RESOLUTION 2016-240

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF OCEAN, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY URGING THAT STRONG CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE DEVASTATING EFFECT A NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS RATE INCREASE WOULD HAVE ON RESIDENTS AND URGING THE NJ BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES TO OPPOSE THE PROPOSED THE RATE INCREASE

WHEREAS, New Jersey Natural Gas Company serves more than a half-million customers in New Jersey, extending across Ocean and Monmouth counties, as well as parts of Middlesex, Morris and Burlington Counties; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey Natural Gas Company wants to raise rates by 24 percent, raising customer's monthly bills by an average of more than $21; and

WHEREAS, part of this upcharge includes a 118 percent increase in the utility's monthly customer service charge, which would rise from $8.25 a month to $18; and

WHEREAS, the company's highly-paid top executives are receiving massive raises. Their 2015 compensation rose 40 percent over 2014 and has doubled since 2011; and

WHEREAS, a 24 percent increase could force seniors on fixed incomes and families struggling to get by to choose between keeping their lights on, heating their homes, putting food on the table, or buying needed medication; and

WHEREAS, the consequence of such a large increase would also adversely affect small business owners, many of whom are just now beginning to recover from the destruction of Superstorm Sandy; and

WHEREAS, it is the opinion of this Board that the Company's return of investments should fund the improvements necessary and that a dedicated fund should be established to finance improvements thus eliminating the need to propose huge rate-hikes for their customers; and

WHEREAS, this proposal by New Jersey Natural Gas must still undergo regulatory hearings before an administrative law judge and be approved by the State Board of Public Utilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township of Ocean Committee of the County of Ocean, State of New Jersey hereby urges that prior to the approval of any rate increase strong consideration be given to the devastating effect such an increase would have on senior citizens living on a fixed income, struggling families and the business community and that the Township of Ocean Committee opposes any such rate-hike and strongly encourages the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to reject this unconscionable rate increase;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be sent to members of the 9th, 10th, 12th and 30th Legislative Districts, Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Board of Public Utilities and all Ocean County Municipalities.

CERTIFICATION

I, Diane Ambrosio, Clerk of the Township of Ocean, in the County of Ocean and the State of New Jersey, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Township Committee at its Regular Business Meeting held on the 12th day of May 2016.

_____

Diane B. Ambrosio, RMC
Municipal Clerk