



Rec'd by e-mail 10/31/07

Rhode Island Community Action Association  
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October 31, 2007

Luly Massaro  
Commission Clerk  
Public Utilities Commission  
89 Jefferson Boulevard  
Warwick, RI 02888

RE: Commission Docket No. 3876

Dear Ms. Massaro:

The Rhode Island Community Action Association (RICAA) is writing in regards to Commission Docket No. 3876, which held a public hearing on October 11, 2007 and is accepting public comments until November 5, 2007. With the onset of the winter season, a record number of low-income Rhode Island households are having difficult re-establishing utility service.

While Governor Carcieri and the General Assembly in a bi-partisan effort supported the Affordable Energy Plan during last year's session that would have provided a funding stream for down payment assistance to low-income households to restore utility services. However, due to state budget shortfalls the assistance portion of the Affordable Energy Legislation was delayed until January 1, 2009.

Based upon the work of the eight (8) Community Action Agencies throughout Rhode Island we are requesting that you removed the following language that will ultimately displace more Rhode Islanders than assist them in making their outstanding utility bills current: (1) removal of the law that currently allows non-certified attorneys to represent customers at the formal hearing process held before the Division of Public Utilities (PUC) and (2) removal of the proposed language that would allow utility companies to offer a lenient payment plan, as the Affordable Energy Legislation allows for a forgiveness program to be implemented; however, utility companies will not without the funding from the state budget. RICAA is requesting the PUC lower the percentage of 25% to an affordable percentage that low-income households can afford.

The Network of Rhode Island's Eight Community Action Agencies

Blackstone Valley Community Action ♥ Comprehensive Community Action ♥ East Bay Community Action ♥  
Family Resources Community Action ♥ Providence Community Action ♥ South County Community Action  
♥ Tri-Town Community Action ♥ Westbay Community Action



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It is RICAA's hope that the PUC will be cognizant of the many low-income Rhode Island households who are limited in resources, many lacking the proper weatherized homes, thus giving our comments careful consideration in your decisions to change these laws.

Sincerely,

Paula M. McFarland  
Director

cc: Henry Shelton, George Wiley Center