



**For Immediate Release**

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## **NIPSCO Gas Rate Case: OUCC Invites Consumer Comments**

If you are a Northern Indiana Public Service Co. (NIPSCO) customer and would like to comment on the utility's pending natural gas rate request, you have the opportunity to do so.

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 Jan. 20, 2022.

### **Written consumer comments**

While using its legal and technical resources to review NIPSCO's request, including examining the utility's books and operations, the OUCC is inviting written public comments through Jan. 18, 2022.

Consumers who wish to submit comments for the case record are encouraged to do so in writing. Comments are welcome via the OUCC's website at [www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm](http://www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm), by email at [uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov](mailto:uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov), or by mail at:

Public Comments  
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 Jan. 18, 2022, 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. Comments should include the consumer's **name, mailing address**, and a reference to either "**IURC Cause No. 45621**" or "**NIPSCO Gas**". Consumers with questions about submitting written comments can contact the OUCC's consumer services staff toll-free at 1-888-441-2494.

### **Public field hearing**

The IURC is currently scheduled to hold a public field hearing on NIPSCO's request on Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022, at South Side High School in Fort Wayne (3601 S. Calhoun St.). The hearing is scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m., local time, in the school's auditorium, and is statutorily required in this case.

Consumers are encouraged to arrive by 5:45 p.m. for an overview of field hearing procedures and the rate case process. Attendees are required to comply with all local health and safety regulations.

Sworn comments presented at the field hearing will carry the same weight as written consumer comments filed by the OUCC.

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The field hearing's sole purpose is to receive public testimony.

- Consumers can speak directly to the Commission under oath and on the record.
- Oral comments during the hearing will become part of the case record. They will carry the same weight as written consumer comments the OUCC receives by Jan. 18, 2022.
- Utilities do not make presentations or answer questions during field hearings. The focus, again, is on public input. In this case, NIPSCO filed testimony and exhibits in September 2021.
- Commissioners are not allowed to answer questions about the case. They will ultimately render a decision after weighing evidence from the utility, the OUCC, and intervening parties.
- No final decisions will be made at the field hearing.

### **Case overview**

NIPSCO's natural gas utility serves 850,000 customers in 32 counties.

The utility is proposing a \$115 million annual increase in two phases. It states in testimony that its request is due to infrastructure investments along with higher operating and maintenance costs.

Current base rates for NIPSCO's gas utility received IURC approval in 2018. Total billing amounts have varied since then due to changes in wholesale commodity costs along with incremental increases to pay for specific infrastructure and federally mandated costs as allowed by Indiana law.

NIPSCO's testimony and exhibits show that its request, when fully implemented in 2023, would raise total residential gas charges as follows:

Monthly Usage	Current Gas Bill	Proposed Gas Bill
50 therms	\$43.74	\$53.33
70 therms	\$55.64	\$64.86
100 therms	\$73.48	\$82.16

Each NIPSCO residential gas bill includes a monthly \$14.00 customer service charge which does not vary based on usage. It would rise to \$24.50 under the utility's request. The remainder of the bill varies by customer usage. For small commercial customers, the monthly customer charge would rise from \$53.00 to \$80.00.

Base distribution rates comprise approximately 62 percent of a typical NIPSCO residential gas bill. They cover "non-gas" costs such as operating and maintenance expenses and capital infrastructure improvements. The remaining 38 percent of a typical monthly 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.

Additional parties that have formally intervened in this case include the Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana, Archer Energy, and nine of NIPSCO's industrial customers. Any testimony they file is due on Jan. 20, 2022.

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A settlement agreement is possible in any legal proceeding. If a settlement is reached, the settling parties are required to present evidence showing it to be in the public interest. The IURC may approve, deny, or modify any agreement it considers.

Electric rates and charges are not at issue in this case.

A final Commission order is currently expected in July 2022.

The OUCC is posting case updates online at [www.in.gov/oucc/natural-gas/key-cases-by-utility/nipsco-gas-rates](http://www.in.gov/oucc/natural-gas/key-cases-by-utility/nipsco-gas-rates). Case updates are also available through the agency's monthly electronic newsletter. Consumers can subscribe at [www.in.gov/oucc/news](http://www.in.gov/oucc/news).

(IURC Cause No. 45621)

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.