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Gas companies allowed to hike prices

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Your gas bill is about to get bigger.

People's Gas and North Shore Gas customers will have to pay an extra 5 percent on average starting Jan. 28, after the Illinois Commerce Commission agreed Thursday to let the companies charge more. The increase equals about \$4 a month for a Peoples customer.

People's Gas will be allowed to collect an extra \$69.8 million in fees, while North Shore can make an extra \$13.8 million, the ICC ruled.

Though that's less than the utilities sought, the Citizens Utility Board said the hike is "more than what they need or deserve." CUB says it will appeal the rate hike. Natural gas prices already have jumped 14 to 36 percent since December, CUB said.

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