



# NEWS RELEASE

## Alliance for Fair Utilities

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### Opposition to We Energies' Unfair Rate Proposal Rises

MILWAUKEE—on the eve of the Public Service Commission's meeting to discuss the We Energies' rate proposal, opposition continues to rise. The proposal includes an increase to the fixed fee from around \$9 to \$16, large taxes for solar owners, and prohibits 3<sup>rd</sup> party solar systems. Community members are calling on Commissioners Montgomery, Callisto, and Nowak to deny the request.

Earlier this week the Milwaukee County Board passed a resolution opposing the proposal. "These proposed rate hikes make no economic or environmental sense. The raised rates would hurt some of the neediest people in Milwaukee County. Retirees who live on fixed income and working families who live paycheck to paycheck would have to stretch their dollars even further, while the utility demands ever more," Milwaukee County Supervisor Jason Haas, who sponsored the resolution, said. "Moreover, county taxpayers would be hurt by the utility's desire to undermine people and organizations with solar installations. Milwaukee County has six existing solar installations, the latest being an entire outer wall of the Milwaukee Public Museum. The county would have to pay more for money that it produced by itself. We would be punished for our environmental stewardship. The hikes make no sense, economically or environmentally."

The proposal before the Public Service Commission needs to be analyzed in terms of who benefits and who loses. An across-the-board rate increase from \$9.12 to \$16 a month disproportionately affects the poor and the elderly on fixed incomes. The proposal also punishes those who have invested in subsidized programs that have made their homes more energy efficient or who have installed solar panels. A monopoly on energy does not serve our community to best advantage," stated Joyce Ellwanger with MICAH. "MICAH supports the creation of new jobs in the renewable energy sector as important to the most distressed neighborhoods in our city where unemployment of 50% and more is tearing apart the very fabric of safe and sound community life."

[RENEW Wisconsin released a report yesterday that showed an unprecedented amount of engagement and overwhelming opposition to this rate change. 89% of the commenters were opposed and only 205 of the nearly 2,000 comments supported the proposal.](#) Jackie Ivy, founder of the Milwaukee Chapter of Friends of Moral Mondays, was one of those who spoke in opposition. "This is another attempt by We Energies to take advantage of the people in Milwaukee who already struggle to pay our bills. We need Commissioners Montgomery, Nowak, and Callisto to do their job and protect us from We Energies." She continued, "in April the Common Council passed a resolution that created a study to find ways to disconnect from We Energies. If the Commission chooses We Energies over the City of Milwaukee, we'll need the City to protect us more than ever."

The Commissioners will be having their preliminary meeting on the issue tomorrow. Alliance for Fair Utilities is suggesting people contact the Public Service Commission at (608) 267-7898 to express their concerns.

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*Alliance for Fair Utilities is a newly-formed coalition of more than a dozen faith, health, environmental, and social justice groups concerned about the impacts of increasing the fixed fee portion of electricity bills.*