

# Complaint Report

**Complaint Number:** C23-0146

## Customer Information

**Customer Name:** Lavato , Nicole

**Account Number:**

**Phone Number:** 8012532539

**Email Address:**

**Service Address:** 2724 S Lake Street  
Salt Lake City , UT 84106

## Complaint Information

**Company Name:** Dominion Energy

**Date Received:** 8/23/2023

**Type of Call:** Complaint

**Complaint Received By:** Cynthia Dumas

**Gone Formal:** NO

**Date Resolved:** 8/30/2023

**Complaint Type:** Billing Problems

**Utility Company Analyst:** Elia Lopez

## Complaint Description:

The Division received a call from Mrs. Lavato regarding her high bill with Dominion Energy. Mrs. Lavato explained Dominion Energy told her they base her payment on a 24 month to average of her usage. Mrs. Lavato explained she wasn't using gas 24 months ago. Average started January 2022, and since then the bill has gone 80% . The problem went up 83% and the cost has gone up 60% and the average is less than 60%. average bill shouldn't include. Mrs. Lavato wants to ensure they aren't averaging her bill for 24 months and instead from the time she started using gas. Please contact the customer. .

## Complaint Response:

From: CAPSC@dominionenergy.com  
To: Cynthia Dumas  
Cc: nicolemjohnson13@yahoo.com  
Sent: 8/30/2023 8:42:45 AM

Attachments:

NicholeLovato.resp.pdf

Good morning,

Attached is a copy of the response and enclosures for your review.

Nicole requested a copy by e-mail also, so I've included her in this response.

Sincerely,

Elia Lopez

Lead Customer Relation & Energy Assistance Specialist

Consumer Affairs

Western Gas Distribution

1140 W 200 S, Salt Lake City, UT 84104

Mailing Address: PO Box 45360, DNR146, Salt Lake City, UT 84145

O:801-324-3557

Dominion Energy Utah  
1140 West 200 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84104  
Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 3194, Salt Lake City, UT 84110  
DominionEnergy.com



Nicole McLaughlan Lovato  
2724 Lake St  
Salt Lake City, UT 84106

August 30, 2023

Dear Ms. Lovato,

This letter is in response to the complaint filed with the Division of Public Utilities. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

Dominion Energy (DE) is a regulated utility and, as such, adheres to the **Utah Code Title 54, Public Utilities and Public Service Commission Rules**. A summary of rate changes can be found on the Utah Public Service Commission website [psc.utah.gov](http://psc.utah.gov) and click on gas information then History of Dominion Energy Utah's Rates.

Your monthly gas bill has two main components: **Gas costs and non-gas costs**. For gas costs, DE purchases gas supplies for customers and passes those costs on **without markup**. The cost of natural gas is going up due to external factors like high demand and international conflicts. To adjust for those cost fluctuations, DE files rate changes with the Utah Public Service Commission regularly. **Non-gas costs** are for operating and maintaining the company's distribution system. It requires a large capital investment to build and maintain a network of pipelines to deliver gas to homes and businesses. This cost reflects on your bill as the Basic Service Fee (BSF) which is a fixed rate of \$6.75 as outlined by the **Utah Rates & Tariff**.

On November 16, 2022, you e-mailed DE asking for average billing. As agreed, your account was set up on the **Budget Plan**. A letter (copy enclosed) confirming this action and explaining budget billing was mailed to you. A copy of **Page 8-14** from the **Utah Natural Gas Tariff, PSCU 600**, covering the **Budget Plan** is also enclosed for your review. As stated in the second paragraph: ***"If at the end of the Budget Plan Year, there is an overpayment or underpayment on an account, the customer's projected monthly budget plan payment amount will be adjusted, spreading the difference over the next 12 months, interest free, unless a customer requests an immediate refund or credit."***

Your Budget Plan balance is displayed on every bill below the Current Charge (Budget Amount) line item. Your Budget Plan balance will help you keep track of how much you are underpaying/overpaying while on the Budget Plan.

Our Budget Plan Year is from **August through July**. Your total usage for the previous Budget Plan Year was \$1,656.74 with a budget deficit balance or underpayment of \$646.50 on August 1st. To calculate your new Budget Plan payment, we take your total

usage and divide by 12 months and add your budget deficit divided by 12 months, then adjust for any rate changes (two rate changes totaling 15% since you setup budget). This makes your new budget installment \$211.00 for the next 12 months.

Higher gas rates and colder temperatures made it more expensive to heat our homes this last winter. Those on the Budget Plan saw an increase in their monthly installments due to large debit balances at the end of winter.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me directly at 801-324-3557.

Sincerely,



Elia Lopez

Lead-Customer Relations & Energy Assistance Specialist  
Western Gas Distribution

elo

Enclosures

cc: Division of Public Utilities



Dominion Energy  
1140 West 200 South  
P.O. Box 45360  
Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0360  
Tel (800) 323-5517

11/18/2022

NICOLE RAE MCLAUGHLAN LOVATO  
2724 LAKE ST  
SALT LAKE CITY UT 84106

Account: [REDACTED]

Service Address: 2724 Lake St  
Salt Lake City, UT 84106-1745

This letter confirms that your Dominion Energy account is set up on the Budget Plan, which is an optional payment program that allows you to pay the same amount each month for natural gas service.

### How does the Budget Plan work?

We estimate the annual usage based on the actual billing history of the premise. Using current rates, we calculate an annual billing amount and divide by 12 to determine your monthly Budget Plan payment for the year. Because the estimated annual usage is paid over a year, the Budget Plan requires a payment each month. Late or missed payments are subject to a late payment charge on the installment amount.

After you enroll in the Budget Plan, we continue to read your meter and show the actual gas used on your monthly statement, this is listed as "Current Gas Billing". It also shows your "Budget Plan Balance", which we recommend you review monthly. A Budget Plan that has high debit or credit balance may indicate the monthly payment amount should be adjusted. Regardless of the Budget Plan monthly payment amount, you are responsible for all the gas costs billed at the premise.

At least once a year, we compare your actual usage to the estimated amount used to calculate your monthly Budget Plan payment. If your usage is higher or lower than expected, or if there has been a significant rate change, we will adjust your payment to help keep your account in balance.

Thank you for choosing the Budget Plan. If you have questions about this information, please call us at 1-800-323-5517, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., or visit [DominionEnergy.com](http://DominionEnergy.com)

**Si necesita ayuda por favor llame a Dominion Energy al número 1-800-323-5517, de Lunes a Viernes de 7 a.m. a 6 p.m, o visite [www.DominionEnergy.com](http://www.DominionEnergy.com).**

Sincerely,  
Dominion Energy

NEWBUDGET

Rev: 05/2017



**8.05 BUDGET PLAN**

To spread gas bill amounts evenly over the entire year, General Service customers may elect to utilize the Budget Plan and pay a predetermined monthly amount. On the basis of prior usage history or estimated usage, the customer's annual bill is computed under current rates and divided into 12 equal payments. Actual billings for customers utilizing the Budget Plan will be calculated each month according to the regular provisions of this Tariff. The monthly budget plan payment amounts may be adjusted by the Company during the year if actual and accrued billings deviate substantially or if a rate change of 5% or greater is approved.

If at the end of the Budget Plan Year, there is an overpayment or an underpayment on an account, the customer's projected monthly budget plan payment amount will be adjusted, spreading the difference over the next 12 months, interest free, unless a customer requests an immediate refund or credit.

A customer will be dropped from the plan if two consecutive payments are missed, resulting in a 60-day delinquency. To be eligible for the Budget Plan, a customer's account must not be delinquent.

Issued by Judd Cook, VP & General Manager	Advice No.	Section Revision No.	Effective Date
	23-01	1	January 1, 2023