

News...

...from the Illinois House of Representatives

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Rep. Feigenholtz Sides with Consumers on Utility Rate Hike Legislation

CHICAGO – State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago) shared her disappointment that the Illinois General Assembly approved Senate Bill 1652 and House Bill 3036 last week. This legislation paves the way for annual utility rate increases.

The General Assembly overwhelmingly overrode Governor Quinn’s veto of Senate Bill 1652, legislation pushed by ComEd that makes it easier for electric utility companies to raise rates if they commit to technology infrastructure upgrades. The proposed rate hikes have been a highly contentious issue and were met with staunch opposition by Attorney General Lisa Madigan and consumer advocacy groups.

“This legislation strips Illinoisans of the rights and protections they deserve as consumers by eroding the oversight of the Illinois Commerce Commission,” Feigenholtz said. “In this economy, households can hardly afford to have the cost of modernization passed on to them. The lack of consumer protection in these bills is disconcerting.”

Legislators also approved accompanying trailer legislation in House Bill 3036 which passed the Senate on a vote of 37-20 and the House on a vote of 91-24. House Bill 3036 sets requirements for investments and creates financial penalties for failure to meet any of the outlined standards. Although Governor Quinn has expressed opposition to the bill, it received veto-proof majorities that indicate a potential veto could be easily overridden.

“There is no question that Illinois needs modernized infrastructure,” said Feigenholtz. “Now that this legislation has passed, we have to focus on ensuring that the smart grid technology is efficient enough to improve service and cut down on energy usage. ComEd and these other electric companies have to be held accountable for fulfilling their requirements in this legislation.”

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