

TOWN OF VERNON

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Thousands Sign Petitions Opposing Eversource Increase *All Welcome to Sign Petition and Comment on the Proposed 19 Percent Rate Hike*

VERNON, Connecticut – Connecticut residents continue to speak out against Eversource’s proposed 19 percent rate hike through a petition on Vernon’s website.

AARP Connecticut is also conducting a petition drive opposing the rate hike request. You can learn more about that by visiting: <https://states.aarp.org/connecticut/aarp-connecticut-urges-pura-to-deny-eversource-united-illuminating-rate-increase-requests> (*AARP Connecticut Urges PURA to Deny Eversource & United Illuminating Rate Increase Requests*)

More than 10,000 people across the state of Connecticut have signed both petitions so far. Vernon’s petition will be forwarded to the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, which is examining the evidence concerning Eversource’s rate hike request and will decide whether the request is reasonable.

Along with their signatures, people from across Connecticut have written messages about how a 19 percent increase will affect them. People from Vernon, Southington, Waterbury, Southbury, Prospect, West Hartford, Ellington, Newtown, Avon and more describe their struggles to pay existing electric bills with no flexibility left in their monthly budgets.

“I’m sick of living in the dark to avoid high utility bills,” one signer from Southington wrote on Vernon’s petition. “Higher rates will most likely cause me to stop using air conditioning, which will put me at risk for heat stroke or death.”

Another signer from Vernon said he is a senior with limited income. “Food, gas and utilities leave me short every month. Please don’t raise it. Pretty soon I’ll be homeless at 74 years old.”

Another signer from Southington wrote that she has unplugged every device in her house not used on a daily basis and lights her home at night with only two 7-watt bulbs. “Will I need to unplug the stove or refrigerator next to keep my bill low? Will I chance dying in the summer months because I have to avoid using air conditioning to keep my bill affordable?”

Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne said people have made it clear that they cannot afford a 19 percent rate hike.

“These messages are heart-breaking and drive home the difficult situation so many Connecticut residents are in,” Mayor Champagne said. “Here in Vernon we are doing our best to stand up for our residents and people across Connecticut. I hope the regulators at PURA stand up for all of us.”

Eversource blames legislative mandates and unpaid bills for its need to raise rates.

“How does increasing electric bills by 19 percent address the problem of people not paying their bills?” Vernon Town Administrator and Emergency & Risk Management Director said. “This is not a political issue. In our society, electricity is a basic human need. For some people, having electricity is a matter of life or death.”

“Regardless of Eversource’s reasoning, a simple fact remains: Eversource has a voracious appetite for ratepayers’ dollars and the result is record profits and out-of-control executive pay,” Purcaro said. “It takes a lot of people on Social Security and small pensions to generate the kind of revenue that allows Eversource to give its executives millions of dollars in compensation. How much is enough? How much can rate payers bear?”

The Town of Vernon takes PURA at its word that comments from every signer of our petition will be read by regulators, Purcaro said. That’s why we made it easy for people to make their views known and their voices heard.

“All you have to do is go to our website, www.vernon-ct.gov, and click on the petition icon that pops up,” Purcaro said. “Our petition is open to everyone. The more signatures we have, the better. We need to make it clear to PURA that Eversource’s request is not affordable to working people.”

In addition to signing our petition, we urge Eversource customers to voice their opinions to their state legislators and the governor. To reach your state legislator, please visit: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp>

A sampling of comments from petition signers.

Let's keep our rates at a level so people can have power, remember not everyone has CEO level income.

We already have to skip medications and food to keep our electricity on. I'm disabled and I'd have been disconnected a long time ago. I guess I'll cancel my oxygen too. Why don't you just take us all out back and shoot us rather than letting us continue to suffer.

Eversource CEO made \$18m last year, start your cuts there.

Enough is enough, you are making people choose between putting food on the table or keeping the lights on. Stop the price gouging!

compensation, bonuses, and profits need to balance with public costs. State mandates are part of the business model now because of unaffordability for the product for the consumer and lack of proper prioritization on the needs of the grid. Self-created issues that should be paid by the creators- Eversource

Do not allow Eversource to raise rates We are paying outrageous prices now Executives should not be earning millions and getting millions in bonuses on the backs of the consumers.

With the cost of living steadily increasing and the wages not increasing at the same rate it is soon to become an issue for many residents, including myself, to keep up with monthly payments.

PLEASE don't let them raise our rates AGAIN. IT IS NOT OUR FAULT that some customers got away with NOT paying...MOST of us did and we paid our bills...We should NOT be forced to pay someone else's unpaid bills. I will be 69 in a couple months...I struggle to pay my bills BUT I pay all of them. Unfortunately between my Social Security & Pension I qualify for NO HELP...so even with rental assistance I found a part-time job...with the proposed rate increase if allowed I will be forced to choose food vs lights. Please help us.

This rate increase will break many people's backs who are already living on tight, fixed incomes. It's simply just too much.

I turned off all the heat, 2 months ago... Too expensive.

Please!!! No more!!! Most of us are barely scraping by as it is. We live on Social Security and are barely scraping by as it is.

Cut the CEO and management salaries, reduce shareholder payouts, handle infrastructure before and not after a major weather event. Your incompetence and greed should not be paid for by customers!

Eversource's never-ending rate increases are unsustainable for Connecticut families.

We will all be living in the dark - electricity or food which will we buy? They know we have no choice - most of us cannot afford solar and have to pay for electricity to live in modern society. I just want to be able to not stress about keeping the electricity on, while affording food and heating the house.

Click here to sign the petition

EVERSOURCE

<https://www.vernon-ct.gov>

About the Town of Vernon

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of more than 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in “New England's Knowledge Corridor” with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870-3670 or visit www.vernon-ct.gov.

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