

ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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September 1, 2023

The Honorable Rory Christian, Chair
New York State Public Service Commission
3 Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 3
Albany, NY 12223-1350

RE: CASES 23-E-0418 and 23-G-0419

Dear Chair Christian:

I write to you on behalf of the 181,000 residents of Ulster County who receive their gas and electric service from Fortis/Central Hudson to request that the Public Service Commission hold an in-person public hearing in Ulster County to give our residents the opportunity to speak to the proposed rate increase and rate plan submitted by the company. To ensure equitable participation in the public hearing, we further request that Spanish-language translation be provided to enable our Spanish-speaking community members to participate.

Ulster County has a number of areas that are unserved or underserved in terms of broadband access, and residents in these areas would not otherwise have the opportunity to be heard unless an in-person hearing is scheduled. Even in areas with adequate broadband access, we have older residents as well as struggling households for whom participation in a virtual hearing is not possible. These are among the households that have been most harmed over the last two years by the mismanaged roll-out of Fortis/Central Hudson's new billing system and will be most harmed by the astronomical increase in rates proposed by the Company—a 16.4% increase for electrical service and a 19% increase for gas.

As you are aware, Ulster County has been actively working to get a meaningful resolution to the billing problems that have been plaguing Fortis/Central Hudson customers in our communities, and our residents and small businesses, including those whose primary language is Spanish, deserve the

opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives directly with the Commission and presiding Administrative Law Judge in an in-person hearing.

Thank you very much, in advance, for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jen Metzger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jen" and last name "Metzger" clearly distinguishable.

Jen Metzger
Ulster County Executive

cc: Richard Berkley, NYS Utility Consumer Advocate