

IURC News Release

Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission

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IURC Decision Helps Hoosiers with Winter Gas Bills

Unique Solution Allows Gas Utilities to Help Fund Respective Universal Service Programs

INDIANAPOLIS – With federal funding projected to be reduced for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Citizens Gas, Northern Indiana Public Service Company, and Vectren filed requests to modify their respective state universal service programs. In response, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) issued an expedited decision to help address the shortfall in funding.

“It was critical for the IURC to act on this decision given that the winter heating season is fast approaching,” said Chairman Jim Atterholt. “We want to do all we can to keep Hoosiers safe and warm this winter.”

In order to help the utilities maintain current funding levels and potentially increase this year’s allotment, the IURC authorized the utilities to apply any unspent funds from last year to this year’s funding. Additionally, the IURC encouraged the utilities to use shareholder funding to help support the administrative costs of the Community Action Program (CAP) agencies. CAP agencies identify customers who qualify for LIHEAP according to set guidelines. Once approved for LIHEAP, customers are eligible for additional assistance through the universal service programs.

LIHEAP is a separate federal program administered by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority. To qualify for energy assistance, a household's annual income cannot exceed 150% of the federal poverty level guidelines.

Only customers who qualify for LIHEAP are protected from disconnection during the winter. This period of time is referred to as moratorium and extends from December 1st to March 15th of each year. For a list of CAP agencies throughout the state and the 2011 federal poverty level guidelines used for qualification, please visit:

<http://www.incap.org/energyinfo.html>.

To view a copy of the Order in Cause No. 44094, please visit: www.in.gov/iurc.

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The Commission is a fact-finding body that hears evidence in cases filed before it and makes decisions based on the evidence presented in those cases. An advocate of neither the public nor the utilities, the IURC is required by state statute to make decisions that balance the interests of all parties to ensure the utilities provide adequate and reliable service at reasonable prices.