

Wonky Regulatory World Hits Page One

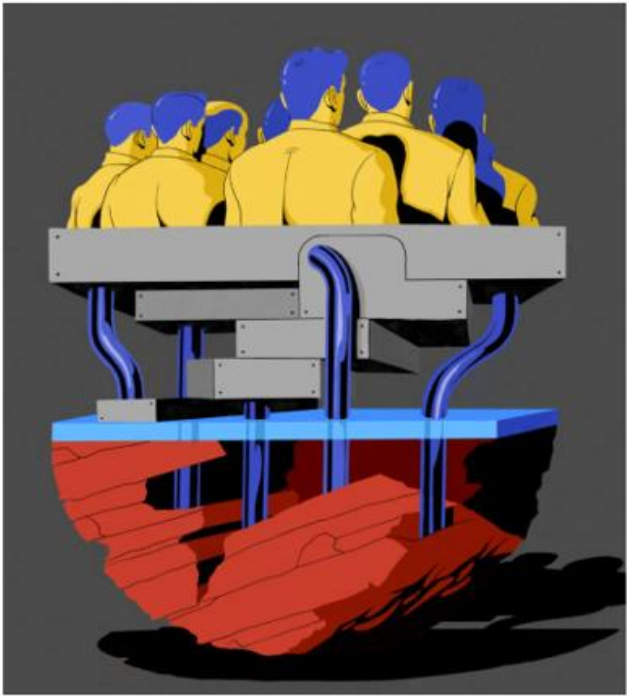
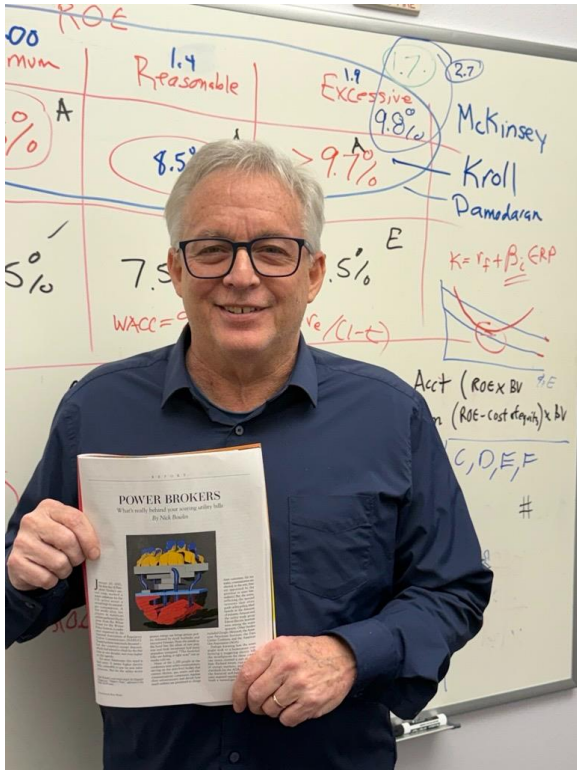
- NASUCA Summer Meeting
- Minneapolis, Minn.
- Monday, July 20, 2026





HARPER'S
MAGAZINE

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Illustrations by Bryce Wymer

[Report]
Power Brokers
What's really behind your soaring utility bills
by Nick Bowlin

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June 2026 Issue

[Letter from Washington]

The Data-Center Divide



Stranded Costs Gets Big Play in WI

As energy-hungry data centers loom, Wisconsin ratepayers owe \$1B on shuttered power plants

- What if the AI Bubble Bursts?
- What if Tech Companies' Business Plans Pivot (Again)
- What if More Efficient Chips Decrease Cooling and Power Needs for Data Centers?



PowerLines

PowerLines aims to modernize the utility regulatory system for American energy consumers to lower utility bills and grow the economy.









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**DAILY
SHOW**

When I say Georgia Public,
you say Service Commission.

“A New Politics of Electricity”

US utilities plot big rise in electricity rates as data centre demand booms

Customers face higher bills to upgrade infrastructure needed to power AI systems



Consumer advocates say the price increases are a negative signal in the emerging debate over who bears the cost of US dominance in AI © Carlos Barria/Rueters

Martha Muir in New York

Published JUL 10 2025



FINANCIAL
TIMES

Utilities have sought regulatory approval for \$29bn in rate increases in the first half of 2025, a 142 per cent increase over the same period a year ago, according to a new report by PowerLines, an energy affordability advocacy group.

These increases highlight the question of whether surging electricity costs will be shared among all consumers, or charged directly to the large industrial users driving the new demand. Power consumption is expected to more than double in the next decade because of energy-intensive AI, according to BloombergNEF.

“What we’re . . . seeing is a deer-in-headlights dynamic,” said PowerLines executive director Charles Hua. “A lot of states don’t have a playbook for how they can meet rising [data centre] demand while balancing affordability and utility bills.”

TIME

JUL 28, 2025 5:12 PM ET

Why Your Energy Bill Is So High

CLIMATE

ENERGY



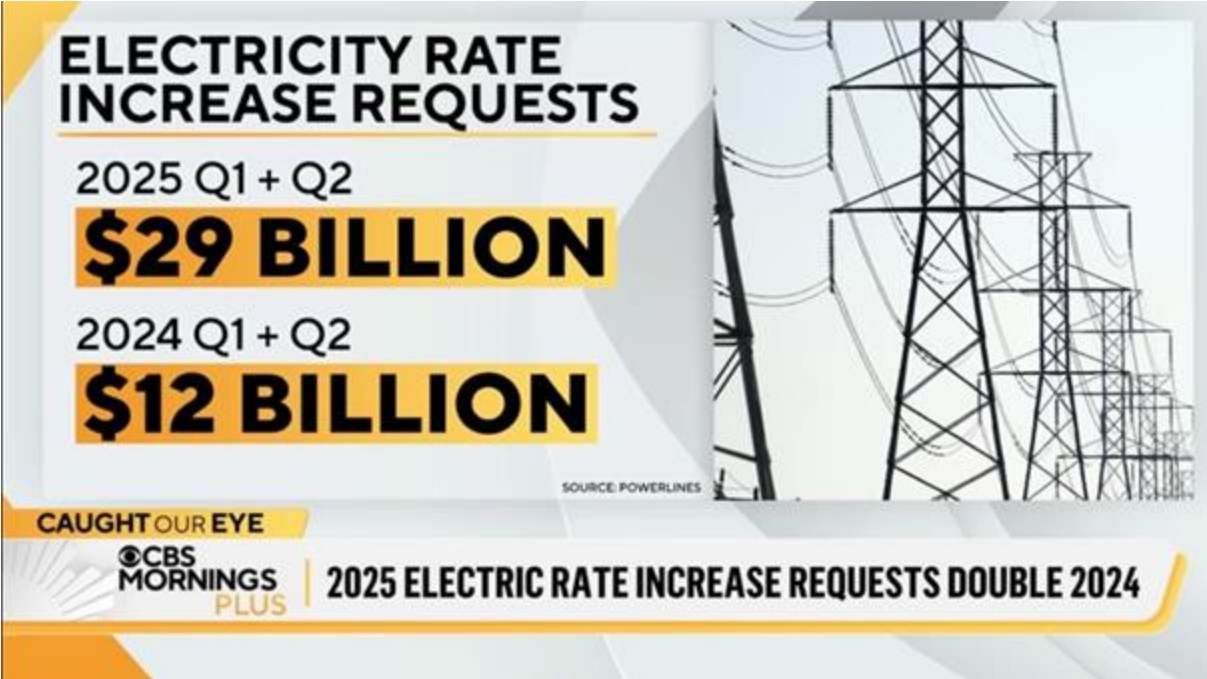
by Rebecca Schneid

REPORTER

More than 60% of Americans said in April that their electricity and/or gas bill had increased compared to a year ago, and nearly three-quarters are concerned that the bills will increase this year, according to a poll marketing and research specialist Ipsos conducted with PowerLines, a nonprofit working to reduce electricity prices. Just 3% said their bill had decreased.

The increases appear to have only continued in the months since then, hitting Americans across the country—but especially in the Western U.S. PowerLines found in a new report that U.S. electric companies have asked for \$29 billion in rate increases so far this year, more than double their requests for the first half of 2024. It notes that Western utilities are “particularly” impacted, having asked for more than \$4 billion in raised rates.

“Improvements to aging infrastructure are cited as a major driver of the increases in the region,” PowerLines says, pointing to upgrades made in response to the increase in extreme weather and climate emergencies over the past few years that it notes has “burdened” the electric grid. Many businesses and energy industry leaders are now looking to find ways to make the U.S. power grid more sustainable for 21st century power usage.



Why your energy bill is suddenly so much more expensive

And why it's not getting cheaper any time soon.

by Umair Irfan
Jul 24, 2025, 7:00 AM EDT



2

US power bills to jump



Leah Millis/File Photo

US consumers should brace for higher power prices this year, as electric utilities point to data centers as a justification to significantly hike their rates. Utilities nationwide have asked regulators to approve \$29 billion in higher rates so far this year, [142% more than the same period last year](#), a report by the advocacy group PowerLines found.

Just about everything costs more these days, but electricity prices are especially concerning because they're an input for so much of the economy — powering factories, data centers, and a growing fleet of electric vehicles. It's not just the big industries; we all feel the pinch firsthand when we pay our utility bills. According to PowerLines, a nonprofit working to reduce electricity prices, about 80 million Americans have to sacrifice other basic expenses like food or medicine to afford to keep the lights on. And it's about to get even worse: Utilities in markets across the country have asked regulators for almost \$29 billion in electricity rate increases for consumers for the first half of the year.



m+ Electricity companies plot massive 142% bill hike despite increasing risk of blackouts





AUG 20, 10:20 AM

Electricity prices are soaring. What's going on?

Alison Brody

▶ LISTEN

The video player shows a news segment. On the left, a man in a suit (Charles Hua) is speaking. On the right, a large white utility truck with a crane arm is on a street. A speed limit sign for 25 is visible. The video player has a yellow and orange gradient background on the left side.

KCAL NEWS **CBS NEWS**
LOS ANGELES

PowerLines founder discusses the rise of energy bills
Charles Hua, the founder and executive director of PowerLines, talks about the rising costs of energy bills across the country. He says there's several things contributing to the spike, including wildfires in California.

SEPT 8, 2025

⌕ f ✉ ↻

US politics & policy [+ Add to myFT](#)

Surging US power costs defy Donald Trump’s pledge to halve bills

Electricity price inflation sparks political debate ahead of elections



New Jersey dairy operator Eran Wajswol has faced a 19% increase in power costs in the past two months, prompting him to consider relocating to Pennsylvania © Pascal Perich/FT

ENERGY

Electricity Prices Are Surging. How the Political Fallout Could Hit Companies, Too.

By [Avi Salzman](#) [Follow](#)

Aug 25, 2025, 1:00 am EDT

“This is going to become one of the defining political issues of our time,” said Charles Hua, executive director of PowerLines, an energy affordability advocacy group.

“Electricity prices are some of the fastest-growing price increases among the basket of goods. That makes for a political storm.”

FORTUNE

ENERGY • POWER

Your electric bill has replaced the price at the pump as the hot-button, political bellwether



By **Jordan Blum**
Editor, Energy

November 14, 2025, 4:00 AM ET



“It’s become very clear that we’re entering a new era of politics in America, which is a new politics of electricity,” Charles Hua, executive director of the nonprofit PowerLines, told *Fortune*. “This is a new political force that is here to stay, and all politicians and policymakers will need to have a response for how they’re going to lower utility bills.”

Electricity and natural gas for heating and cooking are now the leading pressures on inflation in 2025, even exceeding food and grocery costs, according to the latest Consumer Price Index data.

Residential electricity prices have skyrocketed almost 30% since 2021. As of the end of August, electricity costs are up more than 6% in 2025 from the prior year, while piped natural gas costs jumped close to 13%, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

“The pace at which utility bills have risen is really quite staggering,” Hua said. “People really feel powerless because they feel like they have no choice but to pay. We’re seeing a breaking point where people are so frustrated and confused as to why their bills are going up that they feel they have no choice but to make their voices heard.”

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2024 • VOL. CXXCVI NO. 131 • \$4.00

What's News

Business & Finance

- Most Americans are wary of more electricity and should expect higher prices ahead, driven by higher demand and supply constraints. **B1**
- A new report from a leading research firm says that the U.S. economy is slowing down, with the strongest growth seen in the services sector. **B2**
- The number of homes being sold in the U.S. fell for a fourth consecutive month in November, with the strongest price increases seen in the West. **B3**
- Tesla said it will raise its 2025 price targets, with the 2025 price target now at \$175 and the 2026 target at \$200. **B4**
- Goldman Sachs CEO David Solomon said that the company's outlook for the U.S. economy is "cautiously optimistic." **B5**
- The U.S. Postal Service is planning to raise its rates for the first time in over a decade. **B6**
- The U.S. Treasury Department is considering a new rule that would require companies to disclose more information about their climate-related risks. **B7**
- The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to hear a case that could have a major impact on the rights of transgender people. **B8**
- The U.S. House of Representatives is expected to pass a new law that would require companies to disclose more information about their climate-related risks. **B9**
- The U.S. Senate is expected to pass a new law that would require companies to disclose more information about their climate-related risks. **B10**

World Wide

- Trump said he would not send an envoy to the Middle East to mediate between Israel and Hamas. **A1**
- China launched a new satellite to monitor the environment. **A2**
- The U.S. and China are expected to reach a new trade agreement. **A3**
- The U.S. and China are expected to reach a new trade agreement. **A4**
- The U.S. and China are expected to reach a new trade agreement. **A5**
- The U.S. and China are expected to reach a new trade agreement. **A6**
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- The U.S. and China are expected to reach a new trade agreement. **A10**

Growing Protests Put Pressure on Tehran Regime



ANGRY IRANIS: Iranian shopkeepers and traders march in the capital Monday as demonstrations triggered by rising fuel prices spread across the country, increasing the strain on a government already struggling with an economic crisis. **A1**

Costly Power Bills Spark Outrage

Data centers are getting lots of blame, but they aren't the only catalyst.

By Jonathan Miller and Alex M. Smith

When people in the U.S. are paying more for electricity—and used to paying more well into the future—power bills are getting a lot of blame. But they aren't the only catalyst for the outrage. Data centers are getting a lot of blame, but they aren't the only catalyst. The rise in power bills is a result of a combination of factors, including rising demand, supply constraints, and the impact of climate change. The rise in power bills is a result of a combination of factors, including rising demand, supply constraints, and the impact of climate change.

Trump Threatens Military Action If Iran Rebuilds Nuclear Program

President also backs an Israeli strike against Tehran over its missile arsenal.



President Trump said he would support an Israeli strike against Iran if it rebuilds its nuclear program. He also backed an Israeli strike against Tehran over its missile arsenal. Trump said he would support an Israeli strike against Iran if it rebuilds its nuclear program. He also backed an Israeli strike against Tehran over its missile arsenal.

Discontent over rising power bills has become a hot political issue that is expected to spill into the 2026 midterm elections.

"I do think that we're entering a new era, a new politics of electricity," said Charles Hua, executive director of PowerLines, a nonprofit that advocates for utility customers.

POWERLINES

17

U.S. NEWS

Pirro
Deputies
Show Up
At Fed
Work Site

By J. David Davis

WASHINGTON—Deputies of Sen. James P. Piro, R-Mich., showed up at a federal work site on Tuesday to protest the construction of a new dam. The dam is part of a \$1.4-billion project to build a new dam on the Huron River in Michigan.

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Dam Is Reinforced as River Runs High in Michigan



Workers are reinforcing the dam as the river runs high. The dam is part of a \$1.4-billion project to build a new dam on the Huron River in Michigan.

Utilities Set to Spend Big to Power AI

Companies plan to lay out \$14 billion over the next five years to patch the aging grid.

The utilities industry is planning to spend \$14 billion over the next five years to patch the aging grid. The utilities industry is planning to spend \$14 billion over the next five years to patch the aging grid.

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A construction site with a large crane and a building under construction.

Maine Lawmakers Pass Ban on Large Data Centers

Maine lawmakers on Tuesday passed a bill that would ban large data centers from being built in the state. The bill is part of a larger effort to protect the environment and reduce carbon emissions.

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A construction site with a large crane and a building under construction.

Musk's xAI Sued by NAACP Over Memphis Data Center

The NAACP has filed a lawsuit against Elon Musk's company, xAI, over the construction of a data center in Memphis. The lawsuit alleges that the company is discriminating against Black people in the hiring process.

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BUSINESS

Trump promised to cut energy bills in half. One year later, has he delivered?

Cheap gasoline, yes. Drill, baby, drill? Not so much. And electricity bills are going up, not down.



Joe Raedle/Getty Images



WORLD, REORDERING

As Trump dismantles the existing world order, his version is still taking shape

5:22

PLAYLIST



CULTURE

Polyester clothing has been causing a stir online. But how valid are the concerns?



POLITICS

Gretchen Whitmer says it's not 'paranoia' to fear Trump using homeland security personnel in elections

7:46

PLAYLIST



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Power Bills Are Squeezing Georgians. Voters Could Do Something About It.

A special primary election this week for seats on the state's utility board will be a rare referendum on residential electric bills, at a time when they have risen sharply across the country.



The New York Times

DealBook/

With Andrew Ross Sorkin

December 1, 2025

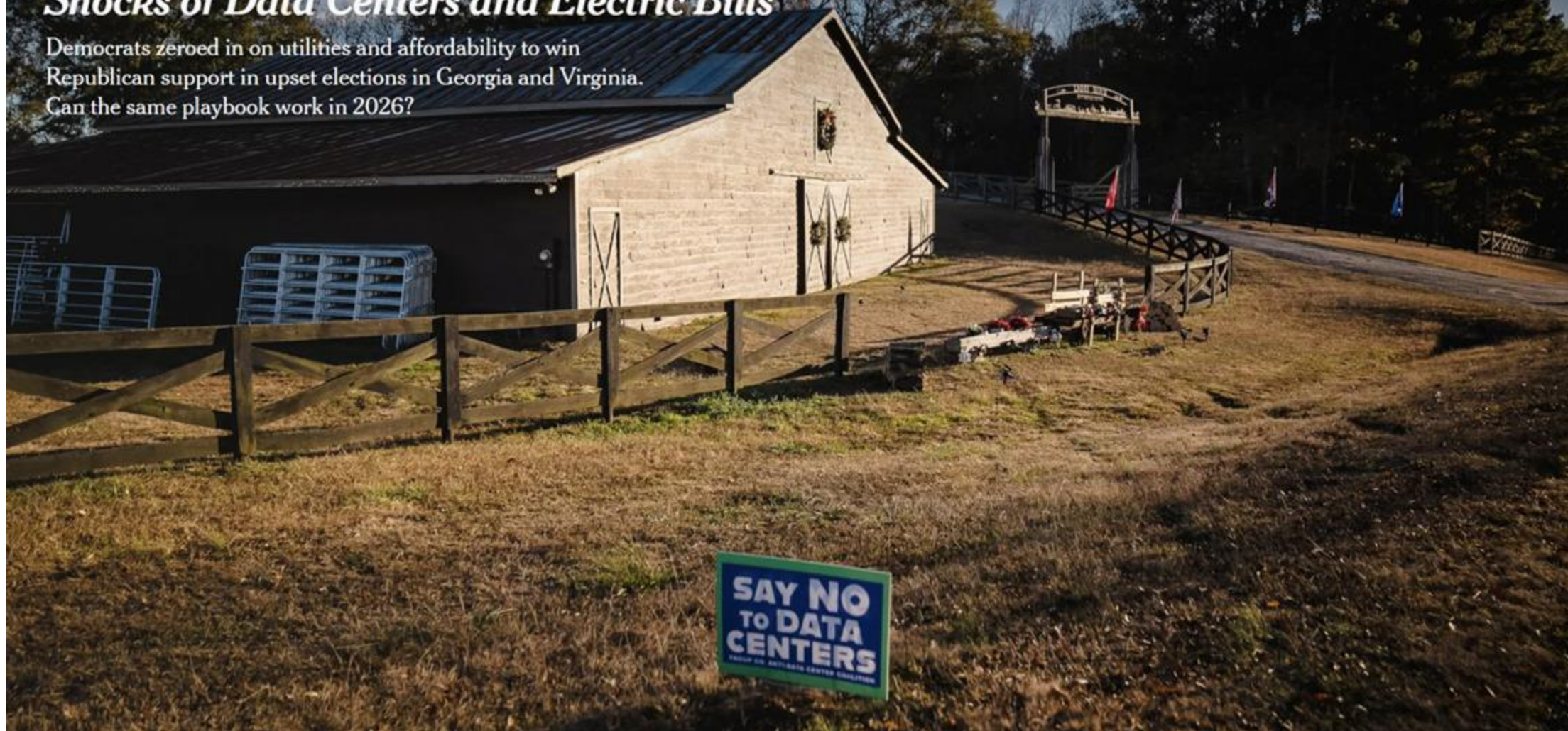
“Electricity is the new price of eggs.”

— Charles Hua, the executive director of PowerLines, a nonpartisan group that aims to modernize utility regulations and reduce power costs, on growing [voter anger over rising utility bills](#) partly caused by the construction of electricity-hungry data centers. In recent months, opposition from citizens has forced the Tucson City Council to pull the plug on an Amazon data center in Arizona, and Google to call off the construction of another in Indianapolis.

“Electricity is the new price of eggs,” said Charles Hua, executive director of [Powerlines](#), a nonpartisan organization which aims to modernize utility regulations and reduce power bills. “This is a defining moment for politicians of all stripes — what’s your answer to lowering utility bills? Because I think consumers and voters are looking for leadership on this.”

'The New Price of Eggs.' The Political Shocks of Data Centers and Electric Bills

Democrats zeroed in on utilities and affordability to win Republican support in upset elections in Georgia and Virginia. Can the same playbook work in 2026?





UTILITY BILLS ARE RISING

Q1 2026

MAY 2026



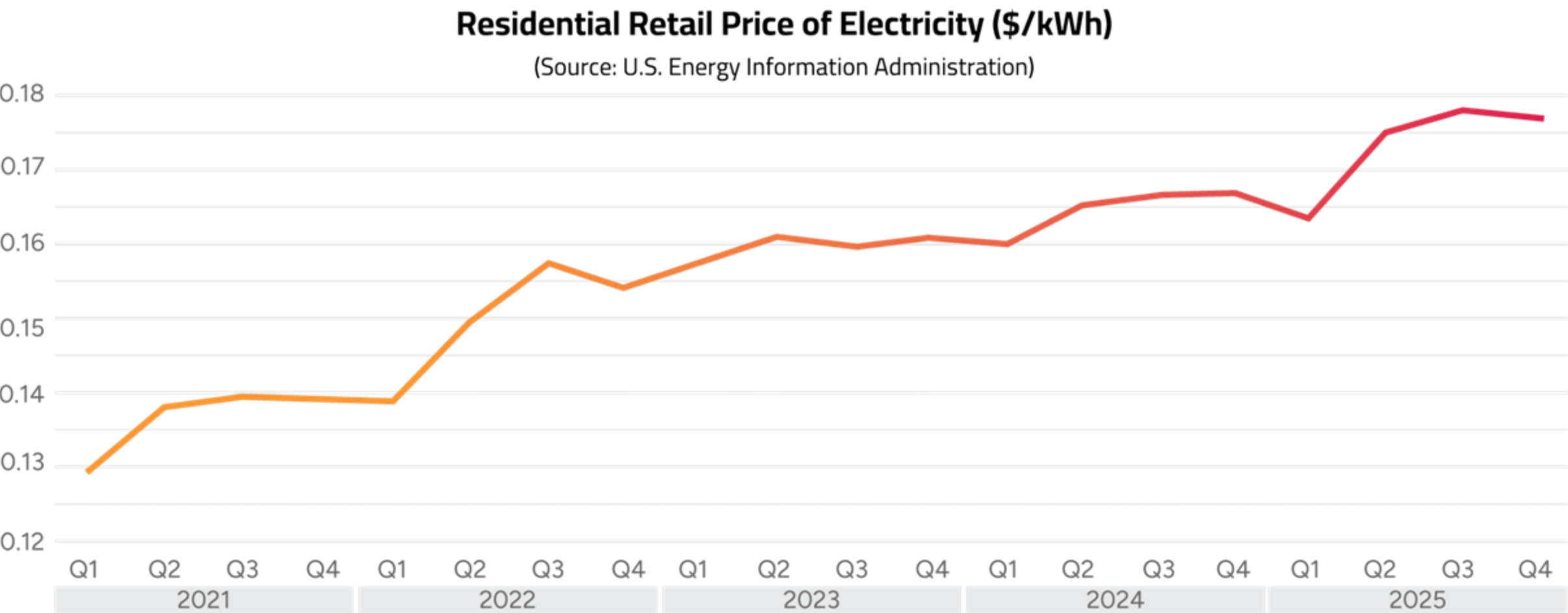
UTILITY SPENDING IS RISING

A Review of Utility Capital Expenditure Plans

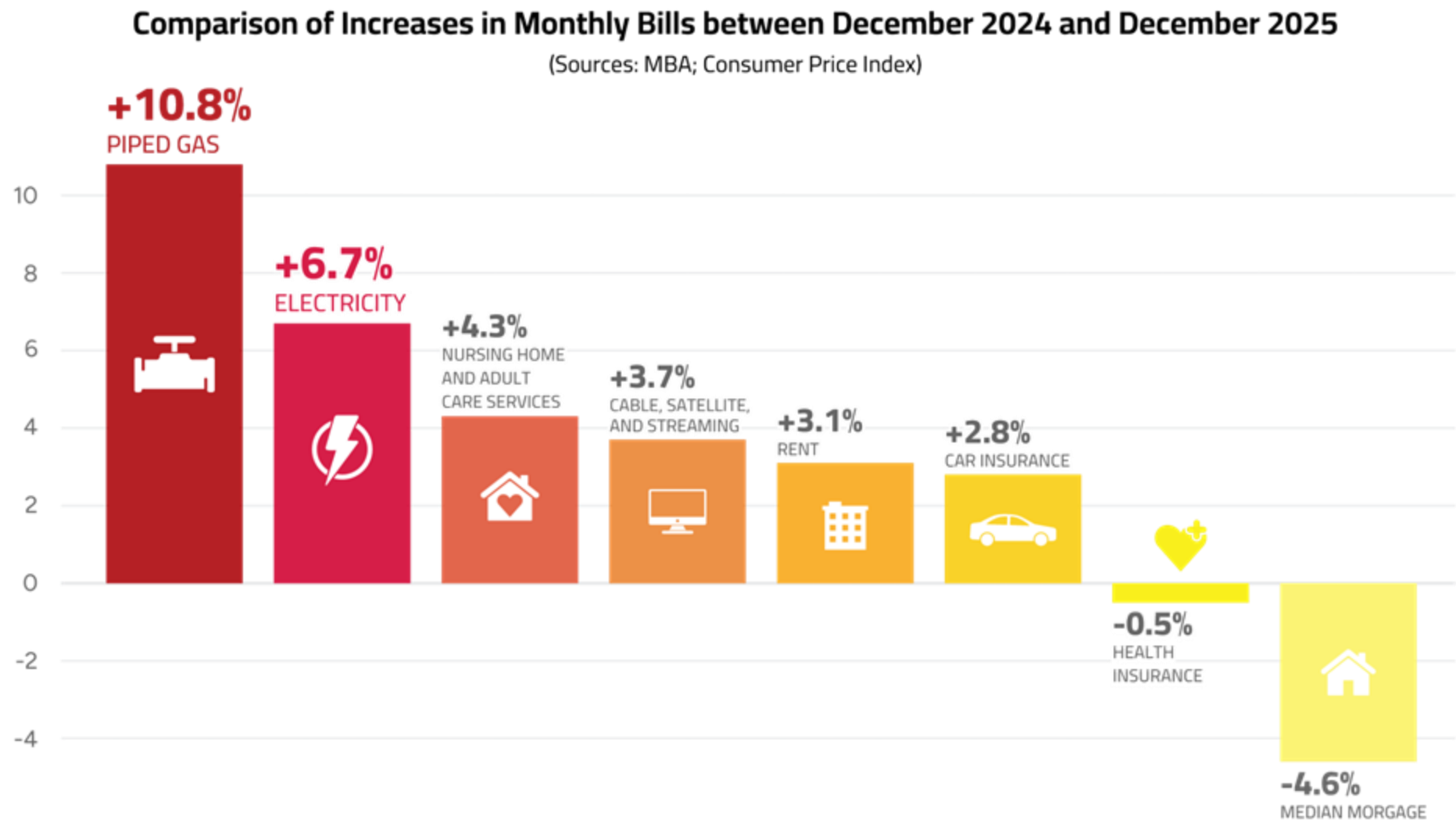
APRIL 2026



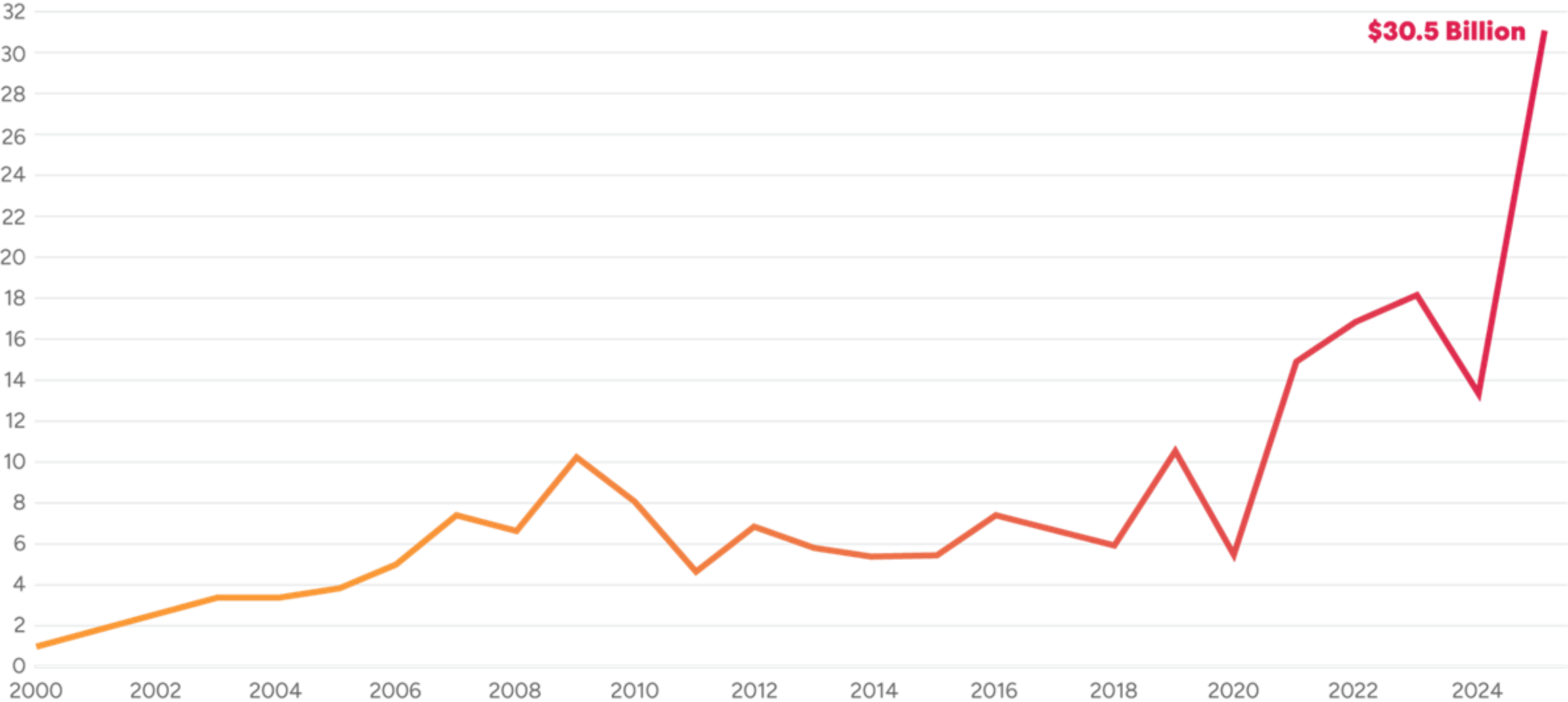
Electricity prices have risen ~40% since 2021, outpacing inflation.



Rising utility bills are among the fastest drivers of inflation.

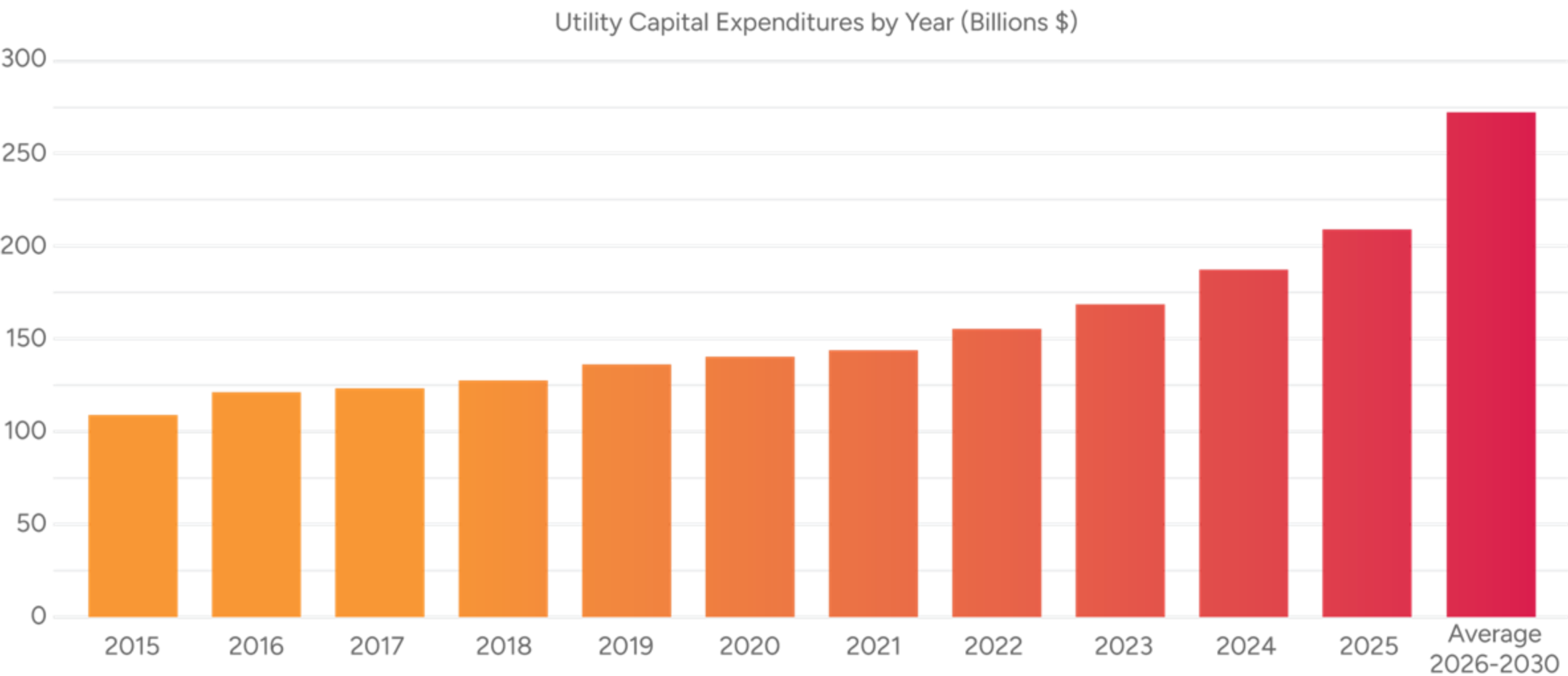


Utilities requested a record \$31 billion in rate increases in 2025.



Source: S&P Global, PowerLines

Utilities are planning to spend \$1.4 trillion in capital expenditures by 2030.



Source: Edison Electric Institute, PowerLines





Contact: charles@powerlines.org

Now That We Have Your Attention ...

Themes, Needs and Topics to Highlight

- ✓ Funding for State Utility Consumer Advocate Offices
- ✓ Funding for Intervenor Compensation Program @ FERC
- ✓ Consumer Advocate Offices at ISOs beyond PJM
- ✓ Tying ROE and Equity Ratio to Performance (Reliability/Affordability/Ability to Pay
- ✓ PSC Consideration of Affordability language in state statute (ME, CT, etc.)
- ✓ Integrated Resource Planning in More States, Plus IDP and PBR
- ✓ Strengthened “Used and Useful, competitive procurement, affordability/accountability language in statute
- ✓ Focus Attention on How Monopoly Utilities Make Money

Tools for Working with Media

- Be Available and Responsive
- Be Proactive - Suggest story topics (repeat as needed)
- Use Plain Language – Limit Jargon/Acronyms -Help Dewonkify
- Tip Sheets for ‘Frequent Flyers’ on What’s Coming Up
- Rate Case Key Issues Primer / PSC – Utility Regulation 101
- Participate in Training Opportunities
- Affordability Town Halls Around the State
- Op-Ed Columns, Radio Interviews, Podcasts



Michigan Department of Attorney General

Special Litigation Division



About



Bureaus & Divisions



Special Litigation Division

The Special Litigation Division acts as the utility consumer advocate for the People of the State of Michigan and handles specific assignments from the Attorney General on related issues. The division participates in utility rate proceedings before the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) and in proceedings before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, and the PJM ISO/RTO. The work before the MPSC involves issues ranging from fighting rate increases to helping shape the state's and the nation's energy grid to be more sustainable and reliable.

Contact the Special Litigation Division

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Contact: Tom Content, content@cubwi.org