



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
General Court

January 11, 2023

Matthew H. Nelson, Chair
Department of Public Utilities
One South Station, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02110

RE: Winter Energy Rate Increases

Dear Chair Nelson,

Several months ago, you received a letter from many of our colleagues regarding our deep concerns about the proposed energy rate increases from multiple investor-owned utility companies, including National Grid, Unitil and Eversource. We expressed concerns about the exorbitant rate increases which were being requested as they would cause great harm to our constituents and local business.

Utility companies cited a myriad of factors that contributed to their request to raise their rates. The focus however for the requested increase centered around the high price of oil and Russia's invasion of Ukraine as well as rising inflation. In the summer of 2022 oil prices reached exorbitant levels, peaking at over \$140 per barrel. However, since the time the department of Public Utilities (DPU) approved the utilities' requested rate increases, oil prices have fallen dramatically, trading at \$75 per barrel at the close of the day on January 4, 2023.¹

We are requesting that the DPU take immediate action to reassess the recently granted rate increases. With cheaper oil, utility companies have been able to generate extreme profit for themselves at the expense of Massachusetts residents. It is the DPU's duty to protect our citizens from unfair and deeply damaging prices.²

Several winter months remain, and it is untenable for our residents and businesses to continue to pay these outrageous and unfair prices for the benefit of utility investors. We urge you to prioritize safety, affordability, and equity for residents across the Commonwealth. Inaction from the DPU on this matter is unacceptable, and we hope you will take the immediate action necessary to protect our residents.

We look forward to your response as this matter must be addressed immediately. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

¹ See also Gas and oil prices sink on back of warm weather and economic worries, Financial Times (January 4th, 2023) available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/c12ba784-4afa-4685-af75-6135b95da923>

² According to the Mass General Laws, "[DPU] shall, with respect to itself and the entities it regulates, prioritize safety, security, reliability of service, affordability, equity and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions...." M.G.L. 25, § 1A.

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Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire District

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Third Berkshire District

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Representative Christopher Flanagan
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Representative Carole Fiola
Sixth Bristol District

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Representative Alan Silvia
Seventh Bristol District

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Norfolk, Plymouth and Bristol District

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Ninth Bristol District

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Senator John Keenan
Norfolk and Plymouth District

Representative Christopher Hendricks
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Representative Josh Cutler

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Representative Joseph McKenna

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Representative Kate Donaghue

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