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### Consumer News... For You! The OUCC's December 2018 Newsletter

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# OUCC

## Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor

### Consumer News.... For You!

DECEMBER 2018

**OUCC** ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018  
INDIANA OFFICE OF UTILITY CONSUMER COUNSELOR  
Now Available at [IN.GOV/OUCC](http://IN.GOV/OUCC)



#### Get to Know Us!

Did you know that our technical experts are putting nearly 840 years of professional experience to work for Hoosiers every day? Or that our attorneys have more than 370 years of combined legal experience? The OUCC's newly issued [Annual Report](#) offers more information on our highly dedicated team and our accomplishments over the past year.

#### Finding the Right Balance

Indiana law allows energy utilities to submit seven-year infrastructure plans and then seek rate recovery of the costs as they are incurred. However, the way those costs are charged to each class (residential, commercial, or industrial) is the subject of a pending case before the Indiana Supreme Court. OUCC Deputy Consumer Counselor Jeffrey Reed presented oral arguments before the court in November, arguing that the current way of collecting those costs is properly balanced.



#### Tax Relief

All of Indiana's major investor-owned utilities have reduced their rates due to the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. The OUCC has worked collaboratively with many utilities while litigating cases with others during the IURC's ongoing [investigation](#). The rate adjustments ensure utilities are recovering federal income taxes on a

dollar-for-dollar basis at the lower level implemented at the first of the year. The investigation's second phase is also complete for most utilities. It is addressing long-term accounting issues and customer bill credits for tax costs that were recovered at the old, higher rate after Jan. 1.

#### Case Updates

- Consumer comments in the [Indiana American Water Co.](#) rate case are invited through Dec. 14.
- The OUCC is scheduled to file testimony in the [Citizens](#) sewer rate case on Jan. 25 and in the [NIPSCO](#) electric rate case on Feb. 6. [Written consumer comments](#) are invited in the meantime. At least one IURC public field hearing will be held in each case.
- Jan. 22 is the OUCC's deadline to file closing arguments on [Vectren's proposal](#) to build a new natural gas-fired power plant and install coal emissions technology.
- OUCC briefs in two cases before the Indiana Court of Appeals are due in December. Indiana American Water Company's (IAWC's) purchase of the Lake Station municipal water utility is at issue in one appeal. The other case focuses on language in IAWC's lead service line replacement program that would hold consumers liable for property damages made by a water utility or a subcontractor.

## We're hiring!

The OUCC's natural gas division is looking for qualified accountants to fill a [current opening](#). If you're interested in joining a high-performing team that's dedicated to consumer advocacy, this could be the opportunity you're looking for. Applications are being accepted for a limited time.



## Help is available



Income-eligible consumers who need assistance with winter heating bills are encouraged to apply for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program ([LIHEAP](#)). Each of Indiana's 92 counties has an intake office, with the Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority's website offering a [directory](#). Consumers can also call 2-1-1 to find local offices and learn about additional options for financial assistance.

## Cooking During the Holidays?

More energy use in the kitchen can start to add up on your monthly bills. But [these and other tips](#) can help you keep the bills in check:

- Coordinate your baking by grouping dishes that use the same, or nearly the same, oven temperatures. Either bake them together, or one following the other, to avoid needing to re-heat the oven.
- Utilize smaller appliances where you can. A microwave or toaster oven needs less energy to heat up than a conventional oven.
- Add a lid to dishes being cooked on the range. Foods cook faster when you add a lid, saving you both time and energy.



## Our Mission

To represent all Indiana consumers to ensure quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable prices possible through dedicated advocacy, consumer education, and creative problem solving.

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