



CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD

Fighting for Illinois Consumers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2026

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CUB CONSUMER ALERT: AMEREN ILLINOIS ELECTRICITY SUPPLY PRICE SET TO DROP SOME ON OCT. 1, BUT WATCHDOG WARNS POWER PRICES STILL ELEVATED

CUB calls for legislative reforms—the POWER Act—to protect electric bills from data center-related energy costs, urges Ameren Illinois to work with struggling customers to keep them connected

CHICAGO—After an expensive summer, Ameren Illinois' electricity price will go down a bit on October 1, but the price is still elevated, the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) said in a Consumer Alert issued Wednesday.

The nonprofit consumer group warned Ameren customers about bad alternative supplier deals; urged Ameren to work with customers struggling to afford their bills; and called on the Illinois General Assembly to pass the POWER Act to protect customers from unfair data center-related energy costs.

Ameren has confirmed that its new “price to compare,” October 2026 through May 2027, will be:
10.441¢ per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for the first 800 kWh of usage, and **8.262¢ per kWh** for any usage beyond that.

This supply rate is called the “price to compare” because it’s the rate Ameren customers would compare to any competing alternative electricity supplier offer. This price—which includes the supply price, a transmission charge and a “supply cost adjustment”—is about 8 percent lower than this past summer’s price (11.326 cents per kWh) for the first 800 kWh of usage. However, it’s about 24 percent higher than last October’s price for the first 800 kWh.

“We are concerned for the well-being of Ameren customers as they endure a second year of this electricity price spike,” CUB Communications Director Jim Chilsen said. “Although Ameren is not profiting off this price increase, the utility still has a key role: We call on Ameren to work with customers to keep them connected this year. And we will continue to work for state reforms—the POWER Act—to protect customers from the impact of data center-related energy demand on power prices. We must rein in data centers and make sure Big Tech pays its fair share of energy bills.”

CUB helped pass the Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability (CRGA) Act last year. The CRGA Act expands energy efficiency and brings more battery storage to help bring down prices in the long run. The watchdog also is working to pass the Illinois POWER Act (SB 4016/HB 5513). The bill would implement a number of reforms, including requiring data centers to bring their own new clean power if they want electric service that won’t be curtailed at times of high demand. CUB provided information about the price spike as well as consumer tips:

What’s the cause? The price for reserve power—called “capacity”—has skyrocketed in recent auctions run by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), the grid operator for all or parts of 15 states, including central and southern Illinois. There are a number of reasons for high prices, including an increase in energy demand from new and proposed data centers. Poor MISO policy also has played a role, including a pricing methodology that CUB said unfairly compromises affordability in capacity auctions.

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What part of the bill is impacted? Supply, which is the cost of the actual electricity. Ameren does not profit off high prices—under law the utility is required to pass supply costs onto customers with no markup. (Ameren profits from rate hikes on the delivery side of bills, and they are currently pushing for a \$65 million increase.)

If Ameren doesn't profit off this price spike, who does? Big energy companies that sell electricity to utilities stand to make a windfall.

CUB's online resource, CUBHelpCenter.com, has tips on how to get through this price spike:

- **Warning: Beware of alternative supplier rip-offs.** Alternative electricity suppliers are impacted by the same market conditions that are causing utility prices to increase, so be careful about getting lured into bad deals. Since 2015, Illinois consumers have lost [about \\$2.3 billion to alternative power suppliers](#). It's likely, even in this expensive market, that your utility is your best bet for supply. If your community has negotiated a power deal with a supplier, don't assume the price is lower than the utility rate. In fact, [a recent CUB analysis](#) found that most "municipal aggregation" deals were money-losers in Ameren territory. Confirm the price and how it compares with the utility and find out when the offer expires.
- **Practice energy efficiency.** Simple actions like weatherizing windows and doors can help soften the blow of this price spike.
- **Stay in contact with your utility.** Consumers who are struggling should contact their utility to inquire about energy assistance, payment plans to pay off debt, and energy efficiency programs. CUB called for Ameren to offer good payment plans to help more utility customers pay off their debt and stay connected.
- **See if you qualify for energy assistance.** On Thursday, Oct. 1, some income-eligible households can apply for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and on Nov. 1, all income-eligible households can apply. For more information on eligibility, visit www.helpillinoisfamilies.com, call the Help Illinois Families Assistance Line at 1-833-711-0374, or read [this CUB article on LIHEAP](#).
- **Consider a community solar deal to help ease costs.** Community solar offers currently guarantee savings compared to the utility's supply price. Be a careful shopper: Get more information at CUB's website, SolarInTheCommunity.com.
- **If you're interested in installing solar panels, consider the next steps.** Learn more about [rooftop solar](#). Also, [CUB has information](#) about income-qualified solar programs.

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.

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