



**Illinois PIRG**



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**CONTACTS:**

**Jim Chilsen, CUB,** 312-513-1784, [jchilsen@citizensutilityboard.org](mailto:jchilsen@citizensutilityboard.org)

**Abe Scarr, Illinois PIRG,** 312-983-2789, [abe@illinoispirg.org](mailto:abe@illinoispirg.org)

**ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: CONSUMERS RALLY TO PROTEST PEOPLES GAS' RECORD-HIGH RATES, RECORD PROFITS, AND NEW PUSH FOR \$202 MILLION RATE HIKE**

**CHICAGO** – Fed-up Peoples Gas customers and consumer advocates gathered in Daley Plaza Wednesday to decry a push by Peoples Gas to again capture record profits and raise bills by \$202 million only a few years after burdening customers with the biggest gas rate hike in Illinois history.

“Despite regulators ordering reforms to Peoples Gas’ pipe retirement program last year, we’re getting more of the same from the utility — wasteful spending on unnecessary fossil fuel infrastructure that will drive rates up even higher,” said Illinois PIRG Director Abe Scarr. “That’s why we’re rallying old and new allies to call on the Illinois Commerce Commission to reject this rate hike and enforce its reforms.”

Toting signs such as “People Over Utility Profits” and “Stop the Greed. Fight the Rate Hike,” rally participants slammed Peoples Gas’ latest \$202 million rate-hike request, which would increase bills by about \$10.59 a month, or \$127 a year. They were joined by U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley, who criticized Peoples Gas for high bills driven by the utility’s constant push for record profits.

Peoples Gas bills have been escalating for years, thanks to mismanagement and reckless spending in a pipe-retirement program first launched in 2011. State regulators eventually paused the program for a year, and in 2025 ordered Peoples Gas to cost-effectively finish the work by 2035, with a priority on safety, not a broader system overhaul. But the program has taken a toll on customers, plunging many of them into a heating-affordability crisis.

- Before the latest rate-hike request, Peoples Gas has raised rates by \$499 million, or 98 percent, since 2011—including the state-record \$306 million gas hike in 2023.
- In recent years, about one in five Peoples Gas customers have chronically struggled to afford their heating bills. In February, their mountain of debt totaled nearly \$90 million. Over the years, 30-50 percent of the homes in some neighborhoods were more than 30 days behind on their bills.
- Under regulatory law, Peoples Gas is allowed to earn a return on capital investments—so while customers suffer, the utility profits. Peoples has set earnings records in seven out of the last nine years, and the utility’s out-of-state corporate parent made \$1.6 billion in profits in 2025. In the

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latest rate case, Peoples Gas is asking for an excessive 10.1 percent profit rate for shareholders, translating to \$337 million in annual authorized profits. #

Thanks to utility spending and volatile fuel markets, [gas bills have increased nearly four times the rate of inflation](#), and now customers face a new attack from Peoples Gas. In the face of these grim statistics, rallygoers on Wednesday urged the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) to reject yet another Peoples Gas rate hike.

“We hold events across the city of Chicago and customers ask us all the time why their Peoples Gas bills are so high,” said Ivonne Rychwa, director of Outreach for the Citizens Utility Board (CUB). “Customers deserve affordable heat—they shouldn’t be treated like a tool for corporate profits. We call on the ICC to stand up to Peoples Gas, and reject the utility’s excessive rate hike.”

“Affordability is a top concern for Illinois families who are juggling rising utility bills, SNAP cuts, increasing rents, and more. We cannot afford another Peoples Gas rate hike,” said Michelle Morton, Co-Chair of COFI and POWER-PAC IL’s *Stepping Out of Poverty Campaign*. “When we hear companies like Peoples Gas are posting record profits while we’re forced to make tough choices about paying for heat, prescriptions, groceries, and rent, it’s a reminder of the broken system that prioritizes corporate profits over the needs of everyday people. We demand that the ICC reject this unjust rate hike and stand up for communities.”

“It is unconscionable for Peoples Gas to demand another \$202 million from our state's most vulnerable residents while reporting billion-dollar profits,” said Álvaro Obregón, Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach at AARP Illinois. “Since 2023, a relentless wave of rate hikes has pushed Chicago’s older adults deeper into debt. AARP Illinois and our 1.7 million members will not stand by while Peoples Gas fuels record earnings at the expense of older adults on fixed incomes.”

In May, consumer groups, such as CUB and PIRG, will file testimony opposing Peoples’ rate hike. Also, the ICC is expected to schedule at least one public forum for Peoples Gas customers to express their opposition to the increase. The ICC is expected to issue a final ruling on the rate case in November, but in the meantime speakers urged customers to file a public comment against the rate hike at [ICC.illinois.gov](https://www.icc.illinois.gov) or by calling the ICC at 1-800-524-0795.

*The Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition is made up of more than 200 consumer, business, environmental, environmental justice, health care, faith-based and student organizations. Visit [ilcleanjobs.org](https://ilcleanjobs.org) to learn more.*

*Illinois PIRG is an advocate for the public interest. We speak out for the public and stand up to special interests on problems that affect the public’s health, safety and wellbeing.*

*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 helped save consumers more than \$20 billion by blocking rate hikes and securing refunds. For more information, call CUB’s Consumer Hotline, at 1-800-669-5556, or visit CUB’s website, [www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org](https://www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org).*