

Thousands of Puerto Ricans protest against contract with energy company Luma

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The veto breaks with the proposal to fix the kilowatt/hour at no more than 20 cents and places the Puerto Rican people in an even more difficult situation. | Photo: Noticel

San Juan, July 21 (RHC)-- Thousands of Puerto Ricans from different social sectors mobilized this Wednesday from the Capitol to the Government headquarters in San Juan to demand that the Government cancel the contract with the private company LUMA, in charge for a year of the electricity supply in the country.

The claim is aimed directly at the governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro R. Pierluisi, who vetoed House Bill 1,383, which prevented increases in the electricity bill by cutting 75 percent of the unsecured debt of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA).

This measure was intended to set as a ceiling a rate never higher than 20 cents per kilowatt hour, as one of the conditions for the restructuring of the debt with the bondholders, amounting to 9 billion dollars.

The spokesperson for the Citizens' Front for the Debt Audit, Eva Prados, said that "we have been fighting for more than five years against the abuse and looting with a debt that has not been audited; at the same time she asserted that there is a new plan being cooked up by the Fiscal Supervision Board (JSF) "so that we are the ones who will pay the debt out of our pockets."

For his part, Alliance spokesman and president of the Union of Electrical and Irrigation Industry Workers (Utier), Angel Figueroa Jaramillo said: "It is a shame that the Governor with these actions shows that he is still the Fiscal Control Board's lawyer and allows all its whims. This instead of giving relief to Puerto Ricans by signing this bill that avoided more bill increases and established a fixed rate of no more than 20 cents per kilowatt hour."

The protests in rejection of the electricity rate hike also found support from several legislators of the opposition Popular Democratic Party and Puerto Rican Independence Party, as well as mayors.

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