



For Immediate Release

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Community Natural Gas rate case: Consumer comments invited

If you would like to comment on Community Natural Gas Company's requested rate increase, here's your opportunity.

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC), the state agency representing consumer interests in cases before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC), is reviewing the utility's request and is scheduled to file testimony on June 14, 2019.

Along with its legal and technical review, the OUCC is inviting written consumer comments through June 7, 2019.

Community Natural Gas Co. is a privately owned utility providing natural gas service to more than 7,100 customers in 10 southern Indiana counties. Its pending request would raise its annual non-gas-cost operating revenues by approximately \$976,000. The impact on a customer's bill would vary based on usage; the utility's notice to residential customers projects a 13 percent average impact. Within the bill, the utility's request would keep the flat, monthly residential customer charge at its current amount of \$13.00, meaning any increase would apply only to the bill's volumetric portion.

The utility's current base rates were approved in 2017, and decreased in 2018 due to federal income tax reductions. According to its testimony, Community Natural Gas is seeking the increase due to higher operating and maintenance costs and to pay for capital improvements including recent expansions into previously unserved rural areas. The utility and OUCC have reached a partial agreement concerning the utility's authorized rate of return.

The proposed increase in this case would only apply to the utility's base distribution rate, which comprises between 50 and 55 percent of a typical Community Natural Gas residential customer's monthly heating bill. Base distribution rates cover "non-gas" costs such as operating and maintenance expenses, and capital infrastructure improvements. The rest of a typical monthly heating bill pays for the natural gas itself, which the utility recovers on a dollar-for-dollar basis subject to OUCC review and IURC approval every three months.

Consumers who wish to submit written comments for the case record may do so via the OUCC's website at www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm, by email at uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov, or by mail at:

Consumer Services Staff
Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor
115 W. Washington St., Suite 1500 South
Indianapolis, IN 46204

The OUCC needs to receive all written consumer comments no later than June 7, 2019 so that it can: 1) Consider them in preparing its testimony and 2) File them with the Commission to be included in the case's formal evidentiary record.

(Continued)

Comments should include the consumer's **name, mailing address**, and a reference to **"IURC Cause No. 45214."** Please do not include account numbers and other sensitive information. Consumers with questions about submitting written comments can contact the OUCC's consumer services staff toll-free at 1-888-441-2494.

An IURC evidentiary hearing is scheduled for August 16, 2019 at the PNC Center (101 W. Washington St.) in Indianapolis. While evidentiary hearings are open to the public, participation is typically limited to attorney and Commission questioning of technical witnesses. A final decision in the case is expected either late this year or in early 2020.

Updates on this case are being posted on the OUCC's website at www.in.gov/oucc/2481.htm. Case updates are also available through the agency's monthly electronic newsletter. Consumers can subscribe at www.in.gov/oucc/2877.htm

(IURC Cause No. 45214)

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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