

STATE OF NEW YORK

5583

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

March 11, 2021

Introduced by Sen. COMRIE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to requiring evidence and consideration of the economic impact of utility rates and charges by the public service commission

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Subdivision 1 of section 65 of the public service law, as
2 amended by chapter 789 of the laws of 1930, is amended to read as
3 follows:

4 1. Every gas corporation, every electric corporation and every municipi-
5 pality shall furnish and provide such service, instrumentalities and
6 facilities as shall be safe and adequate and in all respects just and
7 reasonable. All charges made or demanded by any such gas corporation,
8 electric corporation or municipality for gas, electricity or any service
9 rendered or to be rendered, shall be just and reasonable and not more
10 than allowed by law or by order of the commission. In determining wheth-
11 er charges are just and reasonable, consideration shall be given to the
12 economic impact of such charges upon consumers and the area served by
13 each such gas corporation, electric corporation and municipality. Every
14 unjust or unreasonable charge made or demanded for gas, electricity or
15 any such service, or in connection therewith, or in excess of that
16 allowed by law or by the order of the commission is prohibited.

17 § 2. Subdivision 1 of section 79 of the public service law, as amended
18 by chapter 134 of the laws of 1921, is amended to read as follows:

19 1. Every steam corporation shall furnish and provide such service,
20 instrumentalities and facilities as shall be safe and adequate and in
21 all respects just and reasonable. All charges made or demanded by any
22 such corporation for such service rendered or to be rendered shall be
23 just and reasonable and not more than allowed by order of the commis-

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 sion. In determining whether charges are just and reasonable, consider-
2 ation shall be given to the economic impact of such charges upon consum-
3 ers and the area served by each such steam corporation. Every unjust or
4 unreasonable charge made or demanded for such service, or in connection
5 therewith or in excess of that allowed by law or by the commission is
6 prohibited.

7 § 3. Subdivision 1 of section 89-b of the public service law, as added
8 by chapter 715 of the laws of 1931, is amended to read as follows:

9 1. Every water-works corporation shall furnish and provide such
10 service, instrumentalities and facilities as shall be safe and adequate
11 and in all respects just and reasonable. All charges made or demanded by
12 any such water-works corporation for water, or for equipment furnished
13 or for any service rendered or to be rendered shall be just and reason-
14 able and not more than allowed by law or by order of the commission. In
15 determining whether charges are just and reasonable, consideration shall
16 be given to the economic impact of such charges upon consumers and the
17 area served by each such water-works corporation. Every unjust or unrea-
18 sonable charge made or demanded for water or for equipment furnished or
19 for any such service, or in connection therewith, or in excess of that
20 allowed by law or by the order of the commission is prohibited.

21 § 4. Subdivision 1 of section 91 of the public service law, as added
22 by chapter 673 of the laws of 1910, is amended to read as follows:

23 1. Every telegraph corporation and every telephone corporation shall
24 furnish and provide with respect to its business such instrumentalities
25 and facilities as shall be adequate and in all respects just and reason-
26 able. All charges made or demanded by any telegraph corporation or tele-
27 phone corporation for any service rendered or to be rendered in
28 connection therewith shall be just and reasonable and not more than
29 allowed by law or by order of the commission. In determining whether
30 charges are just and reasonable, consideration shall be given to the
31 economic impact of such charges upon consumers and the area served by
32 each such telegraph corporation and telephone corporation. Every unjust
33 or unreasonable charge made or demanded for any such service or in
34 connection therewith or in excess of that allowed by law or by order of
35 the commission is prohibited and declared to be unlawful.

36 § 5. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 119-d
37 to read as follows:

38 § 119-d. Economic impact. 1. Prior to approving any major increase in
39 rates or charges proposed by a public utility company or municipality,
40 the commission shall consider the economic impact of any such proposed
41 increase in the rates or charges upon consumers in the area served by
42 the company or municipality proposing such increase. For purposes of
43 this subdivision, "major increase" shall mean an increase in the rates
44 and charges which would increase the aggregate revenues of the applicant
45 more than the greater of three hundred thousand dollars or two and one-
46 half percent.

47 2. The commission shall consider unemployment data, median income
48 information and the number of persons receiving social services assist-
49 ance with respect to the applicable service area. In addition, the
50 commission shall consider in reaching its determination in any such rate
51 case:

52 a. the average monthly utility bill for each class of customers who
53 would be affected by an increased rate or charge and the estimated
54 increased utility bill for each such class of customers; and

55 b. the latest federal bureau of labor statistics consumer price index
56 figures indicating the average cost of living and the average cost of

1 fuel and utilities for the nation and, if possible for the state or the
2 service area affected by such increased rate or charge.

3 § 6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to each
4 request for increased rates or charges submitted on or after the effec-
5 tive date of this act.