



For Immediate Release

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Citizens Gas of Westfield Rate Case: Consumer Comments Invited; Public Hearing Set for Oct. 12

If you would like to comment on Citizens Gas of Westfield's requested rate increase, you have two opportunities.

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) continues to invite written comments for the case record. In addition, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) will hold a public field hearing in the gas rate case on Wednesday, October 12, 2016.

The IURC's October 12 hearing will start at 6:00 p.m. in the Westfield High School Cafeteria (18250 N. Union St.).

- Consumers will be able to speak directly to the Commission, under oath and on the record, regarding the gas rate case.
- Consumers will also be able to submit written comments for the case record.
- Comments will carry equal weight whether they are oral or written.
- Commissioners are not allowed to answer questions during the field hearing. However, OUCC staff will be available before, during and after the hearing to address questions about the process.

Consumers who are unable to attend the field hearing but wish to submit written comments may do so via the OUCC's Website at www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm, or by mail, email, or fax:

- Mail: Consumer Services Staff
Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor
115 W. Washington St., Suite 1500 South
Indianapolis, IN 46204
- email: uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov
- Fax: (317) 232-5923

The OUCC needs to receive all written consumer comments in advance of the public field hearing so that they can 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. 44731." Consumers with questions about submitting written comments may call the OUCC toll-free at 1-888-441-2494.

According to its testimony and exhibits, the utility's request would raise a total average monthly residential natural gas bill from \$65.93 to \$71.37. This would include increasing the monthly customer service charge from \$5.79 to \$12.00 for residential customers. The customer service charge for commercial customers would rise from \$5.79 to \$37.00. The utility's proposal would also increase the base rate's volumetric portion.

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Citizens Gas of Westfield's base distribution rate comprises about 58 percent of a typical residential customer's monthly heating bill, and covers operating and maintenance costs along with capital improvements. Wholesale natural gas commodity costs are passed through to rates on a dollar-for-dollar basis and are reviewed and approved in separate legal proceedings.

The OUCC – which represents consumer interests in all cases before the IURC – filed testimony on September 28, 2016 recommending denial of Citizens Gas of Westfield's request.

The utility has until October 26, 2016 to file rebuttal testimony. Case updates will be posted on the OUCC's website at www.in.gov/oucc/2479.htm.

In a separate docket (IURC Cause No. 44835), Citizens Energy Group is seeking a rate increase for its Westfield wastewater utility.

The OUCC is reviewing the requested wastewater rate increase and has until November 30, 2016 to file testimony. Written consumer comments are invited with a public field hearing in the wastewater rate case to be scheduled at a date, time, and location to be determined. Wastewater rate case updates are being posted at www.in.gov/oucc/2865.htm.

(IURC Cause No. 44731)

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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