



CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD

Fighting for Illinois Consumers

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CONSUMER ADVOCATES, REP. DU BUCLET ISSUE WARNING AGAINST ALTERNATIVE ELECTRIC/GAS SUPPLIER RIP-OFFS, MAKE URGENT CALL FOR LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

After years of bad deals, billions of dollars in losses across Illinois, advocates warn of summer ripe for rip-offs, call for legislative reforms in HB 4313: The No More Utility Bill Rip-Offs Customer Protection Act

As financial losses mount for Illinois consumers with alternative electric and gas suppliers, the watchdog Citizens Utility Board (CUB) has joined with other consumer advocates and state Rep. Kimberly Du Buclet to advocate for the No More Utility Bill Rip-Offs Customer Protection Act (House Bill 4313), a series of reforms to protect utility customers from bad energy deals.

Amid an affordability crisis—in which costs for necessities such as utilities, groceries and healthcare—are high, the consumer advocates also issued a statewide warning against bad deals peddled by alternative suppliers. Advocates are concerned that warmer weather and headlines about elevated utility bills will make conditions conducive to rip-offs, as suppliers launch door-to-door marketing campaigns.

CUB said HB 4313, sponsored by Rep. Du Buclet, would build off the Home Energy Affordability and Transparency (HEAT) Act, historic consumer protections against bad energy deals passed in 2019, and help ensure Illinois' electricity and gas markets are working as intended for consumers. The consumer group urged Illinois consumers to contact their legislators in favor of the reform legislation.

While Commonwealth Edison, Ameren Illinois, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas bill customers for delivering electricity/gas over the power lines/pipes they own, under Illinois law those customers can choose another company, an alternative supplier, to supply the actual electricity or gas. (Ameren territory has electric competition, but not gas competition.)

CUB's review of Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) reports has found that since 2015, Illinois consumers have lost an estimated \$2 billion to alternative electricity suppliers. The consumer group has observed similar problems with alternative gas suppliers in the market.

HB 4313 would implement several key protections and market enhancements to help shield customers from bad deals. It would...

- Require that suppliers can't at any time charge a supply rate more than 25 percent higher than the utility supply price.
- Require a customer signature at the time of automatic contract renewal of the offer, if the supplier is increasing the customer's rate.
- Ensure that salespeople of electricity and gas suppliers are not paid on an incentive basis. (This market enhancement protects alternative supplier sales representatives, as well as consumers, by preventing abusive practices by employers.)
- Requiring suppliers to provide more accurate data to the ICC for utility price-comparison purposes.

"Too many Illinois families are being taken advantage of just to keep the lights on and their homes warm," said Rep. Du Buclet. "For years, consumers have been steered into confusing energy contracts that quietly drive up bills month after month, often without clear disclosure or meaningful consent. HB 4313 draws a clear line: no more rip-offs, no more predatory pricing, and no more fine print that hurts working people."

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Rep. Du Buclet continued: “This legislation strengthens consumer protections by requiring transparency, accountability, and enforceable standards so families know exactly what they are signing up for and what they are paying. It puts affordability first and ensures that energy choice never comes at the expense of fairness, trust, or basic consumer rights. This legislation is about protecting families, seniors, and fixed-income households from being exploited simply because they need heat and electricity.”

“Fighting misleading alternative supplier tactics can be like playing a game of ‘whack-a-mole,’” said CUB Executive Director Sarah Moskowitz. “Alternative suppliers are constantly finding new ways to confuse and mislead customers—we’ve talked to far too many customers paying painfully high energy bills because of bad deals. HB 4313 adds key consumer protections that we’ve observed are needed after years of monitoring the market and warning consumers about bad deals and misleading marketing.”

“HB 4313 is a needed step to make Illinois’ energy markets fairer and more transparent, especially after consumers have lost billions to alternative suppliers,” said Philippe Largent, State Director of AARP Illinois. “By requiring clear consent for higher renewal rates and limiting how much more suppliers can charge than utilities, this bill adds real accountability — protections that matter even more for older adults living on fixed incomes who simply can’t afford higher costs. Rep. Du Buclet’s legislation puts consumers first.”

“We thank Representative Kimberly Du Buclet for her leadership on HB 4313 and for standing up for Illinois consumers who have been overcharged for far too long. At a time when families are facing rising costs and federal policy changes, addressing energy affordability is essential,” said Anusha Thotakura, Executive Director at Citizen Action/Illinois. “HB 4313 is basic consumer protection. It puts guardrails in place to stop predatory practices, bring transparency back to energy bills, and ensure that no one pays more than they should to keep their lights on or their home warm.”

CUB urged consumers to visit CUBActionCenter.com to send an email to their legislators in support of HB 4313.

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For more than 40 years the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) has been Illinois’ leading nonprofit utility watchdog group. Created by the Illinois Legislature, CUB opened its doors in 1984 to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers. Since then, CUB has saved consumers more than \$20 billion by helping to block rate hikes and secure refunds. For more information, call CUB’s Consumer Hotline at 1-800-669-5556 or visit CUB’s website, www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org.