



State Senator
Jason Welch
 Bristol ★ Harwinton ★ Plainville
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Dear Neighbors,

Here in Connecticut, the state offers many consumer protections and services to help residents. This brochure contains information about some changes to those services – including those that can help you solve consumer problems and protect you from unfair business practices.

I am committed to making sure all businesses and organizations in Connecticut participate in a fair marketplace and respect the needs and requests of all customers. I encourage you to stay informed about the local resources that promote fair play and consumer protection.

If you have questions about consumer protection in general, please contact the Department of Consumer Protection's information line at (860) 713-6300 or visit their website at www.ct.gov/dcp.

I am also available to help and can be reached in my office at 1-800-842-1421.

Jason Welch
 Jason Welch
 State Senator – 31st District

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Thank you for this opportunity to share information about important issues affecting our state. If you have questions about this or any issue concerning state government, please feel free to contact me directly.

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Jason Welch
 Your State Senator,
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State Senator
Jason Welch
 Electric Customer
 Bill of Rights



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Electric Customer Bill of Rights

During the past year many families and individuals on fixed incomes received a shock when they opened their electric bills. For many, the monthly generation charge doubled or even tripled. Customers had no idea why, but were still stuck paying the bill.

Turns out this was not an isolated problem. The fact that Connecticut already has some of the highest energy costs in the nation makes these skyrocketing prices totally unacceptable.

In 2014 alone, the state Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) received more than 1,300 consumer complaints about electric suppliers.

This year, I voted in favor of a measure designed to better protect electricity consumers from future rate spikes and clear



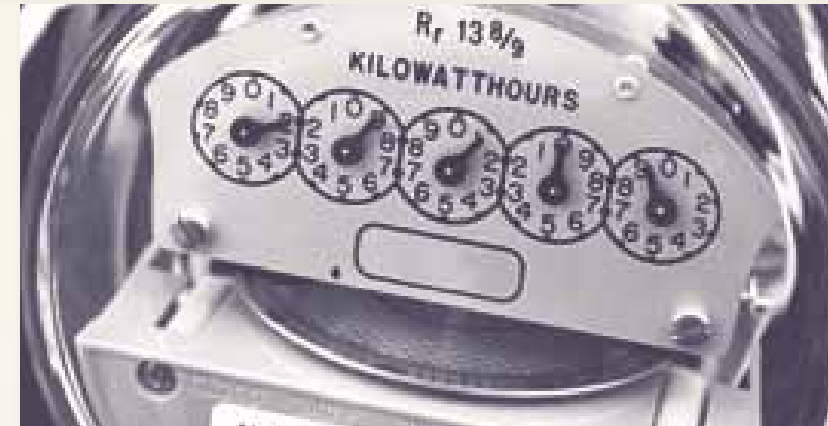
"We must protect our electric consumers." — Sen. Jason Welch

up confusion in the system. The proposal — Public Act 14-75 — empowers consumers in several ways including:

- Making it easier for customers to compare pricing policies and charges by requiring PURA to initiate a redesign of the billing format for residential customers.
- Letting customers choose how they receive information related to bill notices. Options include U.S. mail, e-mail, text messages or an app.
- Stopping an electric supplier from charging a customer month-to-month variable rates after a contract expires without notice. They must provide written notification to the customer 45 days prior to the beginning of the rate change.
- Prohibiting suppliers from misleading customers. Suppliers cannot make a statement suggesting a customer is required to choose a supplier.
- Requiring that all fixed rates must be fixed for at least 3 months. That rate can be lowered, but never raised in that set period of time (beginning July 1, 2014).
- Additionally, the legislation will prohibit any door-to-door salesperson for a supply company from wearing apparel, carrying equipment or distributing materials with the logo of an electric distribution company (including Northeast Utilities and United Illuminating). This will stop supply companies from misleading customers into thinking the suppliers are associated with a larger distribution company.

Future electric bills should contain quarterly inserts with helpful information, such as:

- the electric generation rate
- the term and expiration date of that rate
- any change to such rate effective for the next billing cycle
- the cancellation fee, if there is one



- notification when a rate is variable
- the dollar amount that would have been billed for electric generation services had the customer been on standard service.
- the standard service rate
- the term and expiration date of the standard service rate

Some groups like AARP believe the bill did not go far enough. Though PURA has the ability to fine suppliers for abuses – in some cases as much as \$10,000 per complaint – the agency is not doing so. My office has asked PURA why they have not been enforcing the law. I want to see the consumers protected against aggressive misleading tactics. PURA's enforcement of penalties would greatly help to accomplish that goal.

Market oversight is still a very real concern. This legislation is a step in the right direction and should send a message to suppliers that we protect our consumers in Connecticut. Customers expect and deserve a fair price and should be told the truth about what they are paying for.

For more information about options available in the electric retail market visit the State of Connecticut official energy choice website at www.energizect.com.