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## OUCC statement on Citizens Energy Group investigation

Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor David Stippler made the following statement today regarding the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission's (IURC's) final order in the Citizens Energy Group investigation:

“We are gratified that more than a half-million dollars will be returned for the use of Citizens Energy Group's ratepayers in light of this week's order. In the order, the Commission agreed with the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor's (OUCC's) recommendations regarding Universal Service Program (USP) funds, ordering Citizens to repay more than \$522,000 to the natural gas assistance program that Citizens had misappropriated from USP funds and had applied to non-gas charges.

“We also appreciate the order's provisions regarding the Utility Shield program and are pleased with the requirements the commission has ordered. When consumers consider signing up for line protection programs, they deserve transparency as to who is providing and operating the programs. The Commission's order agreed with the OUCC that some of the statements Citizens made in promoting Utility Shield could have resulted in confusion that Citizens was providing the service, rather than a third party. The Commission found Citizens should implement the OUCC's recommendation to eliminate the use of Citizens' name and logo on materials promoting and marketing Utility Shield. This order will help customers in avoiding that confusion.”

The OUCC urges consumers who consider signing up for utility line protection programs to make informed decisions. The agency's consumer fact sheet, available online at [www.in.gov/oucc/2656.htm](http://www.in.gov/oucc/2656.htm), offers more advice.

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(IURC Cause No. 44462)

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) represents Indiana consumer interests before state and federal bodies that regulate utilities. As a state agency, the OUCC's mission is 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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