

ENERGY AND RATEPAYER ADVOCACY DIVISION

The Energy Advocate



MASSACHUSETTS ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

About our newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of the Energy and Ratepayer Advocacy (ERA) Division's *The Energy Advocate*. The Attorney General's Office's (AGO) ERA Division represents the interests of utility ratepayers (i.e. customers) before the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU), as well as on regional and federal issues before ISO-New England, New England Power Pool, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

At ERA, our attorneys and analysts work hard on your behalf to fight for safe, reliable, and affordable service from the Commonwealth's investor-owned electric, gas, and water utility companies. As Massachusetts seeks to achieve its climate goals, ERA is committed to supporting smart, cost-effective investments in clean energy infrastructure and programs, as well as reducing excessive charges on your utility bills. Our semiannual newsletter will provide relevant updates on ratepayer impacts, resources dedicated to helping customers manage utility bills, and useful energy and cost saving tips.



Ratepayer Information Corner

OVERVIEW OF YOUR GAS BILL

Winter is here, which often leads to higher utility bills due to the costs associated with keeping your home warm. In 2024, [52% of households](#) in Massachusetts used gas to heat their homes. In this section, we cover some general information about your gas bills.

Who is your gas utility?

In Massachusetts, the investor-owned gas utilities are Berkshire Gas, Eversource (NSTAR Gas and Eversource Gas of Massachusetts), Liberty Utilities, National Grid (Boston Gas and Colonial Gas), and Unitil (Fitchburg Gas). You can find your investor-owned or municipal gas utility on the DPU's webpage "[Find My Electric, Gas, and Water Company](#)."

How are your gas rates set?

To learn more about the various gas charges on your utility bill, visit the DPU webpage "[Information on Gas Supply and Delivery Charges](#)." For information on your current gas rates, visit "[Peak/Winter 2025-2026 Rates \(Effective 11/1/25 through 4/30/26\)](#)" on the DPU's website. Keep in mind, rates are just one component of your total gas bill—gas usage and weather also impact your monthly bill. The more gas you use, the higher your bills will be. To help save money on your winter heating bills, check out our tips throughout this newsletter.

Assistance Programs

If you or someone you know is struggling with their utility bills, there are several assistance programs available:

- **Discounted Rates:** Based on your income, you may qualify for a lower rate on your gas and electric bills.
- **Budget Billing:** Keeps energy bills stable through equal monthly payments over the course of 12 months.
- **Payment Plans:** If you are behind on your bills, your utility company offers payment plans to help you pay past due balances.
- **Arrearage Management Programs:** Based on your income, you may participate in your utility's debt relief program that will eliminate past-due balances when you make on-time monthly payments on your current bill.

Understanding your gas bill

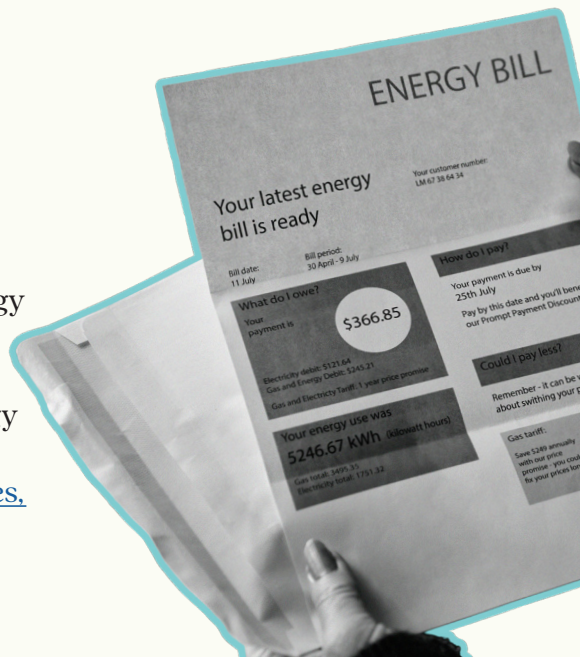
Below are links to sample gas bills for each investor-owned gas utility, which will help you understand your gas bill.

- [Berkshire Gas](#)
- [Eversource](#)
- [Liberty](#)
- [National Grid](#)
- [Unitil](#)

More information can also be found on the DPU's webpage called "[Understanding Your Utility Bill](#)."

Gas bills are getting a new look

In February, the DPU ordered gas utilities to re-design their bills to make charges easier to understand. Starting in Winter 2025, the existing energy efficiency surcharge (EES), which funds Mass Save® (the state's energy efficiency provider), will now be displayed on your gas bill as a separate line item so you know how much you are contributing to the state's energy conservation and decarbonization efforts. We encourage you to take advantage of [Mass Save's low- to no-cost insulation and air sealing upgrades](#), [as well as rebates for heat pumps and energy efficient appliances](#). All these home improvements contribute to lowering your energy bills.



Consumer Contacts

If you have questions about your utility bill or need billing help, contact your utility:

- [Berkshire Gas](#): (800) 292-5012
- [Eversource West – Eversource Gas of Massachusetts](#)
 - Electric: (877) 659-6326
 - Gas: (800) 688-6160
- [Eversource East – NSTAR Gas](#)
 - Electric: (800) 592-2000
 - Gas: (800) 592-2000
- [Liberty Utilities](#): (800) 544-4944
- National Grid
 - [Electric](#): (800) 322-3223
 - [Gas](#): (800) 233-5325
- [Unitil](#) (electric and gas): (888) 301-7700

To learn more about Mass Save® and explore energy saving options for your home:

- (866) 527-SAVE (7283)
- <https://www.masssave.com/>

To contact the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office:

- Consumer Hotline: (617) 727-8400
- <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/file-a-consumer-complaint>

To contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities:

- DPU Consumer Division
 - (617) 737-2836
 - (877) 886-5066 (toll free)
- <https://www.mass.gov/forms/massachusetts-department-of-public-utilities-consumer-complaint-form>

Winter Disconnection Moratorium Extension!

Due to recent federal funding delays to the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), a program that helps low-income households meet their home heating needs, ERA worked with local advocacy groups to extend the winter moratorium, which protects customers from having their utilities turned off due to nonpayment. As a result of this collaborative effort, low-income utility customers who demonstrate financial hardship this winter cannot have their heat shut off from October 27, 2025, through April 1, 2026. To find out more visit [DPU's website](#).

New Seasonal Heat Pump Rates!

Electric utilities [Eversource](#), [National Grid](#) and [Unitil](#) now offer lower winter delivery rates from November 1 through April 30 for residential customers who use a heat pump to heat all or part of their home. Customers who installed a heat pump through Mass Save® on or after January 1, 2019, are automatically enrolled in the new seasonal heat pump rate and should have received a notification letter. If you installed a heat pump but did not use Mass Save®, you will need to contact your electric utility to verify your system is eligible to enroll in the new rate. Check out Frequently Asked Questions [here](#).



DPU Launches New Winter Resource Page

To learn more about your winter heating bills and what resources are available to help you manage your monthly energy costs, Check out the DPU's updated ["Information on Winter Bills"](#) webpage.

SAVE MONEY THIS WINTER BY SAVING ENERGY

- **Stop losing heat through drafty doors and windows**
 - Install weather stripping or use caulk to seal air leaks
 - Use tight-fitting, insulating curtains or shades
- **Maximize the amount of heat you can get from the sun**
 - Keep curtains and blinds open during the day, especially on south-facing windows. Be sure to close them at night to reduce window chill
- **Adjust your thermostat based on your home activity**
 - Wear layers so you can comfortably set your thermostat a few degrees lower
 - Turn down thermostat when asleep or away from home
 - A programmable or smart thermostat can do the adjusting for you
- **Insulate your home to help stay warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer**
- **Maintain heating systems and change air filters regularly for greatest efficiency**
- **Use LED light bulbs and holiday lights**
- **Unplug electronics when not in use and get an [advanced power strip](#)**
- **To get started with these tips, get a Mass Save® [Home Energy Assessment](#) to identify no-cost or low-cost upgrades that will make your home more energy efficient**
- **Get more efficiency tips from [Green Energy Consumers Alliance](#)**



CELEBRATING RECENT ERA WINS FOR MASSACHUSETTS UTILITY CUSTOMERS

In FY2025, ERA represented ratepayers and energy customers in over 175 proceedings before state and federal regulatory agencies and courts, resulting in approximately \$2.11 billion in avoided costs for ratepayers. These avoided costs are spread across utility customers, resulting in savings to individual customer bills. This section highlights some of our ERA successes from the past fiscal year.

DPU Adopts AGO's Recommendations and Cuts \$1.6 Billion to Electric Sector Modernization Plans (ESMP), Saving Ratepayers Money and Improving Electric Grid Resiliency

In June 2025, the DPU adopted many of ERA's recommendations to protect ratepayers from unnecessary costs related to the electric utilities' Electric Sector Modernization Plans (ESMPs). The ESMPs are strategic roadmaps offered by the electric utilities to modernize and upgrade the electric grid to enable an affordable, equitable clean energy transition. ERA argued that the ESMPs included unnecessary infrastructure investments that would lead to higher energy costs for ratepayers. The DPU agreed with ERA's assessment and cut proposed ESMP spending by more than \$1.6 billion, which will save ratepayers money.

\$205 Million Saved in National Grid Electric Rate Case

In October 2024, the DPU adopted ERA's affordability recommendations in National Grid's electric rate case. Utilities use rate cases to request DPU approval to increase rates they charge their customers. As the Commonwealth's ratepayer advocate, ERA will review a utility's rate case petition to determine if the request is fair and reasonable. In this rate case, the DPU reduced National Grid's requested revenue increase by about 40%. Additionally, the DPU approved a tiered discount rate, providing higher discounts for the lowest-income households. National Grid electric customers can learn more about tiered rates on [National Grid's website](#).

\$195 Million in Short-Term Savings and Continued Long-Term Savings Through Reductions to Gas System Enhancement Plan Spending

The Gas System Enhancement Plan (GSEP) program was created in 2014 to address the greatest risks to the safety and reliability of the Commonwealth's gas system. Over the past 10 years gas companies have spent billions of dollars on gas infrastructure upgrades, which are paid for by ratepayers. In April 2025, the DPU adopted most of ERA's recommendations, including lowering the "GSEP cap," which limits the amount of money gas utilities can recover from ratepayers for replacing and repairing leak-prone gas infrastructure as the state works to decarbonize. Changes to the GSEP program will save ratepayers an estimated \$195 million in the near term and will continue to help minimize costs for the remainder of the GSEP program.