

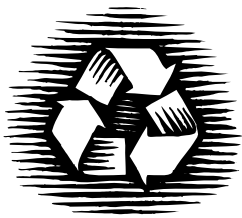
Rate Watcher

New Hampshire

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Recycling your CFLs is a bright idea



The RateWatcher has consistently worked to inform its readers about the benefits of compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. CFLs use 75% less energy and last up to ten times longer than an incandescent light bulb. Globally introduced in the early 1980s, CFLs have steadily increased in sales volume, but account for less than 10% of the lightbulbs in American households – so we still have a long way to go!

Safe cleanup precautions: As more of us use them, it is important to know how to dispose of broken or dead CFLs because they contain mercury. If a CFL breaks in your home, open nearby windows to disperse any vapor that may escape, carefully sweep up the fragments (do not use your hands) and wipe the area with a disposable towel to remove all glass fragments. Do not use a vacuum. Using a vacuum could cause mercury compounds to remain in your vacuum system which could emit mercury vapor into your air every time you use it. Place all fragments in a sealed plastic bag.

How to dispose: TrueValue hardware stores have teamed up with the Department of Environmental Services to offer free lamp recycling for New Hampshire residents and small businesses for up to **six fluorescent lamps per visit**. If you have questions concerning the recycling program, contact Paul Lockwood at (603) 271-2956 or plockwood@des.state.nh.us. If you do not have a TrueValue hardware store near you contact your local Household Hazardous Waste Collection Site for a disposal location. To find a local site visit www.Earth911.org (or call 1-800-CLEAN-UP for an automated hotline). If the web site or hotline number above does not have your local information, please contact your local or municipal government entity responsible for waste collection or household hazardous waste.

*ENERGY STAR bulbs have a warranty so if a CFL burns out within your warranty period contact your local retailer.

Source: US Environmental Protection Agency



Energy Hog

Incandescent light bulbs are outdated! 95% of the energy used goes to heating the bulb, adding unwanted heat to your home in the summer. Replace your five most used light bulbs with ENERGY STAR compact fluorescent bulbs to save \$60 each year. These light bulbs use a lot less energy and last up to 10 times longer.

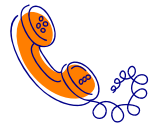
What is going on with the Verizon/FairPoint Transaction?

The final hearings before the NH PUC are scheduled for October 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, and 31 in Concord. By that time, hearings in Vermont and Maine will have been completed.

TDS' request for an alternative form of regulation: what does that mean for TDS customers?

On March 1, four subsidiaries of TDS Telecommunications (Kearsarge, Wilton, Hollis, and Merrimack County) filed petitions seeking an alternative form of regulation or an "AFOR." The NH PUC opened a docket to consider the petitions, DT 07-027. If approved, the companies may increase rates by up to 10% per year without additional Commission approval. In certain instances, according to the companies' filings, the annual rate increases may exceed 10%. The companies have stated in public hearings that any increases will be limited due to competition pressures.

A significant issue for the NH PUC to consider is whether customers of these companies have competitive alternatives to the TDS companies' basic local telephone service. The NH PUC scheduled three public statement hearings to receive comments from customers of these public utilities and any other interested person or group. The last hearing will be held on October 10, 2007 at 7:00pm at Hopkinton High School.



What is decoupling and what does it mean for customers?

"Decoupling" refers to ratemaking that separates an electric or gas utility's profitability from the amount of energy it sells. It is aimed at removing disincentives for utilities to engage in programs such as energy efficiency, which if successful would reduce energy sales. Using a decoupling rate-setting mechanism, the NH PUC would determine how much revenue a utility needs to cover its fixed costs, and then set a rate to produce revenues to meet these costs. Rates are then reconciled on a periodic basis to allow the utilities to recover fixed costs regardless of sales volumes and, conversely, to return any over-recovery of such costs to ratepayers. "A decoupling design could also include incentives to promote energy conservation, and mechanisms that reward and penalize a utility based on its performance," says the NH PUC.



The NH PUC opened an investigation into decoupling and energy efficient rate mechanisms on its own accord. The docket number is DE 07-064. There is not yet a procedural schedule for the remainder of the investigation, but the next meeting may include outside experts who will discuss what is happening nationally with decoupling and generally what has already been established as the positives and negatives of such a design.

Would you adjust your electricity usage if you had a Smart Meter?



If you had a meter that told you when electricity was most expensive for you to use and when electricity was the least expensive to use – a "Smart" meter – would you adjust your usage? Let us know at oca@oca.nh.gov.

The NH PUC has a docket exploring this as well as four other federal energy standards created under the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The docket number is DE 06-061.

Legislative Corner



Before each legislative session, the OCA identifies bills related to its statutory charge of advocating on behalf of residential utility ratepayers. You may view and monitor bills pending at the Legislature at <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/ie/billstatus/quickbill.html>.

To express your opinions about bills you may contact your legislators at <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/ie/whosmyleg/>.

Did You Know?

- For free directory assistance, dial 1-800-FREE-411. You will need to listen to a brief advertisement and then you will get the telephone number you want.
- You can power your cell phone without electricity. Find out about solar cell phone chargers at www.mysoldius.com, and manual cell phone chargers at www.sidewinder.ca.
- The highest source of mercury in our air comes from burning fossil fuels to produce electricity. A power plant will emit 10 mg of mercury to produce the electricity to run an incandescent bulb compared to only 2.4 mg of mercury to run a CFL for the same period of time.
- As a member of the public, you may express your opinion about a pending docket at the NH PUC by submitting written comments to the Commission. When doing so, please reference the docket number, if known, and address your written comments to:

Debra A. Howland
Executive Director and Secretary
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-7319

- Any member of the public may go in person to the Commission's office, located at 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, in Concord, to review non-confidential documents on file.
- As of midnight on February 18, 2008, cellular telephone companies will not be required to provide analog service. While most wireless telephone users will not be affected by this transition, some users may. In addition, the transition could affect some alarm systems and some users of OnStar in-vehicle communications service. See <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/analogcellphone.html> for more information.
- NH legislators passed a bill last session to increase our use of renewable energy. In 2008 utilities will be required to begin to offer a portfolio of alternative energy to its customers, or pay into a renewable energy fund.

Do you need financial assistance to pay your utility bills or weatherizing your home?

Several past RateWatchers have described the assistance programs and energy efficient programs in the State of New Hampshire. Please refer to past newsletters to view what is available. You may view them at <http://www.oca.nh.gov/newsletters.htm>

Fuel Prices as of October 1, 2007:

Heating Oil	\$2.682 per gallon
Propane	\$2.497 per gallon
Kerosene	\$3.111 per gallon
Electricity	\$0.14224 per kwh
Gasoline regular	\$2.675 per gallon
Diesel	\$3.067 per gallon

As of November 1, 2007 the average rate for natural gas will be \$1.40 per therm.

Source: Office of Energy and Planning
<http://www.nh.gov/oep/index.htm>

The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA), www.neada.org, reported in a press release on September 25, 2007 that fuel prices for this heating season are projected to increase by 10.5%. An average family is expected to pay nearly \$400 more for home heating oil this year. Please prepare yourself and your home for the heating season by conserving, budgeting, and weatherizing.



Energy Saving Resources

- ❖ www.nhsaves.com - or call 1-866-266-2420 for information on NH programs. *You pay for these programs so use them!*
- ❖ www.dsireusa.org - for info about federal, state and local incentives for renewable energy, go to the Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy website.
- ❖ <http://nh.gov/oep/programs/energy/RenewableEnergyIncentives.htm> - NH Office of Energy and Planning is a good resource for local and state energy incentives.
- ❖ www.energy.gov - or call 1-800-342-5363 for the US Department of Energy.
- ❖ www.energyhog.org - A fun site for kids to learn about energy efficiency.
- ❖ www.powerisinyourhands.org - a useful website that has numerous pieces of energy efficiency information.
- ❖ www.energytaxincentives.org - provides information about tax credits to consumers for installing energy-efficient products or renewable energy measures in their homes.
- ❖ www.psnh.com/Residential/Efficiency/default.asp - or call 1-800-662-7764 for PSNH specific energy efficiency programs.
- ❖ http://www.nationalgridus.com/granitestate/home/energyeff/3_programs.asp - or call 1-800-322-3223 for National Grid specific energy efficiency programs.
- ❖ <http://www.nhec.com/> - or call 1-800-698-2007 for energy efficiency programs of the NH Electric Coop.
- ❖ http://services.unitil.com/ceco/energy_efficiency.asp - or call 1-800-852-3339 for energy efficiency programs of Unitil.
- ❖ www.northernutilities.com/forhome/NHeneraudit.htm - or call 1-800-232-0120 for Northern Utilities' energy efficiency programs.
- ❖ www.keyspanenergy.com/pshome/energy/saving_nh_kednh.jsp - or call 1-800-292-2032 for KeySpan Energy's energy efficiency programs.

What's new with the OCA!

Stephen Merrill, the OCA's Utility Analyst, retired in July. Thank you Steve for all your hard work and dedication at the OCA. Enjoy your retirement!

Stephen Eckberg joined the OCA as a Utility Analyst in July. Steve joined us from his most recent position as statewide director of the Electric Assistance Program (EAP). He previously worked at the Governor's Office of Energy as Director of the Weatherization Assistance Program. He brings experience in energy efficiency program evaluation and a strong background in a variety of analytical endeavors.

Also new to the OCA is Lisa Cleveland, who recently began work as a part-time administrative assistant. Lisa previously worked for NH Risk Management and the Governor's Office of Energy and Community Services.

Office of Consumer Advocate

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If you have ideas or suggestions for an upcoming newsletter, or have comments regarding this or prior newsletters, please contact Christina Martin at 271-1172 or at oca@oca.nh.gov.

A limited number of copies of this newsletter have been printed. Copying of this document for further distribution to others is encouraged.