, after the scoping meeting, the NYISO was required to issue a withdrawal notice concerning the

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<sup>27</sup> See OATT §30.2.2.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Clean Path's Interconnection Request was submitted in October 2021 and validated on November 24, 2021, while Middletown submitted the Interconnection Request for its Project on March 8, 2022 and was validated on May 9, 2022.

<sup>29</sup> Section 30.4.1 of the NYISO's Large Facility Interconnection Procedures in Attachment X to the OATT ("The Queue Position of each Interconnection Request will be used to determine the order of performing the Interconnection Studies.")

<sup>30</sup> The NYISO's comments in this proceeding should not be interpreted as confirming or otherwise addressing the individual details concerning the interconnection process for the Project described in the Waiver Request.

<sup>31</sup> Waiver Request at 8.

<sup>32</sup> Waiver Request at 17 (noting the Interconnection Request was submitted in March, but additional submissions were required through May for the NYISO to be able to validate the request).



Project because Middletown failed to confirm the Point of Interconnection for the Project by the deadline required by the OATT. Middletown subsequently cured that deficiency in the time provided. Such delays contribute to longer periods of time to process such requests and to advance the interconnection process as a whole.

Middletown emphasizes in the Waiver Request that it hired a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for the Project, implying that this should have expedited the study process.<sup>33</sup> However, a Developer is not required to complete an Optional Feasibility Study in the NYISO's interconnection process to proceed to an SRIS. Moreover, in this instance, Middletown did not make use of the Optional Feasibility Study set forth in the NYISO's OATT but appears to have performed some form of "feasibility" analysis outside the NYISO's interconnection process. There is nothing wrong with a Developer performing its own preliminary analysis, and such analysis may be informative for a project. However, such action is not required by the NYISO OATT, and does not translate into any accelerated status in the NYISO's interconnection process.<sup>34</sup>

The NYISO is working diligently in close collaboration with Middletown and Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc. (the Connecting Transmission Owner) to complete the scope for the SRIS for the Project and move forward with the study. However, the SRIS will not be completed by the Class Year Start Date, and it is not expected to be approved by the Operating Committee by the completion of the ATBA.

For the above-stated reasons, the NYISO opposes the Waiver Request. If the Commission, however, were to grant the Waiver Request, it should apply the same conditions it adopted in the Clean Path order to ensure that the scope of the waiver is limited and other Class Year participants are not harmed.

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<sup>33</sup> Waiver Request at 15, 17.

<sup>34</sup> Middletown also indicates that it has offered to hire consultants and pay overtime for the performance of the SRIS. The NYISO already makes extensive use of consultants in the performance of its studies.

#### **IV. Request for Commission Order by February 1, 2023**

The NYISO respectfully asks that the Commission expedite its review of the Waiver Request. Middletown requests that the Commission issue an order by February 8, 2023.<sup>35</sup> The NYISO respectfully requests that Commission instead issue an order by February 1, 2023. Commission action by February 1, 2023 is crucial to effectuate the waiver and to provide certainty to the NYISO and Middletown concerning the Class Year entry requirements applicable to the Project prior to the Class Year Start Date, which will begin on February 13, 2023. This timeframe is particularly important in this instance given the large number of projects that have requested waivers of the entry requirements for Class Year 2023.<sup>36</sup> This timeframe will enable the NYISO to timely implement any granted waiver with minimal delay to the Class Year Study process.

#### **V. Communications and Correspondence**

All communications and service with regard to this filing should be directed to:

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<sup>35</sup> See Waiver Request at 3, 21.

<sup>36</sup> See, e.g., *York Run Solar, LLC*, Petition of York Run Solar, LLC for Limited Tariff Waiver and Shortened Comment Period and Expedited Commission Approval, Docket No. ER23-787-000 (Jan. 6, 2023); *Microgrid Networks, LLC*, Petition of Microgrid Networks, LLC for a Limited Waiver of a New York Independent System Operator, Inc. Tariff Provision and for Expedited Action, Docket No. ER23-785-000 (Jan. 6, 2023); *ConnectGen Montgomery County LLC*, Request of ConnectGen Montgomery County LLC for Grant of a Prospective, Limited Waiver for the Mill Point Project and Expedited Action, Docket No. ER23-786-000 (Jan. 6, 2023); *Thousand Island Solar LLC*, Petition of Thousand Island Solar LLC for a Limited, Prospective Tariff Waiver and for Expedited Action and Shortened Notice, Docket No. ER23-780-000 (Jan. 5, 2023); *Rhynland Companies*, Petition of Rhynland Companies for Limited Prospective Waiver of the Requirement in Section 25.6.2.3.1 of Attachment S of the New York Independent System Operator Inc., Docket No. ER23-783-000 (Jan. 3, 2023).

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\* Persons designated for receipt of service.

## VI. Conclusion

WHEREFORE, for the foregoing reasons, the NYISO respectfully requests that the Commission accept this protest, deny Middletown's Waiver Request, and rule on the Waiver Request no later than February 1, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Sara B. Keegan

Sara B. Keegan  
Angela J. Sicker

/s/ Michael J. Messonnier Jr.

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January 27, 2023

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## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that I have this day served the foregoing document upon each person designated on the official service list compiled by the Secretary in this proceeding in accordance with the requirements of Rule 2010 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure, 18 C.F.R. §385.2010.

Dated at Rensselaer, NY this 27th day of January 2023.

/s/ Stephanie Amann

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