



PUTNAM COUNTY EXECUTIVE
KEVIN M. BYRNE

July 7, 2025

Hon. Michelle L. Phillips
Secretary to the Commission
New York State Public Service Commission
Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 3
Albany, NY 12223-1350

Re: NYSEG 2025–26 Electric and Gas Rate Increase (Case No. 25-E-0375 / 25-G-0378)

Dear Chair Christian and Commissioners:

As Putnam County Executive—and in my former role as an Assemblymember—I have consistently opposed utility rate increases and personally testified at numerous public hearings hosted by the Public Service Commission (PSC). I write today to formally oppose New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG)'s proposed 24% electric and 34% gas rate hikes, which would place undue strain on hardworking middle-class families already grappling with rising housing, food, and healthcare costs.

I fully recognize that utility companies like NYSEG are delivery systems that do not set energy prices. It is my opinion that it is New York State's repeated policy missteps that have weakened our energy infrastructure and driven prices higher. That's why I opposed the closure of Indian Point, one of the nation's safest and most reliable nuclear power plants, during my tenure in the Assembly. Its loss removed nearly two gigawatts of carbon-free baseload power and forced increased reliance on costlier gas alternatives. I also voted against the so-called 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)—New York's version of the "Green New Deal"—because its mandates, rushed forward without a proper cost-benefit analysis, have disrupted grid reliability and accelerated rate increases. Those costs are made worse when compounded by additional rate hikes from utilities.

For these reasons, I ask the PSC to consider the following:

1. Hold In-Person, Town-Hall-Style Hearings

Virtual comment options are insufficient. To ensure transparency and accountability, the PSC must hold mandatory in-person public hearings in Putnam County and throughout NYSEG's service territory.

2. Support Transparency Legislation (A.1270)

I strongly urge the PSC to endorse Assembly bill A.1270 (Slater), which would require utilities to notify customers of supply-rate hikes of 40% or more and inform them of available bill assistance programs. This legislation builds upon my own 2021 bill, A.3888 (Byrne), which proposed similar requirements for 100%+ increases. It was a good idea then, and it's an even better idea now.

3. Recognize the Current Cost-of-Living Crisis

Putnam County families, and thousands more across New York State, are already struggling to afford basic household bills. Approving a significant rate hike under these conditions would be devastating to middle-class families and small businesses alike.

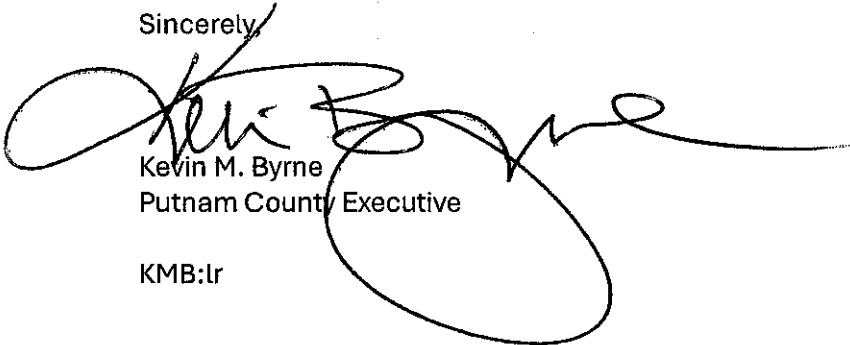
4. Condition Any Future Increases on NYSEG Accountability

If NYSEG seeks rate relief for infrastructure improvements or regulatory compliance, any approval should be conditioned on verifiable cost controls, operational efficiency improvements, transparent spending, and measurable service benchmarks: requirements that should be actively enforced by the PSC.

In summary, I urge you to deny NYSEG's proposed rate increases, mandate in-person public hearings, support A.1270 to improve price transparency, and hold all utility companies to clear, enforceable performance and efficiency standards.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Byrne', is written over the typed name and title.

Kevin M. Byrne
Putnam County Executive

KMB:lr