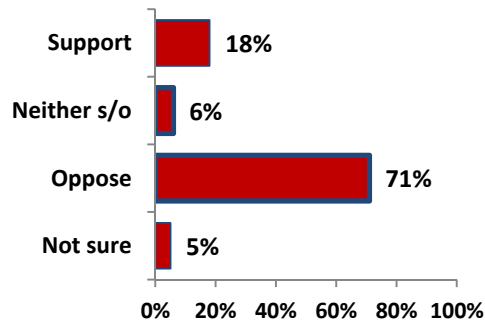


**2013 AARP Survey of Illinois Adults Age 18+:  
Summary of Opinions on Natural Gas Rates and Legislation**  
Prepared Jennifer Sauer, State Research, AARP

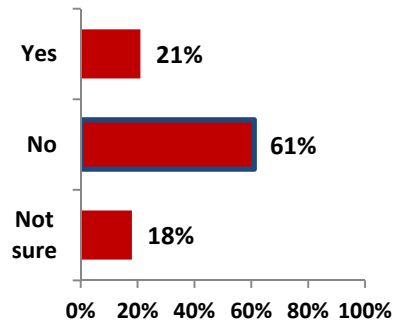
**Natural gas companies in Illinois are proposing annual automatic rate increases over the next 10 years to help fund infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements beyond what is already required by law. This survey shows strong opposition to this proposal across two key demographics: income and political party.**

- ✚ The overwhelming majority (71%) of Illinoisans oppose the state’s leading natural gas companies’ proposal to raise customer rates for extra infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements beyond what is required by law.
- ✚ Further, Illinois natural gas customers do not believe their state officials are doing enough to lower the cost of their natural gas bills (61%). And, along with electric utility customers, they do not believe their interests are represented and taken into consideration when rate increases are proposed (60%).

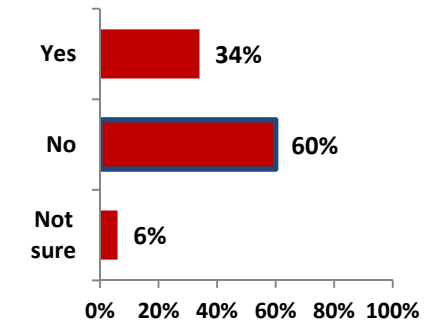
**Support/Opposition: Rate Increases for Infrastructure and Non-Infrastructure Improvements**  
(n=800 Illinoisans)



**Believe State Officials Doing Enough To Lower Cost Of Natural Gas Bills?**  
(n= 542 Illinois natural gas customers )



**Believe Interests of Utility Customers are Represented/Taken Into Consideration?**  
(n= 629 Illinois natural gas/electric customers )



**Differences by Reported Annual Income**

- ✓ Regardless of income, Illinois natural gas customers oppose rate increases for extra infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements (< \$50k: **72%**; \$50k or more: **72%**).
- ✓ Likewise, regardless of income, Illinois natural gas customers do not believe officials do enough to lower customer’s natural gas bills (< \$50k: **67%**; \$50k or more: **61%**).
- ✓ There are differences by income among Illinois natural gas *and* electric customers who do not believe their interests are represented/taken into consideration by state officials (< \$50k: **69%**; \$50k or more: **59%**).

**Differences by Political Party Affiliation**

- ✓ Illinoisans across political party lines oppose rate increases for extra infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements (Republican: **69%**; Independent: **76%**; Democrat: **70%**).
- ✓ Also consistent across party lines is believing that state officials are not doing enough to lower the cost of customers’ natural gas bills (Republican: **58%**; Independent: **62%**; Democrat: **61%**).
- ✓ Independent Illinois natural gas *and* electric customers are more likely than their Republican counterparts to say customers’ interests are not represented/taken into consideration (Republican: **50%**; Independent: **65%**; Democrat: **60%**).

AARP commissioned Precision Opinion to field this RDD survey between May 4, 2013 and May 12, 2013. This state survey yielded 800 completed interviews and the final sample was weighted by age and gender of Illinoisans age 18 and older. The margin of error is ± 3.5%. Contact Jennifer Sauer for questions about this survey at [jsauer@aarp.org](mailto:jsauer@aarp.org).

## Study Methodology

This AARP survey was conducted as a telephone survey among 18+ year old residents in the state of Illinois. The interviews were conducted in English by Precision Opinion from May 4 to May 12, 2013. The sample was weighted by general population in the state of Illinois age 18+. The margin of sampling error for the random sample of 800 for Illinois is +/-3.5%. The RDD sample age targeted 18+ based on the census division information from the state of Illinois. The telephone sample was pulled with virtual Genesys system from Marketing Systems Group (MSG). The questionnaire was developed by AARP staff. In order to improve the quality of the data, the questionnaire was pretested with a small number of respondents. The response rate for this study was 29% and was measured using AAPOR's response rate 3 method. The cooperation rate was 86% and was also measured using AAPOR's cooperation rate 3 method. The refusal rate was .067% and was also measured using AAPOR's refusal rate 3 method.<sup>1</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

AARP staff that contributed to the design and implementation of this study include: Scott Musser and Gerardo Cardenas of the AARP state office in Illinois; Coralette Hannon and Janee Briesemeister of the AARP State and National Group State Advocacy; Jodi Sakol and Chryste Hall of the AARP State and National Group Campaigns; and State Advocacy and Strategy Integration; Rachelle Cummins and Joanne Binette Research & Strategic Analysis; Michael Schuster of the Office of General Counsel. Precision Opinion fielded, entered, tabulated, and weighted the data. Jennifer H. Sauer designed the survey and authored this summary. For more information about this survey, the methodology or the dispositions, please contact Jennifer H. Sauer at [jsauer@aarp.org](mailto:jsauer@aarp.org) or at (202) 434-6207.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: AAPOR Outcome Rate Calculator Version 2.1 May 2003

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of more than 37 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment security and retirement planning. We advocate for consumers in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org); AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP VIVA, a bilingual news source. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).



### **Research and Strategic Analysis**

**For more information about this survey, please contact Jennifer Sauer at:  
202.434.6207 or e-mail [jsauer@aarp.org](mailto:jsauer@aarp.org)**

**2013 AARP Illinois Utilities Annotated Survey  
18+ Statewide Residents**

**INTRODUCTION/SCREENER**

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from \_\_\_\_\_, Inc., a national opinion research firm. We are not telemarketers and are not trying to sell you anything. We would like to find out your opinions on utility service in Illinois. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. All your responses will be kept entirely confidential.

S1. Our study is interested in the opinions of certain age groups. Could you please tell me your age as of your last birthday? [IN YEARS] \_\_\_\_\_ [RECORD ACTUAL AGE AND USE THE AGE GROUPS BELOW TO KEEP TRACK OF HOW MANY RESPONDENTS WE ARE GETTING IN EACH GROUP]

Base: Total respondents	800
Under 18 [THANK AND TERMINATE]	-
18- 24	12.8%
25-34	18.2%
35-44	17.5%
45-54	
55-64	18.9%
65-74	15.7%
75 or older	9.0%
Refused [TERMINATE]	7.9%

S2. And just to confirm, are you a resident of Illinois?

Base: Total respondents	800
Yes	100%
No [THANK AND TERMINATE]	-

S3. Do you currently own or rent your primary residence?

Base: Total respondents	800
Rent	23.2%
Own	69.9%
Not sure	5.9%
Refused	1.0%

## Main Questionnaire

### Electric and Natural Gas Use and Affordability

MQ1. From what company do you receive your electric bill? [**DO NOT READ – RECORD ANSWER**]

Base: Total respondents	800
Ameren	23.1%
Commonwealth Edison (ComEd)	56.9%
Don't pay electric [ <b>SKIP TO MQ. 5</b> ]	0.3%
Don't pay for utilities where I live [ <b>SKIP TO MQ10</b> ] [INTERVIEWER CONFIRM: 'So you don't pay natural gas either?' IF RESPONDENT SAYS 'NO, I don't' <b>SKIP TO MQ10</b> . IF RESPONDENT SAYS 'YES, I DO, <b>SKIP TO MQ5</b> ']	1.6%
Not sure [DO NOT READ] [ <b>SKIP TO MQ. 5</b> ]	17.3%
Refused [DO NOT READ] [ <b>SKIP TO MQ. 5</b> ]	0.8%

MQ2. In the past 12 months, has your electric bill.... [INTERVIEWER READ AND RANDOMIZE EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?

Base:	640
Ameren/ComEd Customers	
Gone down	15.9%
Gone up	21.8%
Stayed the same	46.0%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	16.3%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

MQ3. How concerned are you about the costs of your electricity going up over the next 2 years? Are you extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned?

Base:	640
Ameren/ComEd Customers	
Extremely concerned	14.0%
Very concerned	17.5%
Somewhat concerned	31.8%
Not very concerned	21.3%
Not at all concerned	14.0%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	1.3%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

MQ4. And do you believe your state elected officials are doing enough to lower the cost of your electric bills?

Base: Ameren/ComEd Customers	640
Yes	23.4%
No	56.9%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	19.4%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.3%

MQ5. From what company do you receive your natural gas bill? [**DO NOT READ – RECORD ANSWER**]

Base: Total respondents	800
Ameren	14.1%
Peoples/North Shore Gas	13.1%
Nicor Gas	40.6%
Do NOT use natural gas in home [ <b>SKIP TO MQ9</b> ]	10.8%
Do NOT pay for natural gas/do not pay for any utilities] [ <b>SKIP TO MQ10</b> ]	4.9%
Not sure [ <b>SKIP TO MQ10</b> ]	16.0%
Refused [ <b>SKIP TO MQ10</b> ]	0.6%

MQ6. And what about your natural gas bill – in the past 12 months has this..... [**INTERVIEWER READ AND RANDOMIZE EACH ANSWER CATEGORY**]?

Base: Ameren/Peoples/NSG/Nicor Customers	542
Gone down	12.5%
Gone up	23.5%
Stayed the same	52.7%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	11.1%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.2%

MQ7. And how concerned are you about the costs of your natural gas going up over the next 2 years? Are you extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned?

Base: Ameren/Peoples/NSG/Nicor Customers	542
Extremely concerned	14.4%
Very concerned	19.7%
Somewhat concerned	33.1%
Not very concerned	21.2%
Not at all concerned	10.9%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	0.7%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

MQ8. Do you believe your state elected officials are doing enough to lower the cost of your **natural gas** bills?

Base: Ameren/Peoples/NSG/Nicor Customers	542
Yes	21.3%
No	60.7%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	17.6%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.2%

MQ9. When rate increases are proposed, do you believe the interests of utility customers like yourself are represented and taken into consideration?

BASE: Total Utility Users	629
Yes	33.6%
No	60.4%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	6.0%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

### Gas Company Proposal

**[INTERVIEWER READ: Whether or not you use or pay for natural gas, I'd now like to hear what you think about a state legislative proposal].**

MQ10. Current law in Illinois requires utility companies to keep their infrastructure in good working order. Under a current proposal, Peoples/North Shore Gas and Ameren Gas are requesting \$2.5 billion and \$380 million respectively in annual automatic rate increases over the next 10 years to help pay for infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements beyond what is already required by law. These rate increases would be in addition to any other cost increases due to charges and delivery service rates. Do you support or oppose these annual automatic rate increases for infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements? And do you strongly or somewhat support/oppose?

Base: Total respondents	800
Strongly support	4.6%
Somewhat support	13.4%
Neither support or oppose [DO NOT READ]	6.4%
Somewhat oppose	24.3%
Strongly oppose	46.6%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	5.1%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

## ICC and Consumer Protection

MQ11. As you may know, the Illinois Commerce Commission (or the ICC) provides public information on utility issues, resolves customer issues and utility disputes, and ensures reasonable utility rates and reliable service. The proposed legislation would also change how the ICC operates. One change includes allowing Peoples/ North Shore and Ameren Gas natural gas companies to begin automatic rate increases for infrastructure improvements **before** the ICC has completed a full review of their request for those rate increases. Do you support or oppose this change? And do you strongly or somewhat support/oppose?

Base: Total respondents	800
Strongly support	3.4%
Somewhat support	9.4%
Neither support or oppose [DO NOT READ]	4.4%
Somewhat oppose	19.2%
Strongly oppose	59.3%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	4.4%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	-

MQ12. This proposed legislation would also **no longer** require these companies to justify their requests for automatic rate increases for infrastructure improvements to the ICC. Do you support or oppose this change? And do you strongly or somewhat support/oppose [not requiring justification to the ICC]?

Base: Total respondents	800
Strongly support	5.3%
Somewhat support	6.9%
Neither support or oppose [DO NOT READ]	3.0%
Somewhat oppose	16.8%
Strongly oppose	64.6%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	3.3%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.1%

MQ13. How important do you think it is for the ICC to examine whether or not natural gas companies are using money collected from customers in rates to maintain reliability and improve infrastructure?

Base: Total respondents	800
Extremely important	41.9%
Very important	34.9%
Somewhat important	16.6%
Not too important	2.7%
Not at all important	2.0%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	1.9%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.1%



**[ROTATE MQ14 AND MQ15]**

MQ14. If your state legislator *voted* to approve automatic rate increases for infrastructure improvements, would you feel more favorable towards that legislator, less favorable, or would it have no impact on your level of favorability toward them?

Base: Total respondents	800
More favorable	10.8%
Less favorable	64.7%
No impact	21.2%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	3.0%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.4%

MQ15. If a candidate for state office in Illinois *commits to preventing* natural gas companies from charging unreasonable rates to customers, would you feel more favorable towards that candidate, less favorable, or would it have no impact on your level of favorability toward them?

Base: Total respondents	800
More favorable	63.3%
Less favorable	13.7%
No impact	20.4%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	2.3%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	0.4%

**Demographics**

The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

D1. RECORD RESPONDENT’S GENDER. ASK ONLY IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY: “To ensure it is recorded accurately, could you please state your gender?”

Base: Total respondents	800
Male	48.4%
Female	51.6%

D2. What is your current marital status? Are you.....[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?

Base: Total respondents	800
Married	56.6%
Not married, living with your partner or significant other	5.9%
Separated	1.0%
Divorced	6.8%
Widowed	7.9%
Or are you currently single and never married	18.7%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	0.4%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	2.7%

D3. [IF D2 = MARRIED ASK: “Are you or your spouse currently a member of A-A-R-P?” IF D2 = NOT MARRIED, LIVING WITH PARTNER ASK: “Are you or your partner currently a member of AARP?” OTHERWISE ASK “Are you currently a member of AARP?”]

Base: Total respondents	800
Yes	23.0%
No	74.1%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	1.0%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	1.9%

D4. What is the highest level of education that you completed? [READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]

Base: Total respondents	800
0 to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, but with no diploma	3.4%
High school graduate or equivalent	21.6%
Post high school education, but with no degree	11.4%
2 year degree	13.4%
4 year degree	24.3%
Post graduate study, but with no degree	5.0%
Graduate or professional degree	19.4%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	-
Refused [DO NOT READ]	1.5%

D5. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? [READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]

Base: Total respondents	800
Self-employed full-time	6.8%
Self-employed part-time	3.8%
Employed full-time	40.1%
Employed part-time	12.4%
Retired and not working at all	21.8%
Unemployed and looking for work	5.9%
Or are you not in the labor force for other reasons	7.5%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	0.4%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	1.4%

D6. Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?

Base: Total respondents	800
Yes	5.2%
No	92.4%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	0.4%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	2.0%

D7. What is your race? Are you....[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?

Base: Total respondents	800
White or Caucasian	78.7%
Black or African American	9.9%
Native American or Alaskan Native	0.6%
Asian	2.1%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.4%
Or are you some other race? [Please specify]	4.9%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	0.5%
Base: Total respondents	2.9%

D8. Thinking about your state elections for Illinois Governor and Legislators in the last 10 years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior? Would you say you vote always, most of the time, about half of the time, seldom, or would you say you never vote?

Base: Total respondents	800
Always	49.6%
Most of the time	24.5%
About half of the time	7.9%
Seldom	7.4%
Never	8.7%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	0.4%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	1.6%

D9. Do you consider yourself to be a .... [INTERVIEWER READ AND RANDOMIZE EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]

Base: Total respondents	800
Democrat	31.8%
Republican	21.0%
Independent	23.2%
Other	2.1%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	15.4%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	2.3%

D10. How would you characterize your political views? Would you say you are....[READ AND RANDOMIZE EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?

Base: Total respondents	800
Conservative	27.7%
Moderate	28.3%
Liberal	19.7%
None of the above	18.3%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	3.7%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	2.2%

D11. What is your 5-digit zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

D12. We realize income is a private matter and so rather than ask you anything specific about your income, I'd like to ask you to please stop me when I get to the category that includes your household's income before taxes in 2012. Was it...[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?

Base: Total respondents	800
Less than \$10,000	5.3%
\$10,000 to less than \$20,000	6.5%
\$20,000 to less than \$35,000	9.7%
\$35,000 to less than \$50,000	11.2%
\$50,000 to less than \$60,000	8.2%
\$60,000 to less than \$75,000	8.7%
\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	11.9%
\$100,000 or more	20.9%
Not sure [DO NOT READ]	3.1%
Refused [DO NOT READ]	14.6%

***Thank you for your time – have a good night!***

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### **Study Methodology**

This AARP survey was conducted as a telephone survey among 18+ year old residents in the state of Illinois. The interviews were conducted in English by Precision Opinion from May 4 to May 12, 2013. The sample was weighted by general population in the state of Illinois age 18+. The margin of sampling error for the random sample of 800 for Illinois is +/-3.5%. The RDD sample age targeted 18+ based on the census division information from the state of Illinois. The telephone sample was pulled with virtual Genesys system from Marketing Systems Group (MSG). The questionnaire was developed by AARP staff. In order to improve the quality of the data, the questionnaire was pretested with a small number of respondents. The response rate for this study was 29% and was measured using AAPOR's response rate 3 method. The cooperation rate was 86% and was also measured using AAPOR's cooperation rate 3 method. The refusal rate was .067% and was also measured using AAPOR's refusal rate 3 method.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Source: AAPOR Outcome Rate Calculator Version 2.1 May 2003

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### **Research and Strategic Analysis**

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