

**RESOLUTION 2023-171**

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LITTLE EGG HARBOR, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY SUPPORTING OCEAN COUNTY REPRESENTATION ON THE NEW JERSEY BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES (BPU)**

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (hereinafter “BPU”) is the State agency with authority to oversee the regulated utilities, which provide critical services such as natural gas, electricity, water, telecommunications, and cable television; and

**WHEREAS**, BPU is charged with ensuring safe, adequate, and property utility services at reasonable rates for all customers throughout New Jersey; and

**WHEREAS**, for years, Ocean County has called upon the appointing authority in the State of New Jersey to choose a resident of Ocean County to sit on the BPU in order to provide a needed voice to represent the unique characteristics and challenges faced by communities located along the coast of the State; and

**WHEREAS**, the population of Ocean County continues to grow with both full-time and seasonal residents, increasing the need for assurance by utility companies to provide uninterrupted service and to make certain equipment is maintained and adequately updated; and

**WHEREAS**, Ocean County currently has a year-round population of 650,000 residents with the number steadily increasing in the summer/warm weather months to more than 1.3 million people; and

**WHEREAS**, it is imperative that with the increase in population, energy and utility demands are met without interruption of service, and our residents, visitors and businesses are confident in all utilities working properly and available for their needs; and

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**WHEREAS**, coastal counties are more prone to serious weather conditions including hurricanes, nor'easters and most recently tornadoes, which can result in power outages, utility poles down and a host of safety issues; and

**WHEREAS**, Ocean County residents have experienced the likes of Hurricane Irene in 2011, Superstorm Sandy in 2012, Tropical Storm Isaias, an April 1, 2023 tornado, and widespread summer power outages in the summer months dating back to July 2003 that devastated the height of summer tourism season; and

**WHEREAS**, any type of lengthy power outages especially during the tourism season, which produces \$7 billion in revenue for Ocean County alone, can result in many residents and businesses, both full-time and seasonal, experiencing a financial loss due to having to discard food and medication, and loss of wages; and

**WHEREAS**, adding to the concern, Ocean County also is home to more than 200,000 senior citizens, that is often more reliant on medical devices that use power for their health needs, and are on fixed incomes that do not allow for extra money to replace food and prescriptions spoiled by power outages or any challenges posed by utility issues; and

**WHEREAS**, utility interruptions can also create safety hazards for residents and visitors along with the additional strain emergency responders are tasked with in assisting during these times; and

**WHEREAS**, the current sitting members of the Board of Public Utilities are from Essex, Camden, Morris and Somerset Counties; and

**WHEREAS**, without a voice on the BPU, Ocean County and particularly the Township of Little Egg Harbor, struggle with the utility companies in getting help for residents and businesses; and

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**WHEREAS,** the Township of Little Egg Harbor has specifically suffered significant frustration in its communications with the BPU, particularly in regard to the Township's issues with Atlantic City Electric ("ACE"); and

**WHEREAS,** even before 2021 but particularly since, the Township persistently attempted to engage the BPU as to its issues with tariffs assessed on streetlights, solar panels and an additional substation to meet the community's electric needs; and

**WHEREAS,** despite finally arranging a conference call with Township Officials and representative of the BPU and ACE in June 2022, nothing was resolved, and the Township was forced to file a formal rate protest by filing a Complaint in September 2022; and

**WHEREAS,** since that time, the Township has contacted numerous different personnel within BPU, but has not been able to have any real discussion on the substance of the issues or even a response from BPU to the rate protest Complaint; and

**WHEREAS,** in the absence of a member from Ocean County, the BPU in the meantime, should designate one of its current members as liaison to the area in order to address concerns.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** by the Township Committee of the Township of Little Egg Harbor, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. That the governing body urges the Board of Public Utilities to designate a qualified individual from Ocean County in order to assure representation of the interests of the residents and businesses of the Township of Little Egg Harbor and all citizens of Ocean County.

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2. That the governing body further urges Governor Murphy and the State Legislature to recognize the exponential growth in population to this area and the resulting need for representation on the BPU by an Ocean County member.
3. That the governing body urges that in the interim, a liaison should be designated to the BPU from Ocean County to address ongoing concerns.
4. That certified copies of this Resolution shall be forwarded to Governor Phil Murphy, State of New Jersey, Board of Public Utilities, Ocean County Commissioners and 9<sup>th</sup> District Legislature.

**CERTIFICATION**

I, **KELLY LETTERA, RMC**, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Little Egg Harbor do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Township of Little Egg Harbor Township Committee at a meeting held on the **8<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2023.**



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**KELLY LETTERA, RMC**  
Township Clerk  
Little Egg Harbor Township

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