

A FirstEnergy Company

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June 27, 2025

### **VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY**

Sherri L. Lewis Secretary of the Board New Jersey Board of Public Utilities 44 South Clinton Avenue, 1st Floor Trenton, New Jersey 08625 board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov

Re: In the Matter of the 2025/2026 Annual Compliance Filings for a Change in the Statewide Electric and Gas Permanent Universal Service Fund Program Factors within the Electric and Gas Societal Benefits Charges Rates Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:2-21 and N.J.S.A. 49:2-21.1 – Jersey Central Power & Light Company BPU Docket No.

Dear Secretary Lewis:

On behalf of Jersey Central Power & Light Company ("JCP&L" or the "Company"), please accept this letter and attached exhibits and schedules as JCP&L's annual Universal Service Fund ("USF") compliance filing to establish the appropriate recovery level for the 2025/2026 USF program year. In compliance with the Board's relevant orders, JCP&L joins the State's other electric public utilities to propose that the current statewide electric USF charge, which includes both USF rates ("USF Rates") and Lifeline rates ("Lifeline Rates") (collectively, the "USF Charge"), be increased for the 2025/2026 USF program year. Specifically, as explained below, the overall increase in the statewide electric USF Charge is comprised of (i) an increase in the USF Rates' component of the electric USF Charge, and (ii) an increase in the Lifeline Rates' component of the electric USF Charge factor within JCP&L's Societal Benefits Charge ("SBC"). JCP&L anticipates that each of the State's electric and gas public utilities (collectively, "Utilities") will also be making similar compliance filings under the common docket number to be assigned to this proceeding.

This filing is in compliance with the April 30, 2003, July 16, 2003, June 30, 2004, and June 22, 2005 Orders issued by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("Board" or "BPU"), under BPU Docket Nos. EX00020091, EO09060506, and EO09090771, which have established and refined the statewide mechanism through which funds for the USF program are collected from customers of all of the Utilities through uniform electric and gas rates in the form of the USFCharge factor within the Company's SBC.

Secretary Lewis June 27, 2025 Page 2 of 4

On behalf of the Utilities, Public Service Electric and Gas Company ("PSE&G") has included in its annual USF compliance filing (the "PSE&G Compliance Filing") a series of worksheets that illustrate, by utility and statewide, the USF program recoveries and program costs to date, including the program administrator budget, which was last authorized by the Board in its Order dated September 25, 2024. JCP&L hereby incorporates by reference those worksheets from the PSE&G Compliance Filing (*i.e.*, Attachment A thereto) as if fully set forth herein.

Based upon the results and available estimates known to date for the 2024/2025 USF program year and the available estimates for the 2025/2026 USF program year, which are detailed in the referenced worksheets from the PSE&G Compliance Filing, it is proposed that the statewide electric USF Rates (including Sales and Use Tax ("SUT")) should increase from \$0.002212 per kilowatt-hour ("kWh") to \$0.003728 per kWh and that the statewide electric Lifeline Rates (including SUT) should increase from \$0.000757 per kWh to \$0.000780 per kWh for the 2025/2026 USF program year. As a result, the statewide electric USF Charge (including SUT) should increase on an overall basis from \$0.002969 per kWh to \$0.004508 per kWh for the 2025/2026 USF program year beginning on October 1, 2025. These calculations incorporate the anticipated Department of Community Affairs program administrator budget received from the Board in the amount of \$13,903,866, as well as incremental USF and Fresh Start costs, as well as an estimated increase of \$61,102,950 to USF and Fresh Start costs related to expected increases in both enrollment and USF benefit amounts for the 2025/2026 USF program year. As was the case last year, the Lifeline Rate is set to collect approximately \$74.6 million, consistent with the Board's July 16, 2003 Order in BPU Docket No. EX00020091.

In accordance with the Board's direction in the above-referenced June 22, 2005 Order, JCP&L has included with this compliance filing draft Tariff sheets reflecting the overall increase in the USF Charge to be effective October 1, 2025 (attached as Exhibit A hereto, setting forth the further details regarding the implementation of these changes to the USF Charge). Additionally, JCP&L has included with this filing a proposed form of Public Notice of Filing and Public Hearing (attached as Exhibit B hereto). This form of public notice sets forth the requested rate changes and will be served on the clerks of all affected municipalities and counties, and, where appropriate, the executive officer of each affected county, and will be placed in newspapers having a circulation within JCP&L's electric service territories upon the receipt, scheduling, and publication of hearing dates.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In the Matter of the 2024/2025 Annual Compliance Filings for the Universal Service Fund ("USF") Program Factor Within the Societal Benefits Charge Rate, BPU Docket No. ER24070486, Order dated September 25, 2024 ("September 2024 USF Order").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Based upon the results and available estimates known to date for the 2024/2025 USF program year and the available estimates proposed to date for the 2025/2026 USF program year, it is anticipated that the statewide USF Rates should increase to collect approximately \$332.1 million of USF program costs on a statewide basis, and that the statewide Lifeline Rates should continue to collect approximately \$74.6 million of Lifeline program costs on a statewide basis. Approximately \$242.1 million of the total estimated statewide USF program costs of approximately \$332.1 million would be recovered through electric rates and the remaining portion of approximately \$90 million would be recovered through gas rates. Also, it is anticipated that approximately \$50.7 million of the statewide Lifeline program costs of approximately \$74.6 million would be recovered through electric rates and the remaining portion of approximately \$23.9 million would be recovered through gas rates.

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Once effective and implemented, the proposed overall increase in the USF Charge will result in a JCP&L residential customer using 500 kWh per month, or 6,000 kWh per year, would see an increase in his or her annual electric bill from \$1,216.76 to \$1,225.99, or \$9.23 (approximately 0.8%), based on rates effective June 1, 2025.

In addition, JCP&L respectfully joins in the request of the Utilities, as set forth in the PSE&G Compliance Filing, that consistent with precedent,<sup>3</sup> each utility that is entitled to do so should fully recover its administrative costs, if any, in 2025/2026 USF Rates and Lifeline Rates in the month following Board approval of such rates. This recovery should be from funds disbursed to the Utilities by the USF Trust Fund maintained by the New Jersey Department of Treasury.<sup>4</sup>

In the September 2024 USF Order, the Board finalized the USF interim rates that had been approved through September 30, 2023, and directed those prior interim rates should be examined and finalized in future Annual USF Compliance Filings. Accordingly, JCP&L also joins in the request of the Utilities as set forth in the PSE&G Compliance Filing, which provides for the examination of the 2024/2025 USF and Lifeline Rates approved by the Board on an interim basis in the September 2024 USF Order, that the Board finalize the current USF and Lifeline interim rates, which have been approved through September 30, 2024, by virtue of such September 2024 USF Order.

Finally, by Order dated June 18, 2025, entered in BPU Docket No. QO24110853, the Board directed the Utilities to increase USF enrollments in their service territories by 5%, 3%, and 2% in program years 1, 2, and 3, respectively.<sup>5</sup> The Board further directed the Utilities to assist customers with USF applications at payment centers, conduct in-person events, and provide other customer-accessible means of facilitating application assistance. The USF Modification Order allows that, "[w]ith respect to Utility USF administrative cost recovery, the Utilities may petition the Board for authority to defer costs." Accordingly, JCP&L requests that it be allowed to defer costs associated with the USF Modification Order for recovery in a base rate case or future USF proceeding.

<sup>3</sup> In the Matter of the 2021/2022 Annual Compliance Filings for the Universal Service Fund ("USF") Program Factor Within the Societal Benefits Charge Rate, BPU Docket No. ER21060939, Order dated September 14, 2021 ("September 2021 USF Order"); In the Matter of the 2010/2011 Annual Compliance Filings for the Universal Service Fund ("USF") Program Factor Within the Societal Benefits Charge Rate, BPU Docket No. ER10060436, Order dated October 20, 2010 ("October 2010 USF Order").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Since April 1, 2015, JCP&L has recovered its USF-related administrative costs through current base rates. See In the Matter of the Verified Petition of Jersey Central Power & Light Company for Review and Approval of Increases in and Other Adjustments to Its Rates and Charges for Electric Service, and for Approval of Other Proposed Tariff Revisions in Connection Therewith; and for Approval of an Accelerated Reliability Enhancement Program ("2012 Base Rate Filing"), BPU Docket No. ER12111052, Order dated March 26, 2015. Accordingly, the Company has not sought to recover such administrative costs in this 2025/2026 USF Compliance Filing under either the October 2010 USF Order or the Board's Order dated June 21, 2010. See In the Matter of Recovery of Administrative Costs Expended by Utilities Under Universal Services Funds Program, BPU Docket No. EO09090771, Order dated June 21, 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> In the Matter of a Rate Design and Policy Study Regarding Driving Equity in the Clean Energy Transition, BPU Docket No. QO24110853, Order dated June 18, 2025 ("USF Modification Order).

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WHEREFORE, based on the foregoing, JCP&L respectfully requests that the Board issue an Order approving: (a) the proposed overall increase in the statewide electric USF Charge (including SUT) to \$0.004508 per kWh for the 2025/2026 program year, which begins on October 1, 2025; (b) the implementation of the proposed statewide electric USF Rates and Lifeline Rates by JCP&L, including a proposed increase in both the USF Rates' component and the Lifeline Rates' component thereof, as contained in the proposed Tariff sheets attached hereto as Exhibit A, effective for electric service rendered on and after October 1, 2025, as provided for in the Board's above-referenced July 16, 2003 and June 22, 2005 Orders; (c) the deferral of costs associated with the USF Modification Order; and (d) the finalization of the current USF interim rates, which were approved in the September 2024 USF Order, through September 30, 2024.

Please kindly confirm your receipt and acceptance of this filing, and provide the docket number associated with same, by electronic mail at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

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Counsel for Jersey Central Power & Light Company

Enclosures

cc: Service List

## **Exhibit A**

Proposed
Rider SBC &

**Rider USF Tariffs** 

Clean & Redline

**BPU No. 14 ELECTRIC - PART III** 

XX Rev. Sheet No. 50 Superseding XX Rev. Sheet No. 50

# Rider SBC Societal Benefits Charge

**APPLICABILITY:** Rider SBC provides a charge applicable to all KWH usage of any Full Service Customer or Delivery Service Customer. The charges that may be included in calculating the SBC include demand side management costs (Rider DSF), manufactured gas plant remediation costs (Rider RAC), uncollectible costs (Rider UNC), and universal service fund costs (Rider USF), in accordance with the New Jersey Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act. The current SBC includes the following charges per KWH:

Rider DSF	\$0.003280	Including SUT \$0.003497
Rider RAC	\$0.000806	\$0.000859
Rider UNC	\$0.000352	\$0.000375
Rider USF	\$0.004228	<b>\$0.004508</b>

Carrying costs on unamortized balances of demand side management costs, nuclear decommissioning costs, manufactured gas plant remediation costs, uncollectible costs and universal service fund costs shall be calculated in accordance with the terms of Rider DSF, Rider RAC, Rider UNC and Rider USF, respectively.

Effective \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*, 2025, the SBC shall be applied to all KWH usage for billing purposes as follows:

Including SUT
Total SBC: \$0.008666 \$0.009239

Beginning January 1, 2011, with the exception of universal service fund costs component, all over- and under-recoveries of individual SBC components are to be applied to under- or over-recoveries of other SBC components as of each December 31.

Issued: Effective:

Filed pursuant to Order of Board of Public Utilities

Docket No. dated

**BPU No. 14 ELECTRIC - PART III** 

XX Rev. Sheet No. 55 Superseding XX Rev. Sheet No. 55

# Rider USF Universal Service Fund Costs Recovery

**APPLICABILITY:** Rider USF provides a charge for costs associated with the state-mandated Universal Service Fund ("USF") to assist certain Customers as defined by the BPU. The USF is included in the Societal Benefits Charge and is applicable to all KWH usage of any Full Service Customer or Delivery Service Customer.

Effective \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*, 2025, the USF provided below consists of an USF rate of \$0.003496 per KWH and a Lifeline rate of \$0.000732 per KWH (\$0.0003728 per KWH and \$0.000780 per KWH including SUT, respectively), pursuant to the BPU Order dated xxxxxx,2025 (Docket No.).

USF = \$0.004228 per KWH (\$0.004508 per KWH including SUT)

Universal Service Fund costs shall accrue interest on any over or under recovered balances of such costs at the interest rate based on a two-year constant maturity Treasuries as published in the Federal Reserve Statistical Release on the first day of each month (or the closest day thereafter on which rates are published), plus sixty basis points, but shall not exceed the Company's overall rate of return as approved by the BPU. Such interest rate shall be reset each month. The interest calculation shall be based on the net of tax beginning and end average monthly balance, consistent with the methodology in the Board's Final Order dated May 17, 2004 (Docket No. ER02080506 et al.), accrue monthly with an annual roll-in at the end of each reconciliation period.

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	Effective

Filed pursuant to Order of Board of Public Utilities

Docket No. dated

**BPU No. 14 ELECTRIC - PART III** 

2<sup>nd</sup>-XX Rev. Sheet No. 50 Superseding 4<sup>st</sup>-XX Rev. Sheet No. 50

## Rider SBC Societal Benefits Charge

**APPLICABILITY:** Rider SBC provides a charge applicable to all KWH usage of any Full Service Customer or Delivery Service Customer. The charges that may be included in calculating the SBC include demand side management costs (Rider DSF), manufactured gas plant remediation costs (Rider RAC), uncollectible costs (Rider UNC), and universal service fund costs (Rider USF), in accordance with the New Jersey Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act. The current SBC includes the following charges per KWH:

Rider DSF \$0.003280 Including SUT \$0.003497

Rider RAC \$0.000806 \$0.000859

Rider UNC \$0.000352 \$0.000375

Rider USF \$0.0027850.004228 \$0.0029690.004508

Carrying costs on unamortized balances of demand side management costs, nuclear decommissioning costs, manufactured gas plant remediation costs, uncollectible costs and universal service fund costs shall be calculated in accordance with the terms of Rider DSF, Rider RAC, Rider UNC and Rider USF, respectively.

Effective October 1 \*\*\* 2024 2025, the SBC shall be applied to all KWH usage for billing purposes as follows:

Including SUT

Total SBC: \$0.0072230.008666 \$0.0077000.009239

Beginning January 1, 2011, with the exception of universal service fund costs component, all over- and under-recoveries of individual SBC components are to be applied to under- or over-recoveries of other SBC components as of each December 31.

Issued: September 30, 2024 Effective: October 1, 2024

Filed pursuant to Order of Board of Public Utilities Docket No. ER24070486-dated September 25, 2024

**BPU No. 14 ELECTRIC - PART III** 

4<sup>st</sup>-XX Rev. Sheet No. 55 Superseding Original XX Rev. Sheet No. 55

# Rider USF Universal Service Fund Costs Recovery

**APPLICABILITY:** Rider USF provides a charge for costs associated with the state-mandated Universal Service Fund ("USF") to assist certain Customers as defined by the BPU. The USF is included in the Societal Benefits Charge and is applicable to all KWH usage of any Full Service Customer or Delivery Service Customer.

Effective October 1\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*, 20242025, the USF provided below consists of an USF rate of \$0.0020750.003496 per KWH and a Lifeline rate of \$0.0007100.000732 per KWH (\$0.0022120.0003728 per KWH and \$0.0007570.000780 per KWH including SUT, respectively), pursuant to the BPU Order dated September xxxxxxx, 2025 25, 2024 (Docket No.-ER24070486).

USF = \$0.0027850.004228 per KWH (\$0.0029690.004508 per KWH including SUT)

Universal Service Fund costs shall accrue interest on any over or under recovered balances of such costs at the interest rate based on a two-year constant maturity Treasuries as published in the Federal Reserve Statistical Release on the first day of each month (or the closest day thereafter on which rates are published), plus sixty basis points, but shall not exceed the Company's overall rate of return as approved by the BPU. Such interest rate shall be reset each month. The interest calculation shall be based on the net of tax beginning and end average monthly balance, consistent with the methodology in the Board's Final Order dated May 17, 2004 (Docket No. ER02080506 et al.), accrue monthly with an annual roll-in at the end of each reconciliation period.

Issued: September 30, 2024 Effective: October 1, 2024

Filed pursuant to Order of Board of Public Utilities Docket No. ER24070486-dated September 25, 2024

## **Exhibit B**

**Proposed Public Notice of Filing** 

and

**Public Hearings** 

# NOTICE TO JERSEY CENTRAL POWER & LIGHT COMPANY CUSTOMERS

## Notice of a Filing and Notice of Public Hearings

In the Matter of the 2025/2026 Annual Compliance Filings for a Change in the Statewide Electric and Gas Permanent Universal Service Fund Program Factors within the Electric and Gas Societal Benefits Charges Rates Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:2-21 and N.J.S.A. 48:2-21.1

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that, on June 27, 2025, Jersey Central Power & Light Company ("JCP&L" or "Company") made an Annual Compliance Filing ("Filing") with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("Board" or "BPU")) providing supporting documentation for changes in the Universal Service Fund ("USF") and Lifeline components of JCP&L's Societal Benefits Charges ("SBC") to become effective on October 1, 2025. The requested changes in electric USF/Lifeline components are made pursuant to Board Orders at BPU Docket Nos. EX00020091, EO09060506, and EO09090771, and includes the recovery of funding for the USF Program through uniform statewide rates.

The USF Program was established by the Board in 2003, pursuant to the Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act ("EDECA"), N.J.S.A. 48:3-49, *et seq.*, to assist qualifying low-income individuals in paying their energy bills. The SBC also includes funding for the Lifeline Program, which provides assistance with heating costs to qualifying elderly and disabled persons. The State of New Jersey's Department of Community Affairs ("DCA") and Department of Human Services ("DHS") are the Administrators of the USF and Lifeline Programs, respectively. DCA and DHS authorize the disbursement of benefits to eligible customers in the respective programs.

Based upon the results and available estimates known to date for the 2024/2025 USF Program year, and the available estimates for the 2025/2026 USF Program year, it is anticipated that the USF rates will be set to collect approximately \$332.1 million, of which approximately \$242.1 million would be recovered through electric rates with the remaining approximately \$90 million recovered through gas rates on a statewide basis. The Lifeline rates are anticipated to collect approximately \$74.6 million, of which approximately \$50.7 million would be recovered through electric rates with the remaining approximately \$23.9 million recovered through gas rates on a statewide basis.

The current combined rate, with sales and use tax ("SUT"), for the USF and Lifeline Programs for electric customers is \$0.002969 per kilowatt-hour ("kWh"). As proposed, the USF component with SUT would increase by \$0.001516 per kWh and the Lifeline component with SUT would increase by \$0.000023 per kWh. The proposed USF/Lifeline Program charge with SUT will increase to \$0.004508 per kWh.

The proposed statewide charges for electric customers are as follows:

Universal Service/Lifeline Fund Components of Societal Benefits Charge							
	Present	Present (Incl. SUT)	Proposed	Proposed (Incl. SUT)			
USF-Electric per kWh	\$0.002075	\$0.002212	\$0.003496	\$0.003728			
Lifeline-Electric per kWh	\$0.000732	\$0.000757	\$0.000732	\$0.000780			
Total USF/Lifeline per kWh	\$0.002807	\$0.002969	\$0.004228	\$0.004508			

The above requests will not result in any profit to JCP&L. The revenues received under the proposed USF and Lifeline Program factors are designed to permit the Company to recover its costs associated with these programs only. Actual program costs will be reconciled with the revenues received through the USF and Lifeline Program charges in the next scheduled annual USF and Lifeline compliance filing to be made no later than July 1, 2026.

If approved by the Board, the effect of the proposed changes in the electric combined USF/Lifeline Program charges on a typical residential electric bill is illustrated below:

Impact of Proposed USF and Lifeline Charges							
On Typical Residential Electric Bills							
Monthly	Annual	Present	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed		
kWh	kWh	Annual	Annual	Annual	%		
Usage	usage	Bill (1)	Bill (2)	Increase	Increase		
500	6,000	\$ 1,216.76	\$1,225.99	\$9.23	0.8%		
1,000	12,000	\$ 2,492.44	\$2,510.91	\$18.47	0.7%		
1,500	18,000	\$ 3,795.67	\$3,823.37	\$27.70	0.7%		

<sup>(1)</sup> Based on Residential Full Service (RS) rates in effect June 1, 2025.

As set forth above, based on JCP&L's Filing, a residential electric customer using 500 kilowatt hours per month, and 6,000 kilowatt hours on an annual basis, would see an increase in their annual bill from \$1,216.76 to \$1,225.99 or \$9.23 or approximately 0.8%.

The percentage of change applicable to specific customers will vary according to the applicable service classification and the level of the customer's usage.

<sup>(2)</sup> Based on Residential Full Service (RS) rates in effect June 1, 2025, with proposed charges.

The Board has the statutory authority pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:2-21 to establish the USF and Lifeline charges at levels it finds just and reasonable. Therefore, the Board may establish the USF and Lifeline charges at levels other than those proposed by JCP&L's Filing. As a result, the above-described charges may increase or decrease based upon the Board's decision.

Copies of the Filing can be reviewed on JCP&L's website at:

https://www.firstenergycorp.com/jersey\_central\_power\_light/regulatory.html.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that virtual public hearings will be conducted on the following date and times so that members of the public may present their views on the Filing:

Date: TBD

Hearing Times: 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Link:

Dial-In Number: Phone Conference ID:

Meeting ID: Passcode:

Representatives from the Company, Board Staff, and the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel will participate in the virtual public hearings. Members of the public are invited to participate by utilizing the link or dial-in information set forth above and may express their views on this Filing. All comments will be made a part of the final record of this proceeding and will be considered by the Board. To encourage full participation in this opportunity for public comment, please submit any request for needed accommodations, such as interpreters and/or listening devices, 48 hours prior to the above hearings to the Board Secretary at <a href="mailto:board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov">board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov</a>.

The Board will also accept written and/or electronic comments. Comments may be submitted directly to the specific docket number listed above using the "Post Comments" button on the Board's Public Document Search tool at <a href="https://publicaccess.bpu.state.nj.us/">https://publicaccess.bpu.state.nj.us/</a>. Comments are considered public documents for purposes of the State's Open Public Records Act. Only documents that are intended to be public should be submitted using the "Post Comments" button on the Board's Public Document Search tool. Any confidential information should be submitted in accordance with the procedures set forth in N.J.A.C. 14:1-12.3. In addition to hard copy submissions, confidential information may also be filed electronically via the Board's e-filing system or by email to the Secretary of the Board, Sherri L. Lewis. Please include "Confidential Information" in the subject line of any email. Instructions for confidential e-filing are found on the Board's webpage at <a href="https://www.nj.gov/bpu/agenda/efiling/">https://www.nj.gov/bpu/agenda/efiling/</a>.

Emailed and/or written comments may also be submitted to:

Sherri L. Lewis, Secretary of the Board 44 South Clinton Avenue, 1st Floor P.O. Box 350

Trenton, NJ 08625-0350 Phone: (609) 913-6241

Email: board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov

All comments should include the name of the matter referenced above and the assigned docket number.

### PSE&G USF 2025-2026 Service List BPU Docket No.

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