



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY CENTER
Protecting the Midwest's Environment and Natural Heritage

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ELPC asks Illinois Commerce Commission to Approve NICOR Energy Efficiency Program
NICOR's First-Ever Energy Efficiency Program Could Save Consumers Millions

Chicago, IL—In the midst of dropping temperatures and rising heating bills, the Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC) filed a brief today calling on the Illinois Commerce Commission to approve Nicor's first ever efficiency program. The program has the potential to save ratepayers millions, while protecting the environment. "We need to get these programs implemented as quickly as possible or we will be in this position again next winter," said ELPC Senior Attorney Rob Kelter.

ELPC cites several reasons that it supports the program:

- NICOR is the largest natural gas utility in Illinois - a 1% reduction in gas consumption by NICOR customers would save \$22 million.
- Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota all have energy efficiency programs in place and the average consumer in all three states uses less gas than Illinois Customers.
- The average home heating bill has risen from \$750 per year to \$1008 per year in the last five years. Efficiency is the most effective way to save consumers money.

The energy efficiency program will be run not by the utility, but by an advisory board that would include the Illinois Attorney General, consumer advocates and environmental experts. This aspect of the program has generated opposition, but supporters say will bring the most benefit to the consumers. "This gives the public direct input into these programs that can lower their bills," said Kelter. "If you're looking for ways to sell less gas, it doesn't make sense to put that responsibility in the hands of the gas company."

High heating prices have already led consumers to cut back on gas usage. But consumer advocates fear that without energy efficiency, high heating costs are literally leaving low-income households out in the cold. By making their homes and furnaces more energy efficient, cash-strapped consumers will be able to keep warm while spending less on their gas bills.

NICOR has agreed to spend \$13 million per year for four years to fund the program, and ELPC calls for \$15 million the first year increasing to \$25 million in year four.

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The Environmental Law and Policy Center (ELPC) is the Midwest's leading environmental, legal advocacy and eco-innovation organization. For more information, go to www.ELPC.org.

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