



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Hinchey Bill to Ban Estimated Billing by Utility Companies Passes Senate Unanimously

MICHELLE HINCHEY March 23, 2023



**ALBANY, NY** – Today, the State Senate unanimously passed a bill authored by Senator Michelle Hinchey to protect New Yorkers from excessive month-to-month fluctuations in their utility bills due to the use of estimated billing by utility companies. Hinchey's bill is informed by thousands of Hudson Valley residents who have experienced astronomical bill increases due to estimated utility readings, which is when a utility supplier predicts and bills a customer's power consumption based on their past usage rather than an actual meter reading for that month. Hinchey's bill aims to curb this billing method, which frequently

leads to customers being overcharged and has placed significant economic hardship on residents of her district.

“No matter who you are, a single parent or a senior on a fixed income, you should be able to budget effectively from month to month, not have your savings account unexpectedly drained by an inaccurate utility bill, as we’ve seen happen to countless Hudson Valley community members,” **Senator Michelle Hinchey said.** “Utility companies are using estimation formulas that are not based on past usage, making it impossible for New Yorkers to afford, let alone trust, their utility bills. My legislation to ban the practice will help ensure that this never happens again while bringing needed transparency and accountability to the utility industry as a whole in New York.”

**S1851-Hinchey** would codify in law that utility companies in New York must perform an actual meter reading unless they cannot gain access to a meter due to circumstances beyond their control, including extreme weather. The bill would also require the Public Service Commission (PSC) to develop an estimation formula to be used as a utility industry standard in New York State while limiting the number of times estimated billing can be used to three billing cycles per year (down from six). Hinchey’s bill sets the deadline to November 1, 2023, for the PSC to create the new billing standard, which will be informed, in part, by a comprehensive review of the estimated billing procedures used by all utility companies serving New York State. This would make public, for the first time, the estimated billing formulas of utility companies serving New York State to increase transparency and accountability to the people of New York.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2023-S1851

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Vetoed By Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Permits the rendering of an estimated bill from a utility corporation or municipality under certain circumstances

January 17, 2023

Vetoed

Sponsored by **Michelle Hinchey**

Do you support this bill?

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