



## **CONSUMER UPDATE: YANKEE GAS SERVICES PAYS NEARLY \$1.8 MILLION CIVIL PENALTY TO RESOLVE MARKETING DISCLOSURE VIOLATIONS**

One of Connecticut's three natural gas local distribution companies, The Yankee Gas Services Company d/b/a Eversource Energy ("Yankee Gas"), [recently paid](#) a civil penalty of \$1,797,000 in order to resolve allegations that Yankee Gas failed to include legally required disclosures on marketing materials sent to Connecticut residents encouraging them to convert their homes to natural gas. Pursuant to orders issued by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, Yankee Gas transmitted \$1,750,000 of the penalty to Operation Fuel, an energy-assistance nonprofit, to be used to assist natural gas customers who are having trouble paying their bills. Yankee Gas transmitted the remaining \$47,000 of the penalty to the State of Connecticut.

In August 2021, the Office of Consumer Counsel and the Connecticut Attorney General submitted a [petition](#) to the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority requesting that it investigate Yankee Gas' marketing of the gas expansion program in response to an article in the *Hartford Courant* regarding potentially deceptive advertising disseminated by Yankee Gas. In response to the petition, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority subsequently issued a [Notice of Violation](#) against Yankee Gas, concluding that approximately 3,594 Connecticut residents received advertising from Yankee Gas that failed to include legally required disclosures indicating how the advertising was paid for. The Notice of Violation assessed the aforementioned civil penalty.

Connecticut General Statutes § 16-19d(f) requires that all advertising by electric or natural gas companies must contain a conspicuous indication informing the recipient whether the advertising was paid for by the company's shareholders, its ratepayers, or both. This statute guarantees that Connecticut residents may easily and transparently determine how advertising they have received from regulated utilities was paid for. In this instance, however, Yankee Gas failed to include the required disclosure on its mail advertising.

The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority continues to investigate other marketing issues germane to the natural gas expansion program in Docket No. 21-08-24, including practices by Yankee Gas and the State's two other local distribution companies, The Southern Connecticut Gas Company and the Connecticut Natural Gas Corporation.

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