



Consumer advocates to appeal ComEd hike

By Anna Marie Kukec | Daily Herald Staff

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Consumer advocates said Wednesday they plan to appeal a rate hike approved by the Illinois Commerce Commission that allows ComEd to collect \$270 million in additional revenue.

That means the average household could see an additional \$4.50 on its monthly bill for the delivery of power, beginning Sunday.

The Citizens Utility Board and AARP blasted ComEd for the hike - and for tacking on special riders, or extra fees.

One fee that aimed to quickly recover expenses from storm damage was denied.

But another fee for a "smart" electrical grid was approved only if ComEd conducts a study on how to build the system, the technology used, its cost and potential benefits to consumers. The smart-grid fee would be in addition to the delivery service hike approved Wednesday during the ICC meeting.

"We continue to believe that ComEd has overstated its expenses, and doesn't need or deserve a rate hike," said CUB spokesman Jim Chilsen.

ComEd said it plans to evaluate the ICC's final order and its impact on consumers.

"While ComEd is committed to keeping rates as low as possible, we are also committed to providing our 3.8 million customers with reliable service. This increase is necessary to respond to higher infrastructure improvement costs and to support growing demand," Anne Pramaggiore, ComEd executive vice president of customer operations, regulatory and external affairs, said in a statement.

In October 2007, ComEd filed a request for a delivery service increase of nearly 20 percent, or an additional \$361.3 million in revenue. The ICC cut that total amount by reducing budget items including operations and maintenance, plant additions, lobbying and advertising expenses and executive incentive compensation plans.

"The \$4.50 is only an estimate, and a final number will come when the commission posts its final order on Thursday," said ICC spokesman Brian Sterling.

The delivery service charge is about 30 percent of the monthly bill. The actual cost of the electricity will be determined through a process designed by the new Illinois Power Agency in June.