

News

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. . . from the Illinois House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FORD JOINS NEW EFFORT TO ROLL BACK ELECTRIC RATE INCREASE

Legislator Wants to See Relief for Constituents' Electric Bills

SPRINGFIELD – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) stood with fellow House members and consumer advocates Friday at a press conference to announce his support for new legislation that would roll back electric utility rates for a three-year period.

“Multibillion-dollar electric companies are crying hard times, even saying they might go bankrupt without these rate hikes,” Ford added. “But I see people in the city of Chicago just trying to make ends meet. Something is backwards with this entire situation and we need to make it right.”

The new rollback legislation was introduced Friday by state Rep. George Scully (D-Crete). At the end of the 94th General Assembly, the House passed a bill very similar to Scully’s proposal, but it was not called in the Senate and expired. Though Ford was not a member of the House then, he supported the effort and is hopeful that pressure from angry consumers will move this new measure forward.

Under the terms of the new legislation, the recent utility rate hikes would be rolled back to their 2006 levels and frozen for three years. Consumers would also receive a refund for the months that passed since the rate freeze expired. The Illinois Commerce Commission will also be held to a specific definition of market competition for future rulings.

At the news conference, members and consumer advocates emphasized the need for quick action on the bill. Legislators reported that their district offices have been flooded by calls from angry constituents. Senior citizens, some of whom live in homes and care facilities that use electric heat, are particularly upset.

“Our members are calling panicked about their electric bills,” said Donna Ginther, AARP State Affairs Manager. “One woman’s bill increased four times from the same month last year. The impact doesn’t stop there. The Benld Senior Center, for example, is holding monthly bake sales and chili suppers in order to keep their doors open and provide seniors with a hot meal. Something has to be done.”

For more information on the rollback legislation, contact Rep. Ford’s district office at (773) 378-5902.

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