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**COLD WEATHER RULE GIVES GAS CUSTOMERS ADDITIONAL 30 DAYS**

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Public Service Commission’s cold weather rule gives natural gas customers of the state’s three jurisdictional utilities an additional 30 days to pay their bills from November\_1 through March 31.

The Commission said that persons experiencing difficulties in paying their natural gas bills during the high heating cost months of November through March should first contact their utility companies. The companies – SourceGas, Black Hills, and NorthWestern – maintain information on assistance programs to help customers with their natural gas bills.

One source of funding is the federally financed Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) which this year infused nearly \$23.7 million into its Nebraska program in a law signed by the President in mid-summer.

Under the cold weather rule, natural gas utilities may not disconnect customers for non-payment of their bills for an additional 30 days in the fourth months covered by the rule, giving customers extra time to organize some form of payment plan with their utility companies.

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