

Town of Roseboom  
126 County Highway 50  
Cherry Valley, New York 13320

January 14, 2016

Audrey Zibelman, Chair, Public Service Commission  
New York State Public Service Commission  
Empire State Plaza  
Agency Building 3  
Albany, NY 12223-1350

Dear Chairwoman Zibelman:

The Town of Roseboom in Otsego County, like other communities in New York State, is trying to reduce its operating costs including the cost of electricity. We are also mindful of the environmental and climate change benefits of reducing the consumption of fossil fuels to produce energy. Street lighting comprises a large portion of our total electricity bill and so we are trying to reduce that cost.

Though our small town only has 21 street lights, we still want to change them over to lower energy consumption LED bulbs. Our supplier is National Grid. When I spoke to an account representative yesterday, I was shocked to learn that they offered no incentive program to convert our existing "cobra head" street lights to the more energy efficient LEDs. She said they had no LED Tariff in place and so currently had no policy for Towns to replace lights with LED bulbs and if we wanted to do so that we would be doing it on our own. She said there were no studies that showed LED's efficiency and life span in our "cold climate" made it worth it to switch! This makes no sense.

The recent NYSEDA report "Street Lighting in New York State: Opportunities and Challenges" dated December 2014 as revised in January 2015 contradicts National Grid's statement that there were no efficiency studies and makes the observation that significant savings can be achieved by conversion to LEDs in cobra head streetlights. These savings are already being achieved by jurisdictions in other states around the United States. However, the report indicates "the majority of New York municipalities are currently unable to pursue LED street lighting conversions with the majority of their streetlights due to the lack of cost-effective rate tariffs offered by the utilities. A coordinated effort is needed to establish tariffs that represent the economic advantages of LED lighting." I understand that currently, the one other utility in New York State that does have a tariff rate for LED street lighting, has a LED Tariff rate higher than for other HPS fixtures. This also makes no sense.

The neighboring village of Cooperstown, has replaced some of their historical street lighting with 45W LED's, and are very pleased with both the lower energy consumption and their appearance. However, they are working with a much larger budget than Roseboom. Even so, they were very surprised and upset to learn after the fact that NYSEG (their provider) should have advised them of certain incentives that were available for such conversions.

I know that there are other municipalities, who unlike Roseboom own their street lights. Some have made the fast, easy conversion from high energy consuming vapor lamps to LED's using materials currently available. The City of Yonkers reports saving more than \$1 million per year by switching to LEDs and other municipalities report the conversion only takes about three minutes per light. Granted we are not going to save anything close to that, but every little bit helps in a small town's budget.

Right now, a portion of our street lighting bill goes to rental and maintenance of equipment. We would like to explore ways to reduce this portion of the charges. The streetlights have been in place for many decades. By now, National Grid (previously Niagara Mohawk) should have recovered many times the original installation costs. We believe that a significant reduction in the rental portion of our street lighting bills is in order. Alternatively, there should be some mechanism for municipalities to buy out the streetlights at a price reflecting their depreciated value. In addition, we note that LED bulbs have a far longer life than the vapor bulbs that they replace. The portion of charges for maintaining street lighting with LED bulbs should be reduced to reflect the lower maintenance costs which can be expected by National Grid.

New York State has committed to reducing green house gasses and has encouraged municipalities to reduce costs. We urge the Public Service Commission to urgently resolve the regulatory and rate setting issues that are preventing us from easily reducing the cost of street lighting by installing LED bulbs. There should also be incentives put in place across the board for municipalities to do this for the benefit of tax payers throughout New York State.

Yours truly,

Roseboom Town Board

Council Persons:

Allegra Schechter  
Curtis VanDewerker  
Charles Diamond II  
Daniel R. Gage

Supervisor:

Patti Gustafson

Cc: Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor  
Richard L. Kaufman, Chair, NYSEDA  
John M. Rhodes, President and CEO NYSEDA  
New York Senator James Seward  
New York Assemblyman Peter Lopez