

RESOLUTION 2020 – 299

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BARNEGAT,
COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
OPPOSING JERSEY CENTRAL POWER AND LIGHT’S VERIFIED PETITION FOR A
RATE INCREASE AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL MASTER**

WHEREAS, on February 18, 2020 Jersey Central Power and Light “JCP&L”, a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corporation, an electric utility headquartered in Akron, Ohio submitted a Verified Petition seeking an approval of a 7.8% rate increase, as well as other adjustments to its rates and charges for electric service, and for approval of other proposed tariff revisions in connection therewith; and

WHEREAS, the Verified Petition would impose on a typical residential customer that uses 766 kWh per month, and pays \$102.29 per month for electricity an increase in their monthly bill by \$8.73 or 8.5%, resulting in an average monthly payment of \$111.02; and

WHEREAS, the Verified Petition provides that \$77 million of the requested rate increase is due to storms occurring between January 1, 2016 through June 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, JCP&L previously received a 3.6% rate increase on January 1, 2017 which was to be used for vegetative management and infrastructure upgrades; and

WHEREAS, under N.J.A.C. 14:33.1, JCP&L has an affirmative duty to provide the residents of Ocean County with “Safe, adequate and proper service, including furnishing and performance of service that tends to conserve energy resources and preserve the quality of the environment and the quality of life”; and

WHEREAS, on August 4, 2020, Tropical Storm Isaias tore through New Jersey leaving more than 1.3 million homes without power in its wake; and

WHEREAS, despite JCP&L repeated assurances in their prior requests for rate increases, that vegetative maintenance and infrastructure upgrades would minimize storm related outages, it is clear that JCP&L’s vegetative maintenance and infrastructure upgrades failed during Tropical Storm Isaias; and

WHEREAS, the Ocean County Board of Freeholders finds that JCP&L failed to provide that adequate service in the length of time it took to restore the County to full power; and further finds that JCP&L was unresponsive to the needs of residents by not providing accurate information regarding power outages; and considering the failure of JCP&L to upgrade their infrastructure, combined with the burden the loss of electricity has caused Ocean County residents, the Board of Freeholders opposes any service rate increase and calls upon the Division of Rate Counsel to oppose the rate increase on behalf of County residents

WHEREAS, the failure of the JCP&L’s infrastructure during Tropical Storm Isaias demonstrates that JCP&L was unprepared for the storm and may have deferred the cost of the promised upgrades and vegetative maintenance programs; and

WHEREAS, on July 30, 2020, an indictment was issued against numerous elected officials in the State of Ohio detailing a \$60 million dollar corruption scheme that sought to ensure the passing of certain energy friendly related legislation; and

WHEREAS, the alleged \$60 million dollar corruption scheme involved the financing from an alleged “Company A” described as “an Akron based public utility holding company”; and

WHEREAS, it is apparent “Company A” is FirstEnergy Corporation, headquartered in Akron, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Freeholders requests the Board of Public Utilities to appoint a Special Master to review all of the rate increases for JCP&L, a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corporation, over the past year to confirm all necessary storm mitigation plans were properly executed; and

WHEREAS, the Special Master further be empowered to audit JCP&L and its parent company FirstEnergy to confirm that no revenue from JCP&L, a FirstEnergy Corporation, was improperly diverted from the rate payers of New Jersey to any illegal enterprise; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Barnegat joins with the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean, State of New Jersey hereby opposing any rate increase by JCP&L and requests that a Special Master be appointed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the following: New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, New Jersey Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, JCP&L, FirstEnergy Corporation, New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, the 9th, 10th, 12th and 30th Legislative Districts and all Ocean County Municipalities.

CERTIFICATION

I, Michele Rivers, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Barnegat, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the Governing Body at their meeting held on the 6th of October, 2020 a quorum being present and voting in the majority.

Michele A. Rivers, RMC
Municipal Clerk