



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF CONSUMER COUNSEL
NEWS RELEASE**

Acting Consumer Counsel Richard E. Sobolewski

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ACTING CONSUMER COUNSEL RICHARD E. SOBOLEWSKI REQUESTS
ADDITIONAL SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON RECENT EVERSOURCE
RATE INCREASES**

*PURA Heard Public Comment at Hearing Earlier This Week But Not All Eversource
Customers May Have Been Available to Participate*

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. (August 26, 2020) – Acting Consumer Counsel Richard E. Sobolewski announced today that the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) has filed a [Motion](#) requesting that the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) schedule an additional opportunity for the public to provide live comment on recent increases in Eversource Energy’s distribution rates. PURA took comments from the public at a hearing on Eversource’s rate increase earlier this week and is continuing to accept written comments. Given the extended length of that hearing, however, OCC remains concerned that some consumers who wished to speak were nonetheless unable to remain present until the public comment portion of the hearing.

“I recognize the importance that members of the public place in the opportunity to present live comment to their public officials and want to be sure that every consumer who wishes to be heard in person and on the record on this issue has the chance to do so,” said Acting Consumer Counsel Sobolewski. “The reality is that many people have work, family, and other personal obligations that may have prevented them from remaining in a hearing for over six hours until the public comment portion commenced. Public comment and feedback serves a crucial role and consumers should be provided with multiple opportunities to exercise their fundamental right to be heard.”

The initial PURA hearing on the Eversource rate increase lasted for over eight hours. The hearing began with comment by elected officials and was followed by a formal evidentiary portion, during which Eversource witnesses were subject to cross examination under oath by various parties, including OCC and the Attorney General. By the time the public comment portion of the hearing commenced, it was after 4.00 p.m. and of the over 600 initial participants on the Zoom conference, more than half had logged off. Although many members of the public provided comment on that day, OCC is requesting that PURA reserve additional time at the outset an upcoming hearing tentatively scheduled for September 10th to take further live public

comment from those consumers who were personally unavailable to attend or unable to remain in the initial hearing.

Following the receipt by consumers of higher than anticipated electricity bills in July, Governor Ned Lamont requested that PURA investigate recent rate increases by Eversource and The United Illuminating Company. The investigations of Eversource and United Illuminating are occurring in PURA Docket Nos. 20-01-01 and 20-01-02, respectively. OCC is actively participating in both proceedings to ensure that the perspective of electric ratepayers is adequately represented.

PURA is still accepting written public comment and those Eversource customers who wish to comment in writing are encouraged to submit their written comment to PURA via e-mail at pura.executivesecretary@ct.gov referencing Docket No. 20-01-01. Up to date information on upcoming hearings and registration information may be accessed on PURA's [Calendar of Events](#).

In addition, PURA has scheduled three upcoming public comment hearings for October 21st, 22nd, and 23rd at which time the public will have the opportunity to comment on Eversource and United Illuminating's responses to Tropical Storm Isaias. Members of public seeking more information should contact PURA at the e-mail address above referencing Docket No. 20-08-03.

Acting Consumer Counsel Sobolewski thanked his staff involved in this matter, especially Attorneys Julie Datres and Andrew W. Minikowski and Utilities Examiner Dave Thompson.

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The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) is the State of Connecticut's advocate for consumers on issues relating to electricity, natural gas, water, and telecommunications. For more information, visit www.ct.gov/occ.