



THE LEGISLATURE NIAGARA COUNTY

LEGISLATOR CHEREÉ J. COPELIN
5th 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 Chairman Brown:

I am writing to oppose proposed changes to the Conservation Incentive Program voluntarily administered by National Fuel. The CIP program has benefited 45,000 Western New York families since 2007, including many right here in Niagara County.

In its present format, CIP is a voluntary measure administered by National Fuel to benefit customers throughout its operating region. This includes many residents of the City of Niagara Falls and the neighboring towns of Wheatfield, Niagara, and Lewiston. Funded through a minimal surcharge - \$1.14 per month for the average residential customer - this program has benefited those members of our community that have the least resources and the greatest needs.

Unfortunately, PUSH Buffalo, a high-pressure "advocacy group" known for engaging in street theater, has tried to change a program that works. PUSH intends for the Public Service Commission to ratify its activist agenda by redirecting a program that benefits residents of National Fuel's entire operational region to benefit, essentially, just the West Side of the City of Buffalo.

Adding insult to injury, PUSH also is demanding a \$10 million "charitable contribution" to PUSH from the "profits" of National Fuel. Mr. Brown, as National Fuel is in the business of making a profit for its investors, that \$10 million "contribution" will be borne by paying customers in places like Niagara Falls.

That is unacceptable.

The Conservation Incentive Program works. It has helped more than 1,500 low-income Western New York families. I urge the PSC to reject the radical demands being foisted on National Fuel and its Niagara County customers by PUSH. Niagara County's families deserve the benefits from a program that they and their neighbors pay for - not "community organizers" in Buffalo. And Niagara County's families certainly shouldn't be forced to pay for PUSH's operating costs.

Please do the right thing and reject PUSH's high-tech stick-up.

Respectfully,

Chereé J. Copelin

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