

Center for United Labor Action

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

"Say No To Veeco"

NORFOLK, Va., May 13, 1974 -- The Center for United Labor Action (C.U.L.A.) will send a delegation to this Thursday's meeting of the State Corporation Commission in Richmond to voice consumer protest against the \$50 million rate increase requested by the Virginia Electric & Power Co. (Veeco). The C.U.L.A. has obtained intervenor status in the hearings, which will determine whether Veeco is granted a rate increase that would amount to an additional 9 to 17 percent on the average consumer's bill.

At the S.C.C. hearing the Norfolk and Richmond branches of the C.U.L.A. will present petitions with signatures of more than 5000 Veeco consumers who oppose the rate increase. C.U.L.A. members have been circulating the petitions over the past month in shopping centers, at union meetings, door-to-door, and in work places. Most of the signatures have been gathered in the Tidewater area and in Richmond. Petitions have also been circulated in Charlottesville, Petersburg, the Shenandoah Valley, northern Virginia, and eastern North Carolina.

Center for United Labor Action spokesman Bill Cecil termed the proposed Veeco increase "high-rate-robbery" and said that the petition campaign would be stepped up as the hearings begin. The Richmond C.U.L.A. will hold a picket line at the Veeco office on the afternoon of May 15. In Norfolk the C.U.L.A. will sponsor a "Say No to Veeco" motorcade through parts of the city and a rally on Saturday, May 25.

"We intend to show the S.C.C. that the vast majority of Veeco consumers will not tolerate another rate increase, which would be the third in the past year and a half," declared Cecil, employed by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry-
more...

"an injury to one is an injury to all"

dock Co.

"We will demand that the S.C.C. eliminate the 'fuel adjustment clause', which allows Vepco to put the entire burden of rising fuel costs on the consumer. The time has come for the State Corporation Commission to stop giving rubber-stamp approval to Vepco requests and to start acting in the interest of Vepco consumers, the vast majority of whom are suffering tremendously from the rising cost of every necessity of life."

"The hardest burden of these increases falls on those who are already suffering the most, especially the Black community, the elderly, the unemployed, and welfare recipients," Cecil declared.

Cecil said that in 1974 Vepco enjoyed a 58.1% increase in profits over the previous year, while the buying power of working people's wages decreased by nearly 6%.

The C.U.L.A. delegation will attend Thursday's hearing starting at 10:00am, and will hold a picket line and press conference in front of the Blanton Building, the site of the hearings, at noon.

The petition to the S.C.C. reads:

"We the undersigned are Vepco consumers. We demand that you not give Vepco the nearly \$50 million rate increase it wants. We want a rollback in utility rates, not an increase.

"Furthermore, we demand that all hearings be held at night or on weekends, and in all sections of the state, so that working people can attend."

The Center for United Labor Action, with branches in fifteen cities throughout the country, is an independent organization of working people, welfare recipients, and unemployed workers. Its goal is to unite working people of different communities and workplaces, for better working conditions, and in support of trade unions. Its membership is both Black and white, men and women.

The Norfolk C.U.L.A. was active in organizing last summer's consumer boycott of meat and in circulating petitions for a 25% rollback in food prices, in cooperation with the national "Operation Food Price Rollback." The C.U.L.A. has helped organize support for striking workers in the area, and was an intervenor in opposition to the rate increase granted the C & P Telephone Company last year.

For more information call: 625-2977(5:00-10:00pm)