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Houston-Area Griddy Customer Seeks Class Action Lawsuit Alleging Unlawful Price Gouging

Customers say the retail electricity provider charged them exponentially higher rates during last week's storm. G says Public Utilities Commission to blame for soaring prices.

KYRA BUCKLEY | FEBRUARY 23, 2021, 7:20 PM



AP Photo/Michael Ainsworth

Crews work to restore power to homes in Euless, Texas, Thursday, Feb. 18, 2021.

A Chambers County woman who says she was charged more than \$9,000 for electricity during last week's winter storm is petitioning \$1 billion class action lawsuit against retail electricity provider Griddy, according to court documents.

Lisa Khoury, of Mont Belvieu, alleged in a petition filed in Harris County District Court that she attempted to switch providers after real she was facing sky high electricity prices, but was not able to.

Over a six-day period from Feb. 13-19 Griddy charged her \$9,340, according to the petition. It goes on to say her normal monthly bill \$200-\$250.

"The outrageous bills added to Khoury's stress and financial burden, especially as a retiree," reads the petition, which seeks class action protection. "She describes herself as going into 'survival mode.' Many Texans complained the crisis drained 'the mental reserves the left' from the COVID-19 pandemic."

The company did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday.

Heading into the storm Griddy warned its 29,000 customers in Texas that prices were about to go up, and in an unusual move asked customers to switch electricity providers.

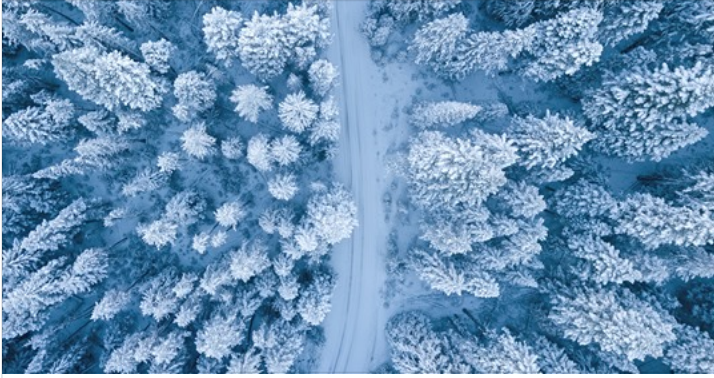
However, by the time many customers got the notification most providers had closed for the President's Day weekend or were not accepting new customers.

g Griddy
about 2 weeks ago f

We've always said that we care about our members first. It is time to put our words into action.

The ERCOT electricity market is currently experiencing extremely high pricing due to increased heating demand from the cold weather, and new data is showing a good part of next week to be even worse. The average customer pays \$5/day in energy charges on a normal day. We expect this to possibly increase to over \$100/day for the next several days.

At Griddy, we simply pass through ... [See More](#)



GRIDDY.COM
Griddy | How to switch | Texas Energy
While we value you as a member, we want what is best for your wallet an...

10 78 7

As temperatures dipped below freezing across much of Texas and electricity demand approached record levels, the Public Utilities Commission directed the state's grid manager ERCOT to raise the wholesale price of electricity to reflect scarcity of supply. Normally price per kilowatt hour is 12 cents or less; ERCOT, as directed by the PUC, bumped the wholesale price up to \$9 per kilowatt hour.

Griddy bases what it charges customers on that wholesale price. Customers pay the delivery charge and a flat monthly fee plus the wholesale price of electricity at the time you use it.

"When there is excess energy on the grid, prices drop and can even go negative, which means you are getting paid to use electricity (awesome!)," Griddy's website explains, "And when demand is high like on hot summer days or winter storms, prices can spike. The the price can go to is \$9/kWh (which has only ever happened 0.005% of the time.)"

WOW NO COW
@nathanpolk t

It's nice too see that my old electric company is trending. My Griddy bill for this month is \$1,750. I work retail. I can't afford this.



10:55 AM · Feb 20, 2021 i

417 176 Copy link to Tweet

Khoury isn't the only customer expressing frustration.

On Twitter and Facebook Griddy customers have been sharing screenshots of bills charging \$1,000 or more, and demanding the co provide financial relief to those impacted by last week's high wholesale prices.

Griddy is blaming the Public Utilities Commission for the high prices, saying the PUC's move to raise wholesale prices "changed the

"We intend to fight this for, and alongside, our customers for equity and accountability," the company wrote in a statement, "to reveal such price increases were allowed to happen as millions of Texans went without power.

[View Fullscreen](#)

2/22/2021 6:53 PM
Marilyn Burgess - District Clerk Harris County
Envelope No. 50796046
By: Maria Rodriguez
Filed: 2/22/2021 6:53 PM

CAUSE NO. _____

<p>LISA KHOURY, Individually and on Behalf of all Others Similarly Situated,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Plaintiffs,</i></p> <p>vs.</p> <p>GRIDDY ENERGY LLC</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Defendant.</i></p>	§ § § § § § § § § §	<p>IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ JUDICIAL DISTRICT</p>
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PLAINTIFFS' ORIGINAL CLASS ACTION PETITION

Plaintiffs Lisa Khoury, Individually and on Behalf of all Others Similarly Situated, by and through the undersigned counsel, bring this class action against Defendant Griddy Energy LLC ("Griddy"). Plaintiffs make the following allegations pursuant to the investigation of counsel and based upon information and belief, except as to the allegations specifically pertaining to Khoury, which are based on personal knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

1. This is a class action on behalf of all Griddy customers who were charged excessive electricity prices during and because of Winter Storm Uri of February 2021. Griddy provides electricity to Texas and charged customers what has been described as "massive," "catastrophic," and "eye watering" electrical bills, even when those customers experienced power outages and other hardships during the storm.
2. Griddy has caused substantial harm to Khoury and the proposed class by charging excessive electricity prices during and because of a disaster.

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Kyra Buckley

ENERGY REPORTER



Kyra Buckley is an Energy Reporter with Houston Public Media. Before joining the News 88.7 team she was the Morn Edition Host and a reporter at KUNC in Northern Colorado. She started in public radio in her hometown of Eugene, Or where she hosted Weekend Edition and reported for KLCC....

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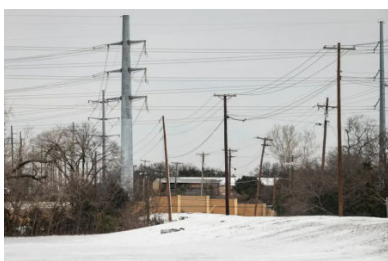
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