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ICC Hosts Winter Preparedness Policy Session

Chicago – On Tuesday, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) hosted a Policy Session to explore and discuss issues surrounding 2016-17 winter preparedness.

Led by Commissioner Sherina Maye Edwards, the Session brought together representatives from the gas industry, regional transmission organizations (RTOs), and Illinois local distribution companies (LDCs) in effort to discuss and display their efforts to meet upcoming winter demand.

“With predictions of exceptionally cold conditions for the upcoming winter season, the performance and capacity of natural gas and electricity systems is vital,” said Edwards. “The coordination of supply, demand, storage, pricing, and various pipeline operations is extremely important to ensure winter readiness.”

Panelists discussed the U.S. Natural Gas Market and agreed that in a time of a changing mix in resources, RTOs and LDCs alike are well positioned to meet the expected demands of the upcoming winter. Following the polar vortex, stakeholders continue to rely on increased coordination between gas and electricity markets to avoid some of the problems experienced during January 2014 when the nation endured prolonged periods of bitterly cold temperatures – driving up energy use and stressing available power supplies.

The Session also featured discussions on energy efficiency and customer outreach efforts. Given warmer than normal temperatures during the winter of 2015-16, customers should be prepared to see higher bills this winter. Panelists highlighted available resources and noted low-income customers are encouraged to apply for funding assistance such as LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) and other programs offered by individual utility companies. Panelists also discussed the availability of energy saving efficiency tools such as home energy audits and other measures that can help reduce bills.

Speakers during the Policy Session included: Richard Meyer, Manager, Energy Analysis and Standards at the American Gas Association; Renuka Chatterjee, Executive Director, Resource Adequacy at Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO); Rich Mathias, Senior Consultant at PJM Interconnection; Ken Dothage, Director Gas Supply at Ameren Illinois; LaJuana Garrett, Director, Energy Efficiency Program Management at Nicor Gas; and Michelle Rindt, Vice President, Customer Service at Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas.

To learn more about LIHEAP and other energy assistance programs, please visit the Commission's website [here](#). Consumers are also encouraged to talk with their local utility company about available assistance and energy efficiency programs.

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About the Illinois Commerce Commission

The Illinois Commerce Commission's mission is to pursue an appropriate balance between the interests of consumers and existing and emerging service providers to ensure the provision of adequate, efficient, reliable, safe and least-cost public utility services. The Commission pursues this mission through three bureaus: The Bureau of External Affairs, which provides educational information on utility issues for consumers, governmental entities and communities and through its Consumer Services Division, resolves customer/utility disputes and develops rules on utility service and consumer protection; the Public Utilities Bureau, which focuses on financial and operational analysis, policy development, public safety and enforcement activities related to electric, natural gas, water, sewer and telecommunications companies; and the Transportation Bureau, which includes trucking insurance and registration, railroad safety, relocation towing, safety towing and household goods moving company enforcement activities. The ICC's five commissioners are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Illinois State Senate for five-year terms.