

CULA

Center for United Labor Action
2710 Lafayette Blvd.
Norfolk, Va. 23509
857 - 5193

Dear VEPCO Workers,

We are here today to protest VEPCO's High-Rate Robbery. We are organizing a campaign throughout the Tidewater area to oppose the rate increase VEPCO is asking for at the S.C.C., and to abolish the fuel adjustment clause. And in Norfolk, we have asked the City Council to eliminate the city tax on utilities and to set up an ordinance that would prohibit VEPCO from ordering anyone's service cut-off until that customer could have a hearing before an impartial arbitration board.

We hope that you will support these demands. We are sure that these high rates and the increase in cut-offs have created many extra problems for you as VEPCO workers. First of all, you of course have to pay the same outrageous VEPCO bills that we do. Sometimes we run across people who don't understand this. Some people think that VEPCO workers get some special discount - you have probably heard this myth many times. We always correct that mistaken impression whenever we hear it, and we point out to people signing our petitions or attending our meetings that VEPCO workers face the same problems that other working people do in paying these high bills.

We're all in the same leaky boat. We live in the same neighborhoods, get ripped off by high prices at the same grocery stores, and the spending power of all of our incomes has gone down over the last few years of skyrocketing inflation. In our brochure, "The Worker's Guide to VEPCO's High-Rate Robbery", we point out that VEPCO's profit margin is one of the highest among utilities in the country. And we also show that those profits go to the big Wall Street Banks, mainly to the Rockefeller empire - and definitely NOT TO VEPCO'S WORKERS !

We remember last year, when many of you were telling us about how VEPCO in the contract negotiations was maneuvering a lot of people out of any overtime pay with a new shift arrangement. And our response was, "If you go on strike, let us know, and we'll be right out here supporting your demands just as hard as we're fighting the rate increase." We've seen VEPCO and other big companies try to play off working people against each other by blaming high prices on wage increases. It's a lie !

In other words, VEPCO is picking all of our pockets. We all work for them one way or another. We only work for VEPCO part-time by giving often 1/4 to 1/2 of our total monthly earnings to VEPCO. But you full-time VEPCO workers get the double-whammy from them. They take your wages back from you in high rates, and they also make even more profit by pocketing the difference between what they are paying you now and what they really should be paying you. All so that Rocky can get richer !

We know that these high rates cause a lot more problems for VEPCO workers than for the bosses. It's easy for top management to sit back in their swivel chairs in air-conditioned, carpeted offices and set policies that lead to thousands of people being denied electricity. But you are on the front lines - you are expected to carry out these criminal policies. And we know that no sincere working person takes any pleasure in cutting off electricity to the homes of retired workers on a fixed income, of a mother on welfare just trying to keep her children alive, or of fellow workers who have been laid-off and need more time to pay. Our efforts to stop arbitrary cut-offs and to set-up a procedure giving customers the same rights to a grievance procedure that union workers have on the job would help those of you who have to do VEPCO's dirtiest work, as well as aiding the victims of VEPCO's greed.

Let's join forces and demand a fairer deal for VEPCO's workers --- an end to VEPCO's High Rate Robbery --- and an end to VEPCO's policies of discrimination in employment, cut-offs, and deposits ! Contact us at the above address for more information.

Fraternaly yours, Your friends in the CULA

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JOIN THE FIGHT TO STOP VEPCO'S ROBBERY- COME TO A COMMUNITY RALLY..... WED. MAR. 26 - 7:30 PM WILLARD JR. HI - 3425 TIDEWATER DR. NORFOLK

-- sponsored by the CENTER FOR UNITED LABOR ACTION

Last Fall the State Corporation Commission(SCC) gave VEPCO a \$99.7 million rate increase. Hearings will be held in Richmond beginning April 21 to determine whether or not VEPCO will be able to make this outrageous rate hike permanent. Also, VEPCO has requested an additional \$37.5 million. VEPCO's rich president, T. Justin Moore, who makes \$140,000 a year, says, "...the increase is needed to get more money to finance our construction program." But what we need is not more power plants; WHAT WE NEED IS LOWER PRICES!

VEPCO consumers all over the state are uniting to fight against VEPCO. It is criminal that this Rockefeller-controlled corporation is demanding more money from us at a time like this. Prices are rising. Lay-offs are increasing. Families are being forced on to food stamps and welfare at a higher rate than ever before. Just where does VEPCO and the SCC expect us to get the money to pay more for utilities?

Join the fight against the VEPCO rate hike - come to the Community Rally on March 26 sponsored by the Center for United Labor Action (CULA) and unite with other VEPCO consumers to fight back. It will take more than "experts" or politicians to force VEPCO to lower its rates. The only way we will get lower prices is through the unified strength of the people. The first step is to get together; that is the purpose of the community rally. Please come if you can, and please clip and return the coupon below.

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- I want to pass out this leaflet and petition (see reverse side).
 - I want to go with the CULA to the April 21 SCC hearing in Richmond.
 - I want a "SAY NO TO VEPCO" bumper sticker.
 - I want a copy of the CULA pamphlet, "The Worker's Guide to VEPCO's HIGH-RATE ROBBERY".
 - I want more information on the Center for United Labor Action
 - I want to subscribe to the CULA's newspaper - "United Labor Action" - (\$1/year)
 - I have enclosed a contribution of _____.

Return to: Center for United Labor Action
2710 Lafayette Blvd.
Norfolk, Va. 23509
phone: 857-5193

OFFICE HOURS:
Tues. 5:30 - 9:00 PM
Thurs. 5:30 - 9:00 PM
Sat. 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

SAY NO TO VEPCO!

VW

Last September the State Corporation Commission (SCC) gave VEPCO a temporary rate increase of \$99.7 million. During the past two years VEPCO has been granted more than \$125 million of our money in rate increases. The SCC will hold hearings in April in Richmond to determine whether or not VEPCO will be able to keep the outrageous \$99.7 million increase.

CULA DEMANDS THE SCC: SAY NO TO VEPCO!

The Center for United Labor Action demands that the SCC tell VEPCO it cannot keep our money. The CULA further demands:

1. Immediate repayment of the \$99.7 million with 9% interest.
2. a rollback in utility rates, generally.
3. it is practically impossible for working people and the poor to travel to Richmond for SCC hearings, so we demand Field Hearings in the Tidewater Area when and where working people can attend (note: The SCC recently held Field Hearings in Roanoke and Abingdon when the Appalachian Power Co. requested a rate increase.)

LAY-OFFS AND HIGH PRICES ARE ALREADY HITTING US HARD

Working people and the poor cannot pay anymore VEPCO increases. Unemployment in Virginia has more than doubled in the last few months. The number of families receiving Food Stamps has risen by 200 to 300% during this same time. VEPCO and the rich banks that control it (including two banks owned by Vice President Rockefeller's family) are taking food from our children's mouths and clothes off their backs.

MINORITIES ARE HIT THE HARDEST

During these hard times, minorities are hit the hardest. Nationally, unemployment for Black people is 13%, 7.1% for white workers, and 8.2% over-all. The overwhelming majority of those applying for unemployment benefits and Food Stamps in the Tidewater area is Black. Any VEPCO rate increase, and higher prices in general, hit the Black community the hardest. VEPCO has always discriminated against Black people and women, in general, in its hiring practices. And it charges more for utility turn-on deposits for those living in the Black and poor communities.

UNITE TO FIGHT BACK AGAINST VEPCO

The Center for United Labor Action is working to bring together all working people and the poor to fight against VEPCO. Only when employed and unemployed, men and women, Black and white, old and young unite will we be able to stop VEPCO and other rich corporations from robbing us.

(continued on back side)

~~-----city and return to the center for united labor action-----~~

- I want to join the campaign to fight back against VEPCO.
- I want to distribute this leaflet and other CULA published information on VEPCO.
- I want more information on the Center for United Labor Action.
- Enclosed is a contribution of _____.

Return to: CULA
Box 7802
Norfolk, VA 23509
PH. 857-5193

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE _____

Center for United Labor Action
2710 Lafayette Blvd.
Norfolk, Va. 23509
May 13, 1975

Dear friend and fellow labor activist,

This morning while we were passing out the enclosed leaflet and petition at the Norfolk Shipbuilding and Drydock Co., a Union Steward stopped and said, "If we don't join hands and get all the unions together to stop VEPCO, they're going to kill us all." He's right, and that is why we are writing this letter. United labor action is just what we need and NOW more than ever!

As you may know, the Center for United Labor Action has been active for the past few years in fighting rate increases by both VEPCO and C&P as well as food, gasoline and other price increases. A good number of our working members are in unions where they work, or if they are in a non-union shop, they are involved in organizing drives to gain union representation. So we know the power that working people can have when united and organized. We hope that you will join with us in turning that organized power toward the State Corporation Commission, the Legislature and the City Councils to win immediate relief from VEPCO's high-rate robbery.

Enclosed are two petitions. One is to the SCC opposing any rate increase for VEPCO and asking for field hearings at times and places where working people can attend. It can be signed by anyone in Virginia who is a VEPCO consumer. The other one is directed toward the Norfolk City Council.

We have proposed to the Norfolk City Council that they remove the city utility tax from our VEPCO and C&P bills, and that they prohibit VEPCO from cutting off service until a customer has had a right to take his or her case to a hearing before an impartial arbitrator. In order to show the City Council that the working public of Norfolk is serious about this problem and wants action, we are circulating a petition addressed to them, and to be signed by residents of Norfolk.

If your Union Local (or organizing committee) would like to join in these efforts to cut back the utility bills, we would like to suggest four possible ways you could help. But please feel free to make other suggestions; we need all the ideas and help we can get.

(1) Please circulate and return these petitions. We would like the Norfolk Council petition by May 25 and the SCC petition by June 15 if possible. Call or write if you need more, or you might want to reproduce them yourself.

(2) An endorsement of the proposals to the Norfolk Council by your Local would be helpful, particularly if a delegate could come to the May 27 night meeting.

(3) Contributions are greatly needed to defray printing and other costs of this effort. Checks can be made out to the Center for United Labor Action.

(4) We would be glad to come speak to your Local about the SAY NO TO VEPCO campaign, and bring brochures, buttons, and bumper stickers.

Please give me a call in the evening at 857-5193 or 625-5762.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. In Unity There is Strength!

Fraternally yours,

John Lewis
John Lewis, Sec.-Treas. CULA

WHAT EVERY WORKER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE DEATH PENALTY

A death penalty bill will be coming before the Virginia State Legislature during this session. The death penalty has not been used in Virginia since 1962. It is no accident that some government officials and politicians are proposing that it be re-instated here and all over the country during a time of increasing lay-offs and skyrocketing prices for food and other necessities of life.

Rather than taking measures to get laid-off workers jobs, lower prices on gasoline, food, etc., the government is spending millions of dollars to build more and "better" prisons and increasing talk of executions of the poor. It is clear that with rising unemployment "crime" is also rising as working people and the poor take desperate measures to feed and clothe their families.

CRIME -- ROBBING A BANK OR OWNING ONE?

Consider the following reasons as to why people are in prisons:
++during Christmas a man in Georgia robbed a bank, then turned himself in to the police so he could be a Santa Claus for his children. In sympathy with him people from all over the country sent his family food and money--while he is in jail facing a long prison term.
++an unemployed auto-worker in Detroit told a reporter, "I stole a tree. Just snuck over a fence and swiped it. There wasn't no way my kids were going to be without a Christmas tree--they're already going without presents."
++Recently while waiting in the Norfolk office of the Virginia Employment Commission to apply for benefits a worker reported that the police chased a young man into the office--the man had taken a loaf of bread. He was arrested and taken to jail by the police.

THE DEATH SENTENCE IS USED AGAINST THE POOR AND MINORITIES

The death penalty has always been used against the poor. Since 1908, 236 men have been executed in Virginia, 202 were Black--all were poor. Every year more than 100,000 workers are killed in this country's mines, mills and factories due to accidents and unsafe working conditions. And not one bus inessman or corporation executive has ever been tried, let alone executed for these killings or deaths.

Malcolm Jefferson and James Washington are two Black men now on death row in the Virginia State Penitentiary. They are facing death in the electric chair for the alleged killing of a state prison guard over three years ago. During their trials, no evidence was presented that proved either of them killed the prison guard, but according to Virginia law, they did not have to be guilty of killing a guard to be sentenced to death. They only had to be present at a place where there was a disturbance and where a prison guard was killed.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: (1) Come to a demonstration in Richmond on Saturday, Jan. 11, and march against the death penalty and in support of Malcolm Jefferson and James Washington; (2) Write to your delegate to the Legislature, tell him or her to vote against the death penalty.

FOR INFORMATION ON THE RICHMOND MARCH CALL OR WRITE

Center for United Labor Action
Box 7002
Norfolk, VA 23509 ph. 857-5193