



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

Senate Majority Moves to Hold Public Service Commission Accountable to NY Ratepayers

LEA WEBB June 5, 2025

| ISSUE: **UTILITY BILLS**

(BINGHAMTON , N.Y.) Senator Webb and The Senate Democratic Majority today advanced legislation to spur change at the Public Service Commission (PSC) so they may better assist and protect ratepayers. This package includes Senator Webb's legislation to establish an energy usage monitor program for ratepayers, in addition to legislation that would notify ratepayers of a proposed rate hike via text, email, and their monthly utility bill; authorize the Public Service Commission to consider non-economic damages to consumers when determining penalties for utilities; and require utilities to return excess revenues to ratepayers.

The bills in today's package build on our efforts from the beginning of this year's session, when we passed another legislative package to lower utility costs and protect ratepayers across New York State. Amid the recent proliferation of proposed rate hikes, we remain especially committed to ensuring utility providers, through their PSC-approved actions and practices, work in the best interest of New York's ratepayers.

"Too many New Yorkers are facing skyrocketing utility bills with little warning or control," **said Senator Lea Webb.** "That's why I'm proud that my bill, S.8062, is part of the utility affordability package. This legislation creates an Energy Usage Monitor Program so

customers can set their own usage or cost limits and get notified when they're close to going over. It's a simple, proactive step that puts power back in the hands of consumers and helps families better manage their monthly expenses."

The legislation passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Establishes an Energy Usage Monitor Program:** This bill, S.8062, sponsored by Senator Webb, would establish a usage monitor program to notify customers when their energy usage exceeds a cost or usage threshold determined by them in a given billing period
- **Enacts the Rate Hike Notice Act:** This bill, S.5553B, sponsored by Senator Comrie, would enact the Rate Hike Notice Act, which directs the Public Service Commission to mandate electric and gas utilities to provide notice of a proposed rate hike to a customer via text, email, and that customer's monthly utility bill.
- **Restores Consumer Representation on the State Energy Planning Board:** This bill, S.2460, sponsored by Senator Comrie, would authorize the Secretary of State to appoint a representative from the Consumer Protection Division's Utility Intervention Unit to serve on the State Energy Planning Board.
- **Considers Non-Economic Damages When Assessing Penalties for Utilities:** This bill, S.7165A, sponsored by Senator Hinchey, would authorize the Public Service Commission to consider non-economic damages suffered by consumers when determining penalties, including penalties negotiated in settlements, for utilities. These non-economic damages may include, for example, any pain and suffering or mental anguish endured by a utility customer during an unplanned power outage.
- **Regulates Appointments to the Public Service Commission:** This bill, S.7328A, sponsored by Senator Hinchey, would expand the number of Public Service Commission commissioners to eight; require the governor to appoint an additional commissioner with consumer advocacy experience; codify the Public Service Commission's mission to

ensure affordable, reliable, and safe access to utility services for New Yorkers; and prohibit any employee of a utility regulated by the Public Service Commission from serving as a commissioner for two years after their employment.

- **Regulates Retroactive Revenue Recovery Following Suspension Periods:** This bill, S.5593, sponsored by Senator Mayer, would regulate provisions that allow utilities to retroactively recover revenues based on the new rates that would have otherwise been applied during the period of a rate case and extends the statutory timeframe for a rate case to 14 months from the current time frame of 11 months, in order to provide additional time for consumer advocates and the Public Service Commission to review the utilities proposed rate increases.
- **Returns Excess Utilities Revenues to Ratepayers:** This bill, S.7693, sponsored by Senator Mayer, would prohibit the Public Service Commission from approving any rate plan that allows a gas, electric, or combination gas and electric corporation to retain revenues in excess of their authorized rate of return on equity. It would require utilities to return any excess revenues annually to ratepayers.
- **Implements Utility Service Outage Provider Hotlines:** This bill, S.6200, sponsored by Senator Skoufis, would require utility companies to maintain an available 24/7 toll free number for consumers to call to report service outages.

###