



Expect to See Your Heating Bill Increase



Photo by randi

Starting next month, Chicago and North Shore gas customers will see a higher home heating bill after the Illinois Commerce Commission approved a rate increase for Peoples Energy and North Shore Gas. Estimates indicate that Peoples Energy customers will pay close to \$4 more a month, equaling \$48 more a year. North suburban residents will pay \$66 more a year. According to [Crain's](#), Peoples will receive a nearly \$70 million rate hike, which is below the \$122 million Peoples asked for but slightly above the \$66 million recommended by an administrative judge for the commission.

Watchdog and citizens groups, such as AARP Illinois and Citizens Utility Board, opposed the rate hike and the new change that allows Peoples to automatically collect from customers the cost above a yet-to-be-specified baseline of replacing aging cast-iron gas pipes, without a traditional after-the-fact review by ICC. A spokeswoman for Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan said she was concerned about any level of rate increase in today's economy and "will carefully review the order to determine our next steps."

[Chicago Breaking News](#) reports Peoples officials said the increases were necessary to offset higher delivery and maintenance costs. A Peoples spokesman told Crain's that the company was disappointed it didn't get the full amount it requested but understood the commission had to balance the interests of the company with those of consumers.

By [Amy Perry](#) in [News](#) on January 22, 2010 2:00 PM [1 Comment](#) [3 Likes](#)

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