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Washington Gas Expects Winter Bills to Increase and Encourages Customers to Prepare for Heating Season

WASHINGTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Washington Gas announced today that its customers could expect a 20 percent increase in heating bills over last winter due to last year's mild winter weather. Natural gas prices may vary if temperatures are colder than anticipated and create an increased demand for natural gas. With an anticipated return to normal weather this winter, resulting in increased usage and higher bills, Washington Gas encourages customers to prepare accordingly for the heating season.

"We are committed to providing safe, reliable natural gas service to communities across the region while ensuring that our customers have the energy answers they need to stay warm this winter," said Adrian Chapman, President and Chief Operating Officer at Washington Gas. "Throughout the summer and fall, we have filled our natural gas storage services. These services are essential to meeting winter demand. We also maintain access to a diverse set of natural gas supply points to cost effectively serve our customers' needs under all weather conditions."

As utility bills can be hard to navigate, Washington Gas encourages customers to ask any questions that they have when bills arrive. In short, bills have three components:

- | The gas supplied to the customer (calculated and noted in "[therms](#)" in the Purchased Gas Charge section of the bill)
- | The cost of delivering the gas (labeled the Distribution Charge), and
- | The system charge, a fixed monthly amount that covers certain costs of providing natural gas service, such as maintenance and repair of critical infrastructure.

As a regulated utility, Washington Gas charges customers the same price that the company pays for the natural gas supply, transportation and storage. Taxes or other fees levied by state and local governments are also included as separate line items on the bill.

Customers will see a fluctuation in their bill amounts as seasons change, with more energy from natural gas being used in the coldest months of winter. So, as colder weather approaches, Washington Gas continues to encourage customers to prepare their homes by taking simple steps now to help manage energy costs and stay safe, warm and energy-smart when temperatures start to drop:

- | Change or clean your furnace or air filters once a month, and schedule an annual furnace or boiler check-up with a licensed professional.
- | Caulk and weather strip around doors and windows.
- | Install rubber gaskets behind outlet and switch plates.
- | Check dampers in unused fireplaces, and close them if they are open.
- | Turn the water heater down to warm or low settings, never more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- | Wash full loads of laundry in cold water, using specially-formulated cold water detergents.
- | Consider installing new, high-efficiency appliances and look for the *ENERGY STAR* label for efficiency ratings.
- | Consider purchasing a programmable thermostat, which automatically lowers the temperature setting at night and increases the setting during the day.

Always Safe!

At Washington Gas, safety is the number one priority. That is why it is particularly important that customers are aware of a winter hazard and what to do about it. Washington Gas strongly encourages anyone who smells gas to move to a safe location and call 911 and the Washington Gas emergency line at 703-750-1400.

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