

# Tired of the Swings in Your Energy Bill?

**By Gay Fred**

Hot summers and cold winters can cause significant swings in your energy bill and problems for your budget. With the budget bill payment plan (budget bill), you won't have to deal with surprises when your energy bill arrives.

Budget billing is an optional payment plan that calculates your expected annual service charges based on your total energy usage during the previous year and divides it into 12 equal payment amounts. Participation in budget billing requires customers to pay their pre-determined average amount every month – even if the status shown on their bill is a credit.

Consumers need to be aware that budget billing can be adjusted during the year. Typically your account is reviewed periodically. Your actual usage may cause the budget amount to go up or down for the next budget billing period or it may result in a roll-over credit or a debt amount to be paid to bring your account back in line.

What is the advantage of budget billing? It provides you more certainty about what your electric or natural gas bill will be each month. This certainty will remove the highs and lows often experienced with warmer or colder than normal temperatures that impact your usage. An example of how an annual budget bill plan

may compare to your actual monthly usage is shown below.

"I love budget billing, before with fluctuations every month I never knew what my energy bill was going to be," said Kathy, a budget bill customer for 10 years. "Now with budget billing, it helps me to level out my budget, so I can manage other bills and can make better decisions on what else I can afford."

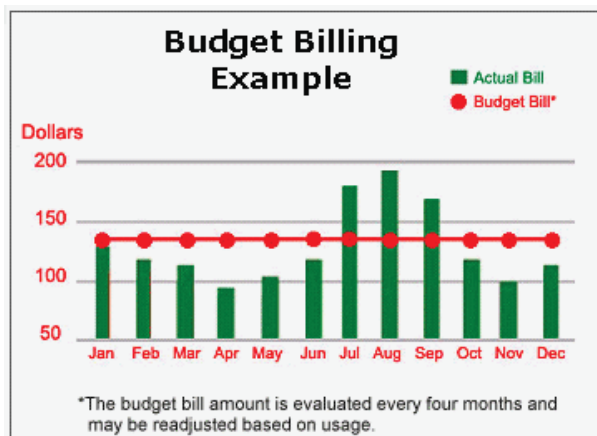
Kathy is not alone when it comes to customers who are choosing budget billing to pay an electric or natural gas bill. There are approximately 770,000 customers

on budget billing statewide and the number continues to climb.

If you are interested in budget billing, please contact your local utility company to find out more information on the program. See what your monthly budget bill amount would be and what options are available if you sign up. Keep in the mind that the only requirement to remain on the budget bill plan is to pay your bill on time. Customers may choose to leave budget billing at any time.

For more information on how to save on your energy bills, visit [www.beenergyefficient.org](http://www.beenergyefficient.org)

-- Gay Fred is the Manager of the PSC  
Consumer Services Department



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***Plans and guidelines vary by utility company.***