NEWS RELEASE
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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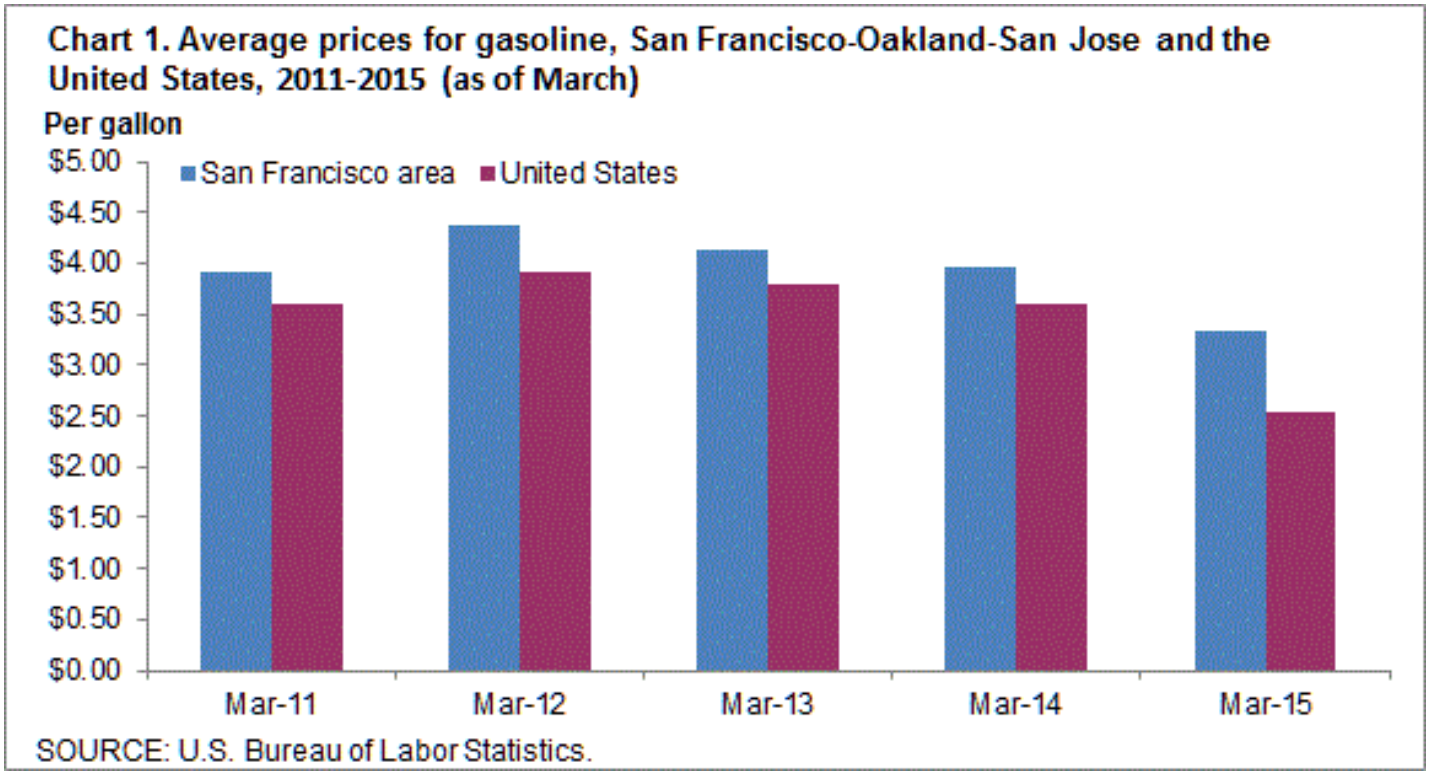
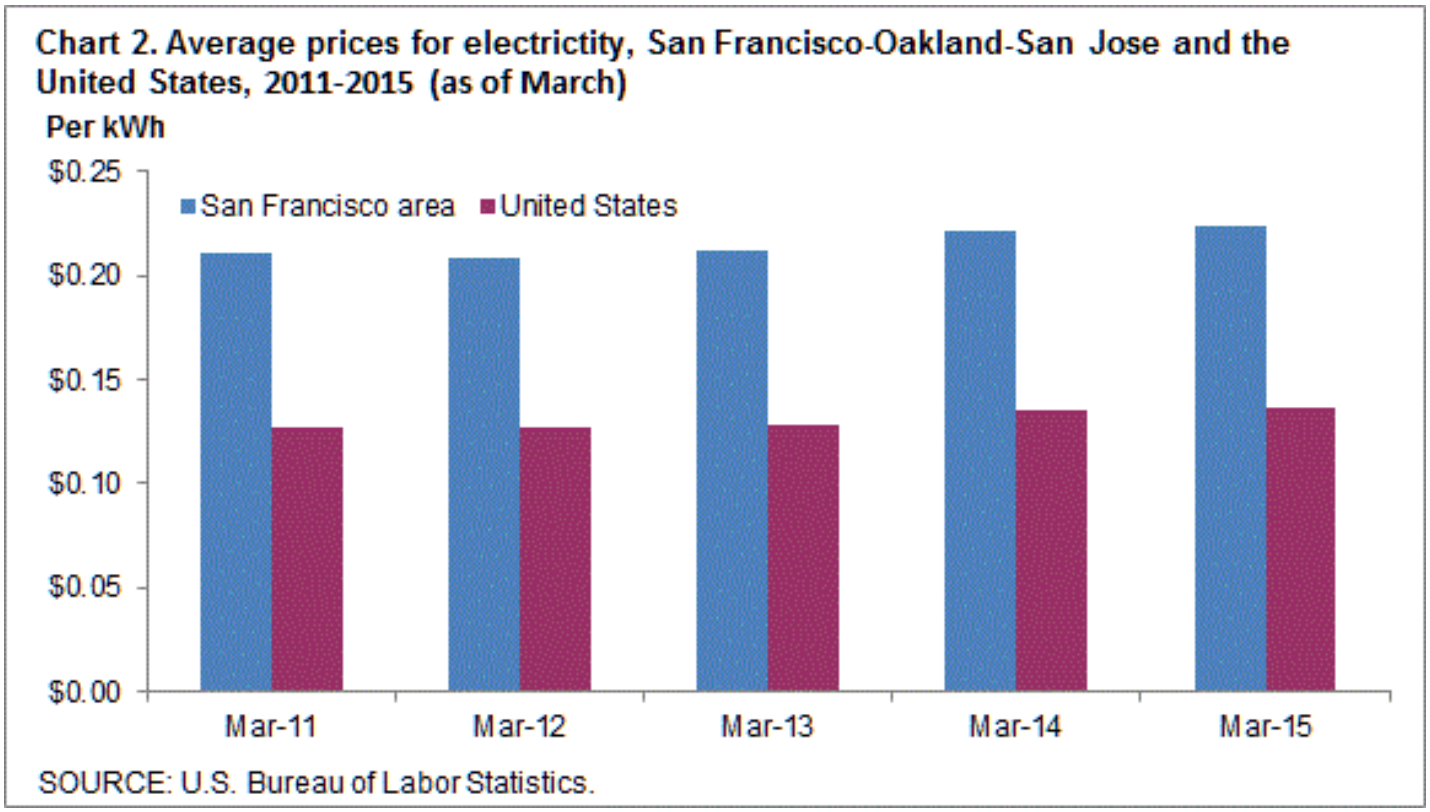
Average Energy Prices, San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, March 2015

Gasoline prices averaged $3.334 a gallon in the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose area in March 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that area gasoline prices were down 61.7 cents compared to last March when they averaged $3.951 per gallon. San Francisco area households paid an average of 22.4 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) of electricity in March 2015, similar to 22.2 cents paid per kWh in March 2014. The average cost of utility (piped) gas at $1.378 per therm in March was similar to the price per therm spent last year. (Data in this release are not seasonally adjusted; accordingly, over-the-year-analysis is used throughout.)

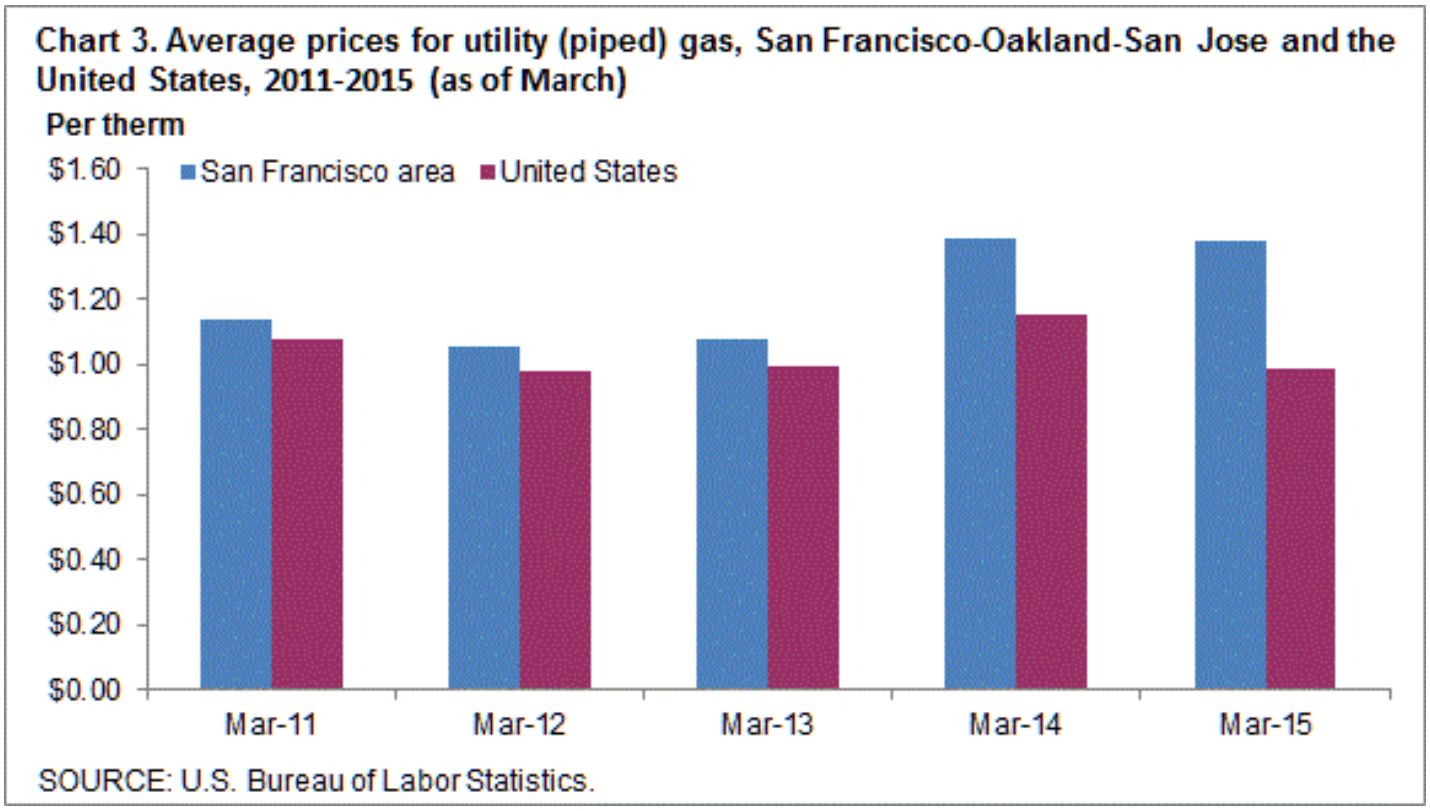
At $3.334 a gallon, San Francisco area consumers paid 31.1 percent more than the $2.544 national average in March 2015. A year earlier, consumers in the San Francisco area paid 10.1 percent more than the national average for a gallon of gasoline. The local price of a gallon of gasoline has exceeded the national average by at least 8.7 percent in the month of March in each of the past five years. (See chart 1.)



The 22.4 cents per kWh San Francisco households paid for electricity in March 2015 was 64.7 percent more than the nationwide average of 13.6 cents per kWh. Last March, electricity costs were 64.4 percent higher in San Francisco compared to the nation. In each of the past five years, prices paid by San Francisco area consumers for electricity exceeded the U.S. average by at least 64.4 percent in the month of March. (See chart 2.)



Prices paid by San Francisco area consumers for utility (piped) gas, commonly referred to as natural gas, were $1.378 per therm, or 39.9 percent above the national average in March 2015 ($0.985 per therm). A year earlier, area consumers paid 20.1 percent more price per therm for natural gas compared to the nation. In the past five years, the per therm cost for natural gas in March in the San Francisco area has varied between 5.8 percent and 39.9 percent above the U.S. average. (See chart 3.)



The San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, Calif. metropolitan area consists of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma Counties in California.

Technical Note

Average prices are estimated from Consumer Price Index (CPI) data for selected commodity series to support the research and analytic needs of CPI data users. 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.

The average price per kilowatt-hour represents the total bill divided by the kilowatt-hour usage. The total bill is the sum of all items applicable to all consumers appearing on an electricity bill including, but not limited to, variable rates per kWh, fixed costs, taxes, surcharges, and credits. This calculation also applies to the average price per therm for utility (piped) gas.

Information from this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200, Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339.

Table 1. Average prices for gasoline, electricty, and utility (piped) gas, San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose and the United States, March 2014-March 2015, not seasonally adjusted

Year and month	Gasoline per gallon		Electricity per kWh		Utillity (piped) gas per therm	
	San Francisco area	United States	San Francisco area	United States	San Francisco area	United States
2014						
March	$3.951	$3.590	$0.222	$0.135	$1.386	$1.154
April	4.162	3.717	0.182	0.131	1.424	1.137
May	4.193	3.745	0.232	0.136	1.465	1.111
June	4.155	3.750	0.233	0.143	1.427	1.088
July	4.101	3.690	0.233	0.143	1.479	1.093
August	3.953	3.540	0.223	0.143	1.441	1.060
September	3.815	3.463	0.223	0.141	1.625	1.058
October	3.565	3.241	0.222	0.136	1.540	1.033
November	3.217	2.945	0.213	0.134	1.324	1.035
December	2.874	2.618	0.213	0.135	1.398	1.060
2015						
January	2.577	2.170	0.222	0.138	1.490	1.036
February	2.782	2.308	0.222	0.138	1.464	1.007
March	3.334	2.544	0.224	0.136	1.378	0.985