



The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority Consultation on Gas Service Worker Regulations

Statement of Results and Final Decision

NGS 18/2026

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1 Introduction

The Natural Gas Act, 2024 (NGA) came into force on 1 June 2024. The NGA established the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) as the independent regulator of the natural gas sector (NGS) in The Bahamas and provides the statutory framework for the introduction of natural gas into the energy mix of The Bahamas.

As the independent regulator of the NGS, URCA is responsible, inter alia, for developing the regulatory framework for the effective and efficient regulation of the NGS in accordance with the provisions of the NGA, in a manner that is transparent and non-discriminatory. In particular, pursuant to section 8 of the NGA and in accordance with section 31 of the NGA, URCA is mandated to grant licences for all NGS activities in The Bahamas.

URCA developed an initial compendium of regulatory measures, including licences, regulations and codes, comprising the framework for the regulation of the NGS. On 1 October 2024, URCA published its Statement of Results and Final Decision, NGS 02/2024, which established the initial licences, regulations and codes for the NGS in The Bahamas. In that Statement of Results and Final Decision, URCA indicated that it would update the initial regulatory measures from time to time. URCA has since reviewed the scope and operation of those initial regulatory measures to determine whether they remain fit for purpose and adequately address the activities contemplated under the NGA.

Consequent upon that review, and following engagement with key NGS industry stakeholders, URCA further considered the operation of the provisions governing the licensing of Gas Service Workers (GSWs). At present, the licensing of GSWs is addressed within the Gas Supply Regulations, NGS 08/2024. URCA identified areas for improvement in the existing framework, including measures to streamline the processing of GSW applications, improve regulatory clarity, and strengthen the regulation of GSWs.

Accordingly, on 19 May 2026, URCA published a consultation document entitled “The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority Consultation on Gas Service Worker Regulations”, NGS 14/2026. That consultation document set out URCA’s proposal to issue standalone Gas Service Worker Regulations, which would repeal sections 5 and 6, paragraphs 67 to 95, of the Gas Supply Regulations, NGS 08/2024.

The purpose of this Statement of Results and Final Decision is to set out the outcome of URCA’s

consultation process and URCA's final decision in relation to the Gas Service Worker Regulations. As no responses were received to the consultation, this document also records that outcome and confirms URCA's final position on the issuance of the Gas Service Worker Regulations.

1.1 Structure of the remainder of this document

The remainder of this Consultation Document is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Outlines the legal basis and framework under which URCA is conducting this consultation and proposing to introduce the regulatory measures;
- Section 3: Provides a summary and analysis of comments received and URCA's Final Decision;
- Section 4: Conclusion and Next Steps; and
- Annex: Contains the draft regulation the annexed document is uploaded and published separately on URCA's website simultaneously with this Consultation Document and by such publication is deemed to be included in the Annex of this document.

2 Legal Framework

This section sets out the legal basis on which URCA issues the regulatory measures addressed in this Statement of Results and Final Decision. The regulatory measures under consultation have been set out under a discrete heading, namely, “licensing”. The regulatory authority for URCA to issue the regulatory measures, as proposed, is discussed under that heading.

2.1 Licensing

URCA is empowered to carry certain regulatory functions pertaining to licensing within the NGS sector as outlined in section 8(3)(g) of the Natural Gas Act (NGA). This includes issuing, suspending, varying and revoking licences. According to section 19 of the NGA, URCA is authorised to establish a licensing framework for gas service workers, including prescribing the application process, requiring supporting documentation and fees, granting licences subject to conditions, and varying, suspending or revoking licences where appropriate. The NGA further provides URCA with broad discretion to determine the conditions applicable to licences and to ensure that persons undertaking gas service work are subject to effective regulatory oversight.

2.2 URCA’s statutory consideration

URCA has considered the statutory framework governing the natural gas sector, including section 6 of the NGA, which requires regulatory measures, decisions and subsidiary instruments relating to the sector to be developed with a view to implementing the main goals, governing principles and objectives of the sector policy and gas supply regime. The NGA further requires URCA to rely on market forces wherever possible, to intervene only where market forces are unlikely to achieve the relevant policy objectives within a reasonable timeframe, and to ensure that regulatory measures are efficient, proportionate, transparent, fair and non-discriminatory. Where significant regulatory measures are introduced or amended, URCA is also required to identify the policy objectives advanced by the measure and to demonstrate compliance with the applicable statutory requirements relating to proportionality, necessity and transparency.

Having regard to those statutory powers, duties and guiding principles, URCA is satisfied that the cumulative effect of the relevant provisions of the NGA provides a clear statutory basis for the

regulatory measures adopted in this Statement of Results and Final Decision, namely the Gas Service Worker Regulations. URCA is further satisfied that the Regulations are consistent with the statutory requirements governing the exercise of its regulatory functions.

In reaching this final decision, URCA has had regard to the principles and objectives governing the sector policy and gas supply regime, including the promotion of natural gas as a secure, stable and economically efficient source of energy, the protection of the public from dangers arising from the transportation and use of gas, the promotion of fair competition and investment, the encouragement of continuous improvement in operational performance and customer service, and the oversight of the sector by an independent regulator.

URCA considers that the Gas Service Worker Regulations advance these statutory objectives by establishing a clearer and more comprehensive licensing and qualification framework for gas service workers across the NGS value chain. The previous regulatory treatment of gas service workers was limited in practical application because the relevant provisions were embedded within the Gas Supply Regulations, which principally addressed supply-side activities within the NGS. However, the definition of a gas service worker under the NGA extends beyond the supply segment and applies more broadly to activities throughout the natural gas sector. The Gas Service Worker Regulations therefore provide greater alignment with the statutory framework established under the NGA and ensure that the regulatory treatment of gas service workers is consistent with the scope contemplated by Parliament.

URCA further considers that the Gas Service Worker Regulations are proportionate and necessary to address operational and public safety risks associated with gas service activities. The Regulations are intended to streamline the licensing and qualification process, improve regulatory clarity, provide more detailed guidance to industry participants, and support greater consistency in competency standards and oversight obligations. The adopted approach also enables operators to implement qualification systems that are responsive to the operational realities and risks of their respective systems, while preserving accountability for ensuring that persons performing safety-sensitive work are competent to do so.

URCA has also taken account of the consultation process. No responses were received to the consultation, as addressed in the responses section of this Statement of Results and Final Decision. In the absence of stakeholder responses, URCA is satisfied that the Gas Service Worker

Regulations remain appropriate, proportionate and necessary in the circumstances, and that reliance on market forces alone would be insufficient to secure the relevant statutory and policy objectives within a reasonable timeframe.

Accordingly, URCA considers that the cumulative effect of the statutory provisions identified above provides the legal basis for the issuance of the Gas Service Worker Regulations set out in this Statement of Results and Final Decision.

3 Summary of Consultation Process, Overview of the Regulations and Final Decision

This section sets out the outcome of URCA's consultation on the proposed Gas Service Worker Regulations, together with an overview of the regulatory framework adopted and URCA's Final Decision.

URCA confirms that no written submissions were received from members of the public, licensees, or other interested parties in response to the Consultation Document. Accordingly, there are no stakeholder comments requiring individual analysis or response in this Statement of Results and Final Decision.

Notwithstanding the absence of responses, URCA has reviewed the proposed Gas Service Worker Regulations having regard to the statutory objectives of the NGA, the regulatory issues identified in the Consultation Document, and the need to ensure that the licensing and qualification framework for Gas Service Workers is clear, proportionate, transparent, and fit for purpose.

3.1 Overview of the Gas Service Worker Regulations

The Gas Service Worker Regulations repeal and replace sections 5 and 6 of the existing Gas Supply Regulations, the provisions of which related to the licensing of Gas Service Workers. The Regulations modernise and consolidate the licensing and qualification framework for Gas Service Workers in The Bahamas, while providing greater clarity, consistency, and alignment with the broader statutory framework established under the NGA.

Under the Gas Supply Regulations, the licensing regime distinguished between two classes of Gas Service Worker licences, namely Class A and Class B licences. A Class A Gas Service Worker was authorised to design, construct, install, alter, fix, repair, maintain, and renew gas mains, pipes, fittings, meters, apparatus and appliances for installations operating at pressures not exceeding 30 mbars. The previous framework also permitted a Class A Gas Service Worker, acting under the supervision of a Professional Engineer within the discipline of Mechanical Engineering, to participate in more complex works involving gas booster systems and gas leakage detection systems. A Class B Gas Service Worker was authorised to carry out more limited activities relating principally to the installation, alteration, repair, removal, and replacement of gas meters.

URCA considers that the previous framework, while appropriate at the time it was introduced, was limited in scope because it was principally designed around traditional downstream gas activities and the supply side of gas systems. The previous provisions did not clearly address the broader range of activities contemplated under the NGA, including LNG facilities, pipelines, transfer systems, storage infrastructure, and wider operational activities across the natural gas value chain. Further, the placement of those provisions within the Gas Supply Regulations, together with the limits on the activities expressly addressed, had the potential to create uncertainty regarding the statutory requirement for persons carrying out Gas Service Work to be licensed.

The Gas Service Worker Regulations apply broadly to both self-employed Gas Service Workers and individuals employed or engaged by licensed companies, contractors, subcontractors, or other operators within the natural gas sector. The Regulations therefore establish obligations both on individual workers and on licensed natural gas companies responsible for developing and implementing qualification programmes for their personnel and contractors.

The Regulations introduce a modern qualification framework aligned with international regulatory practice, including elements of operator qualification approaches adopted in jurisdictions such as the United States under Subpart N of 49 CFR Part 192 and Subpart G of 49 CFR Part 195, as well as accreditation-based approaches reflected in the United Kingdom under the Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme.

The framework establishes minimum competency requirements based on the nature of the activities being performed and the level of technical responsibility involved. Rather than maintaining the previous Class A and Class B licensing structure, the Regulations establish a single Gas Service Worker Licence, with the scope of authorised activities determined by reference to the qualifications, certifications, training, and practical experience of the individual licence holder.

URCA considers that a single licence class provides a more proportionate and flexible regulatory approach, particularly given the increasing diversity and technical complexity of activities undertaken across the natural gas sector, including LNG facilities, pipelines, transfer systems, and downstream gas installations. Under the Regulations, regulatory oversight focuses less on rigid licence classifications and more on ensuring that individuals only undertake activities for

which they are demonstrably qualified and competent. This approach reduces unnecessary administrative complexity while preserving clear accountability for safety-critical work.

The Regulations establish three personnel categories, namely apprentices, technicians, and professional engineers, and define the activities each category may perform across LNG facilities, natural gas pipelines, and supply-side gas systems. The framework also identifies minimum educational standards, safety training, industry certifications, practical experience requirements, and continuing education obligations applicable to each category.

In balancing regulatory considerations, URCA has adopted a framework which places primary responsibility for qualification compliance on both the individual Gas Service Worker and, where applicable, the licensed company engaging that worker. Licensed companies are required to develop and maintain written Qualification Programmes tailored to their operations and authorised activities. These programmes are subject to URCA approval and require operators to identify covered tasks, verify worker qualifications, maintain records, provide ongoing training, and ensure that contractors and subcontractors comply with equivalent competency standards.

The Regulations also incorporate elements of self-certification and operator accountability. Rather than requiring URCA to pre-approve each specific activity undertaken by a Gas Service Worker, the framework places primary responsibility on licensed companies and individual workers to ensure that only appropriately qualified personnel perform authorised activities within the scope of their demonstrated competence, qualifications, training, and experience.

Under the Regulations, all persons engaging in Gas Service Work are required to hold a Gas Service Worker Licence issued by URCA. However, where a licensed company has implemented a URCA-approved Qualification Programme, that company may submit licence applications on behalf of its employees together with a certification confirming that the individual has successfully completed the company's Qualification Programme and satisfies the applicable requirements under the Gas Service Worker Regulations. Upon review of the application and supporting certification, URCA may issue the relevant Gas Service Worker Licence.

Individuals applying independently, including self-employed Gas Service Workers, are required to demonstrate competency directly to URCA, including through completion of URCA's Entry-Level Qualification Framework assessment and submission of supporting qualification and experience documentation.

URCA considers that this approach appropriately balances regulatory oversight with operational efficiency by allowing operators to assume greater responsibility for workforce competency management while preserving URCA's supervisory, audit, inspection, and enforcement powers. The framework preserves effective regulatory oversight through ex post supervision, including inspection powers, audit requirements, record-keeping obligations, investigations, and random verification or competency testing by URCA. Licensed companies and workers remain subject to enforcement action, including suspension, revocation, regulatory fines, or criminal penalties, where work is performed outside the scope of authorised qualifications or in contravention of the Regulations.

The Regulations further establish updated application, renewal, suspension, revocation, and enforcement provisions, including offences and penalties for unlicensed work and obligations relating to continuing education and record keeping. The framework also introduces enhanced licence security features and a formalised register of licensed Gas Service Workers maintained by URCA.

3.2 Final Decision

Having completed the consultation process and having received no written submissions in response to the Consultation Document, URCA has determined to issue the Gas Service Worker Regulations in substantially the form proposed in the Consultation Document.

URCA's Final Decision is to adopt the Gas Service Worker Regulations as a standalone regulatory measure, and to repeal and replace sections 5 and 6, paragraphs 67 to 95, of the Gas Supply Regulations, NGS 08/2024.

URCA is satisfied that the Gas Service Worker Regulations provide a more proportionate, risk-based, and comprehensive framework for the licensing and qualification of Gas Service Workers in The Bahamas. URCA further considers that the Regulations will improve public safety, strengthen accountability, support worker competency, and provide clearer regulatory oversight across the NGS value chain.

Accordingly, URCA's Final Decision is that the Gas Service Worker Regulations shall be issued and brought into effect in accordance with the terms set out in this Statement of Results and Final Decision.

4 Conclusion and Next Steps

With the publication of this Statement of Results and Final Decision, URCA formally concludes the public consultation on the Gas Service Worker Regulations.

URCA confirms that no comments or submissions were received in response to the Consultation Document.

As a next step, URCA will publish the Gas Service Worker Regulations as a standalone regulatory document simultaneously with this Statement of Results and Final Decision. The Gas Service Worker Regulations will be published under reference number NGS 19/2026.