

## **Legislature approves electricity rate relief \$1 BILLION | GOP lawmakers blast plan**

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SPRINGFIELD -- A \$1 billion electricity rate relief package rocketed through the Illinois Legislature on Thursday over the objections of Republican lawmakers who said the plan doesn't give consumers significant help from high power prices.

"This is not real rate relief," state Sen. Bill Brady (R-Bloomington) said. "Our citizens need real rate relief."

If approved by Gov. Blagojevich, the package will fund rollbacks and partial credits for the double-digit percent increases that began Jan. 1 when a decade-long electricity rate freeze expired. The credits and refunds would phase out over the next three years.

The House approved the measure 80-33 after several Republican lawmakers bashed the plan -- and the Democrats who crafted it -- for more than an hour. The package moved to the Senate, which approved it 40-13 Thursday evening.

Under the agreed measure, Chicago area Commonwealth Edison customers would receive a one-time average rebate of \$50 and an approximate \$7 monthly credit for the rest of the year. Several Republicans mocked the seemingly paltry payout.

"It will be wonderful when they get their \$8, and \$10, and \$12 checks. They'll be so happy," state Rep. Mike Bost (R-Murphysboro) said sarcastically. He nevertheless voted for the plan.

The plan could put an end to the issue that lawmakers have grappled with for months.

State Senate President Emil Jones helped block a rate-freeze extension pushed by House Democrats that would have been worth more than \$2 billion annually to consumers.