



NEWS FROM

**ULSTER COUNTY**

County Executive Jen Metzger

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\*\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*\*

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## **Ulster County Executive Calls PSC's Over 50% Cut to Utility Rate Hike 'Significant' but Remains Concerned about Impacts on Struggling Households**

**KINGSTON, NY** - Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger called today's decision by state regulators to cut Fortis-Central Hudson's proposed rate increase by more than half as "significant," but expressed concern about the impact of the approved increase on struggling households. The NYS Public Service Commission accepted the recommended decision of Administrative Law Judges to reduce the rate increase from 13.5% to 5.5% for electric service and from 14.2% and to 7.3% for gas service. The average bill impact for residents is estimated to be \$12 for electric and \$12 for gas, as of August 1. During the Commission's meeting, PSC Chair Rory Christian stated that a revenue increase of \$58 million for electric and \$21.2 million for gas is the minimum necessary to ensure the reliability of the electricity system and to harden that system in the face of the impacts of climate change.

"This is a very tough time for our residents, with some 46% of households considered housing cost-burdened, and many just have no slack in their household budget to afford any utility bill increases," **said County Executive Metzger.** "Even with the PSC's significant action to cut the requested rate increase by more than half, the approved rate hike is nonetheless going to add to the cost burden facing low- and moderate-income residents. I strongly encourage income-eligible residents to take advantage of the NYSERDA EmPower+ Program, which provides no-cost and low-cost building and appliance upgrades to homes for both renters and home-owners that will reduce energy use and utility bills now and for the long-term."

Residents receiving HEAP and SNAP benefits are automatically eligible for the state's [EmPower+](#) program.

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