

November 22, 2021

Hon. Christopher T. Sununu, Governor
Office of the Governor
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Governor Sununu:

We write to you today regarding the recent action taken by the PUC that has threatened to undo a decade's worth of critical work.

This move by former Chairwoman Martin has come as a shock to a wide variety of stakeholders. Businesses who have invested significant amounts of money into energy efficient equipment, hiring additional staff, and training existing staff, could now be facing the decision of whether or not to lay off employees and sell off capital investments in order to comply with this dramatic change. Utility companies, who have been reliant on incentives from the state to increase energy efficiency programs, must now rethink their business models. Already we have seen utility companies are halting applications for the NHSaves program and energy audits. School districts and municipalities who have been working to improve their infrastructure to reduce local taxes are left wondering where the future of energy efficiency stands.

And what of the homeowners making good faith efforts through the NHSaves program to weatherize their homes or buy energy efficient appliances? By reducing the availability and size of available rebates, the PUC is disincentivizing homeowners from taking steps that will save them money on their electric bills due to higher up front costs.

There is no question that New Hampshire is lagging behind the rest of New England when it comes to energy efficiency. Year after year we discuss the unreasonably high financial burden shouldered by our ratepayers.

Lowering electric rates for New Hampshire families and businesses is undoubtedly a bipartisan priority. This winter, following the economic upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic, families could be looking at increases to their electricity prices of up to 60% because of increased demand. Energy efficiency programs are the way out of devastatingly high costs to ratepayers. They create long term financial relief, reduce our energy usage, and set New Hampshire up for long term economic success.

After over a decade of good work from stakeholders across the energy sector, we are incredibly disappointed at the recent turn of events. What is the intention of undoing collaborative work that benefits all Granite Staters? Why has former Chairwoman Martin been able to single handedly set New Hampshire even farther back on our path to a sustainable future?

This decision is rendered even more troubling in light of the UN's report this summer that heralded the need for action to fight climate change as a "code red." The recent COP climate summit concluded with an agreement among nearly 200 nations to commit to more meaningful climate pledges and take expedited action to fight the climate crisis. This is an urgent matter and we cannot be taking steps backwards. In order to truly tackle the existential threat of the climate crisis, local actions have to lay the groundwork for global commitments.

Action is being taken that may lead to an appeal of this decision. However, in your role as Governor, we ask that you continue your previously stated support of our state's EERS program and utilize the Department of Energy's role as an intervener to ensure New Hampshire is not sent further off track. One of the most important roles of our government is to provide stability and predictability through policy. Moves like the one taken by the PUC lead to wasted investment and higher prices for our ratepayers - the residents of New Hampshire. We urge you to take a stand against this ill-advised decision by Ms. Martin and stand up for New Hampshire's energy future.

Sincerely,

Senator David Watters, Senate District 4

Senator Becky Whitley, Senate District 15

Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka, Senate District 21

Representative Peter Somssich, Rockingham - District 27, Ranking Member of Science,
Technology & Energy

Representative Kat McGhee, Hillsborough - District 27, Deputy Ranking Member of Science,
Technology & Energy

Representative Jacqueline Cali-Pitts, Rockingham - District 30

Representative Jacqueline Chretien, Hillsborough - District 42

Representative John Mann, Cheshire - District 2

Representative Rebecca McWilliams, Merrimack - District 27

Representative Lee Oxenham, Sullivan - District 1

Representative Lucius Parshall, Cheshire - District 10

Representative Roderick Pimentel, Merrimack - District 6

