

September 22, 2020

Freeholders Call For BPU To Reject JCP&L's \$185 Million Rate Hike

Hunterdon County's Freeholder Board at the September 15th meeting, approved a resolution calling on the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to reject Jersey Central Power and Light (JCP&L)'s petition for an \$185 million rate increase and to require the utility to reimburse residential customers for cost of food and prescription medicine spoiled or compromised as a result of a sustained electric service outage.

The resolution notes, 'Hunterdon County residents served by JCP&L have had a long history of power failures, slow response for restoration by the utility, and lack of proper communication about outages.'

Freeholder John E. Lanza stated, "Our residents have put up with power outages too often, for far too long, and the loss of food and medicine without reimbursement is unjustified, particularly since Public Service Electric and Gas (PSE&G) is reimbursing their customers. It is time for those who have authority in Trenton to take action."

The rate increase proposed by JCP&L is projected to cost ratepayers \$185.3 million and ranges to as much as an 8.9% increase on monthly bills, according to the filing.

Lanza recommended that in addition to submitting the resolution as the Freeholders' official comment to the BPU, that the document also be forwarded to the New Jersey Senate Law and Public Safety Committee for its September 21st hearing on the response of utility companies throughout the State to power outages resulting from the recent Tropical Storm.

"The Committee is accepting written testimony for the hearing, so I would suggest that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to be included in the record of the committee hearing.

Additionally, I intend to write to the Committee recommending action on Senator Kip Bateman's bill, S-2836, requiring electric public utility to reimburse residential customers for cost of food and prescription medicine spoiled or compromised as a result of a sustained electric service outage," Lanza said.

Lanza concluded, "The public can still comment on the rate increase petition which can be sent to the BPU by September 30, 2020."

Comments can be forwarded to NJBPU Secretary Aida Camacho-Welch, at the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, 44 South Clinton Avenue, 9th Floor, P.O. Box 350, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0350. Email comments should be submitted to: board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov.