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Massachusetts Legislators Urge DPU Action on Winter Energy Rate Increases

(BOSTON – 10/13/2022) – On Tuesday, a bipartisan group of 31 Massachusetts State Senators and 76 State Representatives sent a letter to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) expressing concern about the energy rate increases slated to impact residents this winter. The letter to DPU Chair Matthew Nelson, written by Senator Michael Moore and Representative Orlando Ramos, urges DPU to protect residents of the Commonwealth from these rate increases.

“Between the increased costs of groceries, housing, gas, and other everyday expenses, the last thing Massachusetts residents need is a massive energy rate hike. The expected rate increases from National Grid, Eversource, and other investor-owned utilities are simply unacceptable,” said **Senator Michael Moore (D-Millbury)** following the release of the letter. “No family should have to make the impossible choice between staying warm this winter and buying groceries or school supplies. Let me be clear: the Department of Public Utilities must act.”

“The people of the Commonwealth have yet to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic,” said **Representative Orlando Ramos (D-Springfield)**. “Eversource’s proposed rate increase would disproportionately impact the most vulnerable. Meanwhile Eversource reported profits of more than \$1.2 billion for 2021. That is an increase of about \$15.3 million (1.3%) from the record profits the company reported in 2020, and an increase of \$311.4 million (34.3%) from the profits it reported in 2019.”

“Residents of the Commonwealth simply cannot absorb the significant energy rate increases while also trying to figure out how to pay for other basic necessities with skyrocketing inflation”, said **Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury)**. “I am very concerned about how we protect our residents from the cold and the impact of these rate increases, and I urge swift action as the winter months approach.”

The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources predicts that the coming winter will be colder than last year's, while the cost of heating may increase by up to 54.6% for electric customers and 28.6% for natural gas. Utility providers largely blame global factors such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, supply chain disruptions, and inflation. Legislators believe the DPU can do more to tamp down these rate increases and their effects on consumers.

In their letter to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, signatories state, "...proposed rate increases of this magnitude – during the winter season – would disproportionately impact the Commonwealth's most vulnerable. Moreover, protecting our residents from the cold is not just an affordability and equity concern – it is also a public safety issue. As the oversight agency tasked with prioritizing safety, affordability, and equity with regard to energy rates, we ask that DPU do just that and protect Massachusetts residents from these drastic rate increases this winter season."

The letter was signed by Senators Michael O. Moore, John C. Velis, Diana DiZoglio, Joanne M. Comerford, Ryan Fattman, Patrick O'Connor, Jason M. Lewis, Adam Gomez, Anne M. Gobi, Edward J. Kennedy, Barry R. Finegold, Susan L. Moran, Walter F. Timilty, Sonia Chang-Díaz, James B. Eldridge, Eric P. Lesser, John F. Keenan, Lydia Edwards, Michael D. Brady, John J. Cronin, Patricia D. Jehlen, Marc R. Pacheco, Joan B. Lovely, Becca Rausch, Julian Cyr, Mark C. Montigny, Paul R. Feeney, Bruce E. Tarr, Harriette L. Chandler, Sal N. DiDomenico, and Brendan P. Crighton. It was also signed by Representatives Orlando Ramos, Andy X. Vargas, Michael J. Soter, John Barrett, Timothy R. Whelan, Brian W. Murray, Paul J. Donato, William M. Straus, Steven Ultrino, Susannah Whipps, Jamie Zahlaway Belsito, Christine P. Barber, Michelle Ciccolo, Todd M. Smola, Natalie M. Blais, Michael P. Kushmerek, Danillo A. Sena, Patrick Kearney, Paul Mark, David Allen Robertson, Mindy Domb, Carole Fiola, Josh S. Cutler, Smitty Pignatelli, Peter Capano, Hannah Kane, Carol A. Doherty, Patricia A. Haddad, Joseph McGonagle, Steven G. Xiarhos, Mathew Muratore, Carlos González, Shawn Dooley, Mike Connolly, Kimberly N. Ferguson, Lindsay N. Sabadosa, Tram T. Nguyen, Jacob R. Oliveira, Kay Khan, Brandy Fluker Oakley, Jonathan Zlotnik, James J. O'Day, Gerard J. Cassidy, Steven C. Owens, David K. Muradian, Jr., Natalie Higgins, Bradley H. Jones, Jr., Susan Williams Gifford, Jay D. Livingstone, Thomas M. Stanley, Paul K. Frost, Frank A. Moran, Meghan K. Kilcoyne, Mary S. Keefe, Jay Barrows, David LeBoeuf, Alan Silvia, Joseph McKenna, Ken Gordon, Christopher M. Markey, Linda Dean Campbell, Liz Miranda, Kevin G. Honan, Danielle W. Gregoire, Marc Lombardo, Ruth B. Balsler, Kip A. Diggs, Jeffrey R. Turco, Carmine L. Gentile, Elizabeth A. Malia, Steven S. Howitt, John J. Mahoney, Tami L. Gouveia, Daniel M. Donahue, Colleen M. Garry, and Joseph F. Wagner.

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