Heating Affordability and Utility Accountability Act

HB 5247 / SB 3497 **March 2020**

In 2013, the General Assembly passed a law to allow Ameren, Nicor, and Peoples Gas to **automatically raise customer bills** through a bill surcharge to pay for safety improvements.

Today, all three gas utilities are abusing the surcharge **by spending massive amounts on capital programs that have little to nothing to do with safety** and leaving customers with the bill. The surcharges are rapidly increasing gas bills around the state.

The situation is so bad that in 2018, **15 percent of Peoples Gas customers received a disconnection notice.**

The **Heating Affordability & Utility Accountability Act** sunsets the surcharge in 2021 rather than 2023, returning utility capital programs to traditional regulatory oversight.

The General Assembly was misled when it approved this program.

What was said in 2013:	What is happening now:
The surcharge was for safety improvements.	• Instead of focusing on replacing the most dangerous pipes, Peoples Gas is overhauling its entire system. • Ameren and Nicor are spending hundreds of millions annually, even though they have already replaced all cast iron in their systems.
The bill impacts would be small, e.g., $1.14 per month for Peoples Gas customers.	• Average Peoples Gas customers are already paying over $10 per month. • Nicor's capital spending raised rates twice in two years, increasing their rate base by 158 percent.
The utilities' spending plans were limited, e.g. $330 million for Ameren and $2 billion for Peoples Gas.	• Peoples Gas will spend as high as $11 billion. • Ameren has already spent more than $466 million. • Nicor plans to spend over $1.6 billion in the next two years.