



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

Statement from Senator Metzger on the Joint Proposal of the Parties to the Rate Case of New York State Electric & Gas Corporation (NYSEG)

JEN METZGER June 24, 2020

| ISSUE: **PROTECTING UTILITY RATEPAYERS, NYSEG, PUBLIC UTILITIES**

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It is outrageous that the parties to this rate case have agreed to impose a nearly 25 percent increase in electric rates over three years, in total and utter disregard for the pandemic and the economic toll it has taken on residents and small businesses in our region. The Department of Labor's latest jobs report, released yesterday, shows unemployment rates between 10 and 12 percent in counties I represent, and in this context, such an exorbitant increase is inexcusable. Meanwhile, the agreement gives utility shareholders a higher guaranteed rate of profit than necessary or warranted during this pandemic.

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I also remain very concerned about continued problems with poor service reliability in areas of my district. NYSEG has consistently under-invested in preventative maintenance for reliability, which worsened the severity of impacts of the March 2018 winter storms and has also contributed to a high frequency of power outages in my Senate district more generally. The increase in funding for vegetation management proposed in this Joint Proposal is a welcome start, but additional investment is likely needed given the catch-up necessary because of years of neglect. The Joint Proposal would have the utility spend nearly \$490

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million on advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) when many customers in my district still lack the broadband access to realize benefits from it. Funding would be better spent on additional investment in preventive maintenance and on replacing antiquated circuits to improve power quality and better support renewable energy on the distribution system."

The portions of NYSEG territory in the district that Senator Metzger represents includes nearly all of Sullivan County, the towns of Delhi, Walton, and Colchester in Delaware County, and the town of Shawangunk in Ulster County. Senator Metzger submitted a letter to the Public Service Commission in December providing detailed comments on NYSEG's rate plan proposal, which can be found [here](#).

Relatedly, the State Legislature recently passed the Parker/Mosley moratorium bill ([8113A](#)) to protect New Yorkers during this pandemic who are struggling to pay their utility bills. The legislation, which was signed into law, prohibits utilities from terminating electricity, gas, water, and phone (landline) services for a period extending 180 days beyond the state of emergency, and gives customers the right to enter into a deferred payment plan without utility penalties or late fees.

The Joint Proposal and other documents related to the NYSEG rate case can be found at dps.ny.gov (Case 19-E-0378).