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August 17, 2020

John B. Rhodes
Chairman of the Public Service Commission
Empire State Plaza, Agency Bldg 3
Albany, NY 12223

RE: Joint Proposal – Case 19-E-0378 (NYSEG Electric Rates); Case 19-G-0379 (NYSEG Gas Rates)

Dear Chairman Rhodes,

I write to you in strong opposition of the proposed rate increase for New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG) on behalf of the ratepayers of the Town of Yorktown.

Reviewing the Joint Proposal shows a proposed increase in revenue for NYSEG of \$45.68 million (a 6.1% increase in Rate Year 1, \$84.77 million (a 10.6% increase for RY2 and \$88.57 million (a 9.9% increase) for RY3. Should the Public Service Commission approve the rate increases as recommended in the joint proposal the revenue increases would result in an average monthly bill increase of 3.6% in RY1, 5.7% in RY2 and 7.2% in RY3.

Rate increases should be tied to performance. Sadly, Yorktown residents can attest to the consistently substandard service NYSEG has provided.

For example, on July 10th of this year I was contacted by a constituent who had lost power. The individual explained, "This evening, we lost power again. We have lived in Yorktown for 30 years, and our neighborhood of about 200 households has been suffering from frequent power outages every year. Please help us identify the cause and request NYSEG to fix the perennial power outage problem..."


As we digest the actions taken before and after Hurricane Isaias vegetation management will be a focal point. Our community raised this in the aftermath of Quinn and Riley in 2018 which crippled our community for more than a week and resulted in a PSC-led investigation. The costs associated with NYSEG finally implementing a comprehensive vegetation management program should not fall on the backs of ratepayers which is exactly what this joint proposal would allow. The proper implementation of a vegetation management program is NYSEG's responsibility as part of their commitment to providing reliable energy to their ratepayers and they should pay for it.

Sadly, the damage that the proposed rate hikes will have in our community go far beyond storm preparation or response. For many residents, especially our seniors on fixed incomes, this rate hike will either force our neighbors out of our communities or push them closer to poverty. Just last week the United Way released a new study showing one-third of Hudson Valley families unable to make ends meet; standing one emergency away from financial ruin. In Westchester County the percentage is even higher.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has shuttered small businesses, caused unemployment rates to soar and put hardworking New Yorkers on their backs. The Town of Yorktown is no exception to this. Our food pantries saw a nearly 400% increase in use as many of our neighbors struggled to provide for their families at the height of the pandemic.

The thought of a combined electric and gas rate hike of more than 20% is unconscionable considering the challenges our neighbors are facing. I urge you and the Public Service Commission to do the right thing and reject this mistimed and undeserved rate hike. Our residents are counting on you.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Slater
Yorktown Town Supervisor