



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senator Michelle Hinchey Authors Letter to the PSC Opposing Dover Plains Water Company Rate Increase

MICHELLE HINCHEY November 13, 2023



Hinchey Authors Letter to the PSC Opposing Dover Plains Water Company Rate Increase

**DOVER, NY** – New York State Senator Michelle Hinchey has submitted testimony to the Public Service Commission (PSC) in opposition to a [rate hike request](#) by the Dover Plains Water Company, which is asking for a 68% rate increase and a \$30 quarterly surcharge on residents' water bills. Hinchey is encouraging residents to make their voices heard on the rate case by submitting testimony to the PSC [here](#).

**Senator Michelle Hinchey said,** “Access to clean water is not just a necessity but a fundamental right, and preserving this right means keeping water affordable for our residents. This proposed rate hike is dramatically out of line with the fixed and moderate incomes of Dover residents and would inflict severe financial strain on people and families. No one should ever have to make impossible choices between paying their rent or mortgage, heating their homes, putting food on the table, or covering their water bills. I will continue to advocate for the residents of Dover and fight for a fair and equitable solution that upholds the right to affordable water access for all.”

**A full copy of Senator Hinchey’s letter to the Public Service Commission is below.**

November 7, 2023

Hon. Michelle L. Phillips

Secretary to the Commission

New York State Public Service Commission

Empire State Plaza - Agency Building 3

Albany, NY 12223-1350

**RE: Case 23-W-0467**

Dear Commissioners,

I represent nearly 300 residents and 40 businesses in the Town of Dover who rely on the Dover Plains Water Company for their water service. I submit this letter out of great urgency and strong opposition to the Company’s proposed 68% rate increase coupled with a \$30 quarterly surcharge on residents’ water bills to finance a replenishable escrow account. It is

worth noting that the Commission had previously denied the request for an escrow account surcharge in the Company's last rate case, No. 14-W-0378, and I stand with the people of Dover in supporting its denial once more.

More than doubling the water bill for any rural New York household or business is a severe financial burden, but in Dover, an economically disadvantaged community where 17.9%<sup>1</sup> of residents live below the poverty line, a twofold rate increase compounded by an additional \$30 surcharge would subject people to immediate financial harm. A rate increase this extreme is not proportional to the fixed and moderate incomes of Dover residents, many of whom are already forced to make impossible choices between paying their rent or mortgage, heating their home this winter, putting food on the table, or paying a medical bill. Adding water service to that list is unconscionable.

Access to clean, safe, and reliable water service is a fundamental necessity, and every water utility – no matter their size or who they serve – has a responsibility to provide service at fair rates. The proposed 68% rate increase, along with a \$30 surcharge, by the Dover Plains Water Company is neither fair nor just.

I also strongly encourage the Commission to hold public hearings in the Town of Dover. Hearings would provide an invaluable opportunity to hear the concerns of local residents and business owners who stand to be the most impacted by the proposed rate hike. By doing so, the Commission can gain a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the far-reaching implications that a rate increase would bear on the community.

I appreciate the Commission's attention to this critical issue and its commitment to protecting customers across New York State. I will continue to advocate for the residents of

Dover and work towards a fair and equitable solution.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Hinchey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Michelle Hinchey**

**New York State Senator, District 41**

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