



Class-action lawsuit filed against Central Maine Power

Several law firms join together to file class-action lawsuit over overcharging claims

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PORTLAND, Maine - Several law firms have joined together to file a class-action lawsuit against Central Maine Power.

Over the winter, hundreds of CMP customers complained about large spikes in their bills. Some customers reported their bills doubling or tripling.

A document filed this spring with the Maine Public Utilities Commission said 97,000 Central Maine Power accounts saw year-over-year month or average daily usage increases of more than 50 percent.

New York City-based firm Napoli Shkolnik and Trafton, Matzen, Belleau & Frenette, and Maine-based Lipman & Katz filed the suit Thursday afternoon.

"The law firms have been contacted by over 200 people wishing to be included in the class," Lipman said. "In addition, a group has been formed under the leadership of Patrick Milligan and now under the leadership of Judith Hopkins called 'CMP Ratepayers unite' that has over 4,800

members. These members have joined together to pursue their claims for having been overcharged by CMP. "

"These people deserve an opportunity to be compensated for their harm," Lipman said. "Many of these people paid their bills even though they were unreasonable and excessive so that their electrical service was not interrupted."

The firms estimate about 200,000 customers saw charges increase less than 50 percent.

In May, a group called CMP Ratepayers Union said in a press release that it had retained lawyers to file a lawsuit.

CMP released a statement Thursday regarding the lawsuit.

"The timing of this litigation certainly is peculiar given that the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is undergoing an extensive investigation and has yet to issue its findings and recommendations. We continue to cooperate fully with the PUC and the independent auditor.

"While we understand class action lawyers are motivated to aggressively pursue claims and related legal fees, we hope all of our customers understand the PUC's role. Under Maine law, the PUC is the body specifically charged with ensuring fair, accurate electric bills for all customers."

A 32-page document given to the PUC indicates CMP knew about certain billing errors as early as November 2017.

The PUC is investigating the billing issue.

CMP has repeatedly said it had not found any problems to explain why hundreds of customers reported higher-than-average bills this past winter.

CMP said October's windstorm that knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of people and a cold winter resulted in increased usage.

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