



Local Union 97

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

New York State

November 17, 2021

Michael Rubino
Director, Labor Relations
National Grid
300 Erie Boulevard West
Syracuse, NY 13202

Dear Mike:

Re: Religious Accommodation Process

I write in response to the Company's recent communication to employees concerning the process for requesting a religious accommodation in connection with vaccination requirements—the imposition of which Local 97 has separately objected to, and with respect to which Local 97 reserves all rights.

Local 97 fully expects the Company to comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements concerning the religious accommodation process. We also expect the Company to comply with recent guidance from the EEOC on this subject. See EEOC, *What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws*, Section L, available at <https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws#L>. For example, absent an objective basis for questioning the sincerity of a particular religious belief, the Company should assume that a request for religious accommodation is in fact based on sincerely held beliefs. Moreover, the Company is obligated to conduct individualized inquiries and may not systematically deny accommodation requests that do not fit a particular pattern. The Company may not adopt a mechanical rule that newly adopted beliefs or beliefs that have not always been strictly adhered to are always insincere. Similarly, the Company must consider whether accommodations other than the employee's requested accommodation are reasonable.

We also fully expect the Company to comply with the Labor Agreement in connection with the religious accommodation process. For example, like any disciplinary action involving a bargaining-unit member, employee discipline related to or arising out of the religious accommodation process must be for just cause and must strictly comply with Article XVI of the Blue Book and Article XI of the Gold Book, as the case may be.

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Finally, **please produce** copies of all Company policies, procedures, forms, questionnaires, and other similar documentation related to the religious accommodation process referenced in your recent communication to employees concerning vaccination requirements. Please produce these items as soon as possible but no later than the close of business on **Tuesday, November 30, 2021**.

After the Company has produced the above information, Local 97 reserves the right to submit additional information requests and reserves the right to demand decision and/or effects bargaining concerning the religious accommodation process. Local 97 also reserves all rights under the Labor Agreement and the National Labor Relations Act.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,



Theodore J. Skerpon
President/Business Manager
IBEW Local 97

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cc: *R. Wynter, NY President, National Grid*
K. Sweet-Zavaglia, General Counsel
C. Schneider, NY Chief HR Resource Officers