

ELIZABETHTOWN GAS COMPANY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND
PURSUANT TO SECTION 12 OF THE ELECTRIC DISCOUNT AND ENERGY
COMPETITION ACT OF 1999
BPU DOCKET NO. EX00020091**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE 2024/2025 ANNUAL COMPLIANCE FILING FOR THE
UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND AND LIFELINE PROGRAM COMPONENTS WITHIN
THE SOCIETAL BENEFITS CHARGE RATE PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 48:2-21 AND
N.J.S.A. 48:2-21.1
BPU DOCKET NO. ER24070486**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that, pursuant to the Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act, N.J.S.A. 48:3-49, et seq., the Universal Service Fund (“USF”) program was established by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (“Board” or “BPU”), to provide funds to assist qualifying low-income individuals in paying their energy bills. Pursuant to Board Orders in BPU Docket No. EX00020091 dated April 30, 2003, July 16, 2003, June 30, 2004 and June 22, 2005, the State’s electric and gas public utilities’ Societal Benefits Charges (“SBC”) includes recovery of funding for the USF program through uniform statewide rates. The SBC also includes funding for the Lifeline program which provides assistance with heating costs to qualifying elderly and disabled persons and incorporates funds for the Work First New Jersey program.

The State of New Jersey’s Department of Community Affairs is the Administrator of the USF program, and the New Jersey Department of Human Services is the Administrator of the Lifeline program and authorizes the disbursement of benefits to eligible customers in the respective programs.

On June 28, 2024, Elizabethtown Gas Company (“Elizabethtown” or “Company”) made a compliance filing with the Board requesting authority to implement an increase related to the statewide USF/Lifeline program component of the SBC, as described below, to be effective on October 1, 2024 (“Filing”). Based upon the actual results and available estimates for the 2023/2024 USF program year, and the available estimates for the 2024/2025 USF program year, it is anticipated that the USF rates will be set to collect \$236.5 million, of which, \$143.8 million would be recovered through electric rates with the remaining \$92.7 million recovered through gas rates on a statewide basis. The Lifeline rates are anticipated to collect \$74.5 million, of which, \$49.2 million would be recovered through electric rates with the remaining \$25.3 million recovered through gas rates on a statewide basis.

The current after-tax USF/Lifeline program charge for natural gas customers is \$0.0177 per therm. Based upon the Filing, the proposed changes in rates, inclusive of taxes, are as follows: (i) the USF program charge would increase from \$0.0115 to \$0.0216 per therm or \$0.0101 per therm and (ii) the Lifeline charge would decrease from \$0.0062 to \$0.0060 per therm or (\$0.0002) per therm. The proposed after-tax USF/Lifeline program charge will increase to \$0.0276 per therm. The above request will not result in any profit to the Company. The revenues received under the proposed USF/Lifeline charge are designed to permit the Company to recover only its costs for these programs. Actual program costs will be reconciled with the revenues received through the USF/Lifeline program charge in the next annual filing scheduled to be made no later than July 1, 2025. Copies of Elizabethtown’s Filing can be reviewed on the Company’s website at www.elizabethtowngas.com under regulatory information.

The proposed statewide natural gas rates, inclusive of taxes, for customers are as follows:

**Universal Service/Lifeline Fund Components of the
Societal Benefits Charge**

	Present	Proposed
USF	\$0.0115	\$0.0216
Lifeline	\$0.0062	\$0.0060
Total	\$0.0177	\$0.0276

If approved by the Board, the impact of the proposed rate changes, inclusive of taxes, in the USF/Lifeline Charge on the monthly residential heating bills for customers taking gas service under the Residential Delivery Service tariff is illustrated below:

Rate Impacts

<u>Consumption in Therms</u>	<u>Present Bill June 1, 2024</u>	<u>Proposed Bill October 1, 2024</u>	<u>Proposed Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
10	\$23.34	\$23.44	\$0.10	0.4%
50	\$74.72	\$75.21	\$0.49	0.7%
100	\$138.93	\$139.92	\$0.99	0.7%
250	\$331.58	\$334.05	\$2.47	0.7%

Based upon this Filing, the present monthly bill as of June 1, 2024 for a residential heating customer using 100 therms per month would increase from \$138.93 to \$139.92, or \$0.99 or approximately 0.7%.

The Board has the statutory authority to establish the USF and Lifeline charges at levels it finds just and reasonable. Therefore, the Board may establish the USF and Lifeline charges at levels other than those proposed by Elizabethtown.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that virtual public hearings will be held on following date and times so that members of the public may present their views on the Company’s Petition:

VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING
DATE: August 27, 2024

HEARING TIMES: 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Microsoft Teams Meeting
https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/EX00020091_ER24070486/ETG.USF.LL
ID: 224 128 502 874
PASSCODE: xnL3VJ

(Access the Microsoft Teams App or Microsoft Teams on the web. On the left side of the screen, click the “Teams” icon. Select “Join or ‘create a team”. Press “Join” and enter the Meeting ID and Passcode when prompted.)

-or-

Dial-In: 866-984-3163

Conference ID: 433 216 145 followed by the # sign

A copy of this Notice is being served upon the clerk, executive or administrator of each municipality and county within the Company's service territory.

Representatives of the Company, Board Staff and the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel will participate in the virtual public hearings.

Members of the public may use the Microsoft Teams Meeting link or the Dial-In Number and Conference ID to express their views on this matter. All comments will be part of the final record of the proceeding and will be considered by the Board. To encourage full participation in this opportunity for public comment, please submit any requests for needed accommodations, such as interpreters or listening assistance, 48 hours prior to the above hearings to the Board Secretary at board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov.

The Board is also accepting written and electronic comments. Comments may be submitted directly to the specific docket listed above using the "Post Comments" button on the Board's Public Document Search tool. Comments are considered public documents for purposes of the State's Open Public Records Act. Only public documents should be submitted using the "Post Comments" button on the Board's Public Document Search tool. Any confidential information should be submitted in accordance with the procedures set forth in N.J.A.C. 14:1-12.3. In addition to hard copy submissions, confidential information may also be filed electronically via the Board's e-filing system or by email to the Secretary of the Board. Please include "Confidential Information" in the subject line of any email. Instructions for confidential e-filing are found on the Board's webpage.
<https://www.nj.gov/bpu/agenda/efiling/>.

Emailed and/or written comments may also be submitted to:

Sherri L. Golden, Secretary of the Board
New Jersey Board of Public Utilities
44 South Clinton Ave., 1st Floor
PO Box 350
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350
Phone: 609-913-6241
Email: board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov

Elizabethtown Gas Company