

# FACT SHEET



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## Support: Decrease Energy Burden on Families

**HB 981- Delegate Herring**  
**HB 1132- Delegates Jones & Ware**  
**HB 1450- Delegate Sullivan**  
**SB 354- Senator Bell**  
**SB 1027- Senator Lewis**

**Problem: We have the 7<sup>th</sup> highest bills in the nation**, when considering average residential electricity bill cost in the state of Virginia. Virginia households have a costlier energy burden than the national average - the average electricity burden is unaffordable for over 75% of Virginia households. Although our state has average electricity rates, consumers pay bills, which include rates and expensive additional charges called "RACs" or rate adjustment clauses – also called riders. Dominion's bills have gone up 30% from 2006 and 2016.

### **Policy solutions:**

Virginia should help lower electricity bills on Virginia families by expanding energy efficiency programs for underserved and low-income communities and ensuring proper regulation of utilities so that customers are not over-charged.

### **Leverage resources from clean energy commitments: HB 981 & SB 1027**

By joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a cap and trade program to reduce carbon pollution from power plants, at least 50% of the auction revenues should be allocated to energy efficiency programs for low-income communities.

### **Restore monopoly utility review: HB 1132**

Looking at recent bill increases from Dominion Virginia Power, 42% were due to riders, additional charges added

on top of rates. A controversial bill from the 2015 legislative session froze base rates, but not riders and limited state oversight. Oversight from the State Corporation Commission (SCC) should be restored for the 2021 rate case, SCC's upcoming review of the utility monopoly. Dominion has over charged by at least \$1.3 billion since 2015. This bill would restore SCC oversight.

### **Establish an Energy Efficiency Standard: HB 1450 & SB 354**

Virginia should establish an Energy Efficiency standard including a program that benefits low-income, elderly, and disabled individuals. Studies show that average statewide bills could decrease 27% by 2030 among program participants and 12% statewide amongst everyone.

### **Working families benefit:**

Looking at 2015 data, Dominion could have reduced energy bills by more than \$10,000,000 just looking at rental homes alone through potential energy savings measures. Increasing energy efficiency savings would stabilize and reduce economic burden of utility bills for low-income families. These measures and restoring state oversight can help struggling families afford utilities and other needs, like medicine and food.

### **Responsible energy stewardship:**

Dominion is far behind its peers in terms of taking advantage of energy savings through energy efficiency. Many peer utilities are saving almost twice the amount Dominion currently saves through energy efficiency programs. Dominion can follow the example of its neighbors Duke Energy (NC) and Kentucky Power.

*Sources: Virginia Poverty Law Center, State Corporation Commission*

*Virginia Interfaith Power & Light (VAIPL) collaborates with people of faith to grow healthy communities and advance climate justice through education, advocacy and worship. VAIPL is a program of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, which advocates social, economic, and environmental justice in Virginia's policies and practices through education, prayer, and action.*