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# Freedom Fund: Public Service Commission Should Reject Consumers Energy's New \$225 Million Rate Hike Request

*Monopoly Utility Attempting to Kill Electric Choice as it Moves to Send Rates Soaring again after \$126 Million Hike in December*

**LANSING, MI, March 3, 2016** –Michigan Freedom Fund President Terri Reid today called on the Michigan Public Service Commission to reject a plan by Consumers Energy, one of the state's two monopoly electric utilities, to gouge Michigan families for an additional \$225 million each year. In November, Consumers hiked rates \$126 million.

In addition to Consumers' rate hike scheme, the Public Service Commission is also reviewing a request from DTE Energy, the state's other monopoly utility, for a \$344 million rate hike just months after hitting Michigan consumers with a \$238 million rate increase.

"It's time for Lansing to stand up for Michigan ratepayers in the face of price gouging by massive monopoly corporations like DTE and Consumers Energy," said Reid. "The Michigan Public Service Commission owes it to ratepayers to reject these corporate cash grabs and lawmakers owe it to their constituents to force companies like DTE and Consumers to compete for their business, instead of killing electric choice. Greedy rate hikes like these illustrate exactly why they should reject House Bill 4298 and Senate Bill 437."

DTE and Consumers Energy spent more than \$4 million in 2015 on television ads and lobbying efforts in support of House Bill 4298 and Senate Bill 437, the utility-dubbed "Nofs-Nesbitt energy plan" to eliminate electric choice in Michigan. State law already caps electric choice at 10 percent, giving the two monopoly utilities 90 percent of the state's electric market.

Michigan has the highest electricity prices in the Midwest and rates significantly higher than the national average, increasing at 1,100% the rate of the national average since 2008.

According to economists, the lack of competition also costs the state 21,000 jobs a year.

Michigan Freedom Fund is a nonprofit organization run by Michiganders for Michiganders, working to advance, promote, and protect Michigan workers' Constitutional rights. For more information, please visit [www.MichiganFreedomFund.com](http://www.MichiganFreedomFund.com).

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