WHO IS PAYING FOR THE AI REVOLUTION?

A Nationwide Crisis: How AI Data Centers and Corporate Utility Ownership Are Raising Every American's Energy Bills — and What You Can Do About It

A Citizens' Fact Report | Updated National Edition | March 2026

112M+
Americans facing utility rate increases

$92B
Total rate increases requested 2025–2027

49
States affected (electric + gas)

+6.9%
National avg electricity price rise 2025

+21%
5-year national rate increase since 2021

237+
Utility rate cases filed in 2025

SECTION 1: This Is a 49-State Crisis

Since January 2025, utility customers in 49 states and Washington D.C. have been hit — or are about to be hit — with rate increases for electricity, natural gas, or both. The scope is unlike anything seen in modern American utility history.

📊 THE NATIONAL NUMBERS
112 million+ electric utility customers affected by increases or proposed increases
52 million+ natural gas customers facing increases
237+ utilities have implemented, been approved for, or are actively proposing increases
$92 billion total in rate increases sought between 2025 and 2027
44 states plus D.C. saw electricity costs increase in December 2025 alone

National average residential rate has climbed 21% in five years — from 14.92¢/kWh in 2022 to 18.05¢/kWh in 2026
The average American's energy bill in 2025 was roughly 30% higher than in 2021

What States Are Seeing — Real Dollars, Real People

These are not hypothetical projections. These are approved or pending increases affecting real households right now:

State	Utility	Monthly Increase	Customers
New York	Consolidated Edison (gas + electric)	**Up to $73.02/mo**	~6 million
Florida	Florida Power & Light	**Largest rate hike in US history ($9B)**	~6 million
Virginia	Dominion Energy	**$8.51/mo in 2026 + $2.00 more in 2027**	~2.7 million
West Virginia	Appalachian Power	**$27.15/mo increase**	~500,000
New Jersey	4 utilities combined	**Up to $28/mo**	~3 million
Indiana	Duke Energy + CenterPoint	**$18.76 and $11.18/mo**	~1.5 million
Missouri	Ameren + Spire (gas)	**$16 and $14/mo**	~2 million
Oklahoma	OG&E / PSO	**$12/mo**	~800,000
Idaho	Idaho Power	**+$3.50 Jan 2025; +$21.66 proposed Jan 2026**	~600,000
Oregon/Washington	NW Natural (gas)	**+22% Yr 1, then +5%/yr x2**	~800,000
Wisconsin	WE Energy (WEC)	**+8.79% approved**	~1.1 million

The Steepest Single-Year Spikes

From July 2024 to July 2025, these states saw the sharpest electricity price increases in the country:

- Washington D.C. — +24.5%
- Maine — +22.9%
- Rhode Island — +22.6%

- New Jersey — +21.6%

The national pace in the first half of 2025 was 10% nominal growth — the fastest rate of increase in years. Only Nevada saw a meaningful decrease (-13.7%), due to a specific solar surplus situation unique to that state.

SECTION 2: Natural Gas Is Making It Worse

The electricity crisis is compounded by a simultaneous natural gas crisis — and the two are deeply connected because natural gas now generates roughly 42% of all U.S. electricity, its highest share ever.

- U.S. wholesale electricity prices rose 40% since the beginning of 2025, driven primarily by natural gas price spikes
- The Henry Hub natural gas spot price hit $7.72/MMBtu in January 2026 — up from $4.26 just one month earlier
- On January 23, 2026, the spot price hit a single-day record of $30.72/MMBtu
- When gas prices spike, electricity prices follow almost immediately since gas plants set the marginal price for the whole grid
- 52 million American gas customers are simultaneously facing direct gas bill increases on top of higher electricity bills

⚠️ THE DOUBLE HIT
Millions of American families are being hit twice at the same time: their electricity bill is going up because of AI data center demand AND grid costs, while their gas bill is going up because of natural gas market price spikes.
For a household that heats with gas and cooks with gas, they could be absorbing 3–4 separate utility increases in the same billing cycle.

SECTION 3: The AI Data Center Boom Driving Demand

The fundamental driver of electricity demand growth is the explosion of AI data center construction across the United States. This is not future speculation — it is actively happening in communities nationwide.

The Scale of Construction

- 5,426+ active data centers in the U.S. as of early 2026 — more than any other country

- Virginia alone: 663 operational + 595 more under construction or planned
- Texas: 405 existing + 442 more being built or planned
- Meta's 'Hyperion' project in Louisiana: 5 gigawatts of planned power demand
- Homer City, PA (former coal plant site): 4.4–4.5 GW AI campus — 3,200 acres
- The Stargate project (OpenAI/Oracle/SoftBank): $500B committed, 10 GW target capacity
- Microsoft, Amazon, Google, Meta, Apple combined: $450B+ invested in 2025 alone

How Much Electricity Will They Consume?

Year	U.S. Data Center Demand	Change from 2025	Equivalent Homes
2025	61.8 GW	Baseline	~50 million
2026	75.8 GW	**+23%**	~62 million
2028	108 GW	**+75%**	~89 million
2030	134.4 GW	**+117%**	~111 million

Source: S&P Global Market Intelligence, 2026. IEA projects global data center electricity demand will exceed the entire electricity consumption of Japan by 2030.

🏠 SCALE CHECK
One average AI data center already consumes as much electricity as 100,000 households.
The largest facilities under construction will each consume as much as 2 MILLION households.
Data centers now account for 40% of all U.S. electricity demand growth.

SECTION 4: Who Owns the Utilities — and Who Benefits?

The same two investment firms — BlackRock and Vanguard — appear as the top institutional shareholders in virtually every major U.S. electric and gas utility. This is not a coincidence. It reflects how passive index fund investing works. But it creates a profound structural conflict of interest when those same firms also own AI infrastructure.

Ownership Across Major U.S. Utilities

Utility / Parent Company	States Served	BlackRock %	Vanguard %	Customers
NiSource (NIPSCO)	IN, OH, PA, VA, KY, MD	~8.9%	~10.3%	3.5M
WEC Energy Group (WE)	WI, IL, MI, MN, MO, ME	~7.8%	~10.1%	4.6M
Duke Energy	NC, SC, FL, IN, OH, KY	~7.2%	~9.8%	8.2M
Dominion Energy	VA, WV, NC, SC, OH, UT	~6.9%	~9.4%	7.5M
Southern Company	GA, AL, MS, FL	~7.1%	~9.0%	9M
Exelon (ComEd, PECO, BGE)	IL, PA, MD, DC, NJ, DE	~8.3%	~10.7%	10.2M
Consolidated Edison	NY, NJ	~6.8%	~9.2%	6M
PG&E	CA (Northern/Central)	~7.5%	~9.6%	5.5M
Florida Power & Light (NextEra)	FL	~8.1%	~10.5%	6M
Ameren	MO, IL	~7.4%	~9.9%	2.4M
Xcel Energy	MN, CO, TX, NM, SD, ND, WI	~7.0%	~9.3%	3.7M

Note: Ownership percentages are approximate institutional holdings from most recent SEC 13F filings. BlackRock and Vanguard together typically hold 15–20% of every major U.S. utility's outstanding shares.

The Critical Conflict: They Own Both Sides

BlackRock has moved beyond passive investing into direct AI infrastructure ownership — creating a situation where it profits from both higher utility rates AND from the AI expansion driving those rates:

- BlackRock acquired Aligned Data Centers in a $40 billion deal — direct ownership of 5 GW of data center capacity
- BlackRock co-founded the AI Infrastructure Partnership (AIP) with Microsoft, NVIDIA, and xAI — targeting $100 billion in AI data center investment
- BlackRock's own investor materials describe utilities as 'prime beneficiaries' of AI and recommend buying utility stocks

- In plain terms: BlackRock profits when your utility rate goes up, AND profits from the data centers causing demand to rise

⚠️ THE STRUCTURAL CONFLICT
BlackRock and Vanguard own large stakes in the utilities raising your rates.
BlackRock also directly owns and builds the AI data centers creating the electricity demand.
When utilities request rate increases to fund grid upgrades for data centers, BlackRock benefits twice: as a utility shareholder AND as a data center owner.
This is not a conspiracy theory. It is documented in BlackRock's own SEC filings and investor communications.

SECTION 5: The Government Conflict of Interest

Beyond private financial institutions, there are serious documented concerns about current government officials and structures that benefit financially from the policies they are setting on AI.

The Stargate Connection

- The Trump White House directly brokered the $500 billion Stargate AI project with OpenAI, Oracle, and SoftBank in January 2025
- The U.S. federal government holds a 10% stake in Intel worth approximately $11.1 billion
- $100 billion of Stargate's initial investment is earmarked specifically for immediate data center construction
- President Trump declared AI development a national priority and signed executive orders expediting data center permitting and power access

The David Sacks Situation

David Sacks serves as the Trump administration's White House AI and Crypto Czar — the government's top AI policy-setting official. Ethics experts have flagged serious concerns:

- Sacks and his firm Craft Ventures maintain 400+ investments in tech firms with direct ties to AI
- He was granted ethics waivers by the administration allowing him to keep these investments while setting AI policy

- A leading government ethics expert called these 'sham ethics waivers' designed to let Sacks profit from his government position
- The situation was compared publicly to 'a presidential pardon in advance' for conflict-of-interest law violations

The Florida Power & Light Revelation

The Florida Power & Light rate case — the largest utility rate hike request in U.S. history at nearly $9 billion — contains a particularly revealing element: the utility explicitly requested an increase in the allowed return on equity for shareholders. Government ethics analysts noted this directly transfers money from ordinary customers' bills to investors — including institutional investors like BlackRock and Vanguard.

💰 THE WEALTH TRANSFER — NATIONAL SCALE
In the PJM grid region alone (13 Midwest/mid-Atlantic states), data centers have been linked to $23 billion in additional costs borne by consumers — what grid watchdogs call a 'massive wealth transfer' from ratepayers to tech corporations.
Wholesale capacity prices in PJM exploded from $28.92/megawatt-day in 2024-2025 to $329.17/megawatt-day in 2026-2027 — a 1,037% increase in one year.
$720 billion in total grid infrastructure upgrades will be needed by 2030 — virtually all of it eventually passed to consumers through utility rate cases.

SECTION 6: What the Future Holds — A 5-Year Projection

Every major financial institution projecting electricity prices for the next five years is pointing in the same direction. These are not alarmist predictions — they are the forecasts of Goldman Sachs, the International Energy Agency, S&P Global, and Gartner.

- Goldman Sachs forecasts another 6% consumer electricity price jump from 2026 to 2027, after the 6.9% jump in 2025
- AI-specific server electricity usage will rise nearly fivefold — from 93 TWh in 2025 to 432 TWh by 2030 (Gartner)
- Global data center electricity demand will surpass the total electricity consumption of Japan by 2030 (IEA)
- $720 billion in grid infrastructure upgrades required in the U.S. by 2030 — costs that flow through to consumers via rate cases

- Higher power prices will cascade into higher prices for food (refrigeration/processing), medical care (hospital equipment), clothing (manufacturing), and vehicles (auto plant energy costs)

📈 BOTTOM LINE PROJECTION
If current trends continue without legislative intervention: the average American household could be paying 35–45% more for electricity by 2030 compared to 2021.
For a household currently paying $150/month for electricity, that means $200–$220/month by 2030 — an increase of $50–$70/month, or $600–$840 per year, just for electricity.
Natural gas bills face similar trajectories, meaning total household energy costs could rise by $1,500–$2,000 per year by 2030 without policy intervention.

SECTION 7: What You Can Do — The Complete Action Plan

This is a bipartisan issue that is already being acted on in Congress. Here are six specific categories of action available to every American citizen, regardless of political affiliation.

1. Support the GRID Act in Congress

Senators Josh Hawley (R-MO) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) introduced the GRID Act — a bipartisan bill that would:

- Prohibit data center electricity costs from being passed to residential consumers
- Prioritize grid access for homes and small businesses over tech corporations
- Require AI and data center companies to fund the grid infrastructure they demand

ACTION: Call or email your U.S. Senator and Representative. Ask: 'Do you support the GRID Act or similar legislation that stops data center costs from being passed to consumers?' Their offices log every contact. Five calls from constituents gets noticed.

2. Engage Your State Public Utility Commission

Every utility rate increase must be approved by your state's Public Utility Commission (PUC). These are public proceedings where citizen input carries legal weight.

- Find your state PUC: search '[Your State] Public Utility Commission'
- Sign up for email alerts on upcoming rate cases — they are required to notify the public
- Submit written comments during the public comment period — they become part of the official record

- Ask at hearings: 'What percentage of this rate increase is attributable to data center load growth?' — they are required to answer
- Hire or volunteer with a consumer advocate lawyer — many states have Citizens Utility Boards (CUBs) that do this for free

3. Join Consumer Advocacy Organizations

- PowerLines (powerlinesdc.org) — documented the $31B in 2025 rate requests
- National Consumer Law Center (nclc.org) — fights unfair utility practices nationally
- Citizens Utility Board (your state's CUB) — free advocacy for residential ratepayers
- Environment and Energy Study Institute (eesi.org) — tracks data center legislation
- Public Citizen (citizen.org) — utility accountability campaigns

4. Apply Pressure at the Local Level

Local governments have significant power over data center siting through zoning and permitting — power most communities are not yet using:

- Attend city council/county commission meetings when data center projects are proposed in your area
- Demand Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) requiring companies to fund grid upgrades at their own cost
- Ask your local government to formally oppose state utility rate increases tied to data center load
- Request that your city commission an independent study of data center energy impact on local rates

5. Reduce Your Own Energy Cost Exposure

- Contact your utility about federal LIHEAP assistance and state low-income programs
- Ask about time-of-use (TOU) rate plans — shifting usage to off-peak hours can cut bills 15–30%
- Weatherize: insulation and air sealing deliver the highest return on investment of any home energy upgrade
- Investigate community solar programs — many states allow renters to subscribe to shared solar arrays
- Federal tax credits (still active in 2026) for heat pumps (up to $2,000), insulation (up to $1,200), and solar panels (30%)
- Energy audits: many utilities offer them free or subsidized — they identify your biggest waste

6. Share This Information Responsibly

The most powerful thing ordinary citizens can do is help others distinguish between what is documented fact and what is speculation when discussing this issue. Credibility is essential for this message to reach across political divides.

- DOCUMENTED FACT: BlackRock/Vanguard own major stakes in virtually every U.S. utility
- DOCUMENTED FACT: Electricity prices rose 6.9% nationally in 2025 — 112 million+ customers affected
- DOCUMENTED FACT: AI data centers now account for 40% of U.S. electricity demand growth
- DOCUMENTED FACT: David Sacks holds 400+ AI investments while serving as the government's AI policy chief
- DOCUMENTED FACT: The GRID Act was introduced bipartisanly to prevent cost-shifting to consumers
- Share this report with neighbors, faith communities, civic organizations, PTAs, union halls, and local media

✅ THE BOTTOM LINE
This is not a partisan issue. It is not a conspiracy theory. It is documented by Goldman Sachs, the IEA, S&P Global, Gartner, Harvard Law School, and members of Congress from both parties.
The AI building boom IS driving electricity prices higher in 49 states. The costs ARE being passed to consumers — 112 million of them. Serious conflicts of interest DO exist between government AI policy and private financial gain.
The question is not whether this is happening. The question is whether ordinary Americans will organize to demand that trillion-dollar corporations pay for the infrastructure they're demanding — or whether families across every state will absorb costs they had no say in creating.

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This report was compiled from publicly available institutional research, government filings, utility commission records, and news sources. March 2026. For use by citizens, community organizations, and civic groups.