

CHAIR
AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEES
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, TOURISM,
PARKS AND RECREATION
ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
FINANCE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
TRANSPORTATION

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



MICHELLE HINCHEY
Senator, 41ST District

MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CANNABIS
JOINT SENATE TASK FORCE
ON OPIOIDS, ADDICTION, AND
OVERDOSE PREVENTION
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON
RURAL RESOURCES
LEGISLATIVE WOMEN'S CAUCUS
SELECT MAJORITY TASKFORCE ON
MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED
BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

Hon. Michelle L. Phillips
Secretary to the Commission
New York State Public Service Commission
Albany, NY

February 6, 2024

Subject: Case 23-W-0467 - Dover Plains Water Company

Dear Commissioners,

I write today to advocate for the people of Dover and express my strong opposition to the proposal set forth by the Dover Plains Water Company, which seeks to implement a 67% rate increase coupled with an additional \$30 surcharge on residents' water bills. Access to clean and affordable water is a fundamental necessity, and it is the responsibility of every water utility to provide services at fair rates. Nearly tripling the water bills for people with fixed and moderate incomes is far from fair.

Dover is an economically disadvantaged community where 17.9% of residents live below the poverty line. This rate hike would inflict immediate financial hardship on our neighbors, many of whom are already grappling with serious economic challenges, forced to choose between paying for essentials like rent or mortgage, heating their homes, buying groceries, and covering medical bills. Adding an exorbitant water bill to this list is unconscionable.

I urge the Commission to carefully consider the human impact of this proposal and, in doing so, hold in-person public hearings in the Town of Dover. While we appreciate the Commission's effort to hold a virtual hearing, it does not accommodate the needs of a rural community with limited internet access. It is incumbent upon the PSC to ensure that public comments are accessible to everyone, particularly in situations where the financial stability of an entire community is at stake.

I appreciate the Commission's attention to this vital matter and dedication to protecting customers throughout New York State. I will continue to be an advocate for the residents of Dover, and I trust that the Commission will thoughtfully consider the implications of this proposed rate hike and work towards a fair and equitable solution.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hinchey
New York State Senator, District 41