



Chemung County
Chamber of Commerce



May 12, 2020

The Honorable Michelle L. Phillips
Secretary to the Commission
New York State Public Service Commission
Three Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12223-1350

Re: Case 20-M-0187 – Petition of Multiple Intervenors Seeking Immediate, Material Rate Relief for Electric and Gas Customers, including a Pause in Surcharges and Collections for Projects and Programs Delayed as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Secretary Phillips,

On behalf of the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce and our membership across the Southern Tier of New York, I write today regarding a Petition filed by Multiple Intervenors requesting a pause in surcharge collections due to the economic hardship caused by COVID-19. We urge the New York State Public Service Commission (“Commission”) to consider rate relief and the appropriateness of temporarily suspending or pausing fee collection for mandates and programs that are not of critical importance to maintain grid reliability, service, and other essential activities during these uncertain times.

One common-sense source of immediate, expansive rate relief would be to temporarily pause or reduce the collection of monies devoted towards funding programs likely to be delayed as a result of the pandemic, such as energy efficiency and heat pump project installations. This approach is consistent with that adopted during the economic downturn in 2009 by the Commission in Case 09-M-0435, wherein the Commission sought to provide rate relief to customers in the form of austerity measures. Inasmuch as these funds are not able to be utilized for their intended purposes, I urge the Commission to redirect funds back into the hands of small businesses, manufacturers, and households.

Your expeditious action on this matter will make a significant difference for our devastated economy. In a survey of 60 Chamber member businesses conducted by the Chamber in April 2020, 85% of respondents marked financial support as the most helpful type of relief at this time. More than 75% of

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these businesses have experienced a significant drop in revenue and sales. Our small businesses, in particular, are experiencing tremendous economic hardship. Regardless of the challenges this pandemic continues to present, the business community has tirelessly stepped up to the plate to provide medical attention, PPE manufacturing and distribution, financial donations, food deliveries, cleaning services, and more, including suspensions of all kinds of fees and penalties for those who have been hit hard by this global pandemic.

While we understand this is an unusual time with challenging pressures and issues to consider, we urge you to join the relief effort. As the voice of business for our local community, we see an opportunity here for the Commission to care for the communities it serves in the Southern Tier. We thank you for your consideration of these comments, and hope that we will have your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kamala A. Keeley".

Kamala A. Keeley
President & CEO