



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
NEWS RELEASE

Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lauren Henault Bidra
Lauren.Bidra@ct.gov
860-827-2904 (office)

**Connecticut Utility Customers To Benefit From New Energy
Pricing Details on Monthly Electric Bills**
Companies to provide additional information starting July 1

HARTFORD, Conn. (June 29, 2015) –In an effort to more clearly explain the energy charges on monthly utility bills in Connecticut, Eversource Energy (Eversource) and The United Illuminating Company (UI) are revamping their bills in a two-phase redesign initiative. The changes are part of legislation sponsored by Senator Majority Leader Bob Duff (D-Norwalk) and Representative Lonnie Reed (D-Branford), among others, with support from Attorney General George Jepsen and Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz. The legislation, passed in 2014, is designed to help customers compare pricing and contract terms among electric suppliers.

“This new bill design helps Connecticut residents who select alternative energy suppliers see all the relevant information that affects how much they’re paying for power each month,” said Senator Duff. “It also allows them to easily compare supplier rates and track any rate expiration dates to see where they can get the best deal.”

Representative Reed said, "This bill design sets a new standard for protecting electric consumers by providing compare and contrast tools that are easy to use and will be constantly updated going forward."

“We’ve received thousands of complaints from Connecticut’s electric customers about being misled, overcharged, or switched from one rate to another by third-party suppliers – often without their consent—so the changes to the bill are ground-breaking and essential,” said Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz. “This consumer protection legislation ensures that customers will now have much clearer information about their electric rates – no more surprises.”

As a state with an open energy supplier market, Connecticut residents have the option to choose third-party electric suppliers, which offer rates with different terms. The new utility bills feature more detailed supplier information for greater transparency and flexibility for customers of independent power suppliers.

Katz explained the two-part phase-in of the new billing format: “In the first phase, customers will see a direct comparison of their current price, if they are using a competitive electric supplier, with the standard offer price available from Eversource or UI, and a summary showing the savings or the additional amount they paid.”

In the second phase, which will be rolled out in electric bills starting on January 1, 2016, the bills will also include the next month’s rate, so that consumers can review the rate weeks before that rate becomes effective.

“For example,” Katz explained, “on your January bill, you will see the rate for February. You then can make a decision as to whether that next month’s rate is a good one, and you’ll have time to switch to the standard offer or another supplier rate before the February rate takes effect. Gone are the days where you open your bill and find out what your rate only after it’s taken effect.”

John Erlingheuser, Advocacy Director of AARP Connecticut said, “AARP fully supports the new electric bill design. The features on the new bill will help prevent seniors and other vulnerable populations from being taken advantage of by the unscrupulous practices of some third-party electric suppliers. AARP will continue working to ensure the second phase of the bill design is implemented, as the legislature intended, in January 2016.”

“We understand that utility bills can be complex and often lead to some confusion,” said Penni Conner, Senior Vice President and Chief Customer Officer at Eversource. “We want to help our customers know exactly what they’re paying for and who they’re paying it to. We’re confident the new information we’re providing will help customers make informed decisions about their energy supplier and use.”

“The change made to the electric bill is aimed at empowering customers to make smart choices about their electricity usage, which, in turn can save them money,” said Tracey Pelella, UIL’s Senior Director of Customer Care. “When people understand which parts of the bill they can impact, the decision to take action can become pretty simple. If people know better, through an easy-to-understand bill, they will do better.”

Phase one bill redesign changes, which take effect on July 1, 2015, include adding the following information on the first page of monthly statements (and consumers who pay online are reminded to click “view bill” for the full information):

- The name and address of the customer’s current supplier and rate;
- The current Eversource/UI Standard Service rate, and the terms and expiration date of that rate;
- The dollar amount the customer would have been billed if the customer were on the Eversource/UI Standard Service rate and not with a third-party supplier;
- Information on how to switch back to Eversource or UI as the power supplier; and
- A link to Energize Connecticut (www.energizect.com/compare-energy-suppliers), the

state's official rate board, which shows current energy supplier pricing.

Phase two of the bill redesign, taking effect in January 2016, will provide this additional information:

- The fixed or variable terms of a customer's third-party supply rate, and the expiration month of that rate;
- Any changes to a customer's third-party supply rate that becomes effective in the next billing cycle; and
- Any applicable cancellation fee charged to customers by the third-party supplier for early termination of their contract.

In addition to reviewing their usage and the total amount of the bill, the utility companies encourage customers to regularly review rates and pricing information to make sure they are aware of any changes to their current rates or terms.

There is no fee for Eversource or UI customers to return to the Standard Service supply rate. Customers who have questions about their current supply rate are encouraged to call their electric distribution company, Eversource at 1-800-286-2000, or The United Illuminating Company at 1-800-722-5584.

###

The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) is the State of Connecticut's advocate for consumers on issues relating to electricity, natural gas, water, and telecommunications. For more information, visit www.ct.gov/occ.