



## NEWS RELEASE



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### AVERAGE ENERGY PRICES IN THE WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE AREA – DECEMBER 2009

Washington-Baltimore area consumers paid more than the U.S. city average for electricity (10.5 percent) and utility (piped) gas (7.5 percent), but close to the national average for gasoline (0.1 percent) in December 2009 as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the percent differential between the local and national prices for all three indexes decreased from December 2008. (See table A and table 1.) (All data in this release are not seasonally adjusted; accordingly, over-the-year analysis is used throughout.)

**Table A. Average prices for utility (piped) gas, electricity, and gasoline, United States and Washington-Baltimore area, December 2008 and December 2009**

Item	December 2008			December 2009		
	United States	Washington-Baltimore	Percent difference	United States	Washington-Baltimore	Percent difference
Electricity (per kWh)	\$0.124	\$0.139	12.1	\$0.124	\$0.137	10.5
Utility (piped) gas per therm	1.355	1.601	18.2	1.105	1.188	7.5
Gasoline per gallon	1.742	1.787	2.6	2.671	2.674	0.1

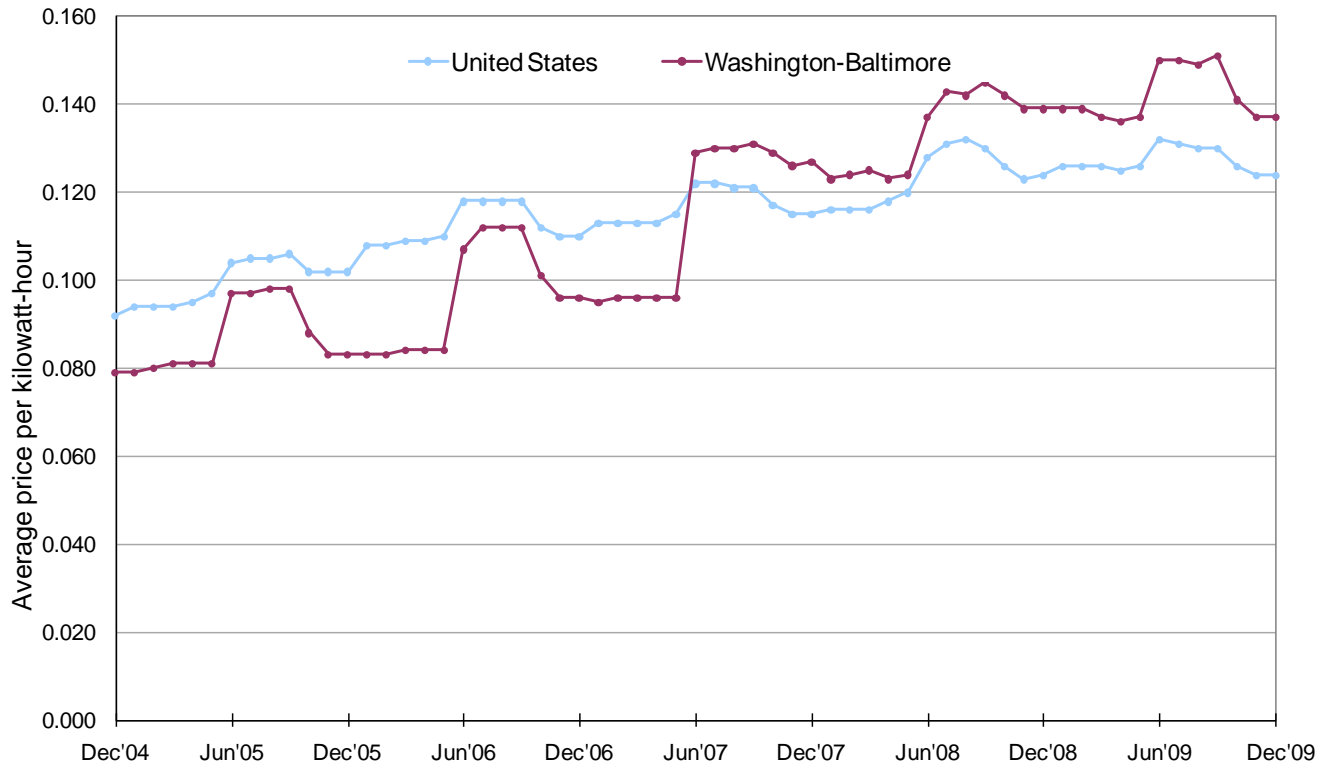
NOTE: A positive percent difference measures how much the price in the Washington-Baltimore area is above the national price, while a negative difference reflects a lower price in the Washington-Baltimore area.

A kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity cost Washington-Baltimore area consumers \$0.137 in December 2009, down 1.4 percent from one year earlier. Nationwide, electricity prices averaged \$0.124 in December 2009, unchanged from a year ago. Electricity prices have generally trended upwards over the last five years both locally and nationally; however, Washington-Baltimore area electricity prices have increased at a higher rate (73.4 percent) than U.S. prices (34.8 percent) since December 2004. (See chart 1.)

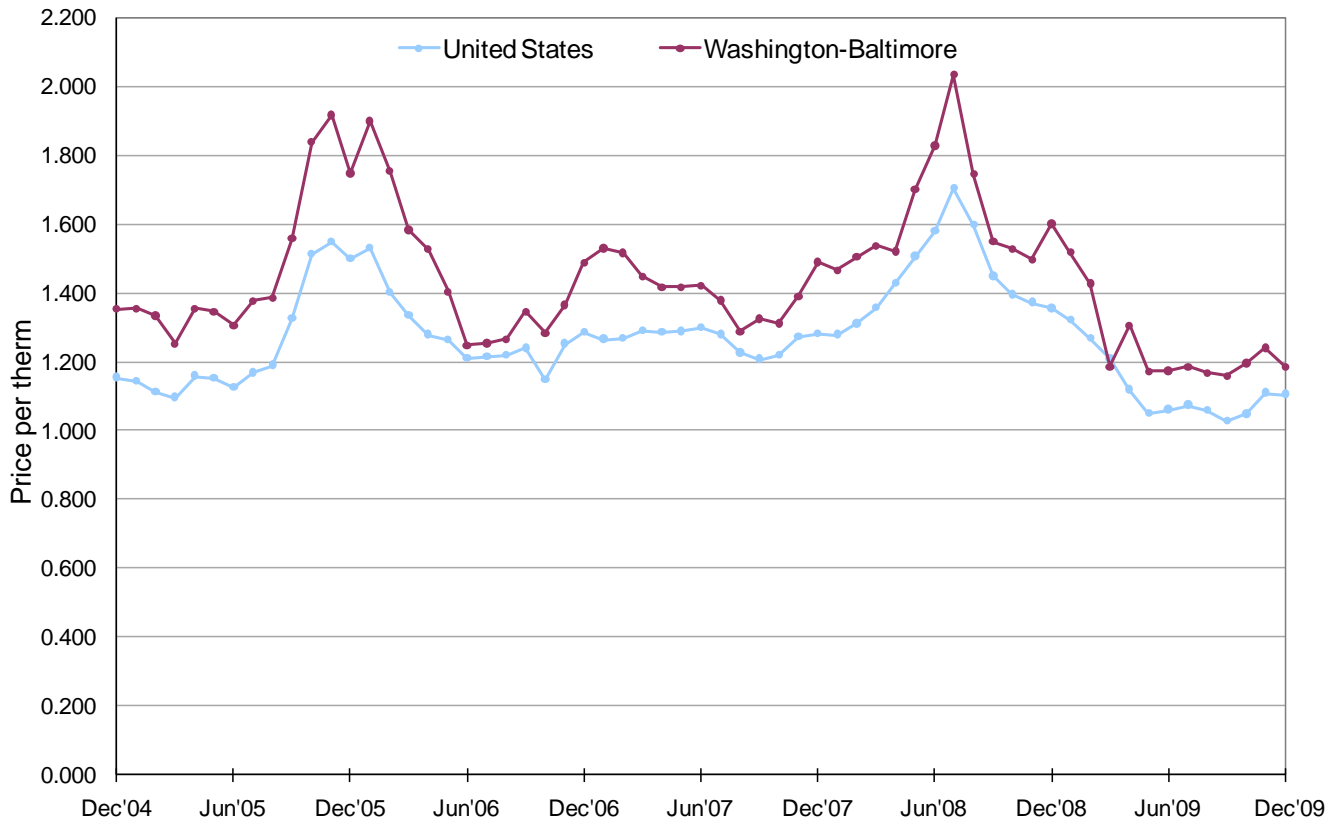
A therm—a measure of constant heating value—of utility (piped) gas, commonly referred to as natural gas, in the Washington-Baltimore area averaged \$1.188 in December 2009, a decrease of 25.8 percent from the previous December. Nationwide, a therm averaged \$1.105 in December 2009, down 18.5 percent over the year. Since December 2004, local and national prices followed similar trends, with local prices generally remaining higher than those for the nation. (See chart 2.)

In December 2009, gasoline in the Washington-Baltimore area averaged \$2.674 per gallon. Local gas prices were \$0.003 (or 0.1 percent) higher than the national average of \$2.671. Over-the-year, gasoline prices jumped 49.6 percent in the Washington-Baltimore area and 53.3 percent nationwide. Though gasoline prices are historically subject to rapid monthly fluctuations, local gasoline prices have been close to the national average over the past five years. (See chart 3.)

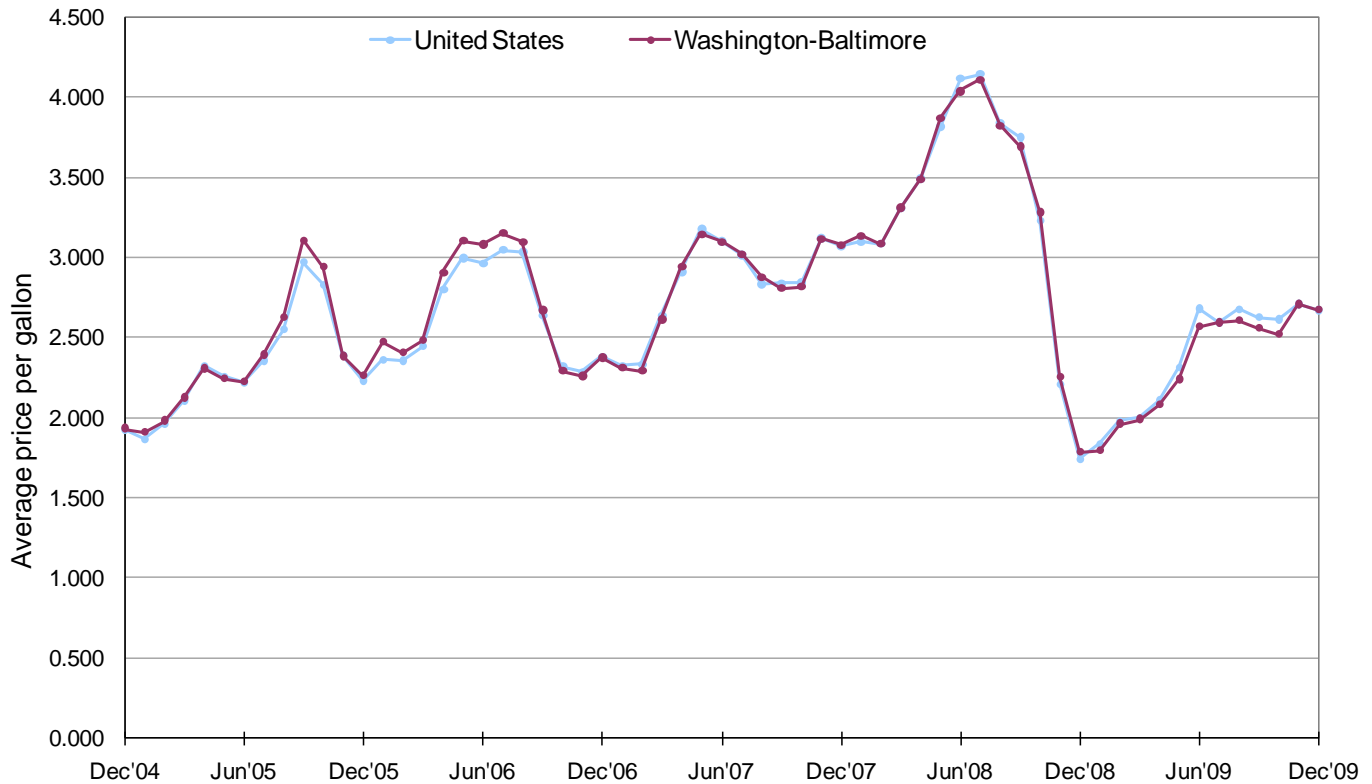
**Chart 1. Average prices for electricity, United States and Washington-Baltimore area, December 2004-2009**



**Chart 2. Average prices for utility (piped) gas, United States and Washington-Baltimore area, December 2004-2009**



**Chart 3. Average prices for gasoline, United States and Washington-Baltimore area, December 2004-2009**



The Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) includes the District of Columbia; Baltimore City and the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and Washington in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax, Fauquier, King George, Loudoun, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the counties of Berkeley and Jefferson in West Virginia.

**Additional information**

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the CPI data, as well as other Bureau data, contact the Mid-Atlantic Information Office at 215-597-3282 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET. Information on the Consumer Price Index and other surveys and programs is available on our Web site at [www.bls.gov/ro3/](http://www.bls.gov/ro3/).

## Technical Note

Average prices for electricity, utility (piped) gas, and gasoline are published monthly for the U.S. city average, the 4 regions, the 3 population size classes, 10 region/size-class cross-classifications, and the 14 largest local index areas. For electricity, average prices per kilowatt-hour (kWh) and per 500 kWh are published. For utility (piped) gas, average prices per therm, per 40 therms, and per 100 therms are published. For gasoline, the average price per gallon is published. Average prices for commonly available grades of gasoline are published as well as the average price across all grades.

Price quotes for 40 therms and 100 therms of utility (piped) gas and for 500 kWh of electricity are collected in sample outlets for use in the average price programs only. Since they are for specified consumption amounts, they are not used in the CPI. All other price quotes used for average price estimation are regular CPI data.

With the exception of the 40 therms, 100 therms, and 500 kWh price quotes, all eligible prices are converted to a price per normalized quantity. These prices are then used to estimate a price for a defined fixed quantity.

**Table 1. Average prices for electricity, utility (piped) gas, and gasoline, United States and Washington-Baltimore area, December 2008-December 2009, not seasonally adjusted**

Year and Month	Electricity per kWh		Utility (piped) gas per therm		Gasoline per gallon	
	United States	Washington-Baltimore	United States	Washington-Baltimore	United States	Washington-Baltimore
<b>2008</b>						
<b>December</b>	\$0.124	\$0.139	\$1.355	\$1.601	\$1.742	\$1.787
<b>2009</b>						
<b>January</b>	0.126	0.139	1.321	1.518	1.838	1.794
<b>February</b>	0.126	0.139	1.268	1.428	1.979	1.962
<b>March</b>	0.126	0.137	1.208	1.187	2.000	1.990
<b>April</b>	0.125	0.136	1.119	1.307	2.107	2.083
<b>May</b>	0.126	0.137	1.051	1.174	2.314	2.240
<b>June</b>	0.132	0.150	1.060	1.176	2.681	2.571
<b>July</b>	0.131	0.150	1.074	1.187	2.594	2.593
<b>August</b>	0.130	0.149	1.058	1.170	2.677	2.609
<b>September</b>	0.130	0.151	1.028	1.161	2.626	2.557
<b>October</b>	0.126	0.141	1.048	1.198	2.613	2.522
<b>November</b>	0.124	0.137	1.110	1.242	2.709	2.707
<b>December</b>	0.124	0.137	1.105	1.188	2.671	2.674