

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Metro Justice responds to County Executive's public utility concerns

Metro Justice is surprised and disappointed that the County Executive would take a position on a public utility study without having a command of all the facts.

The County Executive raises concerns about property taxes, but we ratepayers are already paying all of RGE's costs plus a minimum guaranteed, huge rate of profit that means around \$100 million in profit leaves our region each year to line the pockets of a multinational corporate owners Avangrid and Iberdrola. There's a standard way to replace taxes to local governments in public transitions (payment in lieu of taxes), because again, ratepayers are already paying through their rates.

The County Executive raises concerns about the cost of acquisition, but these numbers are clearly inaccurate because they are based on buying out RG&E in a 9-County area, versus in Monroe County. To get an accurate assessment, we need to move forward and commission a study to assess RGE's assets as well as important information such as a rate structure that would allow us to pay off those assets over time and still save money, and lower that valuation for any current state of disinvestment in the grid or limited economic life of infrastructure based on state climate law. Additionally, the state law that governs the right for local governments to own and control their energy infrastructure (GML 360) is entirely based around a county or any other jurisdiction being able to break off from an existing system and operate independently. In such a transition there would be a job guarantee for current workers - only the ownership and multinational mismanagement would change to a local one aligned with our community's needs.

Another reason a feasibility and implementation study is so important is to outline all the ways we could save money and spur local economic development as a region - by not paying \$100 million a year to a multinational corporation but instead invest in lowering rates, bringing back jobs that have been outsourced, spurring a renewable transition accessible to everyone, and investing in our own community's needs. Public utilities also pay half the borrowing costs of investor owned ones, so the quicker we can transition to public power, the more transparent and cheaper it will be for us. And with the recent passage of the Build Public Renewables Act, there will soon be an expanded base of cheap renewable power that is only directly available to public utilities or cooperatives.

There is such an opportunity to save so much and benefit the lives of those in our county, and with the County's \$22 million in unallocated funding, and the chance to save hundreds of millions a year and serve our community for the long-term, 1 million is a sound investment. The public wants an alternative to the multinational corporate mismanagement of RG&E and we are going to keep fighting until we get it. We call on the County Executive to reconsider the facts and his position, and look forward to working with the County Legislature - who have the ultimate authority on whether to authorize funds for a public utility study.

The study needs to outline transition plans for all of these areas and Metro Justice's draft study questions already do so comprehensively - that's why we need strong community oversight of the

study process including Metro Justice, and to use our draft as the starting point of what is commissioned.

Metro Justice looks forward to direct dialogue with the County Executive to resolve these misunderstandings.