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State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations



Senate Chamber

November 25, 2014

Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02888

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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

We write regarding the recent filing by National Grid seeking a 23.6% increase in electricity rates. We respectfully ask that the Commission moderate this increase to the maximum extent feasible. This dramatic rate increase affects the electricity bills of residential households, as well as businesses and industrial users and is detrimental to our struggling economy.

The negative impacts of electricity affordability extend to the overall state economy, threatening job growth and harming the state's competitive position in regional, national and global markets. Our small businesses are looking for relief as they attempt to rebuild their workforces and profits. Electric rate hikes could negatively affect their investment in capital and labor.

As our state rebounds from high unemployment and economic recession, families continue to struggle to regain their financial footing. The lack of affordable energy disproportionately impacts working families and Rhode Islanders who are on a fixed income. In addition, higher electricity costs are certain to increase already strained municipal and school budgets which may result in higher property taxes when municipalities cannot absorb these rate increases in their budgets.

We understand the challenges that Rhode Island faces in ensuring adequate natural gas pipeline capacity and supply. We must continue to work with Massachusetts and Connecticut toward on critical this issue.

Energy, like food and housing, is an indispensable necessity of life. It must be our collective goal to ensure that energy costs are affordable to all Rhode Islanders, both residents and businesses alike. We believe it is possible to moderate this rate proposal, and we request that you take the necessary steps to do so.

Sincerely,

M. Teresa Paiva Weed
President of the Senate

Dominick J. Ruggiero
Senate Majority Leader