FACTSHEET
HOW DOMINION HURTS LOW-INCOME RATEPAYERS MORE THAN IT HELPS
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For hundreds of thousands of Virginians, paying their energy bill every month is a major financial burden. At a time when regulators say Dominion should lower rates or issue refunds, energy bills are still increasing. The cost to low-income Virginians is too high for too many.

Background: Who Gets Hurt by High Energy Bills
• Dominion’s current programs for struggling and low-income ratepayers — while commendable — are a scattershot approach to alleviating a major economic hardship for too many.
• EnergyShare —This is Dominion’s main program for providing bill assistance, weatherization upgrades, and energy-saving improvements such as more efficient light bulbs or better insulation.
  ■ Only $4.7 million was spent on energy assistance in Virginia in 2017. That’s less than 20 cents in assistance per ratepayer per month in Virginia.¹
  ■ The amount spent on EnergyShare should rise in coming years with additional funding provided in the 2018 Grid Transformation and Security Act.
• Virginia’s Department of Social Services also offers energy assistance programming, but programs are often limited to those in extreme poverty.²
• Unfortunately, Dominion’s low-income assistance programming only addresses a small fraction of the problem.
  o In recent polling, 43% of Americans making less than $40,000 a year said they made “sacrifices” spending less on things like education and healthcare in order to pay for utility bills.³
  o 19% of Americans making less than $40,000 a year say they make “serious sacrifices” to pay their utility bills.
  o Those making “serious sacrifices” to pay utility bills were 3 times more likely to be African-American and twice as likely to be Latino rather than non-minority respondents.

Minorities report more difficulty paying utility bills.
• Three times as many African-Americans and twice as many Latinos report making serious sacrifices to afford their utility bill.

³ Polling commissioned by Energy Efficiency for All with 1,600 respondents conducted June 26-July 1, 2018. Accessed here: https://assets.ctfassets.net/rtcn17ss1ow9/1fWYmD0qPgtndq2t5BTF/aa9f9df86f5e5a68f7e79a49a61119869c/EEFA_Poll_Infographic.pdf
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How Dominion Hurts More Than it Helps
• Again, Dominion’s low-income assistance programs are commendable, but rising energy bills more than outweigh the level of assistance being provided.
  ○ Dominion earns excessive profits of roughly $350-$425 million every year that would normally need to be refunded back to ratepayers or be reflected in lowered rates.¹
  ○ Virginia has the 11th highest energy bills in the nation, and the burden rests heaviest on low-income ratepayers.²
  ○ Dominion’s lobbyists convinced legislators to pass legislation prohibiting regulators from reviewing rates for 6 years, ensuring that rates remain too high.

What Virginia Can Do About It
• There are plenty of ways to lower the energy burden for low-income Virginians, and to do so without harming reliability or quality of service.
  ○ Issue refunds or lower rates — Clean Virginia’s own analysis shows that Dominion ratepayers pay around $250 a year for excessive spending with little (and often no) benefit to the public.³
    ■ Ratepayers could easily be refunded large portions of this simply by giving back the State Corporation Commission (SCC) its powers in setting fair rates.
  ○ Create a new low-income bill assistance program — Families at or below the federal poverty line should be able to qualify for a Percentage of Income Plan (PIPP) that limits energy bills to a small percentage of each qualified ratepayer’s income.
    ■ Ohio already has a program just like this, and it ensures that energy bills for low-income ratepayers never take up too large a proportion of their limited income.

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