

## Natural Gas Bills are Changing for EPCOR Customers

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) has approved new natural gas prices for EPCOR Natural Gas Limited Partnership's (EPCOR) customers in its [Aylmer](#) and [Southern Bruce](#) service areas to take effect January 1, 2026. EPCOR customers using a typical amount of natural gas can expect an average annual bill increase of \$17.33 for the Aylmer service area and \$87.68 for the Southern Bruce service area.

*Table 1 – Total Annual Bill Impact*

Service Area and Typical Annual Usage for a Residential Customer	EPCOR Aylmer 2,065 m <sup>3</sup>	EPCOR Southern Bruce 2,149 m <sup>3</sup>
Total Annual Bill – Current	\$973.36	\$1,624.28
– Beginning January 1, 2026	\$990.69	\$1,711.96
Total Annual Bill Impact	\$17.33	\$87.68
– Percentage Change	1.8%	5.4%

*\*Bill impacts will vary depending on how much natural gas individual customers use. Natural gas use is generally lowest during the summer months.*

### BACKGROUND

The increase in natural gas customers' bills this period is linked to higher market prices for natural gas, a result of lower inventory levels and expected colder-than-normal temperatures.

Table 1 also reflects OEB-approved rate changes and temporary adjustments related to each distributor's application for 2026 rates.

Initially, these applications resulted in a bill reduction of about \$11.46<sup>1</sup> for EPCOR Aylmer customers and an increase of approximately \$53.39<sup>2</sup> for EPCOR Southern Bruce customers.

### ABOUT THE QRAM AND NATURAL GAS MARKET PRICES

The QRAM (quarterly rate adjustment mechanism) is the process by which the OEB adjusts the prices that natural gas customers pay for the natural gas they use and to reflect changes in natural gas market prices.

Natural gas is a commodity that is bought and sold on North American energy markets. At any given time, its price fluctuates based on a variety of factors including supply and demand, seasonal changes,

<sup>1</sup> EB-2025-0177

<sup>2</sup> EB-2025-0178

levels of stored natural gas, and major weather events. EPCOR updates its forecast of market prices every three months and uses that forecast to seek the OEB's approval of its proposed changes to natural gas commodity prices. These proposed changes cover:

- **Future costs:** Based on a forecast of market prices for natural gas over the next 12-month period.
- **Past costs:** Based on the difference between what the utility previously forecast their customers would pay and what their customers actually paid. This kind of adjustment is needed because the gas prices charged to customers are based on forecasts, which are never 100% accurate. The adjustment for past costs can increase or lower the rate accordingly. For example, if a utility collected more from customers than it paid for gas in the past, the difference is credited back to customers through a lower rate. Likewise, if not enough was collected by the utility, the rate will be higher.

These price changes are approved to take effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month in January, April, July and October each year.

The OEB does not allow natural gas distributors to earn a profit on the sale of gas, regardless of market fluctuations in price.

## SUPPORT FOR CUSTOMERS

Support programs are available for customers who need assistance with their bill payments. You need to meet certain criteria to qualify for these programs:

- **Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)**  
This program provides a grant towards a customer's electricity and/or natural gas bill if they're behind on their bill payments and may face having their service shut off. It is for emergency situations. See [OEB.ca/BillHelp](https://www.oeb.ca/BillHelp)
- **Rules for low-income customers**  
Electricity utilities, natural gas utilities and unit sub-metering providers follow customer service rules specific to low-income customers. These include waiving security deposits and allowing longer payment times under arrears payment plans. See [OEB.ca/BillHelp](https://www.oeb.ca/BillHelp)

## ABOUT THE OEB

The OEB is the independent regulator of Ontario's electricity and natural gas sectors. It protects the interests of consumers and enables the delivery of clean, reliable, secure and affordable energy for the people, farms and businesses of Ontario, supporting economic growth in the province. Its goal is to deliver public value through prudent regulation and independent adjudicative decision-making which contributes to Ontario's economic, social and environmental development. You can learn more about the OEB at [oeb.ca](https://www.oeb.ca).

Independence in the hearing and determination of matters is a key element of the OEB's mandate, established through legislative structures, the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between the Minister of Energy and Electrification and the Chair of the OEB, and by-laws that set out clear lines of communication between government and the OEB. Commissioner panels hear and determine matters independently, with legislative protections and other instruments to ensure decisions are free from interference by the CEO, the Board of Directors and government. This also includes the Chief Commissioner when not assigned to the specific case.

## **Contact Us**

### **Media Inquiries**

Phone: 416-544-5171

Email: [oebmedia@oeb.ca](mailto:oebmedia@oeb.ca)

### **Consumer Inquiries**

416-314-2455/1-877-632-2727

*Ce document est aussi disponible en français.*

*This Backgrounder was prepared by OEB staff to inform Ontario's energy consumers about the OEB's decision and is not for use in legal or regulatory proceedings. It is not part of the OEB's reasons for decision; those may be found in the Decision and Rate Orders issued December 19, 2025, which are the official OEB documents.*