

RATEPAYERS ADVISORY BOARD
89 JEFFERSON BOULEVARD
WARWICK, R.I. 02886

TESTIMONY FOR PUBLIC HEARING, DECEMBER 16, 2014

The Ratepayers Advisory Board(RAB) is expressing its serious concern regarding the huge proposed rate increase in electricity by National Grid.

The RAB was created in the 2011 Law known as the Henry Shelton Act. In general, the Ratepayers Advisory Board prioritizes interest in how utility policies impact the economically disadvantaged; consequently, major rate increases are of major concern to us. The policy impacts every household and business.

The Ratepayers Advisory Board wants the Public Utilities Commission to include one factor among the many it must consider in its decision about a possible rate hike; that is, the disproportionate burden an “across the board” percentage increase has on low and modest income Rhode Islanders. For those who struggle to make ends meet, the burden of a 23.3% rate hike is much more severe than the burden felt by residents or businesses with more means. While Rhode Islanders with higher incomes will certainly feel the impact of the rate hike, lower income residents could find themselves unable to pay utility bills in full without compromising other essential household necessities. Low income households are already on payment plans to clear up arrearages while struggling to keep up with current electric bills. Households that are struggling but successfully paying their electric bills may be pushed into a deficit situation due to the proposed substantial increase. The ability to pay is already recognized in rate setting with the A-60 and R-13 programs.

THE RATEPAYER ADVISORY BOARD URGES THE PUC TO BE MINDFUL OF THE UNEVEN BURDEN ON LOWER INCOME RHODE ISLANDERS AND TO CONSIDER TAILORING IMMEDIATE RATE HIKES TO THE ABILITY TO PAY!

The Ratepayers Advisory Board members:

Stephen Boyle, Virginia Gonsalves, Melissa Husband, Judy Jones- Vice Chair, Sandra Kelly, Elizabeth Morancy-Chair, Jackie Parra, Frederick Sneesby, Vivian Weisman