

Dear Editor,

Delmarva Power and state officials recently agreed on a proposal to increase the flat charges paid by customers for the delivery of power and other fixed costs.

The hike will impact the 25-percent of a customer's bill that pays for service; equipment and infrastructure; and the delivery of power to homes and businesses. (The remaining 75-percent pertains to the actual cost of the electricity.)

Under the proposal, lower-usage customers would see a bigger increase, while those who use more power would see smaller jumps. Delmarva claims this is because small volume customers were not paying "their fair share" of the utility's fixed costs under the current rate structure.

It's ironic, and I believe somewhat unfair, that after years of telling Delaware consumers that they need to be more energy-efficient we're adopting a plan that actually penalizes the very people who embraced energy conservation.

I understand that Delmarva Power and other energy utilities are facing a dilemma born of the successful energy efficiency message that they have preached. As customers have used less energy, these companies have seen their bottom lines suffer.

While I recognize this reality, I am a little saddened that a better solution could not have been found. People that have heeded the calls of utility and government officials, and taken action to reduce their energy consumption, should not be punished for their altruism.

Increasing the use of renewable energy, installing high-efficiency doors and windows, and purchasing Energy Star appliances are all worthy initiatives that rely on people believing that these acts will not only produce a societal benefit, but a monetary one as well. Delmarva's new rate structure is counterproductive because undermines this belief by creating an economic disincentive for conservation.

Sincerely,

State Rep. Joe Miro