

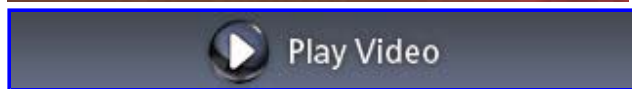
WSIL-TV 3 ABC



TOP STORIES

📺 Last updated 8:13 am CT October 07, 2009.

Citizens Utility Board Calls for Action Against Proposed Ameren Rate Hike



WILLIAMSON-- A new study by the Citizens Utility Board claims Ameren is among the most wasteful power companies in the nation.

The group announced its findings Wednesday.

Just this summer Ameren announced plans to raise rates again, proposing a \$226-million rate hike.

The Citizens Utility Board is fighting the increase, claiming Ameren spends wastefully and that citizens should not be forced to carry the company's burden.

"We are not Ameren's personal ATM and we will do everything we can to stop this rate increase" says Patrick Deignan, C.U.B. member.

As part of their case against Ameren, the Citizens Utility Board has released their analysis, comparing Ameren to 115 electric utilities nationwide.

Read More Below



"With that study we found they overspent by an estimated \$159 million in 2008. Plain and simple, a company this wasteful doesn't deserve a pay raise" says Deignan.

The proposed rate hike comes just one year after Ameren hit customers with a \$162 million rate hike.

Critics say it's just not the time to be asking for more money.

"At a time when everyone is cutting back Ameren needs to get its own house in order before asking its consumers for another bailout" he says.

The new rate hike would cost the average family another \$120 per year according to C.U.B.

Ameren officials say the hikes are needed because of higher construction, operation and maintenance costs.

"Customers expect it to be there on the spot and there are poles and pipes and wire that have to be maintained on a daily basis" says Victoria Busch, Ameren Spokesperson.

However, some senior citizens fear the rate hike would be too much for them to handle.

"Not only are older people trying to help themselves, but they have children and grandchildren and even great grand children that they have to help too" says Amy

Paschedag.

The Illinois Commerce Commission has until May to make the final decision on the matter.

The Illinois Commerce Commission will hold public hearings on the matter.

There's a meeting in our region October 5th.

It's at the Kenneth Hall Regional Office Building in Collinsville.

A final decision in the matter will be made by May.

By: Christen Craig
ccraig@wsilv.com