

UTILITY BILLS ARE RISING

2025 REVIEW

JANUARY 2026

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Photo By: Dustin Chambers

Executive Summary

Over the course of 2025, utility bills became a defining national issue. In the spring, utility affordability was largely an energy story. By the summer, it became an economic story. Come fall, utility bills grew into a political issue. Electricity is the new eggs.

According to new PowerLines analysis, in 2025, electric and gas utilities requested nearly \$31 billion in rate increases, more than double the \$15 billion in rate increases requested by utilities in 2024. These rate increases will affect 81 million Americans, contributing to rising financial anxiety for American consumers at a time when cost-of-living concerns are reaching a boiling point.



PowerLines' polling reveals the reality of consumers' experience with rising utility bills.



feel powerless over their utility bills



are concerned about rising utility bills

These costs are straining family budgets across the country, contributing to American consumers' broader economic concerns. Since 2021, electricity prices have increased by nearly 40 percent, with residential retail electricity prices increasing by 7 percent and piped gas prices increasing by 11 percent in 2025 alone. Increases in electricity and gas prices are not only outpacing inflation, but are now the fastest drivers of inflation, surpassing other expenses including groceries, gasoline, vehicles, and medicine. These shifts are happening against the backdrop of an unprecedented growth in electricity demand, driven largely by data centers and manufacturing, creating concerns that utility bills will only continue to rise.

Americans are feeling the impact of rising utility bills and are frustrated. In 2025, [PowerLines polling](#) conducted with Ipsos found that nearly 3 in 4 Americans were concerned that their utility bills would increase in 2025. More than 3 in 5 respondents said rising bills contributed to financial stress. And 4 in 5 said they felt powerless over these costs. In 2025, utility customer satisfaction reached the lowest point ever recorded.

This report seeks to document the state of utility affordability in 2025. Included are PowerLines' tabulation and analysis of utilities' proposed rate increases, case studies of specific utility rate increase requests, consumer stories that reveal the human impact of rising costs, a review of official data on electricity price trends, and a list of actions that consumers can take in response.

01

Overview of Utility Bill Trends

Utility bills are rising. According to the Federal Reserve, since 2021, residential retail electricity prices have increased by approximately 40 percent, with prices increasing by 7 percent in 2025 alone.¹ Meanwhile, residential retail gas prices have increased by approximately 40 percent since 2019.²

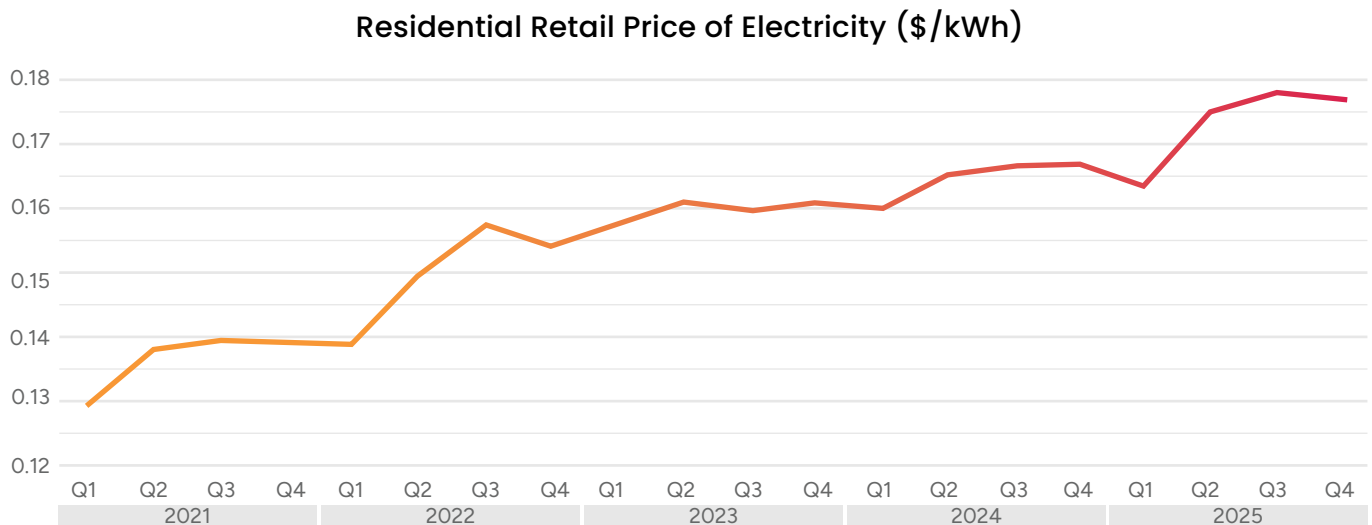


Figure 1. Trends in residential electricity costs: 2021-2025
(Source: [U.S. Energy Information Administration](https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/))

¹ fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CUSR0000SEHF01

² www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/

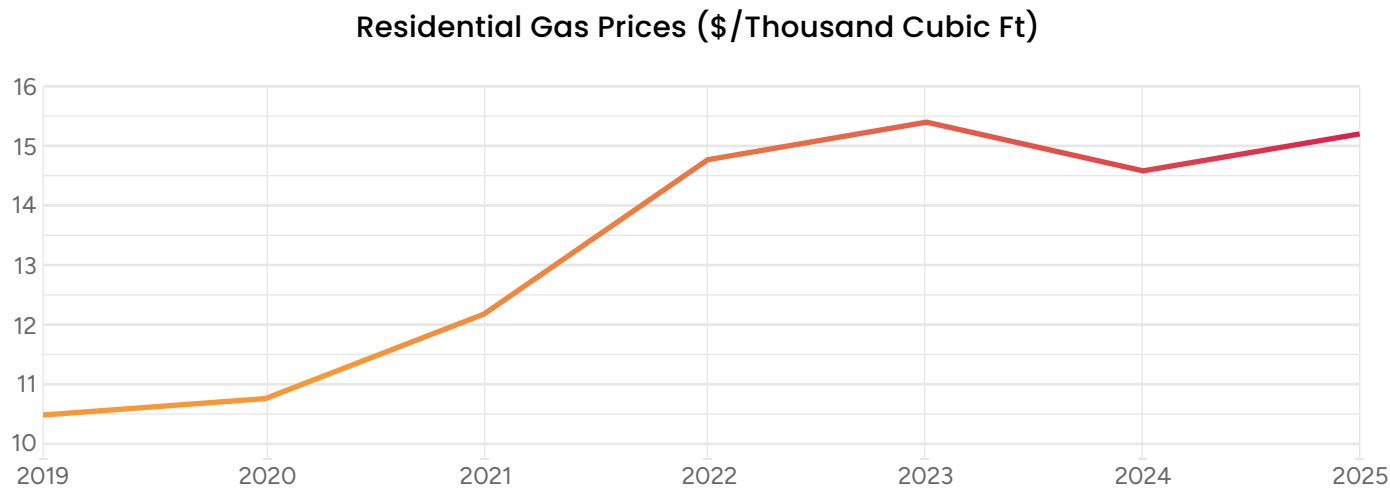


Figure 2. Trends in residential gas prices: 2019-2025
(Source: [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#))

Electricity and gas prices are not just outpacing inflation, but are now the fastest drivers of inflation. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that, between December 2024 and December 2025, residential electricity prices have increased 7 percent while gas prices have risen nearly 11 percent, far outpacing the overall rate of inflation of 3 percent during this time period.³

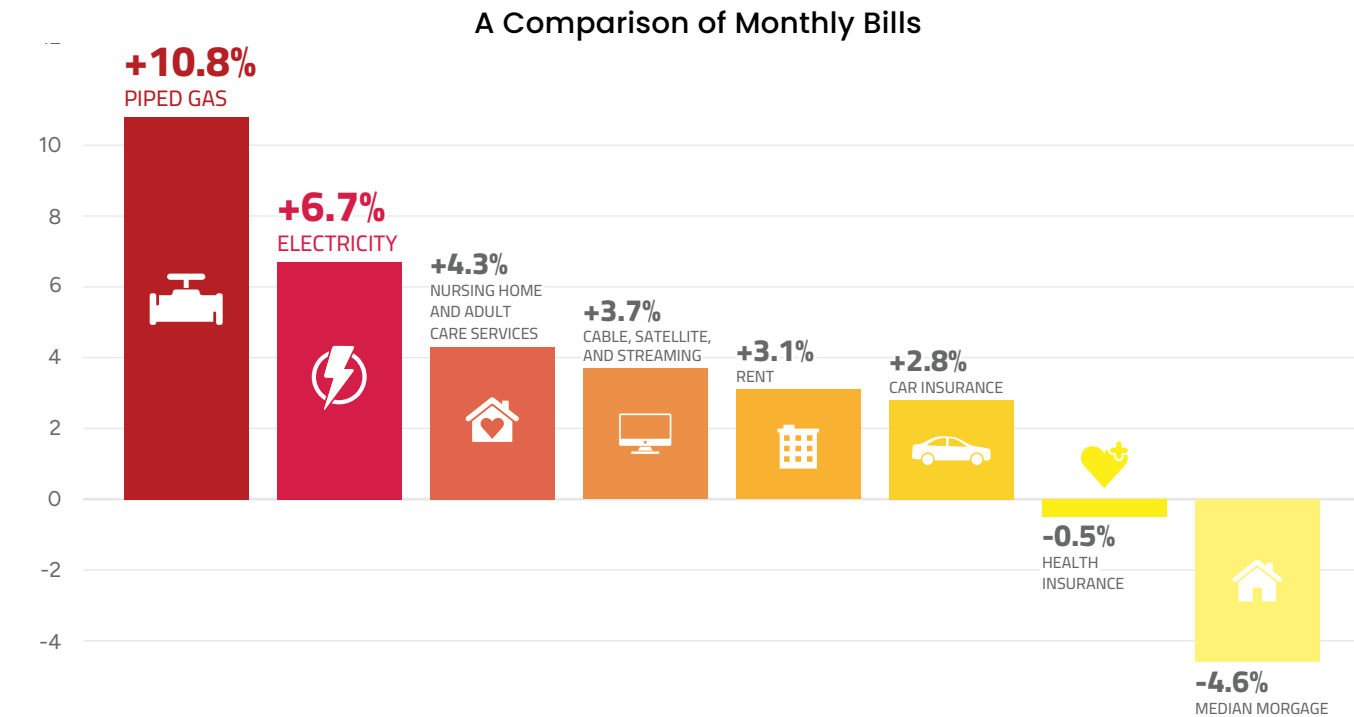


Figure 3. Comparison of increases in monthly bills between December 2024 and December 2025
(Sources: [MBA](#); [Consumer Price Index](#))

³ www.bls.gov/cpi/

UTILITY RATES VS UTILITY BILLS

Utility rates (how much a customer pays for each kilowatt of electricity or each therm of natural gas used) are not synonymous with utility bills. Utility rates represent per-unit electricity costs, while utility bills represent the total electricity costs that consumers pay.

Additionally, there are different types of utility rates and fees that comprise a customer's total utility bill. In general, utilities recover the cost of service through rates. Every state has its own approach to determining what costs are recovered through the rate structure and what the amount of that rate is. The bill may also include, in addition to rate charges, "riders" (e.g., the cost of rebuilding after a storm or a state economic development project) and/or "pass-through charges" (e.g., costs paid by the utility and passed onto the consumer without any mark-up, such as the cost of fuel).



Photo By: Ariana vander Akker

While utility bills may seem like a relatively small expense, energy unaffordability impacts a significant number of Americans. An estimated 80 million Americans, or nearly 1 in 3 people, are struggling to pay their utility bills, needing to forgo basic expenses like medicine, food, and child care simply to afford their utilities.⁴ Additionally, over 50 million Americans reported that they kept their homes at unsafe or unhealthy temperatures simply to manage their utility bill payments. In extreme situations, utilities have shut off power for customers that have fallen behind on their utility bills, leaving them in dangerous conditions. These shutoffs impact more than 3 million Americans each year,

posing significant health and safety risks for already vulnerable households.⁵

More than 1 in 5 American households experience energy poverty, defined as paying more than 6 percent of income on energy bills. Nearly 28 million American households today cross this threshold, based on data from the U.S. Department of Energy Low-Income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) Tool.⁶ The map on the following page indicates the distribution of households experiencing energy poverty, with particular concentrations of impacted households in Texas, New York, California, Florida, and Pennsylvania.

⁴ www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html

⁵ dashboard.utilitydisconnections.org/

⁶ www.energy.gov/scep/slsc/lead-tool

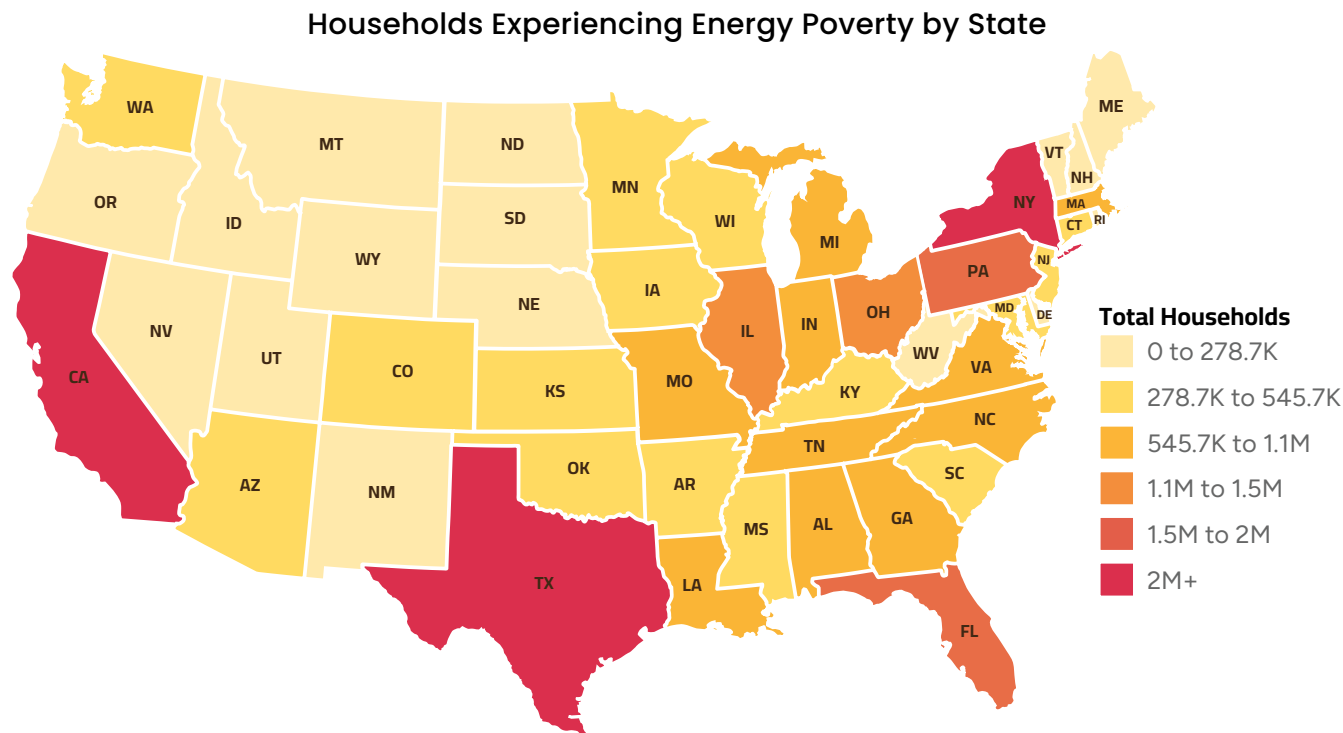
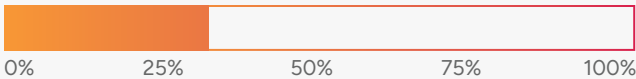


Figure 4. Distribution of U.S. households experiencing energy poverty: 2025
(Source: [U.S. Department of Energy Low-Income Energy Affordability Data \[LEAD\] Tool](#))

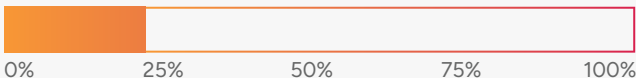
On average, U.S. consumers spent \$1,833 on electricity bills in 2024, more than other major expenditures like telephone services and prescription drugs.⁷ Nationwide, energy bills are becoming a larger portion of household expenditures. Average monthly utility bills rose nearly \$30 from the second quarter of 2024 through the second quarter of 2025 and about \$15 in the first half of 2025 alone.⁸ By the end of 2025, average monthly electric bills topped \$200.⁹

⁷ www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm#topline
⁸ www.cbsnews.com/news/economy-2026-outlook-affordability-rates-jobs-markets/
⁹ www.jdpower.com/business/press-releases/2025-us-electric-utility-residential-customer-satisfaction-study

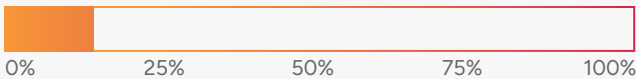
Report any household energy insecurity



Reduce or forgo basic necessities to pay energy bill



Receive disconnect notice



Keep home at unhealthy or unsafe temperature

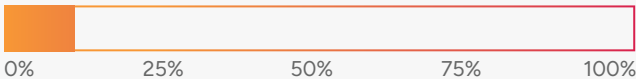


Figure 5. Utility affordability challenges for American households

(Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey](#))

Americans are concerned about these costs. Polling conducted by PowerLines in partnership with Ipsos¹⁰ in 2025 finds that:

- ◆ **Nearly 2 in 3 (64 percent) Americans** whose household pays a monthly electric and gas utility bill say those bills have increased compared to a year ago.
- ◆ **Nearly 2 in 3 (63 percent) billpayers** indicate that their electric and gas utility bills are adding to their financial stress.
- ◆ **Nearly half (48 percent) of all Americans** say that rising electric and gas utility bills for consumers like them is a bad sign for the economy.
- ◆ **3 in 5 (60 percent) Americans** say they are not familiar with the state or local regulatory body that determines their utility bills.

The impact of rising electricity prices extends beyond residential customers. Commercial and industrial electricity prices have risen about 5 percent in the past year.¹¹ Commercial customers include mostly small and mid-sized businesses, service providers, and government facilities.¹² Industrial customers are involved with processing, producing, and manufacturing, including factories, mines, agriculture, and construction. Higher prices on commercial and industrial electric consumption get passed onto consumers, driving up prices for other goods and services.

Looking ahead to 2026, utility bill increases are not expected to slow down, with EIA projecting electricity prices to increase nearly 4 percent.¹³ This estimate beats the Federal Reserve's expected inflation rate of 2.4 percent in 2026.¹⁴ Some utilities have already signaled their rates will increase in 2026, raising concerns of another difficult year for utility consumers.

10 www.ipsos.com/en-us/most-americans-report-higher-electricity-gas-bills-compared-year-ago

11 www.eia.gov/electricity/monthly/epm_table_grapher.php?t=table_5_03

12 www.epa.gov/energy/electricity-customers

13 www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/report/elec_coal_renew.php

14 www.cbsnews.com/news/economy-2026-outlook-affordability-rates-jobs-markets/



Photo By: Dustin Chambers

U.S. wholesale and retail electricity prices

Two-thirds of all U.S. electricity customers are served by utilities that participate in competitive wholesale electricity markets run by regional grid operators known as regional transmission organizations (RTOs) or independent system operators (ISOs). Federal regulators oversee regional wholesale electricity markets; state regulators allocate the cost of wholesale power among residential, commercial, and industrial customers.

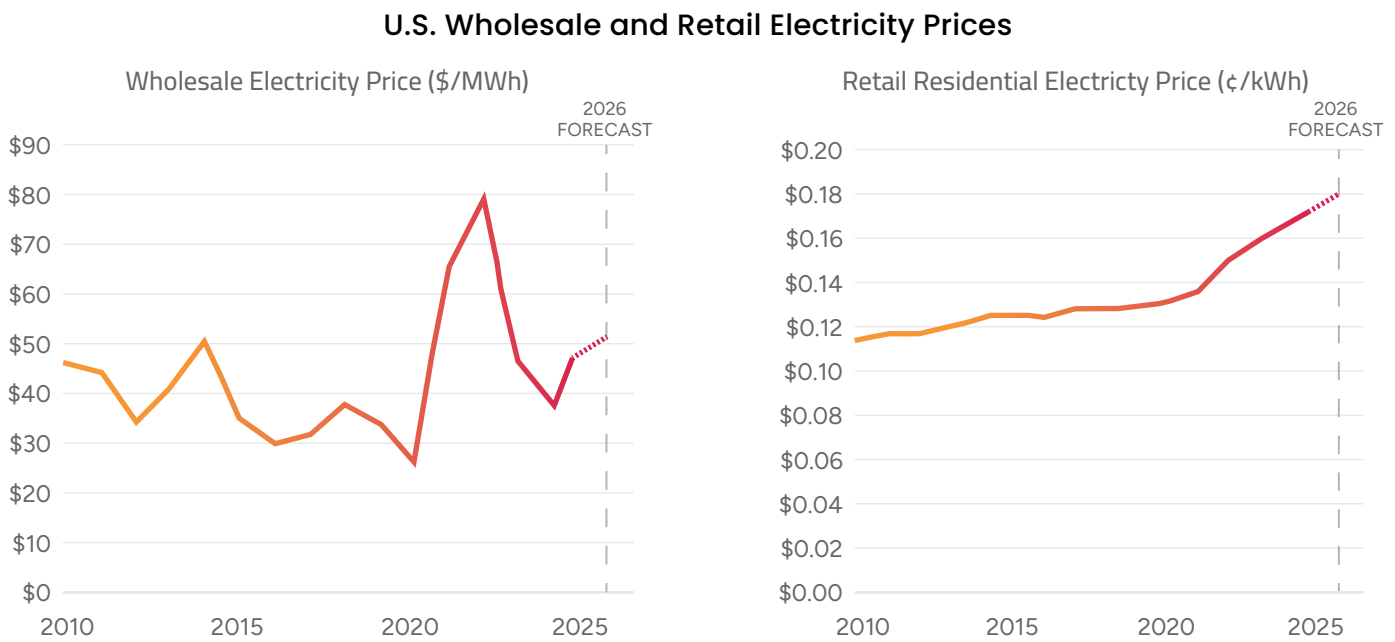


Figure 6. Trends in U.S. wholesale and retail electricity costs: 2010-2026
(Source: [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#))

Utility Bills in the News

As utility bills grew throughout the year, the media took notice, elevating the issue from an energy story to a political discussion.

The New York Times

'The New Price of Eggs.' The Political Shocks of Data Centers and Electric Bills

December 1, 2025

Why the Price of Electricity is Spiking Around the Country

October 30, 2025

CBS News

Soaring electricity bills are squeezing households as utilities seek higher rates

October 27, 2025

The Wall Street Journal

Be Prepared to Keep Paying More for Electricity

December 29, 2025

The Daily Mail

Electricity companies plot massive 142% bill hike despite increasing risk of blackouts

July 13, 2025

FINANCIAL TIMES

US utilities plot big rise in electricity rates as data centre demand booms

July 10, 2025

Bloomberg

Electric Bills in US Set to Rise as Utility Requests for Rate Hikes Double

July 10, 2025

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Voters' anger at high electricity bills and data centers looms over 2026 midterms

November 8, 2025

TIME

The Backlash to High Electric Bills Could Transform U.S. Politics

August 27, 2025

NPR

Electricity prices are soaring. What's going on?

August 20, 2025

FORTUNE

Your electric bill has replaced the price at the pump as the hot-button, political bellwether

July 10, 2025

02

Review of 2025 Utility Rate Increase Requests

In 2025, investor-owned utilities serving roughly 81 million Americans requested rate increases that will drive up household energy costs for consumers.¹⁵ **Collectively, these electric and gas utilities requested rate increases totaling \$31 billion.** This figure is more than double the \$15 billion in rate increase requests that utilities made in 2024. PowerLines conducted an analysis of rate requests over the past year, collecting data from public databases, news, press releases, and utility regulatory filings.



Photo By: Dustin Chambers

¹⁵ Previous PowerLines reports tracked both utility increase requests and approvals; for this 2025 year-end analysis, PowerLines is tabulating only utility rate increase requests. Reports for [Q1](#), [Q2](#), and [Q3](#) 2025 are available on the PowerLines website.

Electric and Gas Utility Rate Requests Since 2000 (Billion \$)

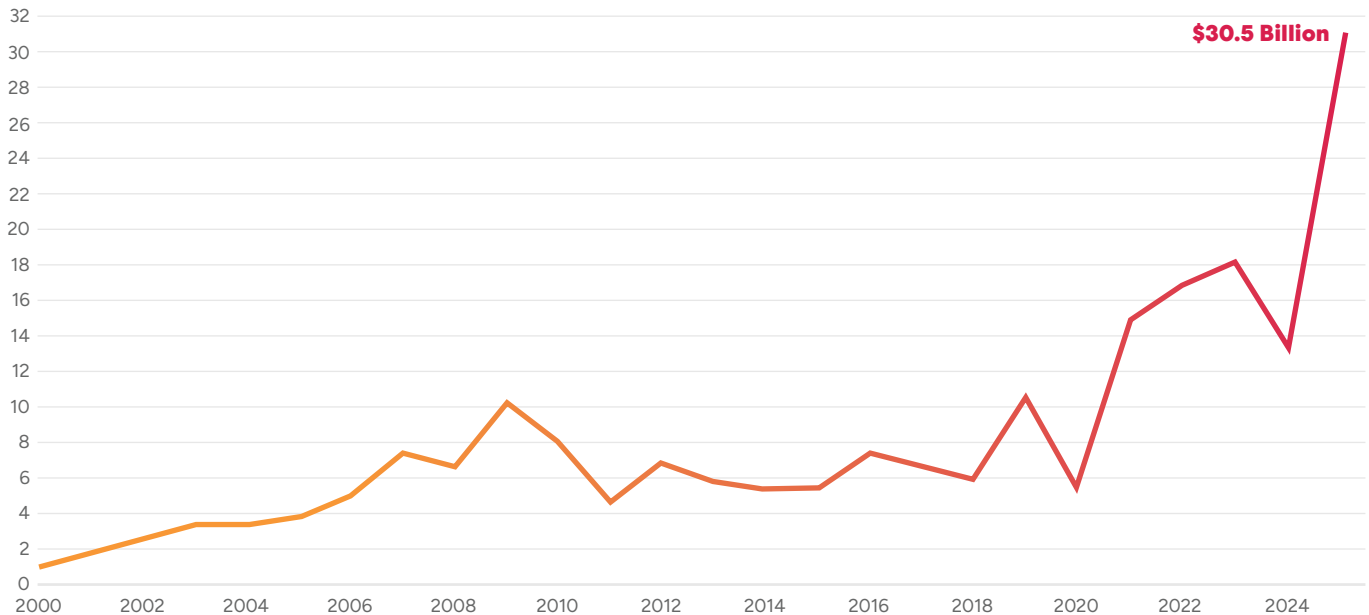


Figure 7. Requested rate increases from electric and gas utilities
(Sources: [Regulatory Research Associates](#); PowerLines)

CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

"It's hard to plan for or predict these rates in advance. It feels like there's nothing we can do about it—we can try to make our buildings as energy efficient as we can...but even that takes money. For us, it's probably a seven year payoff. So it's not like that's really going to save much in the short term. It feels like we really are getting limited, and that leaves the only other options are, can you cut staffing? Can you cut other costs? But that's really hard to do too. You know, that's people's jobs."

– Karin Gudal, AES Ohio customer and owner of Gem City Catfe in Dayton, Ohio (PowerLines interview)



Photo By: Ryan Christopher Jones

03

Regional Impacts and Trends in 2025

Skyrocketing utility bills have clearly become a national issue. In 2025, over 81 million consumers saw their utility company request a combined \$31 billion in increases. Many of these increases have yet to hit consumers' pocketbooks.

2025 Rate Increase Requests Affect 81 Million Customers

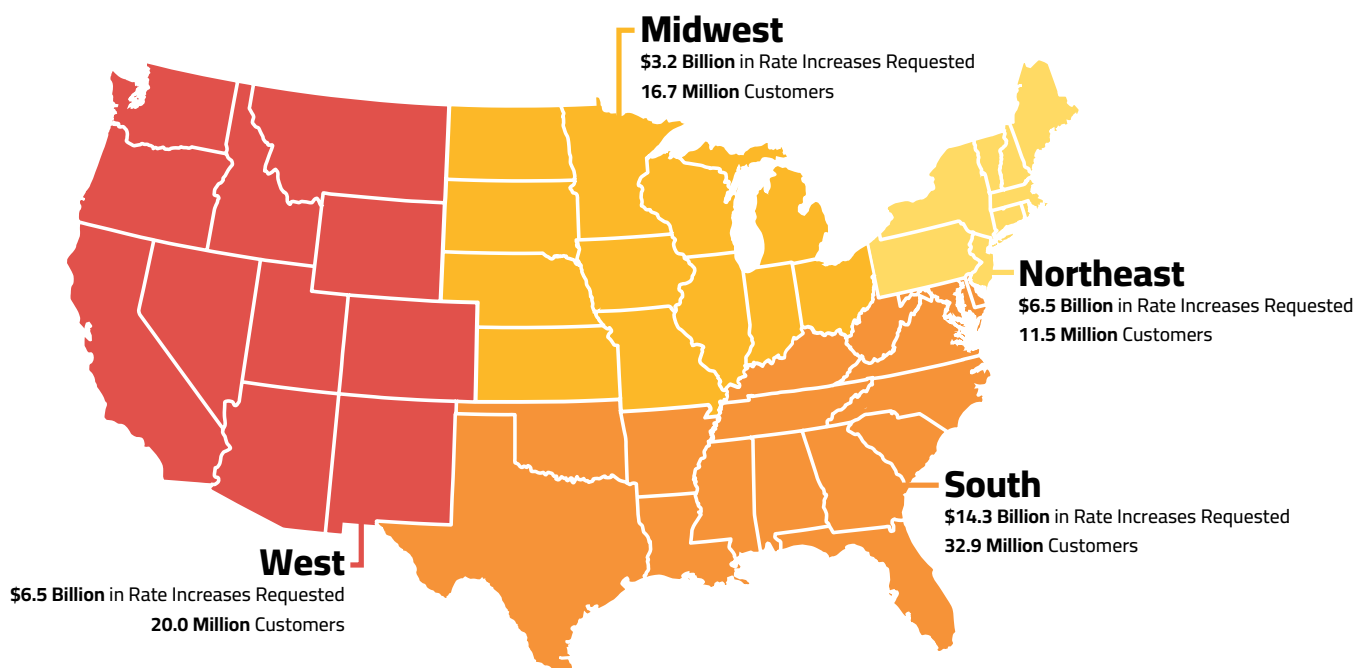
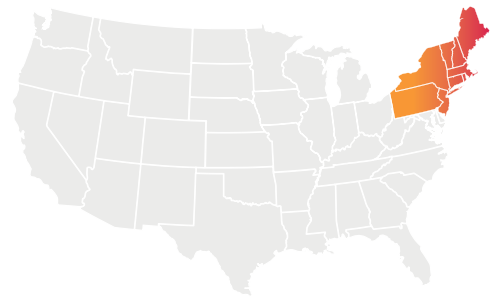


Figure 8. Requested rate increases and number of customers impacted in 2025
(Source: Individual sources are in [Appendix A](#) and the appendices of PowerLines' [Q1](#), [Q2](#), and [Q3](#) reports.)

The Northeast



Electricity customers in the Northeast are facing almost \$7 billion in rate requests this year. Rate hikes in the region will impact more than 11 million customers if approved.

- **Maine** advocates pushed back against an increase from their utility companies, influencing the dismissal by state regulators of a request to increase rates by \$0.4 billion, a motion that reflects consumer concern over these economic pressures. Fuel costs and high prices at the regional grid's capacity auction were major drivers of higher bills in the Northeast in 2025 and will likely continue to squeeze household budgets in 2026.¹⁶
- **Baltimore Gas & Electric (BGE/Exelon)** natural gas rates have more than tripled since 2010, increasing from 26 cents/therm to 85 cents/therm in 2024, exceeding the rate of inflation by a factor of nearly three. Baltimore has the oldest gas system in the country.¹⁷ The utility is replacing gas pipes in addition to electric distribution components. The Office of People's Council has raised concerns about the cost recovery and allocation.



Photo By: Ariana vander Akker

CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

"I've had a lot of people in my district approach me talking about affordability, that's been a major issue. I have a lot of people in my district who are really vulnerable. [I] have a lot of retired people and people on disability who are on that fixed income, where even a small fluctuation in their electricity bill is really impactful for them. If it's \$35 more a month, you know, that's an extremely big deal."

– *Kilton Webb, Central Maine Power customer, representative in the Maine House of Representatives and member of IBEW, Local 567 (PowerLines interview)*

¹⁶ www.reuters.com/business/energy/prices-biggest-us-power-grid-auction-hit-new-record-supply-crunch-2025-12-17/

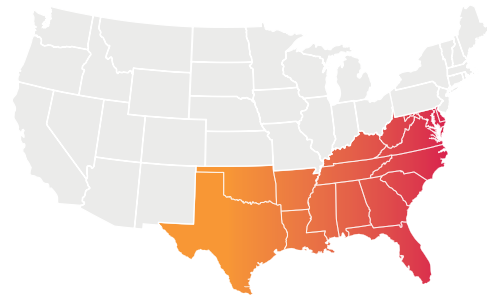
¹⁷ www.aga.org/humble-beginnings-the-early-history-of-the-natural-gas-system/#:~:text=American%20business%20interests%20were%20paying,their%20streets%20with%20natural%20gas

- **PJM**, which supplies wholesale power and transmission services to utilities serving 67 million customers across the mid-Atlantic region, is struggling to get new resources online to meet expected increases in demand. In 2024, PJM's market mechanism for ensuring adequate future power supply, an auction for future electricity capacity resources, saw a roughly nine-fold price increase in auction prices.¹⁸ In 2025, these costs rose further. PJM's challenges in meeting rising demand send a clear warning to the rest of the country: if regional grid operators and their stakeholders do not get planning, investment, and governance right, consumers nationwide could experience similar spikes in electricity costs.

18 www.integrityenergy.com/resources/about-us/news-media/pjm-announces-expensive-energy-changes-in-2025/



The South



Nearly 33 million Southern electricity customers will feel the impact of utility rate increase requests, the highest number of any region. Requests in 2025 totaled more than \$14 billion in the South, headlined by Florida Power & Light's historic \$9 billion rate increase request. In Georgia, voters pushed back in the November elections that saw two incumbent utility regulators unseated due to public frustration over spikes in utility bills. Storm recovery from recent hurricanes drove increases across the region along with rising capital expenditures for new infrastructure.

- **Florida Power and Light** proposed a \$9 billion rate hike, the highest rate increase request submitted by any utility. The utility pointed to population growth, grid hardening for severe storms, and deployment of smart technology to enable automatic power restoration in justifying the proposal. The state's consumer advocate sought to limit the increase to \$5 billion.
- **Duke Energy Florida** submitted a request for \$1.1 billion in storm recovery costs following Hurricane Helene. **Tampa Electric (TECO)** submitted a request for \$464 million. Both charges were approved in 2025.
- **Entergy Louisiana** customers are still paying for at least six storms (Isaac, Laura, Delta, Zeta, Winter Storm Uri, Ida, and possibly will pay more for Francine). Isaac hit the territory in 2012; customers will continue paying storm recovery, approximately \$20 per month for a home using 1,500 kilowatt-hours of electricity, through 2026.
- **Georgia Power**, the major investor-owned utility in Georgia, revised its near-term electricity load forecasts dramatically upward due to projected demand from data centers. Georgia Power, a subsidiary of Southern Company, is projecting it will need an additional 9,900 megawatts in new capacity to meet future demand and replace expiring contracts. The estimated cost for these additions is \$15 billion. Georgia Power predicts the incremental revenue from large loads will put downward pressure on rates, although the impact to consumers' utility bills will depend on a variety of uncertain factors.



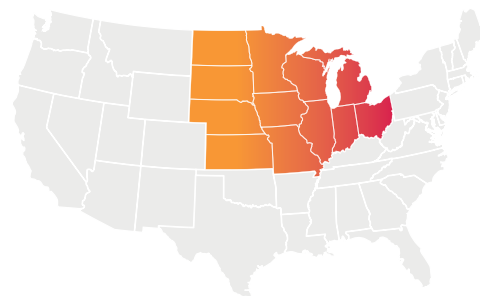
- **Entergy Arkansas**, the second-largest subsidiary of Fortune 500 energy giant Entergy, requested a rate increase of \$92.3 million annually, just weeks after sister company Entergy Louisiana received approval for three gas plants to power a data center. Entergy Arkansas submitted its request in partnership with Google for a data center in West Memphis. Initial reports say that Google will pay for energy.¹⁹ Entergy Arkansas's rate increases come in the wake of new state legislation (SB307) that allows Arkansas utilities to receive expedited authorization for financing "strategic investments."²⁰ The law, drafted by the utility's former CEO, allows utilities to recover costs from infrastructure investments before those projects are completed, even if those projects are ultimately abandoned. Consumers' only protection is a provision setting a ceiling for electric rates, which must stay ten percent below the national average.²¹ The 2025 increase from 9.2 cents per kilowatt hour to 11.6 cents per kilowatt hour represents a nearly 25 percent increase.

¹⁹ www.nwaonline.com/news/2025/sep/05/google-behind-10b-data-center-in-west-memphis/?business-arkansas

²⁰ www.arkansasonline.com/news/2025/jul/28/swepco-seeking-30-per-month-rate-increase

²¹ arktimes.com/arkansas-blog/2025/03/18/house-passes-bill-to-give-windfall-to-utilities-raise-consumer-rates

The Midwest



Utilities serving more than 16 million Midwesterners requested more than \$3 billion in 2025. The two largest investor-owned utilities in Michigan, **DTE** and **Consumers Energy**, requested rate increases that state regulators pared down significantly with help from the state attorney general. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is being asked to decide whether Michigan customers or all customers served by the Midwest grid operator known as MISO should pay the new added cost of a federal order to keep open a Michigan coal plant.

- **Midcontinent System Operator (MISO)** saw capacity prices for the region spike in Summer 2025, jumping from \$30/MW-day to \$666.50/MW-day across the RTO's footprint, a 22-fold increase, driven in part by declining surplus capacity.
- **AES Indiana**, the investor-owned utility serving Indianapolis, is seeking a two-part rate increase that could total about 13.5 percent, or \$21 a month, for a typical residential customer by 2027, on top of a 6 percent increase set to take effect next year.²² AES Indiana slashed its \$193-million base rate increase request by more than half—to \$91 million—in a settlement agreement filed with state regulators.²³ After three decades of negligible load growth, Indiana's low power costs and proximity to Chicago made the region attractive to data center developers.

CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

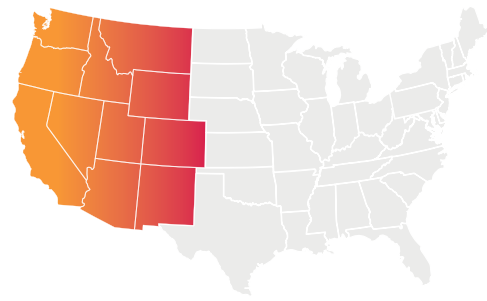
"My husband David has supported us working in tech in Chicago for some years now, and since having our son 3.5 years ago he has been laid off a few times and we have been living paycheck to paycheck mostly. **We are finally catching up at this point but held back by the sudden increase in our bills and we feel helpless to move forward and achieve financial independence and freedom.** I find myself feeling stressed about lights being on or having the heat at a comfortable level and I hate that added tension in my family. It has made me feel pressure to go back to work instead of waiting to have another child, and that feels huge."

– Ashley Beale, 33-year-old ComEd customer living in Chicago, Illinois (PowerLines interview)

²² www.aesindiana.com/press-release/aes-indiana-seeks-rate-review-address-rising-operational-costs-and-future-investments

²³ indianacapitalchronicle.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/46258_AESIN_Joint-Motion-for-Leave-to-File-Settlement-Agreement_101525.pdf

The West



In the West, utilities requested rate hikes that will impact more than 20 million customers and amount to nearly \$7 billion. Both of Arizona's largest investor-owned utilities, **Arizona Public Service** and **Tucson Electric Power**, requested rate increases, totaling \$0.6 and \$0.2 billion, respectively. To the north, Utah ratepayers are facing a wildfire fund proposal that would increase rates by more than \$1 billion over the next ten years. Wildfire funds are a common tool used by western utilities to collect funds in advance to rebuild in the wake of catastrophic wildfires.²⁴

- **Rocky Mountain Power (RMP)** sought a 30 percent rate increase (\$667 million) in its Utah service territory, which included an increase (4.48 percent) for a dedicated "fire fund" to cover wildfire-related costs, moving towards self-insurance instead of solely relying on commercial insurance after significant wildfire damages and increased insurance premiums. A settlement included liability protections.

RMP cited fuel costs as the largest driver behind the increase request. In a separate action, the Utah Public Service Commission allowed Rocky Mountain Power to charge an additional 10 percent to customers to fund an Energy Balancing Account (EBA) to cover the rising cost of coal and gas. Approval for recovering increased costs through the EBA enabled RMP to lower its requested rate increase to 18 percent. The net effect is a 15 percent increase in the price of electricity for Utahns.



Photo By: Ryan Christopher Jones

²⁴ law.stanford.edu/2025/08/29/the-laws-that-hold-utilities-liable-for-wild-fires-are-changing/

04

The New Politics of Electricity

On Tuesday, November 4, 2025, utility bills featured prominently in statewide elections in Virginia, New Jersey, and Georgia—marking the new era of politics: a new politics of electricity. National media coverage highlighted the salience of utility affordability in activating and swaying voters.^{25,26} The prominence of this issue will continue to be a political factor into 2026 with midterm elections across the country as utility bills are expected to continue to rise, outpacing inflation, and as more elected officials hear constituent concerns.

A number of states will elect governors, Congressional representatives, state legislators, and utility regulators next year with utility affordability remaining as a top concern for voters. Nationwide, voters cited affordability as the most important factor behind their vote.²⁷ In New Jersey, about 6 in 10 voters in the hotly contested gubernatorial race reported that electric bills were “a major problem” for them.²⁸

As electric bills continue to tick upwards, the issue will grow as an issue for voters.

25 www.nytimes.com/2025/11/30/us/politics/data-centers-electric-bills-georgia.html

26 apnews.com/article/2026-election-utility-bills-ai-data-centers-13703f61d1397612fd067e69b9093116

27 apnews.com/article/2026-election-utility-bills-ai-data-centers-13703f61d1397612fd067e69b9093116

28 abcnews.go.com/Politics/economy-top-mind-voters-races-preliminary-abc-news/story?id=127141841

Georgia

In November 2025, Georgia resoundingly voted against the two incumbents for the state's Public Service Commission (PSC), resulting in an unprecedented 26-point margin.²⁹ These results represented a backlash against rising utility bills in the state, as incumbent commissioners had voted to increase rates six times over the last two years, hiking bills about \$500 per year for the average household.³⁰ On the back of these increases, Georgia Power requested approval for almost 10,000 megawatts of new energy generation resources the utility claims is vital to meeting rising demand from data centers.³¹ The proposal is estimated to cost \$15 billion, but the actual total may be higher as Georgia Power's estimates were not made public.³² Massive new infrastructure proposals threatening to raise consumers' bills after years of rate increases and fears over unchecked data center buildout activated Georgians to unseat incumbent commissioners for the first time in nearly two decades.³³



Photo By: Ariana vander Akker

29 results.sos.ga.gov/results/public/Georgia/elections/MunicipalGeneralSpecialElectionPSC11042025

30 georgiarecorder.com/2025/11/04/georgia-utility-rates-seen-as-potential-bellwether-for-2026-midterms/

31 www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/georgia-power-requests-certification-of-approximately-9-900-mw-of-new-resources-from-the-georgia-public-service-commission-302518734.html

32 apnews.com/article/georgia-power-data-centers-d15f7793c6b79444908ca8a7b68f7ef1

33 www.nytimes.com/2025/11/30/us/politics/data-centers-electric-bills-georgia.html



Photo By: Dustin Chambers

CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

"Utilities should actually take seriously the demands of consumers, and not just look at consumers as just the people who are worrying about prices, but people who have interests and values and care about how energy is produced in their community. **These utilities should see their role as a public service, not as the operations of meeting the demands of a hedge fund manager...** I sat on a school board and we had a conversation about solar in school. When you realize that you can save over a million dollars in power funds over a 10 year period by making a shift to solar, all of a sudden, the pressure on finances changes dramatically...I wish that we had transparency in the way our energy is produced, and honesty in the way that our energy is produced."

– *Drew Reynolds, a Georgia Power customer living in Tucker, Georgia, and member of St. Thomas More Catholic Church (PowerLines interview)*

Virginia

In 2025 alone, investor-owned utilities requested almost \$1.6 billion in rate increases. Spikes in the regional grid operator PJM capacity auctions for wholesale power also drove up the bills of Virginia customers. Virginia's "Data Center Alley" is ground zero for the impact of the AI race on the electric system. Virginia holds about 13 percent of the global data center capacity and residents fear that continued data center buildout will drive their bills higher.^{34,35} Virginians raised concerns about electric bills with candidates. As a candidate, Governor Abigail Spanberger promised to "make data centers pay their fair share,"³⁶ a marked contrast to outgoing governor Glenn Youngkin who heralded data centers as "innovation at work."³⁷



Photo By: Ariana vander Akker

- 34 www.vpm.org/elections/2025-10-28/election-2025-data-centers-earle-sears-spanberger-dominion-clean-virginia
- 35 www.nytimes.com/2025/11/30/us/politics/data-centers-electric-bills-georgia.html
- 36 www.utilitydive.com/news/spanberger-hashmi-virginia-energy-bills-affordability-dominion-data-centers/807156/
- 37 www.vpm.org/elections/2025-10-28/election-2025-data-centers-earle-sears-spanberger-dominion-clean-virginia

New Jersey

Utility bills were top of mind for voters in the Garden State in 2025. Like Virginians, New Jersey customers saw their bills soar. Some analyses project 30-60 percent increases in bills over the next five years.³⁸ Former governor Phil Murphy took fire from opponents who blamed his administration for rising electric bills in the state.³⁹ Electricity costs and energy affordability dominated campaign coverage as voters headed to the polls.⁴⁰ Both gubernatorial candidates took bold stances on tackling increases, proposing aggressive action to curtail ballooning electric bills. Governor Mikie Sherrill decisively defeated her opponent Jack Ciattarelli in the November contest and is already taking action to fulfill her campaign promises of immediate action upon inauguration.⁴¹

- 38 newjerseymonitor.com/2025/10/15/nj-governor-phil-murphy-energy-policy/
- 39 www.npr.org/2025/11/02/nx-s1-5591133/new-jersey-and-virginias-races-will-be-powered-by-the-soaring-cost-of-electricity
- 40 www.npr.org/2025/11/02/nx-s1-5591133/new-jersey-and-virginias-races-will-be-powered-by-the-soaring-cost-of-electricity
- 41 newjerseymonitor.com/2026/01/20/governor-sherrill-order-electricity/



The National Picture

Since Election Day, politicians have taken actions to address voters' anxieties about rising electric prices. In Virginia, Governor Spanberger promised to appoint a cabinet-level energy czar, indicating that energy affordability is a top priority for her administration.⁴²

In December, President Trump and Chief of Staff Susie Wiles directed administration officials to make energy affordability a major priority heading into the midterms.⁴³

Utility bills are expected to be voters' top concern in the 2026 midterm elections. Nine states will be holding elections for public service commission positions: Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota. In several competitive Congressional and gubernatorial races, utility costs are expected to feature prominently where utility bills have skyrocketed, such as Arizona, Georgia, Maine, Michigan, and Ohio.

⁴² richmond.com/news/state-regional/government-politics/article_47f9b0c6-6160-40a6-be29-60215a3b4c13.html

⁴³ www.politico.com/news/2026/01/07/inside-the-white-house-obsession-with-reducing-energy-prices-00714829

05

Key Drivers of Rising Utility Bills

While each rate case is unique and specific to the utility's circumstances, analysis suggests four key factors behind skyrocketing utility bills:

1. Replacing Aging Infrastructure
2. Costs Associated with Extreme Weather Events
3. Volatile Fuel Costs
4. Increased Demand for Electricity*

**In some specific circumstances.*

- **Aging infrastructure.** The nation's electric systems, both the bulk power grid and the distribution systems, are aging and rapidly reaching the end of their useful lives. Investor-owned utilities have spent a significant amount of capital to replace or rebuild aging grid infrastructure. As of 2023, spending on the grid was the majority of utility capital expenditures.
- **Extreme weather events.** Recovery from severe storms and other natural disasters, in addition to investments in resilience and reliability to mitigate the damage from future storms, has rapidly driven up costs for utilities to serve customers. Many utility



Photo By: Dustin Chambers

companies are confronting the costs of rebuilding systems after natural disasters. Each state handles the cost of disaster recovery differently: some states appropriate funding to cover the costs, while in other states those costs are covered by utility customers through rates.

- **Volatile fuel costs.** Costs for fuels such as natural gas and coal comprise a significant share of utility expenses. Fuel costs are generally considered operational expenses for utilities, which are typically passed through directly to customers. The volatility of fuel costs, such as the spike in natural gas prices experienced during the Russia-Ukraine crisis in 2022, has been a key driver of utility bill increases in recent years.
- **Growing electricity demand (in some specific circumstances).** Wholesale electricity prices in some regions have surged in recent years owing to electrification, manufacturing, and data centers. Some estimates predict data center electricity demand could double or even triple by 2028.⁴⁴ In those regions with organized capacity markets, growing demand and constrained supply can result in price spikes to meet forecasted demand. State regulators across the country are exploring rate designs and other measures to shield consumers from these costs, but many of these measures remain unproven. It is important to note that, depending on utility market structure and proposed investments, rising electricity demand can lower electricity prices by spreading fixed system costs over a larger base of customers.

44

www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2025-ai-data-centers-electricity-prices/

06

How Utilities Make Money

Electric utility capital expenditures are divided into three categories: generation, transmission, and distribution.

Investments in generation

Increased demand for power is spurring new capital investments in generation. Utilities, including wholesale market participants, largely recover the cost of investments and their profits from electric customers through the "volumetric charge," that is, the cost per kilowatt hour used, which varies.

Investments in transmission

U.S. investment in long-distance high-voltage transmission that can move large amounts of power from where it is generated to where it is needed is lagging. Such investments could

facilitate greater competition in wholesale markets to put downward pressure on electricity prices and, at the same, reduce the cost of grid congestion. Instead, the bulk of capital expenditures in transmission has recently gone to local transmission projects that often lack broader consumer benefits. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has sought to promote investments in multi-value high-voltage transmission projects; it remains to be seen how state regulators will follow through.

Investments in distribution

The electric distribution system, such as local poles and wires across neighborhoods, is rapidly aging. The amount of capital investment needed to replace and rebuild distribution

Three main expenses contribute to utility bills:



GENERATION

Power plants and other facilities that generate electricity.



TRANSMISSION

Larger-scale, high-voltage power lines that deliver electricity across long distances (e.g., along highways), from power plants (generation) to local substations (distribution system).



DISTRIBUTION

Smaller-scale, low-voltage power lines that carry electricity from local substations to end-users—such as homes and businesses in neighborhoods.

infrastructure is made more costly by inflation and supply chain troubles. Additionally, in some regions, severe storms and wildfires have taken out whole systems. Utilities are investing in hardening these systems to mitigate the damage from floods, wildfires and other natural disasters.

Utilities are allowed to earn a profit, called a rate of return or return on equity (ROE), on capital investments. These capital investments typically include investments to build new energy infrastructure such as power plants and power lines. Utilities do not earn a profit on operational expenditures. Thus, utilities have a structural incentive to build new capital-intensive energy infrastructure, rather than maximize utilization and operational efficiency of existing infrastructure. Often, this results in deprioritization of cheaper solutions such as demand response, energy efficiency, grid enhancing technologies, and distributed energy resources.

Utility capital expenditures can save consumers money in the long run if they are prudent investments that modernize and maximize the efficiency of our grid. However, greater transparency and regulatory scrutiny will be needed to protect the interests of current and future customers.

Between 2024 and 2025, utility capital expenditures jumped more than 14 percent.⁴⁵ This year-over-year increase is significantly higher than the 2023-2024 increase, which was below 4 percent.⁴⁶ These expenditures are paid for by customers through electric rates; higher capital expenditures translate to higher profits for utilities and higher rates for customers.

⁴⁵ www.eei.org/-/media/Project/EEI/Documents/Issues-and-Policy/Finance-And-Tax/Industry-CapexReport.pdf

⁴⁶ www.eei.org/-/media/Project/EEI/Documents/Issues-and-Policy/Finance-And-Tax/Industry-CapexReport.pdf

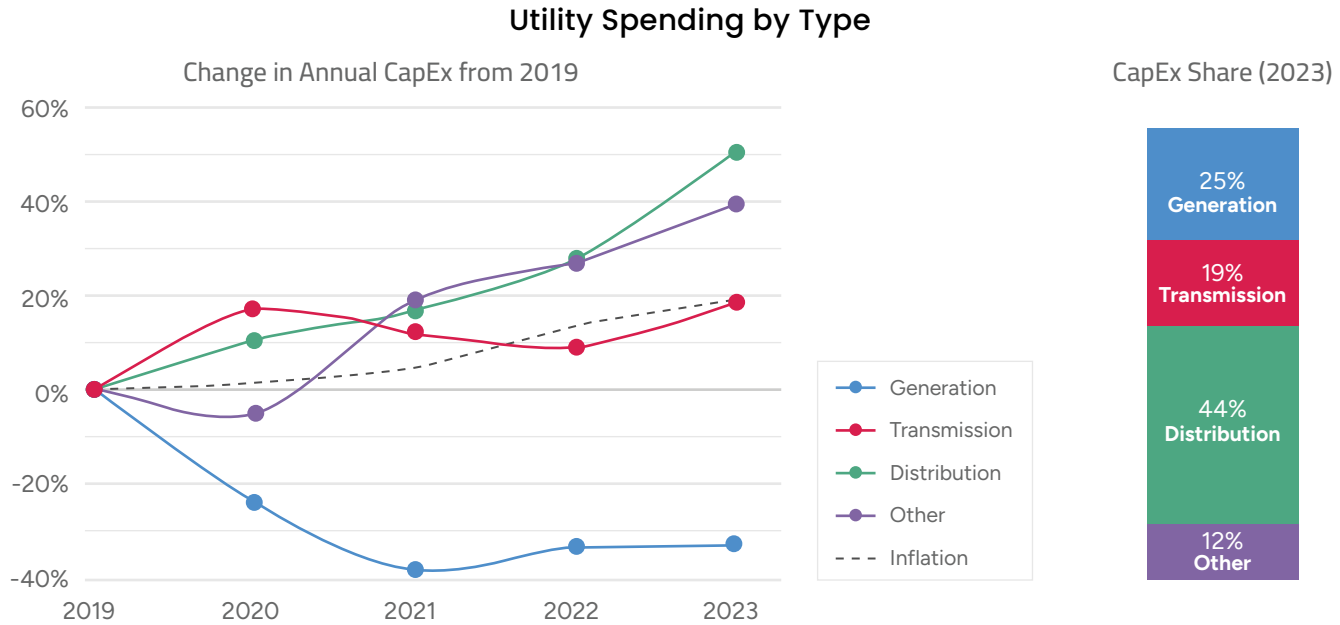


Figure 9. Growth in Capital Expenditures from 2019 to 2023
(Source: [Lawrence Berkeley National Lab](#))

From 2019 to 2023, utility spending on distribution systems rose 50 percent and transmission spending increased about 20 percent, while spending on generation resources remained flat. Edison Electric Institute, the trade association for investor-owned utilities, projects \$1.1 trillion in utility capital expenditures over the next five years, an annual rate that is nearly double that of annual spending over the last decade.⁴⁷ Ultimately, these costs are borne by utility consumers. Investments are necessary to modernize the grid and leverage the benefits of new resources and new technology. Yet, not all of these investments will necessarily receive robust regulatory oversight.

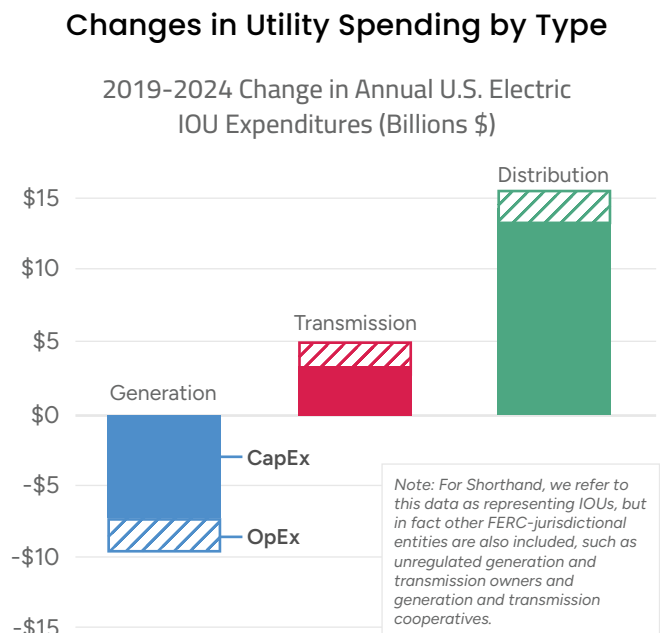


Figure 10. Change in Annual U.S. Electric IOU Expenditures
(Source: [Lawrence Berkeley National Lab](#))

47 www.eei.org/-/media/Project/EEI/Documents/Issues-and-Policy/Finance-And-Tax/IndustryCapexReport.pdf



CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

"Duke's proposed rate hike would be detrimental to my family, my husband and I are full time caregivers to our adult disabled son who lives with us, as well as my 90-year old mother who lives alone. Like most residential customers we live on a budget, a large \$42 increase in utilities will have to come from another essential bucket, like food or gasoline for the car. We are already very conscientious about energy efficiency...This rate hike would be a hardship for us."

– Beth McShane, Duke Energy Indiana customer speaking at a Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission field hearing.

Photo By:
Dustin Chambers

Who pays for rate increases?

Rate increases are paid by consumers—including residential, small business, commercial, and industrial consumers—on their monthly bills. Steep increases in electric bills not only create economic hardship; they affect how people live their lives.

Rate increases documented in this report will affect the utility bills of all types of customers, from families paying more to keep their house cool, to small businesses running refrigerators to keep food fresh, or industrial customers who will struggle to keep their goods affordable.

The impact of higher bills on households is direct and immediate. Rate increases can be a drag on the local economy, forcing local businesses to increase prices. Significant increases can sometimes lead to high-energy users, such as restaurants, permanently closing. Because electricity is a critical input to our modern economy, higher electricity prices create ripple effects that lead to cost-of-living increases across sectors.

Industrial consumers can be especially hard hit by increased utility bills. Rising electricity and gas costs for heavy industrial customers such as chemical, metal, and cement manufacturers will result in higher costs for those products. High-cost electricity and gas can also deter industries from moving into a region altogether.

Who regulates investor-owned utilities?

More than a century ago, when newly-created electric companies were electrifying the country, states granted these utility companies the right to form monopolies. To protect “captive” consumers, states also created regulatory bodies to oversee the process of setting electric rates and ensuring that these costs were “just and reasonable” to advance the public interest.

Every state has a regulatory body responsible for determining how much consumers pay for their utility bills and the types of investments utility companies make. These agencies go by various names, including public utilities commission (PUC) or public service commission (PSC). Just 200 PUC commissioners oversee more than \$200 billion each year in utility spending—nearly \$1 billion per commissioner. They are the U.S. Supreme Court justices of energy.

The Federal Power Act, passed in 1935, divided utility regulation between states and the federal government. State PUCs have the power to regulate 1) electric rates of utilities serving their state’s customers, 2) the utilities’ rate of return that determines their profit, and 3) the siting of energy infrastructure in the state.

Large-scale transmission, wholesale power, gas pipelines and other interstate or regional elements are regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Public utility commissions have the power to determine:



What the consumers pay



What investments utilities make



Where energy projects are located

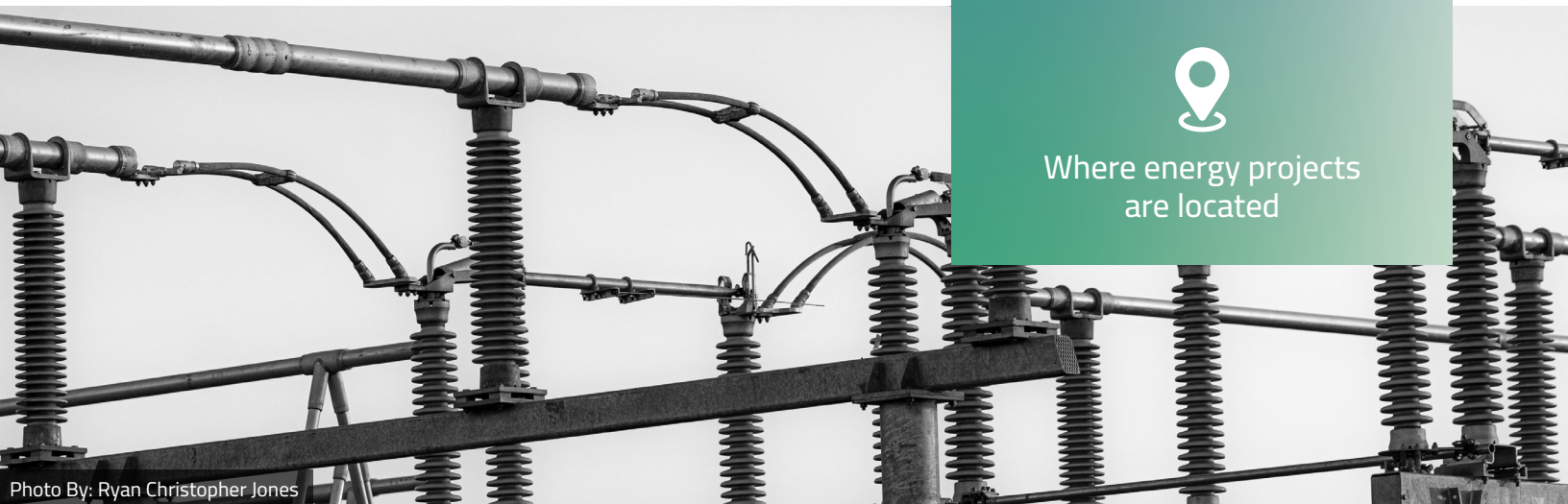


Photo By: Ryan Christopher Jones

What is a rate case?

A rate case is the process regulators follow to determine how much customers will pay for the electricity and gas they use. Typically, utilities initiate the process when they seek to change or increase rates. Utilities tally the amount they need to cover the cost of providing service, which includes spending on capital expenditures (CAPEX) such as new power lines or power plants and operational expenditures (OPEX) such as labor, operations and maintenance, and fuel costs.

Notably, while utilities' operational costs are covered by customer utility bills, they can earn a profit on capital expenditures, creating an incentive for building new capital-intensive infrastructure. All these costs ultimately are paid by consumers on their utility bills. In a rate case, the utility must justify the amount it seeks to collect from consumers, and the regulator must determine which of these costs are prudently incurred and reasonable.

These costs combine to make up the electric rate, that is, the amount customers pay for each kilowatt hour they use. This report focuses on increases in electric and gas rates; however, rates do not tell the whole story of rising utility bills. Regulators also approve "riders" and "pass-throughs," costs that show up on the bill but are not necessarily included in the cost of service.

- **"Riders"** are additional charges such as the cost of storm recovery or a state economic development project that are separate from costs related to providing 24/7 electric or gas service.
- **"Pass-through"** charges are costs paid by the utility and passed on to the consumer without any mark-up. Fuel costs, such as natural gas, are a common pass-through charge.

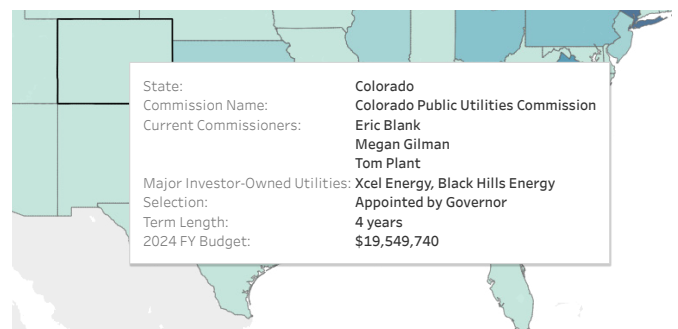
Rate cases give regulators the chance to scrutinize the prudence of utility rate requests. Additional parties including companies, nonprofit advocates, and concerned citizens are able to voice their opinion on utility rate proceedings through testimony and public comment. The process can be lengthy and technical but it gives parties a chance to push back against exorbitant increases and arrive at solutions that protect consumers and the public interest. In some cases, the parties will come to a settlement agreement while the PUC itself will decide on the prudence of the utility's filing and weigh the testimony from parties. Ultimately, the commission will make a final decision with the help of staff and administrative law judges to decide an amount the utility is allowed to recover and a methodology for recovering that amount. Every state has its own process with different rules and timelines for intervening, settling, and deciding rate cases but the general procedure remains similar nationwide.

07

What Actions Can Consumers Take?

Although many consumers feel powerless in the face of rate hikes, state utility regulators are, ultimately, answerable to the public. Consumers and consumer advocacy organizations have avenues and channels for making their concerns heard. The first step is simple: learn more about your state's [utility regulatory body](#), including who serves on the commission and how commissioners are appointed.

When it comes to regulatory decisions on utility rates, each state is unique with different rules for how the public can engage with utility regulators. While all commissions hold open public meetings, the process for “intervening” in a case determining changes to utility rates is more formal and varies widely. Advocates will sometimes submit joint comments.



In states where commissioners are appointed, citizens can make their views known by writing to their governor, state legislators, and Congressional officials. As utility bills increase, many policymakers are increasingly paying attention to the voices of consumers and seeking to advance solutions to tackle these challenges. And in the 10 states that elect their PUC commissioners, consumers can directly make their voices heard by voting for regulators that will advance the interests of consumers.

How to Engage with the Utility Regulatory System as a Consumer:

01

Learn about your state's regulatory body

- Who serves on it
- How commissioners are selected

02

Make your voice heard

- Write to governors, state legislators, and Members of Congress
- Vote if your commissioners are elected

03

Engage with your state PUC

- Attend and/or speak at public PUC meetings
- Submit public comments and feedback

08

Conclusion

2025 was a massive year for utility rate increases. Investor-owned utilities requested \$31 billion in utility rate increases, more than double that of 2024. Americans nationwide are feeling the impact of rate increases that are outpacing inflation and will likely continue into 2026.

PowerLines polling highlights the concerns many Americans felt about rising utility bills this year. Roughly 3 in 4 respondents feared that their utility bills would continue to rise in 2025. They were right: 81 million Americans saw their utility request higher rates, while residential electricity prices continued to outpace inflation.

Consumers like the ones quoted in this report feel frustrated. They are making their voices heard at the ballot box and in PUC hearing rooms across the nation. As utility bills continue to rise, more consumers will pay attention to their utility bills, engage with other stakeholders, and speak up.

Rising utility bills have become an issue of national importance.

APPENDIX A

Rate Increase Requests

Database of 2025 Rate Increase Requests

State	Utility	Region	# of Customers	Type	When Requested or Approved	Requested Rate Increase (\$B)	Source
AK	Chugach Electric Association	West	144,000	Electric	August 2025	0.0	Alaska's News Source
AR	Entergy Arkansas	South	740,000	Electric	July 2025	0.1	Entergy Arkansas
AR	Southwestern Electric Power Company	South	126,000	Electric	July 2025	0.1	Arkansas Democrat Gazette
AZ	Arizona Public Service	West	1,400,000	Electric	June 2025	0.6	ABC15
AZ	Tucson Electric Power	West	458,000	Electric	June 2025	0.2	Arizona Daily Star
CA	Pacific Gas & Electric	West	5,500,000	Electric	April 2025	3.1	Public Advocates Office
CA	San Diego Gas & Electric	West	1,490,000	Electric	March 2025	0.1	SDG&E
CO	Xcel Energy	West	1,600,000	Electric	November 2025	0.4	Colorado Sun
CT	Eversource	Northeast	1,300,000	Electric	March 2025	3.2	CT Energy Ratings
CT	Eversource	Northeast	1,300,000	Electric	November 2025	0.1	Consumer Counsel
CT	United Illuminating	Northeast	347,000	Electric	November 2025	0.0	Consumer Counsel
FL	Florida Power & Light	South	6,000,000	Electric	February 2025	9.0	Miami Herald
ID	Avista Utilities	West	145,000	Electric	January 2025	0.1	Avista
ID	Idaho Power	West	640,000	Electric	May 2025	0.2	Idaho Business Review

Database of 2025 Rate Increase Requests

State	Utility	Region	# of Customers	Type	When Requested or Approved	Requested Rate Increase (\$B)	Source
IL	Ameren Illinois	Midwest	1,200,000	Electric	November 2025	0.1	Peoria Journal Star
IN	AES Indiana	Midwest	530,000	Electric	June 2025	0.4	Indy Star
KS	Evergy Kansas Central	Midwest	736,000	Electric	January 2025	0.2	Evergy
KY	Kentucky Power	South	162,000	Electric	August 2025	0.1	KY PSC
KY	Kentucky Utilities	South	545,000	Electric	May 2025	0.2	Courier-Journal
KY	Louisville Gas & Electric	South	436,000	Electric	May 2025	0.1	Courier-Journal
MD	PEPCO	South	582,000	Electric	October 2025	0.1	MD PSC
ME	Central Maine Power	Northeast	670,000	Electric	September 2025	0.4	Maine Morning Star
MI	Consumers Electric	Midwest	1,800,000	Electric	June 2025	0.4	Michigan Capitol Confidential
MI	DTE	Midwest	2,300,000	Electric	April 2025	0.6	The Detroit News
MN	Otter Tail Power	Midwest	63,000	Electric	October 2025	0.0	Business Wire
NC	Duke Energy Carolinas	South	2,220,000	Electric	November 2025	1.0	Duke Energy
NC	Duke Energy Progress	South	1,620,000	Electric	November 2025	0.7	Duke Energy
ND	Montana-Dakota Utilities	Midwest	94,470	Electric	July 2025	0.0	ND PSC

Database of 2025 Rate Increase Requests

State	Utility	Region	# of Customers	Type	When Requested or Approved	Requested Rate Increase (\$B)	Source
ND	Xcel Energy	Midwest	88,500	Electric	September 2025	0.0	ND PSC
ND	Otter Tail Power	Midwest	45,000	Electric	September 2025	0.0	ND PSC
NM	PNM	West	550,000	Electric	May 2025	0.1	StockTitan
NV	Nevada Power	West	1,431,000	Electric	February 2025	0.2	Nevada Current
NY	Con Edison	Northeast	3,600,000	Electric	January 2025	1.6	NYDPS
OH	AEP Ohio	Midwest	1,500,000	Electric	April 2025	0.1	Columbus Dispatch
OH	AES Ohio	Midwest	527,000	Electric	November 2025	0.2	PUCO
OR	Portland General Electric	West	944,000	Electric	July 2025	0.1	KOIN6
PA	Citizens Electric	Northeast	7,200	Electric	April 2025	0.0	PA Environment Daily
PA	PPL Electric	Northeast	1,500,000	Electric	September 2025	0.4	Stock Titan
PA	Valley Electric	Northeast	7,400	Electric	April 2025	0.0	PA Environment Daily
PA	Wellsboro Electric	Northeast	6,500	Electric	April 2025	0.0	Wellsboro Gazette
RI	RI Energy	Northeast	770,000	Electric	November 2025	0.2	Providence Journal

Database of 2025 Rate Increase Requests

State	Utility	Region	# of Customers	Type	When Requested or Approved	Requested Rate Increase (\$B)	Source
SC	Duke Energy Carolinas	South	680,000	Electric	July 2025	0.2	Duke Energy/ Greenville Journal
SC	Duke Energy Progress	South	177,000	Electric	June 2025	0.1	PR Newswire
TX	El Paso Electric	South	465,000	Electric	January 2025	0.1	El Paso Matters
TX	Oncor	South	13,000,000	Electric	June 2025	0.8	Utility Dive
TX	Texas-New Mexico Power	South	270,000	Electric	November 2025	0.1	TNMP
UT	Rocky Mountain Power	West	1,031,000	Electric	November 2025	1.1	Deseret News
VA	Appalachian Power Co	South	530,000	Electric	May 2025	0.1	WSLS
VA	Dominion Energy	South	2,700,000	Electric	March 2025	1.3	Reisinger Gooch
WI	Alliant Energy	Midwest	500,000	Electric	March 2025	0.2	Alliant Energy
WI	Madison Gas & Electric	Midwest	167,000	Electric	April 2025	0.0	WPR
WI	Xcel Energy	Midwest	250,000	Electric	March 2025	0.2	The Center Square
AK	Enstar	West	150,000	Gas	May 2025	0.0	Anchorage Daily News
CA	Southern California Gas	West	2,100,000	Gas	March 2025	0.1	Socalgas
CO	Atmos Energy	West	130,000	Gas	September 2025	0.0	CO PUC

Database of 2025 Rate Increase Requests

State	Utility	Region	# of Customers	Type	When Requested or Approved	Requested Rate Increase (\$B)	Source
CO	Xcel Energy	West	1,500,000	Gas	December 2025	0.2	Colorado Sun
ID	Avista Utilities	West	93,000	Gas	January 2025	0.0	Avista
ID	Intermountain Gas	West	412,500	Gas	May 2025	0.0	Intermountain Gas
IL	Ameren Illinois	Midwest	800,000	Gas	January 2025	0.1	STLPR
IL	Northern Illinois Gas	Midwest	2,300,000	Gas	January 2025	0.3	PR Newswire
KS	Atmos Energy	Midwest	139,000	Gas	July 2025	0.0	Sunflower State Journal
KS	Black Hills Energy	Midwest	116,000	Gas	February 2025	0.0	Kansas Reflector
KY	Kentucky Frontier Gas	South	6,000	Gas	August 2025	0.0	KY PSC
MA	Berkshire Gas	Northeast	40,000	Gas	October 2025	0.0	Halcyon
MI	DTE	Midwest	1,300,000	Gas	November 2025	0.2	Michigan Live
MO	Spire Missouri Inc	Midwest	1,187,000	Gas	May 2025	0.2	Mid-River News
MT	Montana-Dakota Utilities	West	90,000	Gas	September 2025	0.0	Halcyon
NC	Enbridge Gas	South	667,000	Gas	July 2025	0.1	WRAL
NE	Black Hills Nebraska Gas	Midwest	304,000	Gas	May 2025	0.0	1011 Now
NJ	New Jersey Natural Gas	Northeast	588,000	Gas	September 2025	0.0	NJ BPU

Database of 2025 Rate Increase Requests

State	Utility	Region	# of Customers	Type	When Requested or Approved	Requested Rate Increase (\$B)	Source
NJ	South Jersey Gas Company	Northeast	426,000	Gas	July 2025	0.0	NJ BPU
NY	Con Edison	Northeast	1,100,000	Gas	January 2025	0.4	NYDPS
OK	Oklahoma Natural Gas	South	924,000	Gas	February 2025	0.0	Southwest Ledger
PA	Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania	Northeast	446,000	Gas	April 2025	0.1	ABC 27
PA	UGI Utilities	Northeast	689,000	Gas	January 2025	0.1	UGI Utilities
TX	Texas Gas Service	South	706,000	Gas	November 2025	0.0	El Paso Matters
WA	Washington Gas	South	157,000	Gas	April 2025	0.0	Axios DC
WI	Alliant Energy	Midwest	431,000	Gas	March 2025	0.0	Alliant Energy
WI	Madison Gas & Electric	Midwest	178,000	Gas	April 2025	0.0	WPR
WI	Xcel Energy	Midwest	115,000	Gas	March 2025	0.0	The Center Square
WV	Mountaineer Gas	South	220,000	Gas	July 2025	0.1	WV Metro News
WY	Black Hills Energy	West	177,000	Gas	October 2025	0.0	Halcyon
WY	Montana-Dakota Utilities	West	17,900	Gas	July 2025	0.0	WY PSC

Database of 2025 Rate Increase Requests

Region	Total Number of Customers	Total Requested Rate Increases (\$B)
Midwest	16,670,970	3.2
Northeast	11,497,100	6.5
South	32,933,000	14.3
West	20,003,400	6.5
All Regions	81,104,470	30.5

APPENDIX B

PowerLines 2025 Utility Bill Survey Results

PowerLines/Ipsos Utility Bills Survey

PowerLines conducted a national online poll in March 2025 with the nonpartisan polling company Ipsos using the probability-based KnowledgePanel®, which surveyed 2,036 American adults from March 28 to 30, 2025. See Appendix A: Methodology and Appendix B: Survey Results in the [Utility Bills Are Rising](#) report for additional details on the survey methodology and results.

Respondents were asked to provide their perspectives on a range of questions regarding their attitudes towards recent utility bills trends, their sense of how much their interests as energy consumers are being protected, and their levels of awareness and familiarity with key aspects of the utility regulatory system. This study revealed three key insights regarding American energy consumers' attitudes toward rising utility bills.

TAKEAWAY 1

Americans are already feeling the pinch of rising utility bills and are concerned their bills are going to go up even further.

- Nearly 2 in 3 (64 percent) Americans whose household pays a monthly electric and gas utility bill (referred to as “billpayers” in this report) have seen their utility bills increase over the past year.
- Nearly 3 in 4 (73 percent) Americans are concerned that their utility bills will further increase this year.
- These trends are consistent across political parties, with 74 percent of Democrats, 71 percent of Republicans, and 74 percent of Independents expressing concern over rising utility bills.

TAKEAWAY 2

Most Americans say utility bills are adding to their financial stress but feel powerless to do anything about these costs.

- Nearly 2 in 3 (63 percent) American billpayers say that utility bills are adding to their financial stress, a figure that increases to over 3 in 4 (76 percent) for Americans making less than \$50,000.
- 4 in 5 (80 percent) Americans feel powerless to control how much they're being charged for their utility bills.
- A majority (56 percent) of Americans do not feel they understand what drives the costs they are charged by their utility companies.

TAKEAWAY 3

Every state has a regulatory body responsible for keeping utility bills low for consumers, yet few Americans know who they are.

- Nearly 3 in 5 (59 percent) Americans do not believe their state government is doing a good job protecting their interests when it comes to regulating electric or gas utilities.
- 3 in 5 (60 percent) Americans say they are not familiar with the state or local regulatory body that determines their utility bills.
- In a separate open-ended question, around 9 in 10 respondents could not correctly name the state government body that regulates their utility bills.

Taken together, these results illustrate a deep and widespread concern among American energy consumers regarding rising utility bills, the impacts on their own household budgets, and implications for the broader economy. The public is largely unfamiliar with these regulatory bodies responsible for setting their electric and gas utility rates, and a majority say they do not understand what is behind the charges on their utility bills.

Without visibility into the process or opportunities for education to understand why utility bills are rising, consumers unsurprisingly do not believe the regulatory system is adequately serving their interests as consumers.

If the results show a lack of confidence in the current utility regulatory system, they also illuminate a path forward. Stakeholders should proactively educate consumers about who is making the decisions that will impact their pocketbooks and ensure that consumer perspectives are sufficiently incorporated into decision making. Without an understanding of the regulatory process and how they can make their perspectives heard, consumers feel powerless, and all stakeholders risk experiencing the consequences of a loss of consumer trust and confidence in the current utility regulatory system.



