

Cautionary Note: Numbers of Residential Consumers

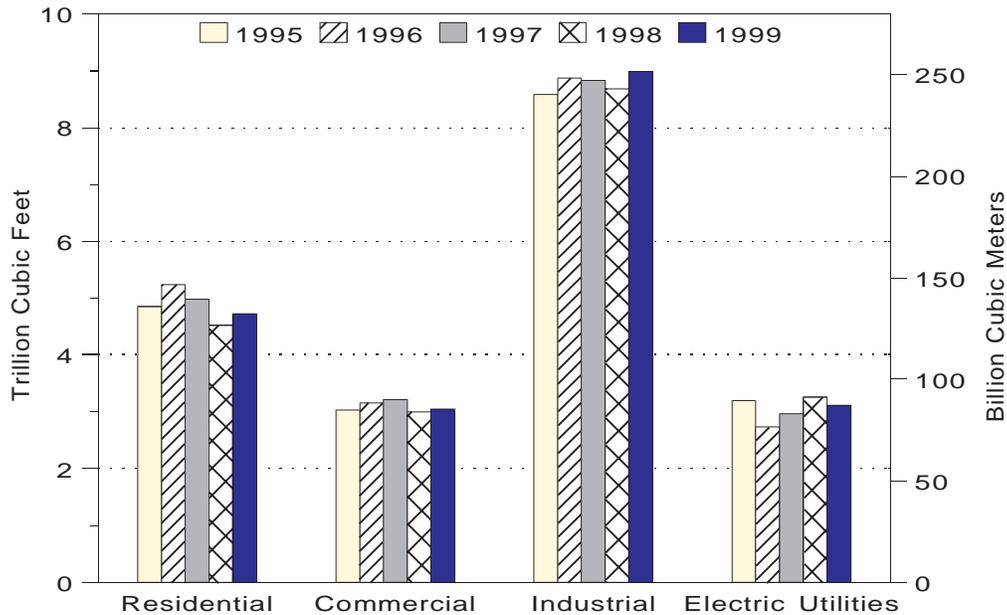
The Energy Information Administration (EIA) expects that there may be some double counting in the number of residential users reported for 1998 and 1999, specifically that some residential customers were reported as both sales and transportation customers.

EIA collects information on number of residential consumers, through a survey of companies that deliver gas to consumers (Form EIA-176). The survey asks for the number of residential customers companies serve as sales customers and as customers to whom they deliver gas purchased from others. Traditionally, residential customers obtained the gas and all services associated with delivering it from their local distribution company (LDC). The LDC records these customers as sales customers. Customer choice programs allow consumers to select the provider from whom they purchase gas. When customers elect to purchase gas from a provider other than the LDC, the LDC continues to deliver the gas to the household even though it no longer sells the gas. When customers switch to another provider, they become transportation customers for the LDC. A residential customer who enters a customer choice program will be classified both as a traditional sales customer and, after entering the program, as a transportation customer. This double reporting affects the number of residential consumers shown in the *Natural Gas Annual*.

Table 18 assists readers in evaluating the extent and possible effect of double reporting. It lists the number of residential sales and transportation customers reported on Form EIA-176 for 1998 and 1999. Appendix A includes the survey Form EIA-176, "Annual Report of Natural and Supplemental Gas Supply and Disposition." Numbers of residential customers are reported on this form for both sales (in Part V, line 5.4.1) and transportation (in Part V, line 7.4.1).

Several customer choice programs, also known as retail unbundling programs, were implemented during 1998 and 1999. A description of these programs for States offering customer choice is on the EIA web site at: www.eia.doe.gov/oil_gas/natural_gas/restructure/restructure.html.

Figure 10. Natural Gas Delivered to Consumers in the United States, 1995-1999



Source: Energy Information Administration (EIA), Form EIA-176, "Annual Report of Natural and Supplemental Gas Supply and Disposition", and Form EIA-759, "Monthly Power Plant Report."