

Press information from: BELMONT LIGHT

For immediate release 5-21-14

For information contact:
617-993-2800

New England Energy Costs on the Rise

(Belmont, MA) - Belmont Light, like all New England electric utilities, has seen dramatic, record-high increases in the cost of purchased power over the past five months. These increased supply costs have required the utility to adjust its electric rates.

A major driver of increased costs is a lack of adequate pipeline capacity to supply natural gas to the region's power generation plants—this is particularly true during cold winter months when there is high demand for natural gas heating. Since there is insufficient pipeline capacity to deliver enough natural gas to meet New England's demand for electricity, the overall cost of purchasing power in the region has increased significantly.

After consulting with industry experts, Belmont Light expects that pipeline constraints will keep New England power costs up until new pipelines can be constructed. "We anticipate that these high costs will remain for at least two more years," General Manager James Palmer stated. "As a result, Belmont Light must pass through the increased generation charges to its customers by implementing a rate adjustment."

The new rates will take effect June 1, 2014. Palmer explained that under the new rate structure, residential customers who use an average of 600 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity each month

should expect to see an approximate increase of 15% over their March 2014 bill. By changing its rates rather than charging customers a large, one-time fee in the future, Belmont Light is able to more equitably charge customers for their current usage and allow customers better control over their bills.

To keep electric bills low, Belmont Light customers are encouraged to conserve energy whenever possible. There are several low-cost energy improvements that can be easily implemented in homes and businesses. Examples include:

- Switch to energy efficient light bulbs (such as CFLs and LEDs) and household appliances. Belmont Light offers a rebate program for eligible residential appliances.
- Reduce phantom energy costs by unplugging electronic devices when they are not in use (for example, televisions, video game consoles, computers, monitors, and phone chargers). Use a surge protector to turn off multiple devices with a single switch.
- Use a thermometer to ensure that your refrigerator and freezer are running at an efficient temperature.
- Close window shades and drapes when the weather is warm to keep hot air out and cool air in.
- Turn off lights in empty rooms.
- Avoid use of ovens on warm days. This may curb the need to run air conditioners.
- Request a home energy assessment to determine what you can do to cut energy costs. To receive a free exterior thermal image scan of your home and request an in-home energy assessment, please visit www.sagewell.com.

Belmont Light also provides information on energy efficiency and financial assistance programs on its website at www.belmontlight.com and at its office, located at 40 Prince Street. Customers can also stop by Belmont Light's vendor table during Town Day on May 31st to pick up coupons for \$5 LED light bulbs.

In addition, customers can talk with customer service representatives about budgeting and managing energy costs. "As always, we encourage our customers to contact us at 617-993-2800 if they have any questions or concerns," General Manager Palmer concluded.

#####