



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senator Michelle Hinchey and Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan Demand Central Hudson End Customer Surcharge and Issue Relief

MICHELLE HINCHEY August 30, 2022

**KINGSTON, NY** – State Senator Michelle Hinchey and Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan today announced that they have [sent a joint letter](#) to the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC), calling on Central Hudson to hold customers harmless for bill surcharges implemented to help pay for the New York State Electric and Gas Bill Relief Program, require shareholders to contribute more toward forgiving low-income customer arrears and extend arrears forgiveness to all moderate- and middle-income ratepayers economically harmed by COVID.

On August 1st, Central Hudson added a surcharge of 0.5 percent onto customer bills to help fund a year-long arrears reduction program to assist low-income households with electric and gas charges accumulated during the pandemic. Shareholders have only contributed about \$200,000 toward the debt relief program, falling short of the \$3-million-plus to be recovered, which the Company is relying on ratepayers and limited State funds to cover. Hinchey and Ryan are fighting to remove the cost burden from customers and ensure Central Hudson pays its fair share into the program while also advocating that the program expand to include debt forgiveness to all customers economically harmed by COVID.

“Central Hudson customers need financial relief, and that relief must come straight from the

top — from Central Hudson’s shareholders who need to step up and stop relying on ratepayers to foot the bill for them,” **Senator Michelle Hinchey said.** “Central Hudson is making money hand over fist, and it’s reprehensible that they would add even a single cent onto ratepayer bills when they can easily afford to cover the costs of this important debt relief program themselves. The last thing Hudson Valley families need is another hit to their wallets, and we will continue to fight for the utility relief our community members deserve.”

“While most of us are struggling to pay our bills, put food on the table, and keep the lights on, big corporations like Central Hudson are making record profits. Central Hudson has refused to pay their fair share and offer the desperately needed relief that our residents deserve from the company's failures to perform its duties. It is time for Central Hudson to take financial responsibility,” **Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan said.**

At the state level, Senator Hinchey has introduced legislation ([S7579A](#)) to ban estimated billing in most circumstances and bring greater transparency and reliability to the practices of utility companies serving New Yorkers. As Ulster County Executive, Ryan used his legal authority to initiate an investigation into Central Hudson's billing practices in a [March 3rd letter](#). Both officials hosted a public hearing on May 3rd, which drew over 100 attendees and more than 45 public comments.

Central Hudson customers who have been impacted by the Company’s billing system errors may submit public comment through the online form at [NYS DPS](#) to aid the Department of Public Service’s continued investigation.

###