



## The Corrosive Impact of Money in Politics: The Case of Dominion Energy in Virginia

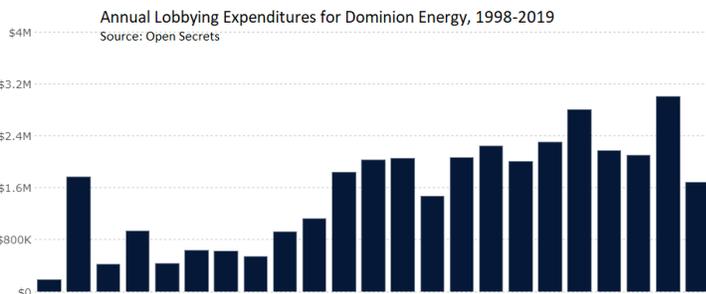
**Background:** Virginia’s energy policies and prices are greatly influenced by energy-related companies and organizations, in particular Dominion Energy, the State’s largest electric utilities provider, enjoys a near monopoly. The energy industry donates to both political parties, spending more than half a million dollars in annual donations to members of the General Assembly, who, accordingly, enacted the 2015 “rate freeze” that led to an epic windfall, and [more than an estimated \\$1.3 billion in overcharges since 2015](#).

This political spending creates a regulatory landscape which benefits the bottom line of energy and utility companies while discouraging [climate technology innovation](#) and raising utility prices for Virginia customers.

### Corporate Spending Facts:

- Since 1996, Dominion Energy has been one of the largest corporate contributors to Virginia’s elected officials, donating more than \$13.4 million to legislators on both sides of the aisle (see table).
- In 2018, Dominion Energy accounted for nearly \$2 million of the \$3.2 million energy and natural resource groups contributed to the coffers of over 100 candidates and legislators running for office. Since 1996, Senator Dick Saslow, the head of the Senate, has received more than [\\$487,000](#) from Dominion Energy, receiving over [\\$82,000 in 2018/19](#).
- In addition to direct campaign contributions, lobbying expenditures by Dominion totaled \$3 million in 2019 (source: [Open Secrets](#)). In the same year, they spent [over \\$355,000 on entertainment and gifts for legislators](#).

Donations from Electric Utilities in Virginia, 1996-2020 (Source: VPAP)	
Amount	Donor
<b>\$20,122,456</b>	<b>Electric Utilities</b>
<a href="#">\$13,460,456</a>	Dominion Energy (Richmond)
<a href="#">\$2,612,994</a>	Appalachian Power Co (Richmond)
<a href="#">\$982,282</a>	Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (Glen Allen)
<a href="#">\$929,827</a>	Farrell, Thomas F II (Henrico)
<a href="#">\$712,555</a>	Dominion Resources (Richmond)
<a href="#">\$629,432</a>	Virginia Maryland & Delaware Assn of Electric Cooperatives (Glen Allen)



customers—Virginia’s families and workers—[bills have skyrocketed in the same period, rising over 25% since 2007](#)<sup>2</sup>.

### How This Affects You:

- Over the past decade, Virginia’s largest utility monopoly—Dominion Energy—has reportedly overcharged its customers by more than \$2.3 billion<sup>1</sup>. To date, less than 5% of this money has been refunded.
- For Dominion’s residential

<sup>1</sup> Figures compiled from Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) reports and final orders for the years 2009–2018.

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- As of 2018, the average Virginia household in Dominion’s service territory paid \$133.19 a month for electricity—more than 13% higher than the national average. Despite Dominion Energy’s paid advertisements on “low rates”, Virginians’ residential electricity bills are the 7th highest in the country<sup>3</sup>.
- Meanwhile, monthly bills for Appalachian Power clients rose almost 64 percent between July 2007 and July 2020, from \$67 to \$109.

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, Electric Sales, Revenue, and Average Price (2018), Data Table T5.a, Residential average monthly bill by Census Division, and State, [https://www.eia.gov/electricity/sales\\_revenue\\_price](https://www.eia.gov/electricity/sales_revenue_price)