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NEWS IN BRIEF

CUB to Appeal Nicor Rate Hike

The Citizen's Utility Board plans to appeal a natural gas rate hike. Regulators signed-off on the increase Wednesday for Nicor, which serves parts of Northern Illinois. The company says the average residential customer will see an increase of about \$2.50 on their monthly bill.

Jim Chilsen is spokesman for the Citizen's Utility Board.

CHILSEN: Utilities are nickel and dime-ing people all the time. I mean, that's what utilities do, is they get people for a few dollars here or there. And so that's why we're appealing. And we believe strongly that Nicor - even if it is a couple dollars a month - the company hasn't justified that big of a rate hike.

The \$69-million increase is about half of what Nicor requested. The company is defending the hike, saying it's only asked for three rate increases in the past 20 years.