

Unprecedented cold weather across the nation in part has caused natural gas market prices in the West to more than double between December and January – to the tune of 128% since December. According to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), several factors are contributing to higher natural gas commodity prices.

- Widespread, below-normal temperatures on much of the West Coast, including Washington and Oregon;
- High natural gas demand for heating by customers in areas with below normal temperatures;
- Reduced natural gas supplies to the West Coast from Canada and the Rocky Mountains;
- Reduced interstate pipeline capacity to the West Coast because of pipeline maintenance activities in West Texas; and
- Low natural gas storage levels on the West Coast.

SoCalGas does not set the price for natural gas. Instead, natural gas prices are determined by national and regional markets. SoCalGas buys natural gas in those markets on behalf of residential and small business customers, and the cost of buying that gas is billed to those customers with no markup, meaning SoCalGas does not profit from the movement of gas commodity prices. Residents can prepare for higher than average energy bills this winter by taking a few steps.

- Lower your thermostat three to five degrees – if health permits. It can save up to 10 percent on heating costs.
- Install proper caulking and weather-stripping and save roughly 10 to 15 percent on heating and cooling bills.
- Wash clothes in cold water and save up to 10 percent on water heating costs.
- Consider turning down the temperature on your water heater.
- Limit the use of non-essential natural gas appliances such as spas, pool heaters, and fireplaces.
- Sign up for Bill Tracker Alerts to monitor natural gas consumption, take steps to reduce usage, and avoid bill surprises. Alerts will be sent through email or text and include a bill-to-date and projected next bill amount to help you manage your energy bills as easily as possible. Visit www.socalgas.com/MyAccount.
- Sign up for the level pay program at socalgas.com/LevelPayPlan which helps level the ups and downs of your monthly natural gas bill.

SoCalGas also has several income-qualified programs that can provide a monthly bill discount, help with energy-efficiency, award a one-time grant, or help those with medical conditions. For more information about these programs, visit socalgas.com/Assistance.

For residents who might not have internet access, they can call 800-427-2200 to sign up for various programs.