

DG11-069

39 S Pine Street

Dover, NH 03820

May 20, 2011

Public Utilities Commission
21 S. Fruit St.
Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301-2429

RE: UNITIL rate increase



To Whom It May Concern:

I received notice with my gas bill yesterday that UNITIL has requested an increase in rates amounting, according to them, to 8—12% of the bill. I must object to this in the strongest possible way and urge that such an increase be completely rejected.

It can come as no surprise that we are currently enduring the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Individuals are being forced to cut back on all levels, as prices for food and gasoline have risen to record levels. At the same time, real income for most has remained stagnant since 1974. In short, people cannot afford another huge hit to their budgets.

But in a larger sense, this will not only affect their heat and hot water— as retailers and other businesses will face an additional 3.1% (on average, again according to UNITIL) rise in their costs. This at a time when all are citing the need for new hiring, which businesses have been loath to do, facing uncertainty (like the proposed increase) and lack of financial resources (which the increase will only exacerbate). They will, without doubt, pass the increase on to their customers, meaning yet another hit to the budget of New Hampshire citizens, potentially a bigger one.

Lastly, we must ask whether the requested increase is even justified by anything more than a desire for greater profits and higher officer salaries, otherwise known as greed. As of February 3rd of this year, UNITIL Corp. posted higher profits in the fourth quarter of 2010 as earnings hit \$5.2 million, or 48 cents per share, compared to earnings of \$1.2 million, or 11 cents per share, at the same time a year earlier. The company says the new money “is designed to provide additional revenues in support of distribution investments and operations.” Butter wouldn’t melt in their mouth — let me parse that: we just want more money!

For all these reasons, and I’m sure others can find more, this request must be denied!

Sincerely,

C. Alexander Cohen