

What is a rate case / rate hike request?

In June of 2025, right after the last installment of the previous 3-year, 34% rate hike went into effect in May, RG&E/NYSEG filed their request for massive increases in our utility bills and their shareholder profit as well. Rate cases currently serve as the only avenue for ratepayers to present their grievances regarding the energy price hikes and challenge the companies regarding their investments, aside from individual complaints on individual bills (find more info on individual complaints and resources [here](#)).

Now it's our turn to have our say. Attend a public hearing to make your voice heard. Tell NYSEG/RG&E and the Public Service Commission to ACT NOW to reject these outrageous rate hikes, increases in profit, customer service closures, and measures that further increase our dependence on gas infrastructure.

What is the testimony (for virtual hearings): 3-5 minute statement about why you want the Public Service Commission to reject RG&E's request to raise our rates and what they should make them do instead. The Public Service Commission (PSC) will be holding **virtual** public statement hearings: The

- ❖ Oct 21st at 1pm or 6pm
- ❖ You must **pre-register** to make a statement at a virtual hearing, but not at an in-person hearing.

For information on how to register & attend the virtual public statement hearings (by video or phone), click [HERE](#).

You can also comment online directly (until Oct 24) [here](#) (for electric) or [here](#) (for gas) - commenting on either one will get added to the overall record, but if you have comments on gas, electrification and climate, commenting on gas would make sense. Written public comments can be as short or as long as you like, but at least should include who you are, ideally your experience with RG&E, and that you oppose any rate increase and that you want a decrease in profits, not increase. You can add supporting documents to written public comments should you wish. Feel free to assemble comments copy/pasting from bullet points below.

What is [Rochester for Energy Democracy \(RED\)](#): RED is a grassroots movement, anchored by Metro Justice, to take over and replace RG&E with a **public utility that is affordable, community owned, responsive to ratepayers, local, renewable, and invests in our local economy and workforce.**

Main parts of a Testimony:

- ❖ Introduction:
 - Your name
 - Where you live
 - Perspective you're coming from (if you're a renter, if you or a loved one have or have had any utility problems conditions that have caused difficulties paying rent, are a homeowner)
 - If you're representing an organization, please make that clear!
- ❖ Your experience with RG&E now and what a rate increase would mean to you
 - Your RG&E story, values, beliefs, how they're affected your life, etc.
 - Examples: My bill has already increased from X to Y during Z period. I've already seen my bills fluctuate from X to Y. When I called customer service, I had [this experience].

I've already had [this experience] with misbilling, shutoffs, etc. RG&E bills have already affected my life in [this way].

- ❖ Specific Demand: Why you want the Public Service Commission to reject RG&E's request to raise our rates and what they should make them do instead - please state this clearly and paraphrase the following (choose the 1-2 issues that are most important to you):
 - The recent DPS Audit shows that RG&E can't be trusted with our money, and shouldn't get any rate increase. Rate hikes would worsen an already dire situation where Rochester faces the 3rd highest energy burden in the country and RG&E shut off over 13,000 homes and businesses in 2024
 - **Don't raise RG&E's rate of profit! They already receive much more than they should. Return on equity should be lowered to the actual cost of capital, based on the Federal Funds Effective Rate.**
 - A [new analysis](#) assessing the profits of New York's five major for-profit, investor-owned utilities: found that Avangrid owned utilities (RG&E, NYSEG) increased their profits 183% since 2015! Ratepayers cannot continue to pay for the expansion of the gas system as if electrification is not an urgent necessity and much cheaper. All this is doing is padding utility profits.
 - Already, RG&E uses its concentrated financial power that we finance to lobby our governments against accountability, climate commitments, or a public alternative to their corporate monopoly. RG&E shouldn't be able to use ratepayer money to lobby. Ratepayer money should also not be used to pay fines for their poor performance - that needs to come out of their profits.
 - More protections against shut offs - there should be no shut offs for low income customers (250% poverty line); introduce low income rates as well
 - Don't close the S Clinton walk in center, and expand walk in center hours at least from 7am to 7pm, or vary times to ensure open hours outside of 9-5. When RG&E overcharges, they must issue refunds, not credits - they should not be allowed to hold onto our money and gain interest on it. Customer service should not be outsourced, it needs to be in house. We as ratepayers are still facing an epidemic of misbilling and errors, and RG&E routinely runs customers around in circles to make them give up. They don't tell people what assistance programs they're eligible for. We need real oversight that ensures that the recommendations of the PSC audit are enforced. We also need walk-in centers that are accessible to all when normal people can go to them.
 - No new expensive gas, hydrogen, or "renewable natural gas" infrastructure - divert those funds to electrification instead; make renewable heating affordable to everyone through prioritizing utility thermal energy networks, boosting heat pump rebates, incentivizing electrification especially for LMI households and funding weatherization and emergencies
 - RG&E shouldn't be able to demand deposits from people, bills shouldn't wreck our credit, and RG&E needs to work on their end to connect users with all available resources and alternatives to shut offs, and ensure themselves that users don't have medical needs, children or elders in the house, where shut offs would cause even more harm. Shut offs should not be performed by contractors.

- **Shareholders Pay for legacy infrastructure:** Shareholders, not ratepayers, should pay for legacy infrastructure and audit costs. Customers shouldn't be on the hook for corporate mismanagement.
- **Ratepayers should not pay for upgrades that benefit data centers:** If data centers or crypto-mining facilities add big loads, they must cover the full cost of grid upgrades so residential customers aren't subsidizing them.
- ❖ Conclusion: we suggest ending on a bullet or bullets from the following themes:

RG&E CAN'T BE TRUSTED WITH OUR MONEY NOW - THEY SHOULDN'T GET ANY MORE

- The recent independent audit ordered by DPS revealed troubling inconsistencies and poor bookkeeping in resource and profit sharing between Avangrid and its subsidiaries, RG&E and NYSEG. It's also not clear if money is being shared between various Avangrid companies. Beyond diverting ratepayer money to shareholder profits, these accounting issues show that the utilities have not demonstrated responsible use of our funds and do not merit this rate increase or the profits they seek.
- **The PSC audit found no “cohesive asset-management strategy,”** that Avangrid does not “develop operational plans to achieve goals related to NYSEG and RG&E.” “Avangrid failed to maintain basic records for completed electric and gas capital projects,” and that “Avangrid’s organizational governance does not comply with NYPSC.” **How is there any guarantee that our money is being used for what they’re saying?**
- They’ve failed to keep basic records of completed electric and gas projects - we don’t know where our money is going, and neither do they.
 - Already, their corporate structure is so obscure that the PSC audit questioned **“whether costs are being allocated appropriately.”**
- RG&E billing is not accurate. Why should ratepayers be on the hook for bills that we don’t know are correct?

I CAN'T AFFORD BILLS NOW, I CAN'T AFFORD A RATE INCREASE. ROCHESTER CAN'T AFFORD RG&E. ANY INCREASE POSES AN UNACCEPTABLE RISE IN ENERGY BURDEN.

- Our communities are hurting under RG&E’s predatory practices. NYS has defined a reasonable energy burden as 6% of one’s household expenses. According to [ACEEE](#)’s 2024 report, LMI households in Rochester face the third highest energy burden in the country! In their 2022 report, they found 37% of Rochester residents and 44% of Black and Latino Rochester residents pay between 10-25% of their income for energy. An updated report from ACEEE shows that a quarter of low income households in Rochester pay 21% or more of their income to RG&E. These hikes will make matters worse and impact our most vulnerable disproportionately.
- In 2024, 12,217 homes and 1,196 businesses were shut off, tripling 2023 levels and highlighting a growing affordability crisis. With a median income of ~\$46K, more than half of Rochester households risk exceeding the 6% threshold.
- Rising energy supply costs, coupled with proposed utility delivery hikes and U.S. tariff uncertainties, will push more families to the breaking point—resulting in more shutoffs, greater harm to children and the elderly from extreme temperatures, and increased evictions and homelessness.

- Avangrid and Iberdrola are holding ratepayers hostage to their mismanagement. The PSC should finance a feasibility study into a public alternative for any village, town, city or county that wants to investigate that alternative.

NO INCREASE IN THEIR PROFIT

- **There is no reason why Return on Equity should be more than Cost of Capital.** This is just ratepayers being held captive by monopolies and receiving outrageous rent. Their rate of profit needs to be reduced, not increased. We recommend 6%, not 10%.
- RG&E profits have already been rising - from \$89 million a few years ago to \$107 million in 2023 to \$122 million in 2024, with only a small dip of adjusted profits to \$119 million in the year ending April 2025. While they're failing us so severely, they can't be allowed to increase their profits.
- For reference: RG&E is requesting a return on equity to increase from 9.2% to 10%.

NO WALK-IN SERVICE CENTER CLOSURES, IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE BY BRINGING IT BACK IN HOUSE AND EXPANDING HOURS, NO AI

- **Keep Walk-in Centers open, they need to be open outside of 9-5 hours.**
- **Don't outsource customer service**
- **Refund Billing Errors:** When utilities overcharge, they must issue refunds, not just bill credits, and stop holding customer money hostage.
- **Make renewable bills better:** Coordinate with renewable energy suppliers to provide more timely and understandable billing.
- RG&E already closed one local office on East Ave
- AI Customer Service is inaccurate and unhelpful. We don't want to invest in technology that will be a barrier to real help and will take away jobs.

RG&E AND NYSEG NEED TO BE FORCED TO MEET CLIMATE GOALS, NOT BLOCK THEIR PROGRESS

-  **NO new gas infrastructure:**
 - **Leak prone pipe repair:** NYSEG and RG&E spend nearly \$1M/ mile in repair of gas infrastructure extending their life, instead of diverting funds to electrification.
 - **No hydrogen infrastructure:** It is a pseudo solution that prolongs fossil fuel use, risks pipe brittleness, increases leakage and smog, and diverts resources from weatherization, efficiency, and heat pumps. See [EJ hydrogen framework](#).
 - **No renewable natural gas:** its lifecycle emissions, energy use, and limited supply make it unsuitable for widespread use. Focus funds on transitioning buildings to efficient electric heat pumps; reserve biogas for rare industrial cases with no cleaner alternatives.
-  **Make Renewable Heating Affordable to Everyone**
 - **Expedite Thermal Networks:** Utility Thermal Energy Networks (UTENs) are key to equitably meeting electrification goals. They've taken years to get moving. Fast-track them and use UTENs as the first option before spending billions replacing leak-prone gas pipes.
 - **Incentivize Electrification:** Pilot rate designs that encourage switching to clean heating, especially for low- to moderate-income (LMI) households. CT & MA already do this; NY should too.

- **Fund Weatherization & Emergencies:** Create a shareholder-funded, full-home LMI weatherization and electrification program, with dedicated funds for no-heat emergencies.
- **Boost Heat Pump Rebates:** Increase heat pump incentives, offer no-upfront-cost options with payment plans, so all customers can participate in the clean energy transition.
- **Fix the Discount Factor:** Current social discount rates unfairly favor new gas projects over electrification, undermining CLCPA climate targets. Use rates that reflect the urgency of decarbonization.
-  **Meeting Climate Goals**
 - **Shareholders Pay for legacy infrastructure:** Shareholders, not ratepayers, should pay for legacy infrastructure and audit costs. Customers shouldn't be on the hook for corporate mismanagement.
 - **Speed Up Renewable Connections:** Streamline grid interconnections and work with renewable developers to make projects faster and cheaper to connect, benefiting both ratepayers and climate goals.
 - **Hold Data Center Developers Accountable:** If data centers or crypto-mining facilities add big loads, they must cover the full cost of grid upgrades so residential customers aren't subsidizing them.
 - **Adhere to CLCPA:** Reduce gas sales and greenhouse gas emissions in compliance with New York's climate law, including using CLCPA mandated methods for accounting for methane emissions.
 - **Support Customer-Owned Renewables:** Make rooftop solar, batteries, and community renewables accessible for all, especially LMI households, and prioritize customer-owned resources over new utility infrastructure.

Summary of climate points: I call on the Department of Public Service to require our utilities transition away from fossil fuel infrastructure in line with the State's Climate Law scoping plan and ensure affordable, renewable energy solutions for our community, and not invest in new gas infrastructure or the profits of multi-national corporations.

FOR REFERENCE:

Proposed shareholder profits: 10.0% (from 9.2%)

Company	% Increase in delivery cost	Current Bill \$/mo	New Bill \$/mo	Avg \$/mo bill increase
RG&E Electric	36%	\$126.91	\$159.92	\$33.01
RG&E Gas	32%	\$84.84	\$103.71	\$18.87
NYSEG Electric	35%	\$139.63	\$172.75	\$33.12
NYSEG Gas	39.4%	\$100.07	\$133.64	\$33.57

These \$/mo bill increases assume 600kWh of electricity and 83Therms of gas. These \$/mo bill increases assume 600kWh of electricity and 83Therms of gas.

You can find the entire rate case filing here, if you are so inclined. : [25-G-0380](#) (RG&E Gas), [25-E-0379](#) (RG&E Electric), [25-E-0375](#) (NYSEG Electric), [25-G-0378](#) (NYSEG Gas)