



For Immediate Release

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CenterPoint Energy Electric Rate Case: OUCC Recommendations

Corrected Version

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is recommending a substantial reduction to of CenterPoint Energy Indiana's request for a \$118.8 Million (16%) base rate increase. Instead, the OUCC's analysis shows that an increase of \$33.1 million (4.5%) is warranted based on the case's evidence and applicable law.

Thirteen OUCC witnesses filed testimony with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) this week, following a 3 ½-month legal and technical review of the testimony, exhibits, and work papers filed by the utility. As the OUCC's testimony notes, most of the increase requested is due to capital projects that received IURC preapproval and are now being included in rates as is provided by state law.

"Our attorneys and technical experts closely examined CenterPoint Energy's evidence and have countered the utility's new requests with recommendations that would provide for safe and reliable service at much lower costs than the utility requests," said Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor Bill Fine. "In doing this, we were particularly mindful of the strong concerns many customers and civic leaders have raised about the utility's request. We took all the comments into account while reviewing the evidence and we thank the community for their meaningful engagement in this process."

More than 2,300 written consumer comments were filed with the OUCC's testimony, along with letters and resolutions received from local governmental entities in the utility's service territory. In addition, **78** CenterPoint Energy customers spoke at the IURC's Feb. 29, 2024 field hearing in this case.

The OUCC's testimony recommends:

- Keeping the utility's monthly customer service charges for residential and small commercial customers at their current levels.
- Decreasing the utility's authorized return on equity to 8.8%. CenterPoint Energy's current authorized return of 10.4% was approved in 2011. The utility proposes keeping the amount where it is.
- Reducing the utility's proposed depreciation expense and reducing numerous line items from the utility's proposed amounts for operating and maintenance expenses.
- Requiring specific consumer protections to be in place before the utility implements its proposal to carry out disconnections for non-payment remotely. CenterPoint Energy is asking the IURC to waive rules requiring utilities to make in-person visits to a customer's property before shutting service off. The OUCC's proposed protections include requiring the utility to obtain updated contact information for its customers and follow specific guidelines to inform customers of the change in advance.

CenterPoint Energy's Rebuttal testimony is due on Apr. 9, 2024, with an evidentiary hearing scheduled to start on **April 30, 2024**. A final order from the IURC is expected this fall.

Natural gas rates and charges are not at issue in this case. CenterPoint Energy's electric utility provides service to approximately 150,000 customers in seven southwestern Indiana counties.

The OUCC is posting case updates online at www.in.gov/oucc/electric/key-cases-by-utility/vectren-electric-rates/centerpoint-energy-electric-rate-case. Case updates are also available through the agency's monthly electronic newsletter. Consumers can subscribe at www.in.gov/oucc/news.

(IURC Cause No. 45990)

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.