

CenterPoint/Evansville Legislator Accountability Project

September 18, 2025



Agenda

- How Did We Get Such High CenterPoint Bills?
- Changes Needed to Fix This
- How Ratepayers Have Organized and Fought Back
- Next Steps – the Legislative Accountability Project
- Q&A

Introductions

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Citizens Action Coalition

- CAC is Indiana's oldest and largest consumer and environmental advocacy organization.
- Since our inception in 1974, we've helped to save Hoosiers **billions** in excess utility charges.
- CAC advocates on behalf of Hoosiers on issues regarding energy policy, utility reform, health care, pollution prevention, and family farms.

Grassroots organizing



Legislative advocacy



Regulatory advocacy



How did we get such high
CenterPoint bills?

Utility Regulation in Indiana

- **Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC)**
 - Consumer Counselor serves at the will and pleasure of Governor
- **Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC)**
 - Primary function is a surrogate to competition, economic regulator
 - Creature of statute
 - Five Commissioner's who serve at the will and pleasure of the Governor
 - IURC Nominating Committee interviews applicants and sends three names to the Governor to select one
 - No more than three Commissioners may be of the same political party as the Governor
 - One of the five Commissioners must be an attorney
 - Sets rate of return for investor-owned utilities, like CenterPoint, receive
 - Approves all the charges, fees, and rates charged by regulated utilities

Legislative Rate Hikes

■ Trackers & Backdoor Deregulation

- Legislation passed by the Indiana Statehouse expands the use of trackers
- Trackers allow the utility to recover costs on an on-going basis by adjusting rates on an annual, quarterly or semi-annual basis
- Before trackers, utilities had to manage their costs between rate cases. After trackers, the utilities have no incentive to control their costs
- Trackers reduce the risk to CenterPoint, but raise your rates with little to no oversight

Legislation that has increased your bills:

citact.org/legislative-rate-hikes

Construction Work in Progress



"CWIP" allows utilities to charge ratepayers for power plants while they are under construction, before they are producing any electricity, and even if they NEVER produce any electricity. SEA29 (2002), SEA271 (2022), HEA1421 (2023), SEA423 & SEA424 (2025)

Transmission & Distribution Legislation



"TDSIC" gives utilities more profit to keep up the maintenance of their system - an obligation they were already under and should not receive extra profit for performing. This effectively provides CenterPoint a blank check courtesy of ratepayers. SEA560 (2013), HEA 1470 (2019), HEA1420 (2023)

Reducing the IURC's Authority



The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission is the regulatory body for Indiana's investor-owned utilities. Indiana legislators have stripped away much of the IURC's authority to make decisions that promote fair utility bills. SEA 251 (2011), HEA1417 (2023), SEA 9 (2023), HB1007 (2025)

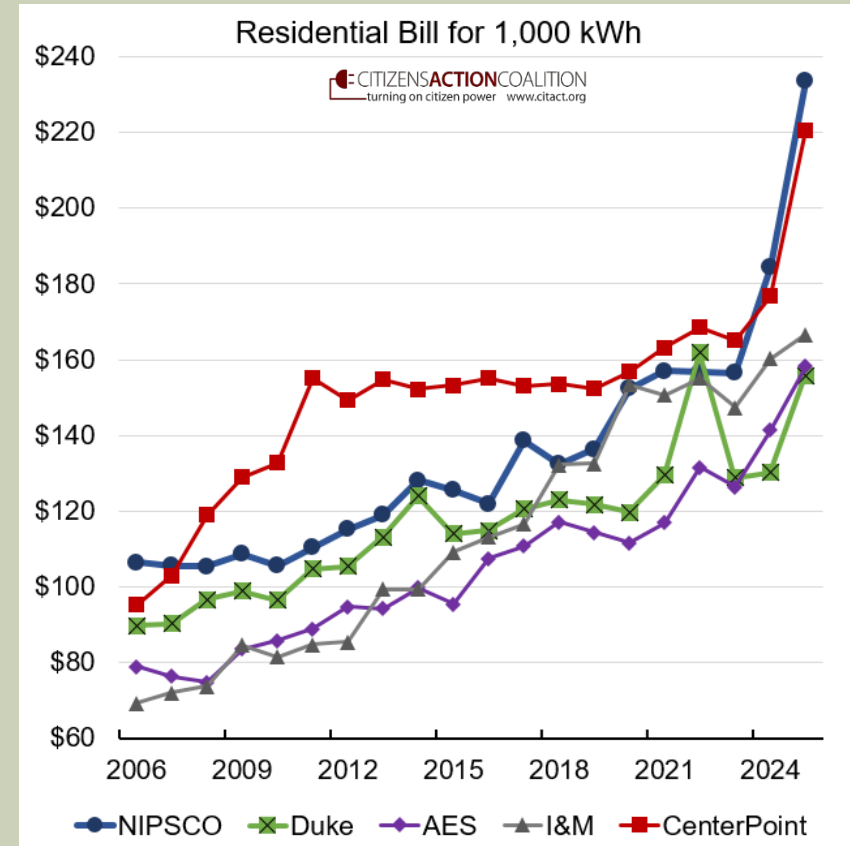
Stifling Consumer Protections & Energy Independence

- Monopoly utilities have used their power and influence at the Indiana Statehouse to block pro-consumer bills from receiving a hearing, and to stifle solar and energy efficiency
- SEA 309 (2017) phased out net metering in Indiana, making it more difficult for Hoosiers benefit from rooftop solar
- SEA 340 (2014) killed Energizing Indiana, an effective statewide energy efficiency program with energy savings goals
- Community Solar makes the benefits of solar available to everyone, but existing law does not allow independent community solar

The Result: Record Rate Increases

■ Monopoly electric utilities slam Hoosiers with historic bill hikes in past 12 months:

- Average increase: \$28/month
 - **CenterPoint: \$44/month**
 - NIPSCO: \$50/month
 - Duke: \$26/month
 - AES Indiana: \$17/month (12%)
 - I&M: \$6/month
- Largest average increase in at least two decades



Solutions Exist!

■ Repeal Anti-consumer legislation and related trackers

- Increase the discretion and flexibility of the IURC
- Increase the incentive for CenterPoint and the other investor-owned utilities to manage their costs between rate cases

■ Guarantee universal service for all

- Reduce disconnections during the summer
- Establish programs for low-income ratepayers struggling to get by

■ Prevent utilities from using ratepayer money for lobbying and campaign contributions

- From 2021-2024 utilities spent \$3.6 million in campaign contributions

■ Support policies that give customers control over energy costs

- Energy efficiency
- Rooftop Solar
- Community Solar

How ratepayers
are organizing and
fighting back

Organizing and Advocating

■ After a decade of sky-high utility rates, a group called Direct Action Against CenterPoint Energy (DAACE) formed

- Since 2022 the group has organized and educated many CenterPoint ratepayers about what they can do to fight back against unjust utility rates
- Currently over 16,000 members on Facebook.
- DAACE is an important force in our community, allowing us to build relationships, spread awareness, and advocate for much-needed change



Organizing and Advocating

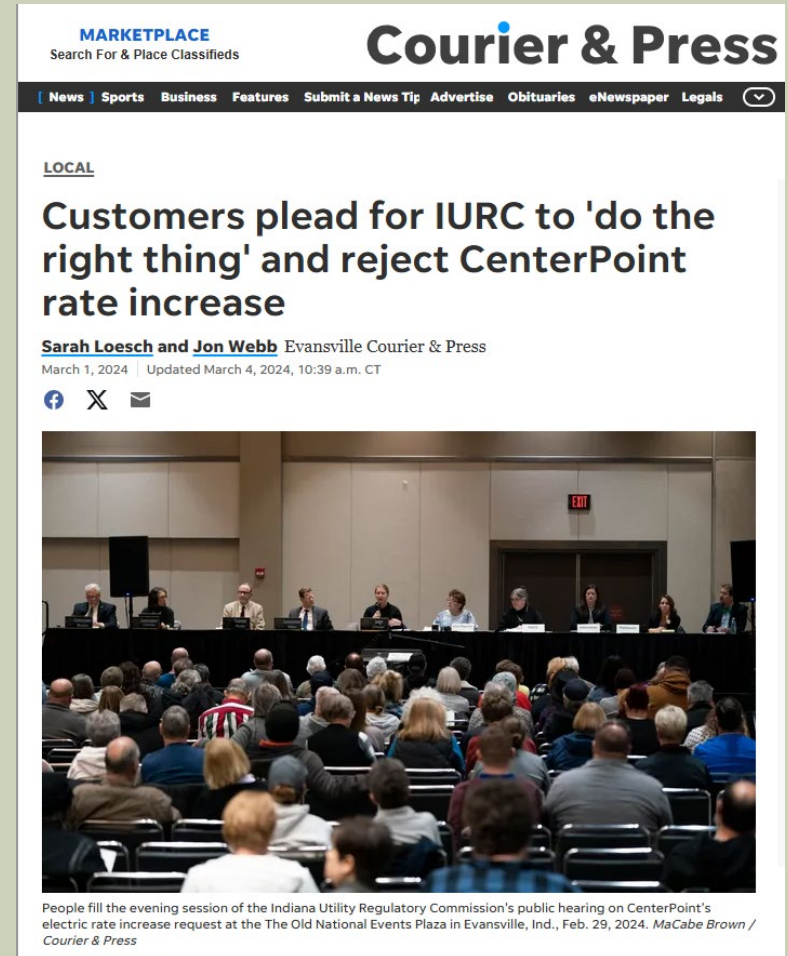
- **The grassroots efforts of DAACE and other local organizations are making an impact**
 - Several local legislators have started to shift their votes towards a pro-consumer stance
 - Numerous media stories have highlighted the issues facing CenterPoint as a company and ratepayers
- Many small businesses have also expressed their frustration with the high utility rates



Organizing and Advocating

On February 29 2024, 70+ people testified to the IURC against CenterPoint's request for a rate hike

- Testimony lasted 9+ hours; the longest in recent memory
- Our community shared powerful testimony, including the difficult decisions folks have to make to afford high CenterPoint bills
- Local elected officials also testified, demonstrating bipartisan support for much needed change



What do we do now?

Next Steps

■ **Legislative rate hikes have enabled CenterPoint's greed**

- Legislative rate hikes have given Investor-Owned Utilities a blank check
- Companies like CenterPoint have used their influence to stifle any competition
- The IURC has been handcuffed in several ways by the Indiana General Assembly

■ **The best way to reverse these trends is to communicate with your legislators about the change we need**

- In person meetings are the most effective way to build relationships and advocate for change
- Sharing your and your neighbors' stories is critical to counteract the lobbying influence of CenterPoint & other monopolies

Legislator Accountability Project

- **Action Item: We need you to meet with your legislators, share your story, and advocate for policy change**
- **We will support you throughout this process:**
 - We will hold an in-person training session to prepare you to meet with your legislators
 - We will guide you throughout the process of scheduling meetings with your legislators and following up if they don't respond
 - We will debrief with you after the meeting to learn about your experience

In-Person Training Session

- We will hold an in-person training session on **Thursday, October 16th at 6 PM** at Central Library in Evansville in the Browning Room
 - If you can't attend, we will coordinate with you to get the info you need!
- During the training session, we will share talking points, rebuttals, and specific legislative requests for you to share with your legislators
- The training session will give you a chance to connect with other project participants
- After the training session, we will provide additional support as needed to help you throughout the remainder of the process

Sign up to participate!

- Scan the QR code to visit citact.org/evv-lap-signup to fill out a form to participate in our Legislative Accountability Project



Q&A

Questions & Answers

- Please type your question using the Q&A feature
- For more information about our work, visit www.citact.org
 - Make a contribution to support our work
 - Sign up for emails and texts to stay in the loop
 - Take action on consumer and environmental issues impacting Hoosiers!

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