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

WASHINGTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Washington Gas announced today that customers may experience an increase of up to 18 percent in heating bills compared to last winter because of the mild weather last year. Natural gas prices may vary if temperatures are colder than projected and create an increased demand for natural gas. With a return to normal weather anticipated this winter, which could result in increased usage, Washington Gas encourages customers to prepare themselves for the heating season by following some essential weatherization tips.

"We are dedicated to providing natural gas service that is safe and reliable to communities throughout the region, and that helps our customers to stay warm during the upcoming winter season," said Adrian Chapman, President and Chief Operating Officer at Washington Gas. "To cost-effectively serve our customers under a variety of weather conditions, we have taken many steps throughout the year, including filling our natural gas storage services to give us abundant supply as the colder month's approach. We also have maintained a diverse set of natural gas supply points so we are fully prepared to serve the needs of our customers this winter."

"Washington Gas employees are committed to delivering dependable service to our customers," said Douglas A. Staebler, Senior Vice President, Utility Operations, Washington Gas. "We are keenly aware of the importance of the reliability of our service, particularly during the winter heating season. Our call centers, dispatch team and service crews operate around the clock, and will continue to remain available and responsive to customer needs, with safety and reliability as our highest priorities, to effectively service our customers across the region throughout the cold months ahead."

Winter Preparation Tips

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. Washington Gas encourages customers to prepare their homes by taking simple steps now to help manage energy costs and stay safe, warm and energy-smart when temperatures begin to drop. According to industry estimates, the typical low-income home saves an average of 25% on energy consumption and saves an average of more than \$275 annually in heating and cooling costs after weatherization services.

- | 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. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas, created when fossil fuels are not burned completely. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends putting CO detectors outside the bedrooms in each separate sleeping area of your home. Also recommended is the installation of smoke alarms on each level of your residence and inside every bedroom. For both types of devices, check batteries monthly and replace them at least twice a year.

Washington Gas also 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. As a reminder, we add an unpleasant odorant called mercaptan to natural gas delivered through Washington Gas' distribution system. Mercaptan gives natural gas a strong, unpleasant odor (like sulfur or rotten eggs) so you will be able to detect escaping natural gas.

Understanding Your Bill

Since utility bills can be difficult to navigate, Washington Gas encourages customers to contact us with questions that they have when bills arrive. In summary bills have three components:

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

Instructional videos that provide education on how to better understand your bill can be found on washingtongas.com (search: Understanding your charges).

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 also are included as separate line items on the bill.

Payment Plans

To help manage energy costs, Washington Gas offers several payment plans and services. For customers having difficulty paying their natural gas bills, please contact Washington Gas as soon as possible to learn about alternative payment plans that may be available. Plans include:

- | **The Washington Gas Budget Plan:** This plan allows eligible customers to spread the cost of winter heating over the entire year. It helps to minimize the impact of typically higher seasonal bills and provides greater flexibility in managing a household budget. The Budget Plan is designed as a 12-month program, and we encourage customers to stay on it year-round to realize the potential benefits.
- | **Customer Choice:** This is an option for customers to buy their natural gas from a licensed energy supply company other than Washington Gas. Regardless of which company sells you natural gas, Washington Gas will continue to deliver the gas safely and reliably to your home through its distribution system, address your customer needs and respond around the clock to natural gas emergencies. For more information, visit washingtongas.com, place your cursor over *MY ACCOUNT* and click on *Customer Choice*.
- | **The Washington Area Fuel Fund (WAFF):** Founded by Washington Gas and administered by The Salvation Army, WAFF helps families who do not qualify for, or who have exhausted, government energy assistance. WAFF provides funds for all types of fuel to heat families' homes during the winter heating season. Washington Gas pays the administrative fees of the fund so that 100 percent of WAFF donations go directly to those who need assistance. For more information or to apply for assistance, contact The Salvation Army at **888-318-WAFF (9233)** or visit www.waffhelp.org.

Further, if a customer or someone they know is having difficulty paying a natural gas bill in the District of Columbia, they can also contact the [Department of Energy & Environment \(DOEE\)](#) at 311 or online to determine eligibility for the following program:

- | **Residential Essential Service (RES) Program:** Eligible Washington, D.C. residents may qualify for a discount on a portion of the natural gas they use during the winter heating season from November 1 to April 30. To be eligible for the RES discount, residents must use natural gas as the principal source for home heating and be certified by DOEE as eligible for the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Once certified, eligible customers may participate in the RES program for one heating season and must reapply annually.

For additional information about energy assistance, the budget plan, energy efficiency, safety and more, visit washingtongas.com.

About Washington Gas

Washington Gas Light Company is a regulated natural gas utility providing safe, reliable natural gas service to more than

1.1 million customers in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. A subsidiary of WGL Holdings, Inc. (WGL), the company has been providing energy to residential, commercial and industrial customers for 168 years.

About WGL

WGL (NYSE: WGL), headquartered in Washington, D.C., is a leading source for clean, efficient and diverse energy solutions. With activities and assets across the U.S., WGL consists of Washington Gas, WGL Energy, WGL Midstream and Hampshire Gas. WGL provides options for natural gas, electricity, green power and energy services, including generation, storage, transportation, distribution, supply and efficiency. Our calling as a company is to make energy surprisingly easy for our employees, our community and all our customers. Whether you are a homeowner or renter, small business or multinational corporation, state and local or federal agency, WGL is here to provide Energy Answers. Ask Us. For more information, visit us at wgl.com.

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