

William M. Flynn, Esq., Chairman
New York State
Public Service Commission
3 Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12223

Dear Chairman Flynn:

I am writing to express my concern about the steadily climbing rates of natural gas. The impact of natural gas prices has hit all New Yorkers in the last six months — manufacturers, small businesses, schools and residential consumers have all been affected. And in the Mohawk Valley, with our brutally-cold winters, many families simply cannot afford to stretch their already strained budgets any more to pay additional utility costs.

The price of natural gas has been on the rise for the past six months and is only expected to get worse. Industry analysts have projected the price of natural gas to continue to average \$6 per million British thermal units in 2003, compared to an average of \$3.30 in 2002. Additionally, with our increased reliance on this fuel, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has warned Congress about the grave consequences of natural gas shortfalls and disruptions to the nation's economy.

The governor's appointees on the PSC have an obligation to protect our working families from being gouged by rate increases. We need to take immediate action on this matter to ensure our families and our economy are not completely devastated by skyrocketing natural gas prices.

My colleague Assemblyman Paul Tonko, who is chair of the Assembly Committee on Energy, has requested a hearing on the rising costs of natural gas and I intend to closely follow the information presented during the hearings. I would like your input regarding this important issue. What is your view on the impact that astronomical natural gas prices would have on New York State? What do you think can be done to help our families and businesses avoid unjustified rate hikes?

I look forward to working with you on behalf of energy consumers to determine a solution to this problem.

Sincerely,

RoAnn M. Desito
Member of Assembly