

**National Lawyers Guild of Rhode Island**  
2374 Post Road, Suite 201  
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November 16, 2017

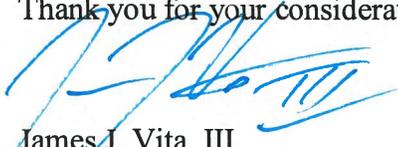
To the Commissioners of the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission,

On behalf of the Rhode Island chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, I am writing in support of the George Wiley Center's proposed emergency rules addressing the urgent need of Rhode Islanders that are without utilities. We support the George Wiley Center's proposals to allow those currently without heat or electricity due to shutoffs to have their utilities restored by paying 10% of their overdue balance, to extend this protection to all Rhode Islanders, and to extend the period of time these protections are available. We therefore write to urge you to pass these proposals as soon as possible so that they may help as many people as quickly as possible.

Heat and electricity are essential utilities that must be available to all people. None of us can stay warm, prepare hot meals, store food safely, or keep our homes illuminated during the long winter nights. However, many Rhode Islanders continue to struggle under dire economic conditions. Others have medical needs that are dependent on having electricity to keep equipment running or to store medication. Many of our neighbors are vulnerable children or elders. They cannot survive without their utilities. All people deserve some degree of material wellbeing that is impossible without heat and electricity. These proposals would help those with the most urgent need and would provide immediate and positive changes in their lives.

As an organization that advocates for human rights to be protected over property interests, we believe that the passage of these emergency proposals is necessary. The rights of our fellow Rhode Islanders to safe and comfortable shelter and to food, light, and warmth through the winter months must take priority over the economic interests of National Grid. The Commission should recognize this and adopt the George Wiley Center's proposals.

Thank you for your consideration,

  
James J. Vita, III,  
on behalf of RI National Lawyers Guild