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# New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Releases Affordability and Rates Report

For Immediate Release:

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*Report builds on commitment to ensuring energy affordability for all ratepayers*

TRENTON - The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) today accepted a report entitled "[An Assessment of Energy Affordability in New Jersey and Alternative Policy and Rate Options](#)," including its full set of recommendations, and authorized the public release of the report. In recommending the Board's acceptance of the report, the Report outlines a framework for increasing affordability and significantly improving the NJBPUs ability to assist low- and moderate-income (LMI) utility customers.

"Affordability is always front of mind for the Murphy Administration, and the Energy Equity and Affordability Report will help guide our next steps on securing ratepayer savings and making energy more affordable for New Jersey ratepayers, especially for those who need assistance the most," said NJBPU President Christine Guhl-Sadovy. "Nobody wants to see their bills go up. This report is another example of our efforts to manage any rate increases and ensure we are improving our available assistance programs to reach as many ratepayers in need as best we can."

The study evaluates the effectiveness of the utility bill assistance programs in New Jersey (LIHEAP, USF, Lifeline, and New Jersey SHARES programs) based on how much they reduce energy burden for participating households using a large data set covering more than 200,000 New Jersey households receiving assistance in the 2023-2024 timeframe. The report found that while New Jersey's energy assistance programs are effective in reducing energy burden for participants, New Jersey has opportunities to advance its programs and enhance its rate offerings to support a broader base of customers and safeguard LMI customers from potential future rate increases. Here is a brief summary of the Report's key findings:

#### 1. Bill Assistance Programs:

1. New Jersey can extend its reach to more low-income customers to increase participation in its Universal Service Fund ("USF") program through targeted outreach, involving a coordinated initiative from the Board, utilities, and other State and local agencies. New Jersey should also continue to monitor the funding needs as well as the bill impacts on non-participating customers.
2. New Jersey should consider developing bill assistance programs specifically designed for moderate-income customers.
3. New Jersey can consider increasing the USF discount cap per household, which would allow eligible households to receive a greater amount of assistance.

#### 1. Alternative Rate Design:

1. New Jersey should review the current policy on inclining block rates and consider rate designs that are more reflective of the underlying costs to provide electricity service to customers.
2. New Jersey should start testing time varying rate options with a goal to make these rates widely available to customers when advanced metering infrastructure and the associated meters are fully deployed.
3. New Jersey should continue to monitor the merits of income-tiered fixed charges, but no immediate changes are necessary given that similar affordability benefits are being achieved through USF.

The state of New Jersey is committed to ensuring energy affordability for all ratepayers. If you or someone you know needs assistance with their energy bills, do not wait to contact the NJBPU until you are faced with a service disruption. The NJBPU

is here to help.

Last year, New Jersey's energy assistance programs provided approximately \$295 million in assistance to over 455,000 families. Additionally, the Board unveiled the Residential Energy Assistance Payment initiative, which disbursed over \$48.7 million via a one-time \$175 bill credit for over 278,000 qualifying families.

There are several assistance programs available through the NJBPU or [New Jersey Department of Customer Affairs](#): Universal Service Fund, Fresh Start Program, Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric (PAGE) Program, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Lifeline, NJ Shares and NJ Comfort Partners. A more detailed description of these programs, as well as the requirements and guidelines can be found on the Board's NJBPU's website at <https://nj.gov/bpu/>.

A Straw Proposal with specific actions to be taken towards these ends and opportunity for public comment will follow in the coming days. NJBPU Staff will hold a virtual [Stakeholder Meeting](#) to solicit input from the public and interested parties on proposals to address energy affordability for Low- and Moderate-Income customers on April 1.

The Final Report was developed by Brattle, Inc. and can be found on the Board's website here: [Affordability in New Jersey](#).

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#### [About the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities \(NJBPU\)](#)

*NJBPU is a state agency and regulatory authority mandated to ensure safe, adequate and proper utility services at reasonable rates for New Jersey customers. Critical services regulated by NJBPU include natural gas, electricity, water, wastewater, telecommunications and cable television. The Board has general oversight and responsibility for monitoring utility service, responding to consumer complaints, and investigating utility accidents. To find out more about NJBPU, visit our website at [www.nj.gov/bpu](http://www.nj.gov/bpu).*

#### [About New Jersey's Clean Energy Program \(NJCEP\)](#)

*NJCEP, established on January 22, 2003, in accordance with the Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act (EDECA), provides financial and other incentives to the State's residential customers, businesses and schools that install high-efficiency or renewable energy technologies, thereby reducing energy usage, lowering customers' energy bills and reducing environmental impacts. The program is authorized and overseen by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU), and its website is [www.NJCleanEnergy.com](http://www.NJCleanEnergy.com).*



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