



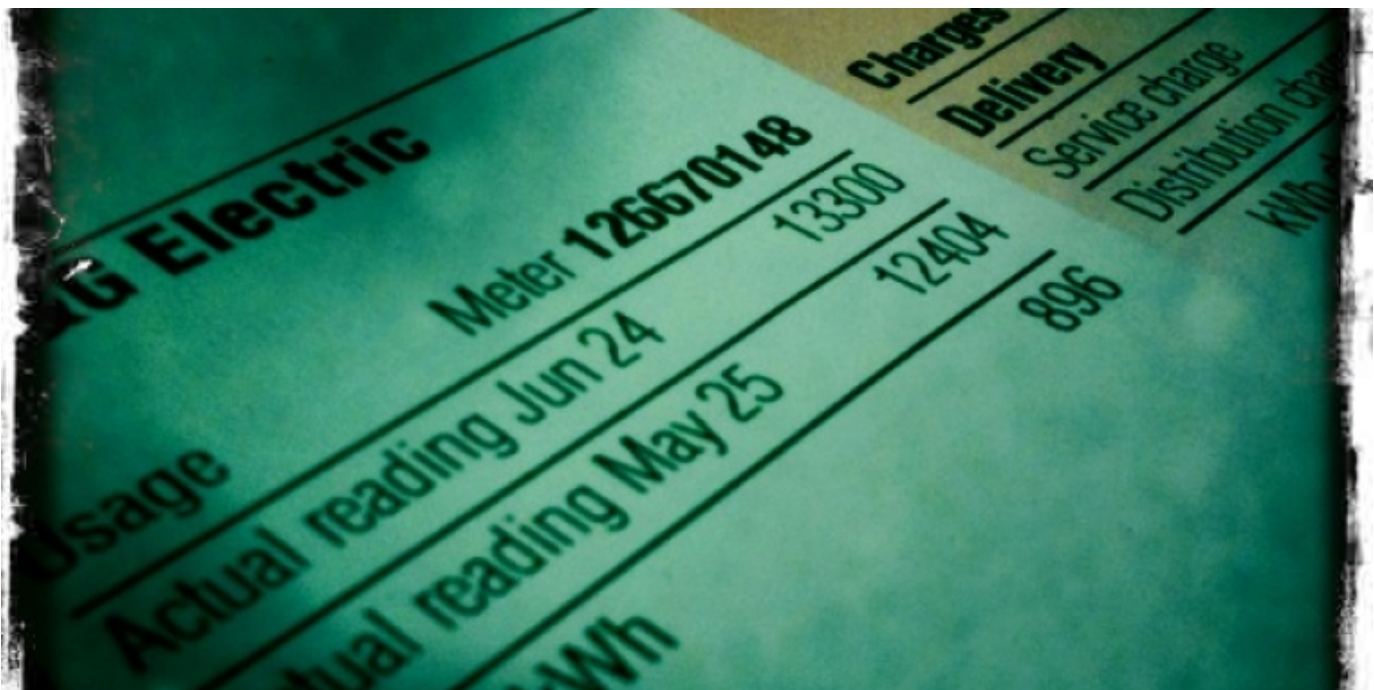
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo: PSC Should Reject National Grid Rate Increase Proposal

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO October 22, 2010

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(Albany) - Citing the free-spending ways of National Grid's top executives and contrasting that to the desperate plight of working families across the 47th District, Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-IP-C, Rome) today called upon the state Public Service Commission to reject the utility's request for a \$296 million increase in electric rates.

The Senate Energy Committee, of which Griffo is the Ranking Minority member, held a hearing this morning on the proposal. Griffo pointedly questioned National Grid executives and representatives of the PSC who were there to give testimony.

“This rate increase puts an intolerable, unjust, unfair and immoral burden upon the families and businesses of Upstate New York,” Griffo said. “In an economy where families are limping along by giving up luxuries, is nothing short of a sin for National Grid to be asking for a rate increase so that company executives can take political junkets, have the expensive wine collections shipped overseas, and pay astronomical private school tuition. Rates should reflect honest costs, and not exhibit the inflated, consumer-gouging expenses that have been tucked into this package.”

“What is it going to take for utility costs to come down in Upstate New York?” Griffo questioned. “Low natural gas prices, a slower economy, energy conservation programs and cool summers have contributed to the lower demand and price for electricity, but National Grid insists that rates, which are already among the highest in the nation, must be raised. Are ratepayers going to need to whip up support for a ‘Utility-Rates-Are-Too-High-Party’ in order to get action to address energy prices in New York?”

Griffo noted that although National Grid, once caught red-handed padding the increase with unjustified costs, said they removed these costs, he noted that initial PSC estimates show that National Grid padded its expenses by \$26 million, not \$4 million, as the company claimed.

“How can a rate increase even be seriously considered when we do not fully know the depths to which the company has gone to inflate costs and make consumers the fall guys for its arrogant actions and inappropriate spending?” Griffo said. “First, we resolve these issues related to what they spent and what they are trying to put on the backs of customers who are trying to make ends meet. Then, we hold National Grid to its 2002 promise that rates would go down in 2011. In a state where high electric rates are a major barrier to economic development, we not only need to avoid higher rates, we need to implement lower rates and insist that National Grid not be allowed to get away with this.”

Clips of the committee hearing can be viewed at the links below:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oggFPKni_Do

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkOtr5sgf3M>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRdT8ZSZIZw>