



Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor

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## **Citizens Gas rate case: Consumer comments invited**

*IURC field hearing scheduled for May 5 – OUCC accepting written consumer comments through May 6*

Consumers are invited to comment on the request of Citizens Gas for an increase in its base rates and charges.

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) – the state agency representing consumer interests in all cases before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) – is accepting written consumer comments for the case record through Friday, May 6, 2011.

The OUCC also encourages consumers to attend the IURC **public field hearing** scheduled for **Thursday, May 5, 2011** in Room 222 at the PNC Center (101 W. Washington St. in Indianapolis). The field hearing's public comment portion will begin at 6:00 p.m.

- Sworn oral and written comments regarding the rate case will be accepted during the field hearing.
- Oral and written consumer comments carry equal weight and will become part of the official evidentiary record considered by the IURC in reaching its final decision.
- Commissioners are not permitted to answer consumer questions during the formal field hearing. (However, OUCC and IURC staff will be available before, during and after the hearing.)

An OUCC informational session on the regulatory process and public field hearing procedures will start at 5:30 p.m.

Citizens Gas – a public charitable trust providing natural gas utility service in Marion County – has requested a \$14.04 million increase in its base rates and charges. According to the utility's testimony and exhibits, the proposal would increase an average monthly residential bill by an average of \$4.78 per month. In testimony, the utility indicates it is seeking the increase due to higher operating and maintenance costs along with infrastructure improvements. Current base rates for Citizens Gas were approved 2008.

The proposed increase in this case would apply only to the base distribution rates for Citizens Gas, which cover "non-gas" expenses such as capital improvements and the costs of operations and maintenance. Base rates comprise approximately 25 to 30 percent of a typical residential natural gas customer's monthly heating bill.

Wholesale natural gas supply costs, which make up between 70 and 75 percent of a typical customer's bill, are recovered on a dollar-for-dollar basis through the state's Gas Cost Adjustment (GCA) process. Citizens Gas files its GCA requests, which require OUCC review and IURC approval, every three months. The pending base rate case will not affect the GCA process.

**(Continued)**

Consumers who wish to submit written comments in this case may send them to the OUCC by mail, fax or e-mail, or through the OUCC's Website:

- Mail: Consumer Services Staff; Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor  
115 W. Washington St., Suite 1500 South; Indianapolis, IN 46204
- Fax: (317) 232-5923
- E-mail: [uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov](mailto:uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov)
- OUCC Website: [www.IN.gov/OUCC](http://www.IN.gov/OUCC)

All **written comments** should include the consumer's **name**, **mailing address**, and a reference to **IURC Cause No. 43975**. The OUCC will file all written comments it receives by **May 6, 2011** with the IURC for inclusion in the case's official record.

The OUCC has not yet taken a position in this case but is reviewing the utility's request and is scheduled to file testimony on May 10, 2011.

More information, including the utility's testimony, is available on the OUCC Website at [www.in.gov/oucc/2648.htm](http://www.in.gov/oucc/2648.htm). The agency's Website also offers a guide to understanding natural gas prices and other consumer publications.

(IURC Cause No. 43975)

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. To learn more, visit [www.IN.gov/OUCC](http://www.IN.gov/OUCC).