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Lawmaker blasts rate hike requests

By The News-Gazette

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CHAMPAIGN – State Rep. Naomi Jakobsson, D-Urbana, has begun a petition drive to oppose rate increases sought by Illinois-American Water Co. and the Ameren Illinois Utilities.

"People across the state are hurting financially, and these requests to take more money from utility customers' paychecks could not come at a worse time," she said. "Both Ameren and Illinois-American Water Co. substantially raised their rates in our region over the last year and now they want more. I find it hard to believe that these companies are hurting so badly that they need to dig deeper into the wallets of hardworking families."

Illinois-American is seeking a rate increase of about 34 percent, Jakobsson said. Proposed AmerenIP rate increases for customers in the Champaign, Urbana and Danville area would cost a typical residential customer about \$97 more a year for electricity and \$55 for natural gas.

Jakobsson said she plans to present the petitions to the Illinois Commerce Commission, which will act on the two rate cases by next May. For more information, call Jakobsson's office at 373-5000 or e-mail her at naomi<@>naomijakobsson.com.

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