

# Law Office of James A. Dumont, Esq., P.C.

15 Main St., P.O. Box 229, Bristol VT 05443  
Office 802-453-7011; Cell 802-349-7342; Fax 802-505-6290  
email: jim@dumontlawvt.com; website: dumontlawvt.com

James A. Dumont, Esq.

---

October 13, 2025

Ms. Holly Anderson  
Clerk  
Vermont Public Utility Commission

*Re: Case No. 25-0443-INV -- Submission re October 14, 2025, Workshop*

Dear Ms. Anderson:

I submit this letter to facilitate the Commission's workshop tomorrow, and to follow up on my letter submitted on August 28, 2025.

Mr. Richard Butz, of Interfaith Light and Power, has provided me with a memo that his church prepared about a request for assistance in paying an electric bill and a gas bill to avoid disconnection of each service. Mr. Butz is not able to attend, so I am attaching the memo (The person has given permission to use the memo, but I have redacted the person's initials and place of residence to ensure her privacy).

The memo illustrates the enormous costs of disconnecting electric and gas service because of inability to pay. In the situation described in the memo, no one benefits from disconnection. Disconnection will not result in payment to the utility, and will impose heart-breaking costs on the family and substantial costs on the community. Without the ability to light and heat their apartment, what will happen to this family that is already struggling through no fault of their own? This family is just one of the over 10,000 Vermont households that lose their electric service each year and the over 50,000 households that receive electric service disconnection notices.

The comments submitted by the Department of Public Service in its memorandum of September 5, 2025, include a recommendation that the Commission seek authority to implement a statewide program if the Commission finds this to be appropriate. The Department's memorandum and my letter of August 28, 2025, also raise many questions that the existing record does not answer but need to be answered before a statewide program is decided upon and established. Yet, only seven weeks remain before the Commission's report is due.

The need for better protection is urgent. I and many others who have been following this proceeding hope that the Commission's report to the General Assembly recognizes both this critical need and also the necessity of further investigation. At this juncture, while further investigation is conducted, we urge the Commission to include in its report to the General Assembly proposed

statutory changes that explicitly authorize but do not require the Commission to adopt and implement a statewide energy assistance program governing regulated fuels – electricity and gas.

We hope that the authority to adopt the following elements of an energy assistance program is included in the proposed statutory changes: 1) eligibility up to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level; 2) Tiered Discount Programs, Percentage of Income Programs or other similar programs; 3) automatic enrollment where feasible; 4) arrearage forgiveness; 5) a cap on kilowatt hours subject to the discount; 6) funding by customer charges such as a volumetric charge, including authority for adoption of a statewide program of funding that re-allocates collected funds to service territories based on need; 7) exemption from paying the charge that funds the program, such as exempting households earning up to 80 percent of state median income; and 8) a cap on the amount of a volumetric charge that any one customer would pay.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

*/s/James A. Dumont*  
James A. Dumont, Esq.

**August 30, 2025**

**GRANT REQUEST:** \$361.96 to \$497.51 to assist with utility payments for ■■■'s family.

■■■ is a single parent in her mid-30's living in Burlington's New North End. Her family includes her 17 year-old son, 9 year-old son, and 6 year-old daughter.

■■■ lives at ■■■■ – a complex with government funded “project based” housing subsidies. ■■■'s budget includes modest rent (due to the housing subsidy), food, gas, electricity, water, phone, internet, a \$300 car payment, car insurance, fuel for the car, and household necessities. ■■■ works 15 hours a week as a personal care aid to disabled adults, young adults and youth. ■■■ is assigned clients through a care service – one of her clients is her younger brother who has severe autism, a seizure disorder and mobility limitations – caring for him carries additional challenges of relating to her parents about his care and safety.

■■■ would work more hours a week if she could. Her time is often focused on her 9 year-old son who has several challenging health concerns. He is currently in a diagnostic process, monitoring and being treated both in Burlington and at a hospital in Boston for digestive and swallowing issues (ARFID Syndrome is the hypothesis) – and severe food allergies - an esophageal biopsy is scheduled for mid- September in Boston.

■■■ came to JUMP this past Thursday asking for support with her utility bills - gas and electric. JUMP provided a \$75 grant on ■■■'s Burlington Electric bill.

- o The remaining outstanding balance on ■■■'s Burlington Electric bill is:  
\$197.51
- o The outstanding balance on ■■■'s VT Gas Bill is: \$300

**The grant request - \$497.51/full grant – OR - \$361.96/prevent shut-off amount:**

The full grant will give ■■■ a real opportunity as it will zero out both utility balances and give her the opportunity to establish year-round budget plans for her gas and utility bills – this could help prevent her from getting behind in the future. Clearly this grant will also reduce financial stress for ■■■ and her family.

As there are currently shut-off notices on both ■■■'s gas and electricity accounts for next week – there is some time pressure for your discernment about this grant. The amount needed to stop both shut off notices is: \$100 (BED) and \$261.96 (VT Gas) = \$361.96. If you have the ability to assist ■■■'s family – with the full grant (\$497.51) – or the lesser shut-off prevention amount - if that is what is best from your point of view - please let me know and we will follow up with payment arrangements on Tuesday ideally.

