

Overview: Citizen Utility Boards (CUBs) in the US

CUB – Illinois www.citizensutilityboard.org

The Illinois Legislature formed the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) in 1983 to serve as a voice for residential and small-business utility ratepayers. CUB is a nonpartisan, nonprofit statewide organization funded by Illinois consumers and a grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Trust. Though created by the state, CUB receives no state tax dollars. CUB is guided by a 20-member board of directors, with one director elected by dues-paying CUB members in each of Illinois' Congressional Districts. Working as volunteers, board members determine CUB's policy and budget and serve as local representatives for the organization.

"The Purpose of this Act is to promote the health, welfare and prosperity of all the citizens of this State by ensuring effective and democratic representation of utility consumers...Such purpose shall be deemed a statewide interest and not a private or special concern." Citizens Utility Board Act Illinois Revised Statutes, Ch. 111 2/3, Sec. 902

When the Illinois General Assembly created CUB in 1983, it gave the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization a clear mission: to represent the interests of residential utility customers across the state. The statute directs CUB to carry out that mission by intervening in ratemaking proceedings before the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), in the courts and before other public bodies and by providing consumers with information and assistance regarding their utility companies. Since its inception in 1984, CUB has been doing just that—working for lower rates and better service from the state's investor-owned electric, gas and telephone companies. Over the last 17 years, CUB has saved consumers more than \$5 billion by blocking rate hikes and winning consumer refunds.

CUB – Wisconsin www.wiscub.org

The purpose of this organisation is to 1) ensure effective and democratic representation of residential, farm and small business utility customers before regulatory agencies; 2) ensure effective and democratic representation of residential, farm and small business utility customers before the legislature and other public bodies; and 3) provide education on utility service costs and on the benefits and methods of energy conservation for consumers.

CUB fought and stopped the proposed USD 6 billion merger between Wisconsin Electric Power and Northern States Power, a Minnesota-based utility. The merger would have been the largest in US history, caused higher rates, fewer good Wisconsin jobs, and poorer service.

CUB saved WEPCO ratepayers USD 75 million by hiring a nuclear expert that proved to the PSC [Public Service Commission] that WEPCO mismanagement caused the lengthy shutdown of the Point Beach nuclear plant in 1997. The PSC denied 75% of WEPCO's request to increase rates by USD 100 million to pay for nuclear cost overruns. CUB was the leading consumer advocate for the passage of Wisconsin's 1998 Electric Reliability Act.

CUB – Oregon www.oregoncub.org

The mission of CUB Oregon is simple: to represent you, the residential utility customer. The Citizens' Utility Board of Oregon is the only group in the state funded by Oregon ratepayers to challenge rate increases and other matters brought before the Public Utility Commission and State Legislature by the private utility companies.

CUB also understands that although money is a big concern, it isn't the only concern. That's why, in addition to fighting rate hikes, they also work for clean and efficient energy alternatives. In the 20 years since CUB was founded by voters through a ballot initiative, CUB has saved consumers over \$3.6 billion and won important policy victories that have protected consumer privacy, the environment and low-income Oregonians.