

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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## **Bill Payment Assistance Still Available After Statewide Temporary Suspension on Disconnects Ends March 15**

**Merrillville, Ind.** —NIPSCO is reminding customers that bill payment assistance is still available after the state’s moratorium on disconnecting natural gas service during the winter for eligible customers ends March 15.

Between December 1 and March 15, natural gas utilities in Indiana do not disconnect service to Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) customers who are delinquent on their home heating bills.

Customers experiencing financial challenges are encouraged to contact NIPSCO to explore the options available to them, including:

- **LIHEAP Program:** Support is available to households falling within 150 percent of federal poverty guidelines and is fully funded by a federal block grant offered through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Applications for heating assistance are taken through May 12, 2017. Summer cooling assistance will run from June 5, 2017, through August 11, 2017.
- **NIPSCO Customer Assistance for Residential Energy (CARE) Discount Program:** In addition to the assistance available through LIHEAP, the NIPSCO CARE Discount Program is designed to provide further bill reductions to LIHEAP-eligible customers. Once enrolled in LIHEAP, customers are automatically enrolled in the program, and reductions range from 11 to 26 percent, depending on the same criteria used by the state in determining the level of assistance. CARE discounts are available through May 31, 2017, or until funds are exhausted.
- **NIPSCO Hardship Program:** For customers just outside the federal poverty guidelines for LIHEAP, the NIPSCO Hardship Program offers up to \$400 in gas bill assistance to households between 151 and 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Hardship funds are available through many of the same local Community Action Agencies where LIHEAP funds are distributed and are available through May 31, 2017, or until funds are exhausted.
- **Township Trustees:** A limited amount of energy assistance funds are available through local Township Trustee offices. Last year, approximately \$1.2 million was distributed to help nearly 7,000 customers. NIPSCO customers are encouraged to contact their local Township Trustee to see what help is available.
- **Payment Arrangements:** A NIPSCO credit agreement allows customers to make an initial payment within five days of the agreement, then spread the remaining unpaid balance over three months, plus current bills as they are due.

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For more information on billing options and payment assistance, visit [NIPSCO.com/PaymentAssistance](http://NIPSCO.com/PaymentAssistance).

In addition to offering a number of payment assistance options, NIPSCO offers a number of energy-efficiency programs to help lower energy usage and bills. Visit [NIPSCO.com/Save](http://NIPSCO.com/Save) for more information on available programs and other ways to save.

**About NIPSCO:** *Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO), with headquarters in Merrillville, Indiana, has proudly served the energy needs of northern Indiana for more than 100 years. As Indiana's largest natural gas distribution company and the second-largest electric distribution company, NIPSCO serves approximately 810,000 natural gas and 460,000 electric customers across 32 counties. NIPSCO is part of NiSource's (NYSE: NI) seven regulated utility companies. NiSource is one of the largest fully regulated utility companies in the United States, serving approximately 4 million natural gas and electric customers through its local Columbia Gas and NIPSCO brands. More information about NIPSCO and NiSource is available at [NIPSCO.com](http://NIPSCO.com) and [NiSource.com](http://NiSource.com).*

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