

Wilmington, Delaware
May 7, 2026

#0234

Sponsor:

Council
Member
Willauer

WHEREAS, electricity is an essential resource upon which the health, safety, and economic well-being of Wilmington residents and businesses depend, and access to affordable, reliable energy is foundational to the quality of life for all residents of the State of Delaware; and

WHEREAS, Delmarva Power and Light Company (Delmarva Power) is the primary electric distribution utility serving the City of Wilmington and the surrounding region. The company provides electricity to more than 300,000 residential and commercial customers in the State of Delaware, many of whom have experienced significant increases in their electric bills in recent years; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, Title 26, Chapter 10 of the Delaware Code introduced the Electric Utility Restructuring plan that permanently split utility bills into two components: a regulated delivery charge, including infrastructure costs, which is still overseen by the Delaware Public Service Commission, and a deregulated supply charge for electricity itself. Delmarva subsequently began purchasing power on the open wholesale market, resulting in the transfer of 100% of price volatility, including spikes in 2006, 2022, and 2025, directly onto customers. The retail competition that was intended to lower residential rates did not meaningfully materialize; and

WHEREAS, since this time, retail electricity rates for Delmarva Power customers have risen substantially due to multiple compounding factors, including natural gas price volatility, escalating infrastructure costs, and skyrocketing capacity prices within the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection (PJM) regional power market, which has recorded capacity

price increases of over 800 percent since 2024, driven by demand outpacing supply, the rapid growth of energy-intensive data centers, and structural flaws in PJM's market design. These regional market dynamics disproportionately burden low- and middle-income households, seniors on fixed incomes, and small businesses in Wilmington, for whom rising energy costs represent an increasingly unsustainable share of monthly expenses; and

WHEREAS, the State of Delaware and the Delaware General Assembly have taken commendable steps in recent years to provide Delmarva Power customers with temporary rate relief and bill credits, institute strategies to address climate change, and create a forum for energy stakeholders to discuss critical emerging issues. Several laws have been proposed and adopted to facilitate a diversified energy future, recognizing the value of renewable resources, demand-side management, and community-owned energy-generating facilities. These are frameworks that, if robustly expanded and funded, could meaningfully reduce ratepayer dependence on volatile regional wholesale markets and decentralize the State's energy supply. However, without sustained investment in long-term energy solutions, residents and businesses will continue to face elevated and potentially increasing electricity bills in the years ahead; and

WHEREAS, investment in renewable energy sources, including solar, offshore wind, and energy storage, as well as robust energy efficiency programs for income-qualifying households, have been demonstrated to reduce ratepayer costs over time, decrease dependence on volatile fossil fuel markets, and create local economic opportunity; and

WHEREAS, federal policies including tariffs on clean energy technology components and restrictions on the development of renewable energy resources threaten to exacerbate the electricity supply shortage and increase costs for consumers, making it all the more urgent that

the State of Delaware act decisively within its own authority to expand and accelerate clean and affordable energy development; and

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2025, federal Executive Order 14156 was issued, declaring a national energy emergency. Our regional neighbors have responded accordingly. New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill’s first two executive orders directed the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to pause additional utility rate increases, use state funds to offset pending hikes, and to make immediate plans to accelerate investments in alternative energy sources.

WHEREAS, the City of Wilmington has a compelling interest in advocating for energy policies that provide lasting relief, promote economic stability, and advance environmental justice. Council also recognizes that sustained collaboration among state government, utility regulators, municipalities, and community stakeholders is essential to ensuring that Delaware's energy future is equitable, resilient, and sustainable. Governor Wes Moore and the Maryland General Assembly have worked collaboratively to pass the Utility RELIEF (Reducing Energy Load Inflation on Everyday Families) emergency measure to provide \$200 million from their Strategic Energy Investment Fund to direct bill relief, energy efficiency and heat pumps, long-term changes to reduce bill surcharges, and greater accountability for utility companies, as well as large energy users. Governor Josh Shapiro demanded that PECO, Pennsylvania’s largest utility company, withdraw its proposed rate increase, saving customers \$510 million, or approximately \$34 per bill for some households; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON that the Council respectfully urges the Governor of the State of Delaware and the honorable members of the Delaware General Assembly to expand investments in sustainable, affordable energy strategies, including renewable energy development, energy

storage, and targeted energy efficiency programs for low- and middle-income ratepayers to provide lasting relief from rising electricity costs for Delmarva Power customers and all Delaware residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Wilmington urges the Governor and the Delaware General Assembly to direct the Delaware Public Service Commission and relevant state agencies to study and pursue long-term reforms to the utility business model, including performance-based ratemaking, multi-year rate plans, and mechanisms that reduce ratepayer dependence on capital infrastructure spending, to stabilize and reduce electricity bills over time.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Wilmington urges the Governor and the Delaware General Assembly to ensure that any state proceeds from regional climate and energy programs, including the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), are directed in meaningful part to direct ratepayer relief and energy efficiency assistance for income-qualifying households.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: While the State has taken action to offer assistance to Delmarva customers experiencing increased costs, this relief is a temporary solution to an ongoing issue. This Resolution respectfully urges the Governor of the State of Delaware and the honorable members of the Delaware General Assembly to expand investments in sustainable, affordable energy strategies.