



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

Senator Lea Webb & Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo Applaud Programs Available for Utility Bill Debt Relief

LEA WEBB February 21, 2024

| ISSUE: **PROTECTING UTILITY RATEPAYERS**



\$200M in state funding for utility bill relief to benefit 8M residents

(BINGHAMTON, NY) – Today Senator Lea Webb and Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo were joined by Laurie Wheelock, Executive Director and Counsel at the Public Utility Law Project (PULP) to emphasize the statewide movement towards energy affordability, with \$1.4B having been or expected to be made available to offset energy costs in 2024 through the state’s existing programs, including Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), the Energy

Affordability Program (EAP), EmPower+, NY Sun, and the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

Additionally, state law was recently changed to require the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to generate and share with utility companies lists of beneficiaries of OTDA-administered programs who are also eligible for utility affordability programs. These “data-matching” efforts will ensure that utility customers who meet eligibility standards are enrolled in their utility companies’ Energy Assistance Programs.

Finally, \$200 million in state funding is now available for utility bill credits that will benefit over eight million New Yorkers. This funding was included in the 2023-24 State budget in response to spikes in energy commodity prices post-COVID. Residential and non-residential customers of New York State Electric and Gas and Rochester Gas & Electric (NYSEG-RG&E) can expect to see a one-time bill credit in the amount of \$9.51 for electric customers and \$15.70 for gas customers. Bill credits will be applied automatically with no actions by the customer and can be expected to appear on statements within the next 45 days.

“Energy affordability is one of my top priorities as we make our transition to clean energy,” **said Senator Lea Webb.** “I am proud that we were able to secure \$200 million in Energy Affordability funds in the FY 2023-24 State Budget. I thank my partners in the state legislature, Governor Hochul, PULP, the PSC, and our utility companies for working together on a proposal to deliver some financial relief to electric and gas customers here in the Southern Tier. Many households and small businesses are still struggling to find financial stability as our region recovers from the pandemic. We must continue to advocate for additional resources to ensure that energy is affordable for families and small businesses across New York.”

Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo said, “Working families and area businesses alike have been burdened by increasing utility prices in a post-COVID economy. We want to make sure that rate payers are aware that utility assistance programs like HEAP and EAP are available to provide assistance. In addition, thanks to funding we passed in last year’s state budget, every household with gas or electric service will receive a small credit on their bill in the next couple of months. I’d like to especially thank the Public Utility Law Project for their advocacy and leadership on this subject.”

Laurie Wheelock, Executive Director & Counsel, Public Utility Law Project, said “PULP extends our sincere gratitude to Governor Hochul and the State Legislature for the allocation of a historic \$200 million in the FY 2023-24 State Budget to address energy affordability. PULP and other stakeholders, including the Department of Public Service, the electric and gas utilities, including NYSEG, and fellow consumer advocates, all worked together to put forward a proposal that would provide relief to customers. This bill credit underscores a shared commitment to find ways to aid all New Yorkers, including our most vulnerable households, facing rising utility costs and volatile electric and natural gas prices. As we celebrate this milestone, PULP remains committed to identifying and advocating for additional measures to ensure energy is affordable in 2024 and beyond. We thank Senator Webb and Assemblymember Lupardo for their longstanding support of energy affordability efforts.”

Low-income customers that are behind or falling behind on their bills can contact PULP for no-cost help. Call PULP’s hotline at 877-669-2572 or send an email to info@utilityproject.org for further assistance. To learn about additional energy management resources, visit: **LINK**

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