Senator Webb, Assemblymember Kelles and PULP Hold Event to Help Utility Customers Apply for Energy Assistance

LEA WEBB   February 28, 2025

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(ITHACA, NY) On Thursday, February 27, Senator Lea Webb, Assemblymember Anna Kelles, The Public Utility Law Project (PULP), and other partners hosted a clinic at the Greater Ithaca Activities Center to help utility customers save money on their utility bills this winter by checking their eligibility for utility financial and energy efficiency assistance programs.

Local residents attended the workshop and were able to consult with trained advocates from PULP and other agencies to ask questions, learn about financial assistance options, and apply for a variety of income-eligible programs.

 Said Senator Lea Webb, "It has been a very cold winter and many of my constituents are struggling to pay their utility bills. I am committed to passing legislation in Albany to address utility affordability and deliver transparency for consumers when it comes to their bills. I am pleased to be able to offer events like this one to connect community members with the local organizations and programs that can offer some financial assistance. Thank you to Assemblymember Kelles, PULP, and all of the participating organizations for working together to deliver some utility relief this winter."

Said Assemblymember Anna Kelles, "New Yorkers' budgets are stretched now more than ever, and affording the escalating utility costs is adding economic strain to individuals and families in our communities, especially through these tough winter months. While we continue to transition New York State to renewable energy infrastructure that will ultimately help reduce the cost burden on rate payers, we must also provide economic relief now for struggling households. Our in-district open house events are here to help residents identify and access existing local, state, and federal programs that they may be eligible for to reduce their utility bills. I was proud to co-host this event with Senator Lea Webb, the Public Utility Law Project, and county agencies who are all working together to help Tompkins county residents and look forward to hosting more in the future!"

 "PULP applauds the leadership of Senator Webb and Assemblymember Kelles for hosting another impactful Utility Assistance workshop in Tompkins County. Events like these are vital in ensuring struggling households have access to the resources they need to keep their homes safe and warm in the winter season. PULP is always proud to assist utility customers by reviewing their bills, answering questions, and guiding them through the application process for crucial financial aid and energy efficiency programs," said **Laurie Wheelock, Executive Director and Counsel at PULP**.

Attendees at Thursdays event included:

- Senator Webb's office
- Assemblymember Kelles' Office
- The Public Utility Law Project ("PULP")
- NYSEG
- The Department of Public Service
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (the NYSERDA Regional Clean Energy Hub)

- Tompkins County Office of the Aging

- Cortland County Community Action Program (HCR's regional subgrantee)

Attendees were able to learn about the following utility assistance programs, which have income eligibility requirements and include:

- NYSEG's Energy Affordability Program monthly bill discount program

- The NYS Home Energy Assistance Program ("HEAP")

- Energy efficiency programs including EmPower Plus

- Weatherization Programs including the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and the Energy Savers Program. Both Cornell Cooperative Extension and Cortland County Community Action Program will be on hand to discuss weatherization and energy efficiency.

- NYSEG - will also be able to provide one-on-one account assistance with customers. This includes deferred payment agreements, account reviews, budget billing plans and more.

- PULP - this organization can help customers review their bills and help them apply for assistance

- The Department of Public Service staff will be on hand to offer winter weather safety and other utility-related information. The Department also has a helpline and hotline for customers who are unable to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

- Tompkins County Office of the Aging- will also be sharing resources to assist older adults.

Community members unable to attend Thursday's event can still access assistance and programs the following ways:

Utility related assistance

NYSEG customers struggling to pay their utility bill will be able to speak with the company directly. They may be able to enter into a deferred payment agreement or learn more about options such as budget billing. You can contact NYSEG by calling: 800.572.1111

NYSEG's energy affordability program monthly discount program:

Income eligible households may qualify for NYSEG's monthly discount program. To learn more you can visit: EAP Application Form PDF

NYSEG also has its own financial assistance grant called "Project Share."

To learn more visit: https://www.nyseg.com/account/waystopay/helpwithbill/project-share

The Home Energy Assistance Program ("HEAP") and Emergency HEAP

Both programs are currently open. Income eligible households can still apply by visiting: mybenefits.ny.gov

More info @ https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/

Or visit Tompkins County DSS located at: 320 W State St, Ithaca, NY 14850

EmPower+

Helps low- and moderate-income households save energy and money toward energy improvements made to their primary residence: https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/EmPower-New-York-Program

To learn more about how energy efficiency can help lower your usage and your bills, you can visit: https://energyadvisor.ny.gov Locally, you can also contact Cornell Cooperative Extension and learn more by visiting: https://smartenergychoices.org/

For weatherization resources, learn more by visiting Cortland County Community Action Program: https://www.capco.org/our-programs/

Senator Webb, Assemblymember Kelles, and PULP are planning an additional utility assistance event in Cortland in April.

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