

# Office of the Public Advocate

Your Trusted Source for Utility Information



VOLUME 22 | SPRING 2025

## ELECTRICITY GUIDE

### UNDERSTANDING YOUR 2025 ELECTRIC BILL

#### STANDARD OFFER RATES STAY STEADY, BUT BILLS WON'T

In 2025, CMP and Versant bills will be a good news-bad news situation.

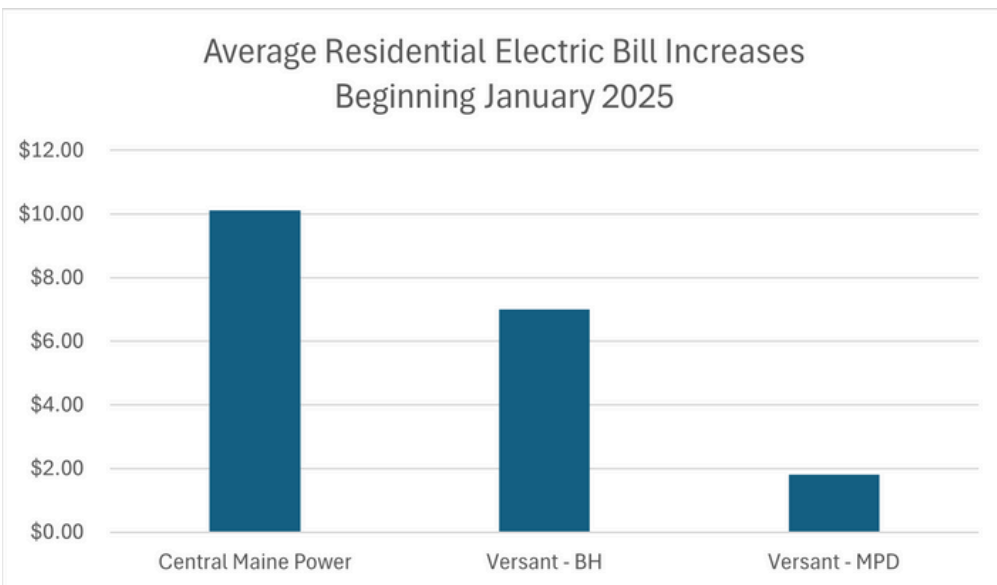
The good news: The standard offer supply price for electricity, as set by the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC), remained relatively steady compared to 2024.

The bad news: Transmission rates will increase due to rising regional transmission costs.

For Central Maine Power, the average (550 kWh/mo.) residential bill will increase \$10.11 a month.

For Versant's Bangor Hydro District, average (500 kWh/mo.) residential bills will increase by \$7.00.

For Versant's Maine Public District, average (500 kWh/mo.) bills will increase by \$1.80.



2025 Standard Offer  
Rates

CMP  
10.61 cents/kWh

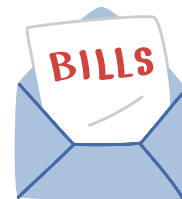
Versant BH  
10.56 cents/kWh

Versant MPD  
11.65 cents/kWh

# DIAGNOSE YOUR HIGH ELECTRIC BILL

## 1 WHO IS YOUR SUPPLIER?

If you have a supplier besides the Standard Offer, they may have changed their rate since you first signed up, and it may be more expensive than you expected. Call us (207-624-3687) if you need help finding your supplier info on your electric bill. To return to the Standard Offer, contact your utility:



**CMP Customer Service: 1-800-750-4000**

**Versant Customer Service: 1-855-363-7211**

## 2 HOW DOES YOUR USAGE COMPARE TO PAST USAGE?

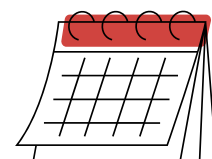
Each month, your utility bill includes a graph showing your total monthly usage. How does this month's bill compare to other months? Is there data from last month, or last year, that you can compare your usage to? (CMP and Versant also have tools on their websites that allow you to compare usage and even track it, hour by hour.) If you've started using something new in the home, or an old appliance is starting to fail, your usage will increase, causing your bill to go up.

### Common Usage Culprits

- **Home heating:** Space heaters, electric heat, heat tape, heat pumps, plug-in fireplaces and even ovens, dryers and hot tubs - anything that creates heat in your home will impact your electric bill. Fans to circulate heat can also impact your bill.
- **Hot water heaters:** When these appliances start to fail, they can increase your electric bill. If it's been checked by a professional lately and you aren't noticing differences in water pressure, temperature, and you haven't been running out of hot water, you could also consider insulating the heater and its pipes - and check the temp! 120 is the recommended setting.
- **Wells:** Anything in your home that uses a motor, such as a well pump, swimming pool pump, or water softening system, will impact your electric bill. Consider getting your system or appliance serviced if you notice any issues.
- **Home cooling:** A/C units, heat pumps, refrigerators, freezers - all of these appliance use a fair amount of electricity, and fridges and freezers can use even more when they start to fail.
- **Misc.:** Is it that light over the stove you leave on 24/7? Probably not. Most lights, unless it's several additional lights due to holiday decor, are not going to be the biggest problem on your bill. Dehumidifiers, humidifiers, TVs, and computers are items you should monitor the use of and consider unplugging when not in use.

## 3 HOW LONG IS YOUR BILLING PERIOD?

Utility bills can sometimes range from 28 days to 33 days. A longer billing period can increase your bill. Additionally, some utilities will change your billing cycle to prepare your account to take on credits for the Community Solar program, and this can also increase the number of days your bill contains charges for.



**Contact your utility - they can look at all these factors and more to help lower your bill**

# WHEN YOU CAN'T AFFORD YOUR BILL

## 1 CONTACT YOUR UTILITY

If you're struggling with your bills, your utility may be able to offer payment arrangements to make things more manageable. They can also talk to you about usage management tools and usage alerts. To contact your utility, call:

**CMP Customer Service: 1-800-750-4000**

**Versant Customer Service: 1-855-363-7211**



## 2 CALL 2-1-1

Your local community action agency can connect you with programs to help pay for utility bills and other necessities. Calling 2-1-1 or visiting [211maine.org](https://211maine.org) can connect you with your community action agency to talk about:

- The Low Income Assistance Program (LIAP)
- Emergency HEAP funding
- The Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

**Note: 2-1-1 may also connect you to other local funding resources, such as local churches, veteran's organizations, and others.**

## 3 ASK ABOUT AMP

Once you qualify for assistance (such as LIAP), you may also qualify for the Arrearage Management Program (AMP), which forgives past-due bills as you pay your current bills on time. You can ask your Community Action Agency or utility for more information about AMP.

## 4 OTHER AVENUES FOR SUPPORT

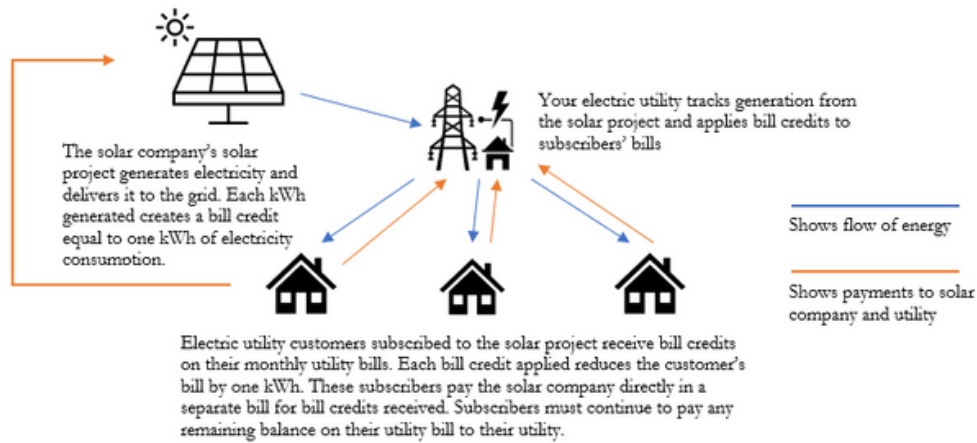
- You can also contact your town to apply for **General Assistance** to help pay a utility bill.
- If there are children involved, the **Maine Office for Family Independence** may be able to help. Phone: 1-855-797-4357.
- Veterans can contact **USA Cares** (1-800-773-0387) and **Veterans Forward** (347) 443-0005.

**Reach out for help if you need it - it is easier to prevent disconnection than get reconnected.**

# COMMON COMMUNITY SOLAR QUESTIONS

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY SOLAR?

Community solar, also known as Net Energy Billing (NEB), is designed to promote the expansion of solar production in Maine. Eligible solar projects receive credit for each kWh of electricity they generate. Utility customers can sign up with the owner of a solar project to receive a share of these credits generated by the project. The solar project can be located anywhere in the service territory of your utility.



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Each credit you purchase from the solar provider offsets one kWh of electricity usage by the subscribing customer.
  - Normal electricity bills include charges for delivery and supply based on usage; if your usage is offset by solar credits, you will receive a much smaller electric bill, likely with just the fixed and/or demand charges.
- You will usually receive a bill from the solar company for the credits generated for you that month, often 45-60 days after that month's electric bill.
- You may see a higher bill from your solar company in the summer when more energy is being generated; you can use those extra credits to offset your bills in the winter, when less solar energy may be generated.
- If you have purchased the right number of solar credits to offset your usage, over time, you should see a savings.
- Solar credits expire after one year.

## IS THE SOLAR COMPANY MY ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER?

No. You will still have a supply company or the Standard Offer on your electric bill. The electricity from the farm is not going directly to your house; rather, solar subscriptions allow you to support solar expansion and participate in the financial benefits of the solar farm.

## HOW DO I CANCEL MY SOLAR SUBSCRIPTION?

Call your solar company's customer support line to cancel. Please note that you have the right to cancel your agreement, orally or in writing, until five days after you receive your first bill or invoice from the solar company and you will only be responsible for paying that first bill or invoice. If you are told that you will be responsible for additional fees or bills, contact our office for assistance. If you are past that date, many solar companies can take up to 90 days or more to cancel your account and you will be responsible for the bills in the meantime. Read your contract to understand your specific company's policy on cancellation.

Learn more at [https://www.maine.gov/meopa/electricity/renewable-energy/community\\_solar](https://www.maine.gov/meopa/electricity/renewable-energy/community_solar)

# WHAT IS THE OPA?



## What is the OPA?

The **Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)** advocates for Maine's utility ratepayers at the state and federal level, including the Maine Legislature, the PUC, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

We also provide information, advice and resources for ratepayers with questions and concerns about public utilities.

## How can we help utility ratepayers?

- Share information and resources to help answer questions and advise on the best decision for the consumer.
- Act as an intermediary to connect ratepayers with the right person at a utility to resolve their concerns.
- Connect ratepayers to the right agency to get help, make a complaint, or continue research.
- Provide advice as a ratepayer proceeds through the PUC complaint process.

ISSUE	OPA	OTHER
ELECTRIC	✓	
WATER	✓	
NATURAL GAS	✓	
INTERNET/CABLE TV		Maine Connectivity Authority 207-370-7439
LANDLINE PHONE	✓	
PROPANE/OTHER FUELS		Maine Fuel Board 207-624-8627
SEWER		Town Office
OTHER BUSINESSES		Maine Attorney General 207-626-8849



# Office of the Public Advocate

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### ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE



The Office of the Public Advocate's primary responsibility is to represent the interests of Maine utility consumers. Our attorneys advocate for rates, services, as set forth in our authorizing statute, 35-A M.R.S. § 1702 and practices to benefit utility customers in regulatory and court proceedings. Most of our work takes place in proceedings before the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

Our Office also intervenes in cases before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the federal agency that oversees wholesale electricity markets, interstate electricity transmission and interstate gas transportation, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which regulates interstate communications by radio, TV, wire, satellite and cable. We are also active as a consumer representative in the stakeholder process at ISO New England, the regional electric transmission grid operator.

In addition, our Office testifies before the Legislature on matters affecting utility consumers, and provides information regarding utility services to the public at large.

Learn more at [www.maine.gov/meopa](http://www.maine.gov/meopa)