



Energy Prices Surge in 2025–2026

Part I: What Customers Need to Know

As we transition into 2026, households and businesses throughout Illinois — and across much of the region — are experiencing the strain of rising energy costs. In many service areas, electric bills are significantly higher than they were just a year ago, and current analyses suggest that this upward trend is likely to persist.

How Much Your Bill Could Increase

In the ComEd service area, capacity and supply costs spiked significantly starting June 1, 2025, which raised average residential bills by roughly **10–15%** — or around **\$10.60 or more per month** for many customers.

Looking ahead to 2026, energy analysts and consumer advocacy groups warn that customers could see **additional upward pressure on bills**, particularly if capacity prices remain elevated in upcoming grid auctions. If demand continues to rise and new-generation or transmission projects lag behind, households could experience **another increase of several percentage points**, especially during peak summer and winter months. While exact amounts will vary based on usage and market conditions, some estimates suggest annual electric costs for average-use homes could be **hundreds of dollars higher than pre-2025 levels**.

These increases are reflected in what grid operators call the **capacity charge**, which ensures that enough electricity is available, even during peak demand. Those capacity costs are passed directly to customers as part of their supply price, and recent auctions have driven record-high prices.



Part II: Why Energy Prices Are Surging

So **why did energy prices rise so sharply** in 2025 and continue to do so into 2026 and beyond? The answer goes beyond simple inflation or weather patterns. Structural shifts in electricity demand are a major factor.

The Role of AI, Data Centers, and Grid Demand

Across the U.S., the rapid growth of **artificial intelligence (AI)** and the accompanying boom in large **data center construction** are significant drivers of electricity demand. These facilities require massive amounts of power to run high-performance computing equipment and to keep servers cool around the clock.

According to recent reports, increased demand from AI data centers added **billions of dollars to grid capacity costs**, which are ultimately reflected in consumer bills.¹

National electricity consumption in regions like the PJM Interconnection — which operates the electric grid that covers Illinois and much of the East Coast — shows that higher capacity auction prices are driven in part by this new heavy load.²

Analysts estimate that data centers could account for a growing share of total electricity use in coming years, potentially pushing average household electricity rates higher unless infrastructure and generation keep pace.³

Meanwhile, Grid Investment and Supply Challenges Continue

Utilities and grid operators are expanding generation capacity and transmission infrastructure to meet this surge in demand. However, these upgrades cost money and often take years to come online. Those costs are typically passed through to ratepayers.⁴

Outside of IL, large nationwide grids are also experiencing record energy demand. This is due in part to AI, data centers, transport and residential electrification, and delayed workforce and infrastructure upgrades.⁵

In some areas, capacity prices in grid auctions — which set the cost of maintaining readiness for peak demand — have soared **several hundred percent over previous years**.⁶

The Big Picture

In short, the rapid expansion of AI and data centers, combined with lagging grid upgrades and high wholesale capacity prices, are reshaping the energy landscape. While technological growth and electrification drive these trends, their **financial burden often shows up first in everyday customer bills** long before new infrastructure and renewable solutions can fully balance the grid.

Customers concerned about their bills and energy reliability should stay informed about both **market conditions and available energy programs** — including renewable options, efficiency incentives, and budgeting tools offered by utilities and energy service providers.

¹ [Finance & Commerce](#)
² [POWER Magazine](#)
³ [Crain's Chicago Business](#)
⁴ [ComEd's Hourly Pricing](#)
⁵ [bucksindependence.com](#)
⁶ [Citizens Utility Board](#)

Illinois Required Disclosure (ComEd Service Area)
MC Squared Energy Services, LLC (mc²) is not the same entity as your electric delivery company. You are not required to enroll with mc². As of January 2026, the electric supply price to compare to is currently 10.017 cents per kWh¹. The electric utility electric supply price will expire on May 31, 2026. The utility electric supply price to compare does not include the purchased electricity adjustment factor. For more information, go to the Illinois Commerce Commission's free website at www.pluginillinois.org.

¹ The electric supply price to compare is for residential customers. Electric supply prices to compare for other rate classes (in cents per kWh) that are currently applicable include: Watt-Hour Non-Electric Space Heating – 10.032 cents/kWh; Demand Non-Electric Space Heating – 10.061 cents/kWh; Nonresidential Electric Space Heating – 9.727 cents/kWh; Dusk to Dawn Lighting – 5.712 cents/kWh; General Lighting – 9.426 cents/kWh.

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¹ The electric supply price to compare listed above is for residential customers. Other rate class rates as of the month above (in cents per kWh): Small General Service (Secondary) 9.315; Small General Service (Primary) 9.164; Small General Service (High Voltage) 9.071.

