



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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**NIPSCO PARTICIPATES IN NATURAL GAS FORUM
HOSTED BY INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION**

MERRILLVILLE, Ind. – Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) today participated in a forum on natural gas issues hosted by the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC).

NIPSCO President Mark Maassel provided a broad overview of the current status of the North American natural gas market to staff and commissioners of the IURC, as well as representatives of Indiana's other major natural gas utilities.

“There is a growing demand for natural gas in the United States and we anticipate the balance between supply and demand will remain tight through the winter heating season,” said Maassel. “It is anticipated that the natural gas market will remain volatile and cause natural gas prices to remain high.”

Maassel outlined a number of strategies that utilities, government and customers can do to help lessen the impact of high heating bills this winter. He called upon utilities to consider diversifying their gas supply portfolios and promoting customer payment options such as fixed-price contracts and budget billing, and working together to help spread the message to consumers to prepare now for high natural gas prices.

“Customers should take advantage of these programs, but also weatherize their homes and use energy wisely,” said Maassel. “At the same time, government should consider increasing funding to the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to help families with limited incomes stay safe and warm during the winter heating season.”

NIPSCO offers a variety of programs that will help customers manage their home heating bills this winter, including:

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Page 2 of 2

- **BudgetPlan** provides an average monthly bill based on past energy usage and estimated future prices. Customers pay an equal amount each month.
- **DependaBill**, a predetermined, totally guaranteed, fixed monthly natural gas bill for 12 months.
- **Price Protection Service Program** offers customers the flexibility of choosing a fixed price option or a capped price option.
- **NIPSCO Choice** allows customers to shop for an alternate gas supplier.
- Assistance locating available energy support, such as the **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**.

Even though natural gas remains plentiful in the United States, Maassel said both industry and government should continue to work together to develop and implement a long-term plan to ensure the country has a safe and reliable supply of competitively priced natural gas.

NIPSCO, with headquarters in Merrillville, Ind., is one of the 10 energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). With over 712,000 natural gas customers and 445,000 electric customers across the northern third of Indiana, NIPSCO is the largest natural gas distribution company, and the second largest electric distribution company, in the state. NiSource distribution companies serve 3.7 million natural gas and electric customers primarily in nine states. More information about NIPSCO is available at www.nipsco.com

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