



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS

Marcus J. Molinaro
County Executive

May 31, 2022

Mr. Rory M. Christian, Chairman and CEO
New York State Public Service Commission
Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 3
Albany, NY 12223-1350

Chairman Christian:

Pursuant to complaints related to new billing systems implemented by Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation (CH) and New York State Electric & Gas Corporation (NYSEG), and in furtherance of consumer financial protections, I respectfully invoke your intervention on behalf of the two utility's more than 2.5 million customers to ensure full transparency and accountability during the investigations. To these ends, I implore the Public Service Commission (PSC) to:

1. suspend any current rate case and defer any future utility filings including any pending rate increases during the investigation period, and until all outstanding related customer disputes have been satisfied, and;
2. suspend any current rate case and defer any future utility filings including any pending rate increases until a management and operations audit has been completed.

As you may know, a perfect storm has been brewing for two decades fueled by questionable federal and state policy decisions, some targeting our region, and the untimely and hastily closure of Indian Point—the result has been a deliberate incremental increase in electric and gas costs to the residents of our region conflated by legislated supply side constrictions of electric and natural gas. This in and of itself has produced undue hardship on our residents, but the failure of the PSC to provide proper guidance and oversight as it relates to mandates such as the Community Distributed Generation Program and the implementation of the utilities' billing systems have placed thousands of residents in financial jeopardy. Instead of creating a reliable and sustainable system resilient to external factors, the system has been regulated for failure.

Nevertheless, the utilities cannot escape the responsibility for a flawed rollout of a new billing system and failure to effectively communicate with affected customers, but neither should those that regulate them.

Consequently, our residents, still vulnerable from a global pandemic, have lost faith in our gas and electric utilities on which they rely on more than ever, and lost faith in the institutions responsible for their oversight. Our residents find themselves reduced to having to make choices between energy and nutrition.

While the investigations and resolutions are paramount, in short order I call on the PSC to seek greater accountability and transparency from the utilities they regulate, but also look inward at the Department of Public Service (DPS) and New York State (NYS) for the same accountability and transparency.

My colleagues have called for greater transparency of the market prices and formulas the utilities use to determine consumer rates, and I support that effort, but I demand the same accountability and transparency apply to the cost of programs and policies mandated by the state which are embedded in the supply, delivery and miscellaneous charges. Utility bills prescribed by DPS and the NYS are difficult at best for customers to understand, and customers have the right to know a true cost breakdown of their energy as well as the efficacy and benefit of any mandated program or policy.

I appreciate your time and attention to this correspondence and stand ready to work with you and the state to ensure our residents and businesses receive the affordable, reliable and sustainable energy they need with full, not selective, accountability and transparency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Molinaro", with a large, sweeping initial "M" and a stylized "J. Molinaro" following.

Marcus J. Molinaro
County Executive