

Henry e. howell



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Henry E. Howell, was born on September 5, 1920 in Norfolk, Virginia. He was married to Elizabeth McCarthy of Portsmouth, Virginia and they had three children- Mary, Susan, and Hank. While growing up in Norfolk, Howell attended Maury High School and graduated in 1938. After high school Henry went on to attend the Norfolk Division of the College of William and Mary, now named Old Dominion University. Following his graduation from there he continued his education at the University of Virginia and obtained his law degree in 1943. 1After receiving his law degree Howell moved to West Palm Beach, Florida to practice. He later returned to Virginia and eventually formed his own law firm called Howell, Anninos, and Daugherty. He specialized in admiralty and tort law. Henry Howell first ran for office in 1953. He ran in the Democratic primary for a seat in the House of Delegates, and he was defeated. In 1953 and in 1965 Howell was elected as a Democrat to Virginia's House of Delegates. Howell was then elected to the state Senate in 1967. In 1969 Henry made his first of three attempts at being elected as the Governor of Virginia. The first time he ran as a Democrat, but in his later attempts, in 1973 and also in 1977, he ran as an Independent. According to Hank Howell, Henry's son, he was defeated due to racial issues, mainly bussing. 2 He lost that election by only fifteen hundred votes. Henry Howell was elected to the Lt. Governors office as an Independent in 1971. During Howell's lifetime he worked tirelessly to protect Virginian's who could not protect themselves. His slogan was " Keep the Big Boys Honest." Howell enjoyed taking on the " big boys" to court. Howell was always keeping big business on their toes. 3 He also brought suits against the state's poll tax, against its appropriation of federal impact funds designed to go to various localities in Virginia, and against its failure to give urban districts their due

representation in the Virginia General Assembly. He also frequently appeared as a spokesman for consumers before the State Corporation Commission to oppose rate increases requested by public utilities and insurance companies. In a number of cases he went on to file suits that eventually neglected unfavorable S. C. C. rulings. His activity in this sphere continued during his term as Lt. Governor . 4Hank Howell said that one of the other reasons that he was elected Governor of Virginia was because, Henry was a threat to the people with money invested in the business that he attacked. 5 Henry was on a mission to expose business and the people who were corrupt. These people (people with money invested) wanted things to stay the same. Henry disturbed the status quo. If he were elected as governor, he would have the ability to cut into their profits. One business Howell took on was the Virginia Electric and Power Company, or better known to many Virginians as VEPCO. During my research on this matter, I used the Henry Howell Papers in Old Dominions special collections section of the library. I found drafts of speeches and letters addressing the concerns he had with the monopoly Vepco had on Virginia. Vepco was the sole distributor for gas and electricity in Norfolk. Howell felt that the free flow of the forces of competition could not prevail under these circumstances. 6 Howell wrote, in a letter to Mr. John M. McGurn, President of the Virginia Electric and Power Company, on August 2, 1968 that "... Virginia is losing industry in those cases where the cost of industrial electricity is the balancing factor." In summery what he goes on to say is that Virginia is losing the opportunity to have large companys settle in Virginia due to the large difference in the cost of electricity. Businesses are going to neighboring states because it will cost them a significant amount less to operate. Howell expressed in his letter that

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VEPCO had become "... to big for its corporate britches." He urged Mr. McGrun to meet him in a news conference to discuss why Vepco charged so much more than other electric companies. In the letter, Howell urged McGrun to "... Join me as a Virginia State Senator in taking constructive steps to find ways to reduce VEPCO's rates so they will be competitive with North Carolina and South Carolina." 7 Attached in this letter was a comparison chart of Duke Power Company and their rates. VEPCO Duke Power Co. Total KWH/Year Cost per kW Total cost Cost per KW Total cost Difference in cost

Plant	KWH/Year	Cost per kW	Total cost	Cost per KW	Total cost	Difference in cost
Brookneal	12,043,200	.0084	\$101,345.88	.00726	\$87,517.20	\$13,282.68
Halifax	8,844,000	.008	\$151,979.60	.0068	\$130,150.00	\$21,829.60
Altavista	19,838,400	.0079	\$158,025.80	.0068	\$135,831.00	\$22,194.80
Clarksville	24,313,000	.008	\$198,888.00	.007	\$169,262.00	\$29,626.00
South Hill	4,084,640	.0093	\$43,826.00	.0087	\$35,694.00	\$8,123.00
Drakes Branch	11,721,000	.00818	\$95,999.00	.00717	\$84,172.00	\$11,827.00

This chart clearly shows that the neighboring electric company's rates were significantly lower than that of VEPCO's. The first column has the name of the power plant, and the second; how many kilowatts per year each plant uses. Once under the VEPCO heading, the first column shows how much each kilowatt costs, and the column next to that indicates the price that one would pay a year, in that area. The next two columns describe the same, only using Duke Power Company. The difference in price is in the last column, and it shows how much more VEPCO charges, per-year, for the same power. Henry wanted injustices like this to change. Howell worked campaigned for adequate protection for the consumers of Virginia, including that of more competitive electric rates. Howell said that "... the majority of the committee members who control this type of

legislation have refused to put this bill on the floor or even recommend a study." Henry felt that the SCC (State Corporation Committee) had been flying under the radar for too long, and he was going to do something about it. He drew attention to the things that the SCC and big business had been getting away with. Howell wanted a separate consumer protection agency.