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Braun Administration Cuts Deal with NIPSCO: Customers Get Pennies on the Dollar for Decades of Overcharges While Losing Programs That Save Them Money

INDIANAPOLIS — The Braun administration and NIPSCO are asking Indiana regulators to approve a pair of settlements that would let the powerful monopoly utility escape meaningful accountability for a massive gas metering debacle, while abruptly dismantling nearly all of the utility's cost-saving gas energy efficiency programs serving the more than 800,000 NIPSCO gas customers.

The proposed deals amount to a stunning giveaway to NIPSCO at the expense of Hoosier families and businesses. The utility would escape a full investigation into how thousands of customers were overcharged for gas, potentially for decades, while refunding affected customers for only 2.5 years of the damage, even though some customers could have been overcharged for a period of more than 50 years. The average affected customer was overcharged by more than $400 in just the past 1-year period, so the deal could shortchange affected customers by thousands, or even tens of thousands, of dollars, allowing NIPSCO to keep the overcharges.

Meanwhile, the Braun administration negotiated another deal that would eliminate nearly all NIPSCO gas energy efficiency programs, programs which have helped customers lower their bills for nearly 20 years. Energy efficiency reduces the amount of natural gas utilities must purchase, transport, and deliver, helping manage long-term system needs and costs, and provides tools for customers to insulate and upgrade their homes and businesses to lower their own monthly bills. The programs also support the contractors, tradespeople, and businesses that deliver these improvements throughout northern Indiana.

"The Braun administration is sweeping NIPSCO's mismanagement under the rug, allowing NIPSCO to get away with ripping off thousands of its gas customers for decades with little consequence," said Ben Inskeep, CAC's Program Director. "NIPSCO ratepayers deserve a full and transparent investigation into NIPSCO's wrongdoing, and customers who have been overcharged deserve full refunds, with interest. Allowing NIPSCO to kill its beneficial gas energy efficiency programs would add insult to injury for families across northern Indiana struggling to manage their soaring NIPSCO bills."

Potentially Largest and Longest-Lasting Gas Metering Problem in U.S. History

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NIPSCO has acknowledged that more than 6,800 gas customers were overcharged (with more yet to be identified through the end of the year), where faulty meters charged them *double* for the gas they used. Many of the affected gas meters were installed between the 1970s and 1990s. Thus, some customers may have been overcharged for more than 50 years, and thousands more for 20 to 50 years. This could be the longest period in U.S. history in which a utility massively overcharged thousands of natural gas customers.

NIPSCO claims it did not discover the problem until October 2024, yet it continued to hide the problem from the IURC until September 2025. NIPSCO did not inform customers until March 2026 (and, even then, did not adequately explain what had occurred).

The settlement would not even require NIPSCO to share proceeds it receives from potential future litigation against the meter manufacturer with ratepayers, nor would it prevent NIPSCO from requesting in the future to recover the costs from its customers of the meter investigation and the limited restitution it provides to affected customers.

Rather than requiring meaningful accountability for NIPSCO's failures, the settlement would allow the utility to close the investigation while leaving customers to absorb most of the financial harm that unjustly enriched NIPSCO.

Braun Administration Targets Programs That Lower Customers' Gas Bills

The other half of this bargain would abruptly end nearly all of NIPSCO's natural gas energy efficiency programs as early as January 1, 2027. For nearly 20 years, these programs have helped customers reduce gas consumption, lower monthly bills, and improve the comfort of their homes and businesses. NIPSCO's cost-effective gas efficiency programs delivered meaningful benefits to Hoosiers in 2025: more than 5,000 home rebates; 1,400 home energy assessments; nearly 5,000 instant discounts; 2,350 new construction rebates; and over 500 businesses received meaningful gas efficiency services and products. These programs collectively saved more than 5.1 million therms of natural gas.

Two Unrelated Cases, One Deal: NIPSCO Wins, Customers Lose

The settlements arise from two entirely separate IURC proceedings, yet the Braun administration and NIPSCO have linked them together in a single deal. NIPSCO gets to close an investigation into what is one of the largest and potentially longest-lasting gas metering problems in U.S. history, while the administration sacrifices decades of energy savings for a one-day victory lap. This penny-wise, pound-foolish policymaking dismantles a critical tool for Hoosiers and runs counter to sound utility planning.

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“Hoosiers need to be made whole when a utility harms them,” said Kerwin Olson, CAC’s Executive Director. “And Hoosiers need lower bills, not political theater dressed up as rate relief. Dismantling energy efficiency programs runs counterintuitive to addressing affordability and further erodes what few choices Hoosier ratepayers held captive by monopolies have in controlling their energy costs.”

CAC urges NIPSCO gas customers to submit comments to the OUCC opposing the settlements and asking the IURC to reject them. CAC will file testimony opposing the settlements in January 2027. More information, including the settlement agreements, are available in IURC Cause Nos. 46329 and 46390.

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