



THE LEGISLATURE NIAGARA COUNTY

LEGISLATOR BRITTANY CATCHPOLE
6th DISTRICT

July 1, 2011

Mr. Garry L. Brown, Chairman
New York State Public Service Commission
Empire State Plaza
Agency Bldg. 3
Albany, New York 12223-1350

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am writing to request that the Public Service Commission do the right thing, and oppose the efforts of PUSH Buffalo to turn National Fuel—and its customers in Niagara County—into a piggy bank to fund their agenda.

Niagara County's families already pay enough for their utilities, whether they are customers of National Fuel, NYSEG, or National Grid. Were the PUSH proposals at this week's hearings allowed to go through, Niagara County families' utility bills would rise—even as a program that benefits our neediest residents was shut down, its funding diverted to a group only concerned with benefiting the residents of Buffalo.

Our families here in Niagara County matter, too. They're the ones paying the surcharge that funds National Fuel's Conservation Incentive Program, and they expect to see those programs benefit *their* neighbors, not strangers on Buffalo's West Side.

CIP is a program that works. It has provided rebates to 61,000 residential customers for conservation upgrades, at the same time that 2,200 low- and fixed-income homes throughout Western New York were weatherized. This has included many hundreds of homes on Buffalo's West Side—as well as homes in communities like the Town of Niagara, Niagara Falls, the Town of Wheatfield, and the Town of Lewiston. If PUSH Buffalo has its way, the only customers seeing any benefit from this program will be those living in Buffalo.

Meanwhile, the residents of the Town of Niagara and the DeVeaux neighborhood of Niagara Falls and their surrounding communities, in addition to losing the benefits of CIP, will now find themselves on the hook for the \$10 million in funding that PUSH is demanding from National Fuel—which, really, is \$10 million from National Fuel's customers.

We deserve better.

Mr. Chairman, don't allow the PSC to be used to further PUSH's shakedown tactics. Don't force Western New York's families to fund PUSH's political agenda. Don't force Niagara County's families to pay Buffalo's heating bills.

We deserve better, and we'll get it if the PSC does the right thing and stops this radical proposal that hurts Niagara County's families.

Sincerely,

Brittany Catchpole

Cc: Patricia L. Acampora, Commissioner
Robert E. Curry, Jr., Commissioner
Maureen F. Harris, Esq., Commissioner
James L. Larocca, Commissioner
David F. Smith, CEO, National Fuel