



**For Immediate Release**

**February 25, 2019**

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**Public comments invited in NIPSCO electric rate case**  
*IURC hearing scheduled for Mar. 11 in Hammond*  
*OUCC inviting written consumer comments through Mar. 13*

Consumer comments are invited in the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) electric rate case.

An Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) public field hearing is scheduled for Monday, Mar. 11, 2019 at the Hammond High School Auditorium (5926 Calumet Ave. in Hammond). The hearing will start at 6:00 p.m. local time. Consumers are encouraged to arrive by 5:45 p.m. for an overview of field hearing procedures and the rate case process.

At the hearing:

- Consumers will be able to speak directly to the Commission, under oath and on the record, regarding the case.
- Consumers will also be able to submit written comments for the case record.
- Commissioners are not allowed to answer questions. However, OUCC staff will be available before, during, and after the hearing to address questions about the process.

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC), the state agency representing consumer interests in cases before the IURC, is inviting written consumer comments for the case record through Wednesday, Mar. 13, 2019.

- Consumers who wish to submit written comments may do so via the OUCC's website at [www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm](http://www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm), via email at [uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov](mailto: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 Mar. 13, 2019 so that it can 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 "**IURC Cause No. 45159.**" Consumers with questions about submitting written comments can contact the OUCC's consumer services staff toll-free at 1-888-441-2494. Please do not include account numbers or other sensitive information.

In its testimony and exhibits, NIPSCO states that its proposal would raise monthly electric charges for an average residential customer – using 689 kilowatt hours (kWh) – from \$94.54 to \$105.96. According to NIPSCO's exhibits, a residential customer using 1,000 kWh would see his or her monthly electric charges rise from \$130.96 to \$146.07.

- In its filings, NIPSCO identifies the case's "key drivers" as realignment of depreciation rates for its coal-fired generating facilities (including costs of planned generating facility retirements), impacts from the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, and the "near term" shifting recovery of certain costs from industrial customers to other customers, to address options industrial customers have for generating more of their own electricity.

**(Continued)**

- NIPSCO's current base electric rates were approved in July 2016. However, billing amounts have changed since then due to rate recovery mechanisms – or “trackers” – which allow rate increases for specific items on an expedited basis. Rates have also changed due to federal income tax reductions the utility received under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017.

The OUCC has filed testimony recommending:

- No increase to residential customer rates. This includes keeping the electric utility's flat, monthly residential customer charge at its current \$14.00 level.
- Reductions to numerous line items in the request and a reduction to the utility's proposed return on equity.
- Recognizing new power supply options available to the company's largest customers and facilitating cost savings to those customers, while shielding residential and commercial customer classes from covering those costs.

Additional parties that have formally intervened in this case include eight municipal governments (the Cities of East Chicago and Valparaiso, and the Towns of Dyer, Griffith, Highland, Munster, Schererville, and Winfield), the Sierra Club, the Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana, the Indiana Coalition for Affordable and Reliable Electricity, the Indiana Coal Council, Peabody Coalsales, Wal-Mart, and a number of the utility's industrial customers (including Accurate Castings, ArcelorMittal, BP Products North America, Cargill, Enbridge Energy, Modern Forge Indiana, NLMK, Praxair, United States Steel, and USG Corporation).

Natural gas rates and charges are not at issue in this case. NIPSCO's electric utility provides service to more than 468,000 customers in 20 counties.

An IURC evidentiary hearing is scheduled to start on Apr. 16, 2019 in Indianapolis and is scheduled to continue through May 1, 2019 if necessary. Evidentiary hearings are open to the public, but participation is typically limited to attorney and Commission questioning of technical witnesses for the case's formal parties. A Commission order is expected this summer.

The OUCC is posting updates on this case at [www.in.gov/oucc/2901.htm](http://www.in.gov/oucc/2901.htm). Case updates are also available through the agency's monthly electronic newsletter. Consumers can subscribe at [www.in.gov/oucc/2877.htm](http://www.in.gov/oucc/2877.htm).

(IURC Cause No. 45159)

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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