



Office of the Public Advocate

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OCTOBER 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

We were saddened to learn of the passing of former Public Advocate, Dick Davies. In addition to holding several positions in state government, Dick served as Public Advocate from 2007 to 2013. Many of us who had the privilege of working with Dick appreciated his unselfish and dedicated commitment to public service. Indeed, Mainers were lucky to have Dick in their corner for most of his adult life, strongly advocating for them.

His passing caused me to reflect on all the talented people, including Dick, who have previously served as the Public Advocate during its 42 year history. The list of former Public Advocates includes some of the smartest and most successful people ever to work in our state government – Gordon Weil (1981-1982); Peter Bradford (1982-1983); Paul Fritsche (1983-1986); Steve Ward (1986-2007); Tim Schneider (2013-2017) and Barry Hobbins (2017-2021). They were each supported by a staff of outstanding lawyers and professionals. It is an impressive collection of talent.

For the eleven of us working here today, we cannot help but look back and recognize that any success we are able to achieve in advocating for ratepayers is partly the result of all the hard work by our predecessors. They helped set the values and build the reputation of the Office -- high quality, well researched, and effective advocacy. Today, we have the benefit of standing on the shoulders of the many talented and successful advocates who served before us. Hopefully we can continue to build on their good work and future OPA staff will recognize our contribution to advancing the mission of the Office.

William Harwood

[Find Out More](#)

To learn more about any of the cases mentioned in this issue, please visit the [PUC's Case Management System \(CMS\)](#). Make note of the docket number of the case of interest from this newsletter and enter it in the search feature.

The Office submitted its Annual Report to the Energy, Utilities, and Technology (EUT) Committee on September 1st. The Report, required by statute, is a summary of the Office's participation in Commission proceedings and at the Legislature. It also details the Office's expenditures over the past year and savings attained on behalf of ratepayers. The Report can be found [here](#).

You can visit our website for more information: <https://www.maine.gov/meopa/home>

If you know someone who might be interested in receiving future editions of our monthly highlights, have them contact benjamin.j.frech@maine.gov

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OPA Joins NE Consumer Advocates in Urging Congress to Increase LIHEAP Funding

On September 12, the OPA joined with other consumer advocates from NH, MA, and CT sending a letter to the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees urging them to support increased Federal funding of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which serves as a lifeline for millions of low-income families across the country. Households across New England are facing historically high electricity prices. To ensure low-income families do not have to make difficult choices between paying for electricity or other essentials such as food, housing, or medicine, the Advocates are urging additional funding of this critical program.

OPA Challenges New England Transmission Owners Over Budget for Asset Condition Projects

Maine Public Advocate has joined the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, the Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel, the New Hampshire Office of the Consumer Advocate, and the Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (collectively Consumer Advocates of New England) in expressing their concern to ISO New England (ISO-NE) regarding the projected dramatic increase in expenditures by New England Transmission Owners (NETOs).

The NETOs recently increased their estimate of the cost of upgrading the New England transmission system by 50% from previous estimates. Specifically, there are now approximately \$5 billion in "asset condition" projects proposed, planned, or under construction.

Asset condition projects involve the replacement of existing transmission facilities with new facilities that will perform the same function. The decision to replace the existing facilities is based on their age or physical condition rather than a desire to expand their capacity or increase their reliability for reasons other than their condition. Under existing rules, such projects are not generally subject to scrutiny by ISO-NE in the same manner as transmission upgrades.

This favorable treatment appears to assume that it's always reasonable to replace projects nearing the end of their expected lives or suffering significant deterioration. Some transmission owners in New England are now taking advantage of this exception by accelerating the construction schedule for asset condition projects ahead of previous projections without clear justification. Delaying a project, even for a short period, or more carefully targeting a project to address areas of greatest need provide significant opportunities for savings to ratepayers. Such standards would also ensure the process is more disciplined and more transparent.

The OPA and other New England consumer advocates are now challenging the lack of scrutiny given to asset condition projects under the ISO-NE planning approval process and are asking that the development of asset condition projects be paused while objective criteria-based standards are implemented for the review of proposed asset condition projects.

In addition to seeking to modify the review process at ISO-NE, on September 15, the OPA filed a series of written discovery requests on the New England Transmission Owners regarding projects that they are proposing to include in rates this year. This discovery request is the initial step if a party

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wishes to formally challenge inclusion of costs in rates. The information will also assist the OPA and the New England Consumer Advocates as we attempt to reform the project review process of ISO-NE.

OPA Urges the ISO New England Board to Reduce the Proposed 2024 Budget Increase

On September 18, the OPA sent a letter to ISO New England's Board of Directors regarding the proposed 2024 Operating and Capital Budgets prepared by ISO-NE management.

The budget calls for an overall increase of 21.5 % versus 2023 spending levels. Even given recent inflationary pressures, the proposed increase in the budget is an extremely aggressive increase. A portion of the increase is due to a reconciliation of a prior period under recovery of expenses. However, even ignoring this factor, the budget reflects a 16.4% increase in revenue requirement.

The OPA believes this increase is unnecessarily high given the significant upward rate pressure that consumers have faced due to commodity price increases and other factors. While some increase in spending is reasonably expected, the level of increase raises concern regarding whether the overall budget has been carefully developed with the price impact on ratepayers in mind.

To address these concerns, the OPA urged the Board of Directors of ISO New England to examine carefully the proposed budget, to challenge ISO New England management to justify its aggressive spending proposals, to be cautious in spending related to the implementation of new initiatives, to reduce this spending as appropriate, and to direct ISO New England management to be mindful of its responsibilities with the cost impact on utility ratepayers.

Deputy Public Advocate Landry Speaks to the ISO New England Consumer Liaison Group

On September 21, Deputy Public Advocate Andrew Landry appeared at the quarterly meeting of the ISO New England Consumer Liaison Group as part of a Ratepayer Advocate Roundtable that addressed the role of state ratepayer advocates in supporting state climate policy goals. In his remarks, Mr. Landry stressed that the traditional role of advocating for affordability is not in conflict with supporting state climate policy goals. Critically, with proper planning, the transition to a clean energy future can be used to relieve ratepayer burden.

To achieve such a future, it will be essential to drive incremental load associated with beneficial electrification, such as electric vehicles and heat pumps, to periods of the day when renewable generation is abundant, such as the middle of the day and late night. This will allow more efficient use of the transmission and distribution systems and avoid unnecessary system expansions, thereby lowering system costs and allowing these costs to be spread over a higher volume of sales. This can be achieved through effective planning, including the development of demand response programs and implementation of efficient rate design.

PUC Electric Proceedings

OPA Challenges CMP Storm Cost Recovery Request

In 2022, CMP spent more than \$117 million to restore power following major storms, primarily by paying out-of-state contractor crews high hourly labor and equipment rates (Docket No. 2023-00038). CMP is requesting that the PUC allow it to recover these additional costs from ratepayers over two years.

OPA is challenging more than \$50 million of those costs, and here's why:

CMP regularly exceeds the staffing recommendations in its Emergency Response Plan, a document CMP is required to prepare under Maine law that governs how the Company should respond to storms based on the severity level of that storm. In our view CMP should be required to follow its Plan and be held accountable for spending above amounts required by the Plan

CMP wrote the plan. If that plan is inadequate, and had to be exceeded, the costs should be borne by shareholders, not ratepayers.

Given the increasing frequency and severity of storms, and the fact that electricity prices are already at record high levels, costs of this magnitude are not sustainable for Maine ratepayers.

OPA understands that it is frustrating both for customers without power to wait for it to be restored, and for CMP to face criticism for any delays in restoring power, but the facts show that the level of spending in 2022 was unnecessary and excessive.

Storm-related outages are a growing issue as the State grapples with climate-change and we simply cannot afford a policy of ignoring the costs of responding to these major events. If CMP's Emergency Response Plan is inadequate, it needs a new one, which will need PUC approval. In the meantime, ratepayers should not pay the price.

PUC Ready to Deliberate Versant Power Request for Recovery of Storm Restoration Costs

On June 15, 2023, Versant Power (Versant) filed a Petition for Approval of Accounting Order, seeking to defer, for recovery in a future rate case, approximately \$5.5 million in incremental distribution costs used for restoration of service following a windstorm that struck in its service territory on December 23, 2022 (Docket No. 2023-00140). Versant states that these incremental costs were extraordinary and thus meet the standard for issuance of an accounting order.

MPUC Staff and the OPA have examined Versant's filing and have not found any issues of concern. In particular, the OPA filed comments noting the Versant followed its System Emergency Operations Plan and appropriately responded to this significant storm event. The OPA believes that Versant has met its burden to demonstrate that an accounting order is appropriate based on the extraordinary nature of this storm. Therefore, the OPA supports the Petition for an accounting

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order based on the specific facts of this case. The PUC is expected to deliberate this case in the near future.

The OPA Files Testimony Requesting that the PUC Permanently Revoke Electricity Maine's Authority to Conduct Business in Maine, due to Alleged Unfair and Deceptive Trade Practices

Beginning late last year, Electricity Maine, a competitive electricity provider (CEP), began charging its residential customers a variable rate for electricity supply of approximately 40 cents per kWh, more than triple the standard offer rate at the time and more than double the current standard offer rate (Docket No. 2023-00024). Electricity Maine did this without notifying its customers ahead of time and without obtaining their consent to a variable rate contract. Understandably, the Commission received hundreds of complaints from customers and the Commission opened an investigation. The OPA intervened in the investigation as is its right.

On September 26, the OPA filed its initial testimony alleging that Electricity Maine's conduct constitutes an unfair and deceptive trade practice. Given the seriousness of the violation and Electricity Maine's prior violations of consumer protection rules, the OPA is requesting that the PUC permanently revoke Electricity Maine's competitive electricity provider license and order Electricity Maine to refund all customers that were transferred to a variable rate without their consent. A technical conference on the OPA's testimony is scheduled for November 8 and 9.

The OPA Intervenes in Case Involving Solar Developer Requests for Good Cause Exemptions to the Statutory Deadline to Participate in the Net Energy Billing (NEB) Program

On September 8, six solar projects filed petitions with the PUC seeking determinations their projects qualify to participate in Net Energy Billing (NEB) under the statutory "good cause" exemption process which allows projects to remain eligible to participate in NEB despite not being able to reach commercial operation by the required date of December 31, 2024 (Docket No. 2023-00236). All six projects are located in the service territory of Central Maine Power Company. The good cause provisions allow projects to seek exemptions from the PUC if their failure to reach commercial operation by the required date was due to external delays outside of the entity's control. The Commission may grant these petitions if it finds that, without the external delays, the entity could reasonably have been expected to meet the required commercial operation date. All six projects cite interconnection delays as external delays outside of their control.

The OPA estimates that the NEB program will cost ratepayers \$220 million per year once all eligible projects are online. The projects included in the petition represent millions of dollars in annual ratepayer costs if they are allowed to participate in the NEB program. This case is one of the first good cause exemption requests filed with the Commission and will set an important precedent for

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other projects seeking good cause exemptions. A case conference was held on October 3 to determine next steps in the proceeding.

The PUC Holds a Public Hearing on Amendments to Maine's Arrearage Management Program (AMP) that would Expand Eligibility and Benefits

In June, the OPA requested the PUC to adopt recommendations of the Electric Ratepayer Advisory Council (ERAC) to modify the PUC's Rules (Chapter 317) governing Maine's Statewide Arrearage Management Program (Docket No. 2023-00134). The AMP program provides that past indebtedness of qualifying low income ratepayers will be forgiven by the utility, if the ratepayer pays their current amounts owed. ERAC suggested rule changes that would:

- allow an AMP participant to miss two payments before disqualification;
- allow AMP eligibility once every seven years, rather than just once in a lifetime;
- allow LIAP customers to automatically qualify for enrollment into AMP; and,
- raise the maximum monthly forgiveness to \$500 a month (currently it's \$300/month).

The PUC issued a proposed amendment to Chapter 17 that would include the ERAC's recommendations and, in addition would:

- clarify the treatment under AMP of the amount currently owed for the previous month's usage; and,
- add certain tracking and reporting requirements. The OPA has also proposed that customers be notified that they are a risk of being removed from AMP after they miss a payment.

PUC Expands Eligibility for the Low-Income Assistance Program (LIAP); Adding 46,000 to the Number of Customers Who Can Receive a Credit on Their Electricity Bill

On July 11, 2023, Governor Janet Mills signed L.D. 258 which provides one-time funding of \$15 million for LIAP which provides bill credits for low-income electric customers (Docket Nos. 2023-00175 & 2023-00056). In response, the PUC initiated an inquiry to seek public comment on how to allocate this additional funding.

The OPA provided initial comments, suggesting that the PUC both expand eligibility by raising the federal poverty level (FPL) eligibility threshold for customers eligible to receive the benefit and increase the amount of the benefit.

In addition, the OPA recommended using a portion of the funding to promote participation in LIAP. The OPA also recommended that the Commission match the Legislative funding by increasing the ratepayer funding of LIAP by \$7.5 million beginning in PY 2023-2024. On September 27, 2023, the PUC increased the eligibility threshold to $\leq 150\%$ of the FPL. The Department of Health and Human Services will soon be mailing 67,000 letters informing customers that they qualify for LIAP and need to contact their electric company to receive the credit.

PUC Natural Gas Proceedings

Settlement Reached in Bangor Natural Gas Annual Cost of Gas Activities Review

On July 5, 2023, Bangor Natural Gas Company (Bangor Gas) submitted for PUC review and approval its Annual Report of Cost of Gas Activities for the Period of May 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023 (Docket No. 2023-00152). Through that filing, Bangor Gas requested that the PUC find as reasonable Bangor Gas' hedging, procurement, and other cost of gas activities for the 2022-2023 period. The OPA and Bangor Gas have reached a settlement in this proceeding, with the support of the PUC Staff, which recommends that the PUC approve the Company's cost of gas activities for the period of May 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023. The Stipulation also recommends that the Commission approve procedures for a mid-period reconciliation of capacity reservation costs. The settlement still needs the approval of the PUC.

Decision on Unutil Cost of Gas Factor Expected by the End of October

On August 15, 2023, Northern Utilities, Inc. d/b/a Unutil (Northern) filed an application, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S. § 4703 and Chapter 430(2) of the Commission's Rules, for a change in the cost of gas factor (CGF) rate for the Winter Period November 1, 2023, through April 30, 2024 (Docket No. 2023-00212). The proposed 2023 - 2024 Winter Period CGF Rate for Residential customers is \$0.7815 per therm. This rate is \$0.29 per therm lower than the average 2022 - 2023 Winter Period CGF rate, primarily due to significantly lower demand and commodity costs as well as a smaller reconciliation of prior under-collections. The total bill for a typical residential heating customer over the 2023 - 2024 Winter Period is projected to be \$911.12, which would be \$150.40 lower than their 2022 - 2023 Winter Period total bill, or about 14 percent. The total bill impact compares all Company 2023 - 2024 charges to 2022 - 2023 charges, including CGF Rates, base rates, and the applicable rate adjustments.

The OPA, as the only intervenor in the case, will file comments on Unutil's filing on October 6, 2023. A decision by the PUC is scheduled for October 31, 2023.

PUC Approves Increase in Summit Cost of Gas Rates

On September 27, 2023, the PUC issued an Order approving a Cost of Gas Adjustment rate of 1.061 per therm for all customer classes of Summit Natural Gas of Maine (Summit) for the period from October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024 (Docket No. 2023-00168). This represents an increase from the current Cost of Gas Adjustment rate of \$0.678 per therm. The resulting total rates are \$2.208 per therm for residential customers, \$2.073 per therm for small commercial customers, and \$1.806 per therm for large commercial customers. This proceeding will remain open to consider other issues that were raised in course of this case by the OPA, but which should not affect the Cost of Gas Adjustment rate approved by the PUC.

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Maine Natural Gas (MNG) Will Provide Gas Service for Central Maine Power's (CMP) New Natural Gas Heating Boiler in Augusta

On July 28, 2023, MNG asked the PUC for approval of an agreement to supply natural gas to CMP for its new natural gas heating boiler (Docket No. 2023-00195). Special approval is required because both MNG and CMP are indirect subsidiaries of Avangrid, Inc. The utilities answered questions from the PUC and the OPA about which terms and conditions will be applied to the contract, and the costs and timeline for the construction. On September 26, 2023, the PUC approved the agreement, finding that it is consistent with the laws regarding utility contracts between affiliate companies and that the arrangement is not adverse to the public interest.

[PUC Water Proceedings](#)

The PUC Staff Recommends a Lower Return on Shareholder Investments Than Maine Water Company (MWC) Requested

On March 31, 2023, the MWC asked the PUC to raise the annual revenue it collects from customers by approximately \$2 million (Docket No. 2023-00065). Part of that increase is to pay the return to shareholders on their capital investments (e.g., replacing equipment). In its March 31, 2023 petition, MWC asked for a 9.7% return on shareholder investments. On June 20, the OPA recommended that the return should be only 8.88%. MWC responded by asking for an even higher return of 10.75%. But, on September 5, 2023, the PUC issued its Bench Analysis saying that the return on shareholder investments should be only 9.00%. The MWC has asked to file additional testimony to respond to the PUC's recommendation. As a result, the Hearing for the final decision on the rate increase request, which was to be held on October 18, 2023 will be rescheduled for later in 2023.

The PUC Takes More Time to Review the OPA's Objection to the Temporary Rate Increase Being Paid by the Maine Water Company's (MWC) Biddeford and Saco (B&S) Customers

On March 31, 2023, MWC asked the PUC for a 19.92% increase for its B&S customers (Docket No. 2023-00065). Then on April 25, 2023, MWC requested a temporary rate increase of 12% starting on July 1, 2023 until the rate case is completed, saying that there were cost increases not in dispute in the case. Over the OPA's objection, MWC's request was granted on August 25, 2023. The OPA has filed a petition asking for the PUC to reconsider, which remains pending.

PUC Denies Maine Water Company's (MWC) Request to Add Surcharge to Customers' Bills in Camden & Rockland (C&R) for New Spending

On June 30, 2023, the MWC asked the PUC for permission to raise its revenues by 2.34% by adding a surcharge to C&R customers' bills to recover the costs (approximately \$1.7 million) of repairs/replacement of water mains and other equipment (Docket No. 2023-00163). In response, the OPA filed Comments asking why the new projects were not part of the recent rate increases (new rates became effective 1/1/23), why receipts and other documentation were not provided, and

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why customers were not provided with notice of this case. On September 21, 2023 the PUC issued an order agreeing with the OPA that MWC had failed to notify customers of this surcharge requests as required by the PUC's Rule Chapter 675. The Commission has suspended the proceeding until MWC makes the necessary notice to customers.

The PUC Staff Recommends a Public Meeting for Lincoln Water District's (LWD) Request to Approve a Special Rate Contract with Poland Spring Before the Contract Can Be Reviewed

On June 23, 2023, LWD notified the PUC that it would be amending its lease between LWD and Poland Spring Bottling Company (Docket No. 2023-00151). LWD also would be creating a Special Rate Contract (SRC) between the District and Poland Spring. The OPA responded that LWD was required to hold a Public Meeting to give customers an opportunity to comment on the lease. Over objection by LWD, the Commission found that Poland Spring is a customer of LWD, subject to a public meeting exemption by statute. However, for an agreement of this significance for LWD and its customers, there must be an opportunity for the public to receive information, ask questions, and weigh in. The PUC will schedule a public hearing, unless the LWD holds its own public meeting.

PUC Recommends a "10-Person Complaint" Asking the PUC to Open a Formal Investigation Into the Auburn Water District's Actions Regarding Lake Auburn be Dismissed if Certain Conditions are Met

On March 23, 2023, a group of local customers and residents filed a complaint against the Auburn Water District (AWD), claiming the District has acted in ways that threaten the quality of water in Lake Auburn and which may lead to significant rate increases (Docket No. 2023-00069). Currently, Lake Auburn has a federal waiver from the requirement to build a costly filtration system which is otherwise required for surface water drinking water sources. The PUC is expected to issue an order providing that the complaint be dismissed if AWD files documents showing it has kept its promises to adequately address the water quality and filtration waiver concerns set forth in the complaint.

[PUC Procedural Rulings](#)

The OPA objects to PUC changes to Creating an Evidentiary Record

In several recent cases, the Hearing Examiners have issued rulings that all material filed in the PUC's CMS filing system in each case will automatically be admitted into the evidentiary record upon which the PUC makes any findings of fact in its Final Order (Docket No. 2023-00233), unless parties object to them. The OPA objected, arguing that if the PUC automatically preapproves all CMS filings as evidence, the Commission is not following that the rules of evidence apply in PUC proceedings. Specifically, the OPA argues that PUC should not issue a finding on the admissibility of evidence that is not under oath and has yet to be identified.

Consumer Assistance

Elizabeth Deprey, OPA Consumer Advisor

Big changes coming to Efficiency Maine Heat Pump Rebate Program

Efficiency Maine in September announced a shift in focus for heat pump rebates from “partial-home” heat pumps to “whole-home” heat pumps. Rebate amounts are increasing, but heat pumps must be sized to meet at least 80% of the home’s peak heating load to qualify. Note: \$2,000 federal tax credits are still available to support both partial-home and whole-home heat pumps. [Learn more from Efficiency Maine.](#)

Should you sign up with two solar providers?

I recently spoke to a gentleman who wanted to know if he could get double the savings if he signed up with two community solar opportunities. The short answer is, if you’ve already purchased enough credits to cover your usage, no you won’t see additional savings from signing up with more than one provider. I explained that he couldn’t stack savings. He would basically be buying a bag of oranges at one store at a discount, and another bag of oranges at different store at a discount. He would not be buying one bag at a great big discount. And most likely, he would end up with more oranges than he could eat.

I don’t know if I convinced him, but if you are considering doing the same, I hope you will reconsider. Solar credits offset your usage charges, so you can only save the advertised amount on each credit that actually reduces your monthly usage. In addition, the current situation with solar credits is that they expire after a year. It’s likely that you will end up paying for credits you don’t need if you’re signed up with two solar companies, and they will likely expire before you use them. You definitely won’t be saving money if that happens. There isn’t a rule against signing up with more than one community solar company. But it’s not something I would advise.

Looking for more Community Solar advice and information? Check out our refreshed [Community Solar Page](#), and don’t forget our [Community Solar FAQ](#).

How to Contact Your Solar Provider

Several people have called the Office of the Public Advocate lately looking for contact information for their solar provider. With new community solar projects coming online, customers are seeing changes in their electric bills, such as a change in billing cycles, or a reduction in the bill amount.

Confusion arises because the solar company name that is familiar to customers, such as “Arcadia” or “NexAmp,” isn’t usually the name on the bill, so finding phone numbers for customer support can be a challenge. Instead, the bill often shows an LLC for a specific site. It also may be difficult for some customers to remember the name of the company they signed up with because that conversation likely happened several years ago.

Some consumers don’t even remember signing up for solar in the first place, so they are even more

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frustrated. What should consumers do? As the Consumer Advisor for the OPA I recommend:

- Searching all email accounts for the word “solar,” even in the spam folder. Often when these projects are about to go live, they contact customers via email.
- Search the database. Solar providers are expected to register with Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC), and consumers can search for the LLC name shown on their power bill – we have a link to the MPUC database on [our website](#).
- If those options fail, wait for a bill. This may also come to your email account.

Note: If community solar no longer fits your needs, cancel within 5 days of receiving that first bill to be responsible for only that bill; otherwise, it may take up to 90 days to cancel your account.

State Announces Help for Low-income Broadband Consumers

The Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA) has announced that qualifying low-income broadband customers will receive a discount of up to \$30 per month (up to \$75 per month for qualifying tribal households) and a one-time \$100 discount toward a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet. The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is funded by the Federal Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA). MCA’s “ACP4ME” campaign is hoping to reach approximately 240,000 eligible Maine households. Eligible households earn 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or less. For a household of 4, that is \$60,000. Also, this benefit may not be available after June 2024, so we encourage people to act quickly to benefit their household for as many months as possible. To learn more, visit maineconnectivity.org/affordability

What to do if you are behind on your utility bills

- Contact your utility. Ask about a payment arrangement to pay down your back balance.
- If you have a payment arrangement with your utility and you can’t afford it, contact the PUC’s Consumer Assistance Division at (800)452-4699 to see if they can negotiate a more favorable rate for you.
- Call your local CAP. There are heating, electric, and pandemic assistance funds available to help with your utility bills.
- Contact your town for general assistance fund support.
- If you are eligible for heating assistance, call your electric utility and ask about enrolling in arrearage management. This program provides debt forgiveness as you pay your current electricity bill on-time.

[Having trouble paying a utility bill?](#)

The Public Utilities Commission has a webpage to connect you to bill assistance resources. This list covers all utilities and is a great page to review if you are having trouble making ends meet:

<https://www.maine.gov/mpuc/consumer-assistance/programs>

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