EIA Short-Term Energy and Winter Fuels Outlook

October 8, 2013 | Washington, DC

Overview

- Winter Fuels Outlook focuses on households.
- EIA expects higher prices this winter for homes that heat with natural gas, propane, and electricity. Home heating oil prices are expected to be lower than last winter.
- Forecast temperatures are close to last winter with the Northeast about 3% colder and the West 3% warmer.
- Projected changes in residential expenditures from last winter are:
  - 13% higher for homes that heat primarily with natural gas
  - 9% higher for propane
  - 2% higher for electricity; 2% lower for heating oil
- Although natural gas expenditures are significantly higher than last winter, they are still lower than the average of the previous five winters (October 2007 – March 2012).

Expenditures are expected to be higher this winter (October 1– March 31) for natural gas, propane, electricity; lower for heating oil

Percent change in fuel bills from last winter (forecast)

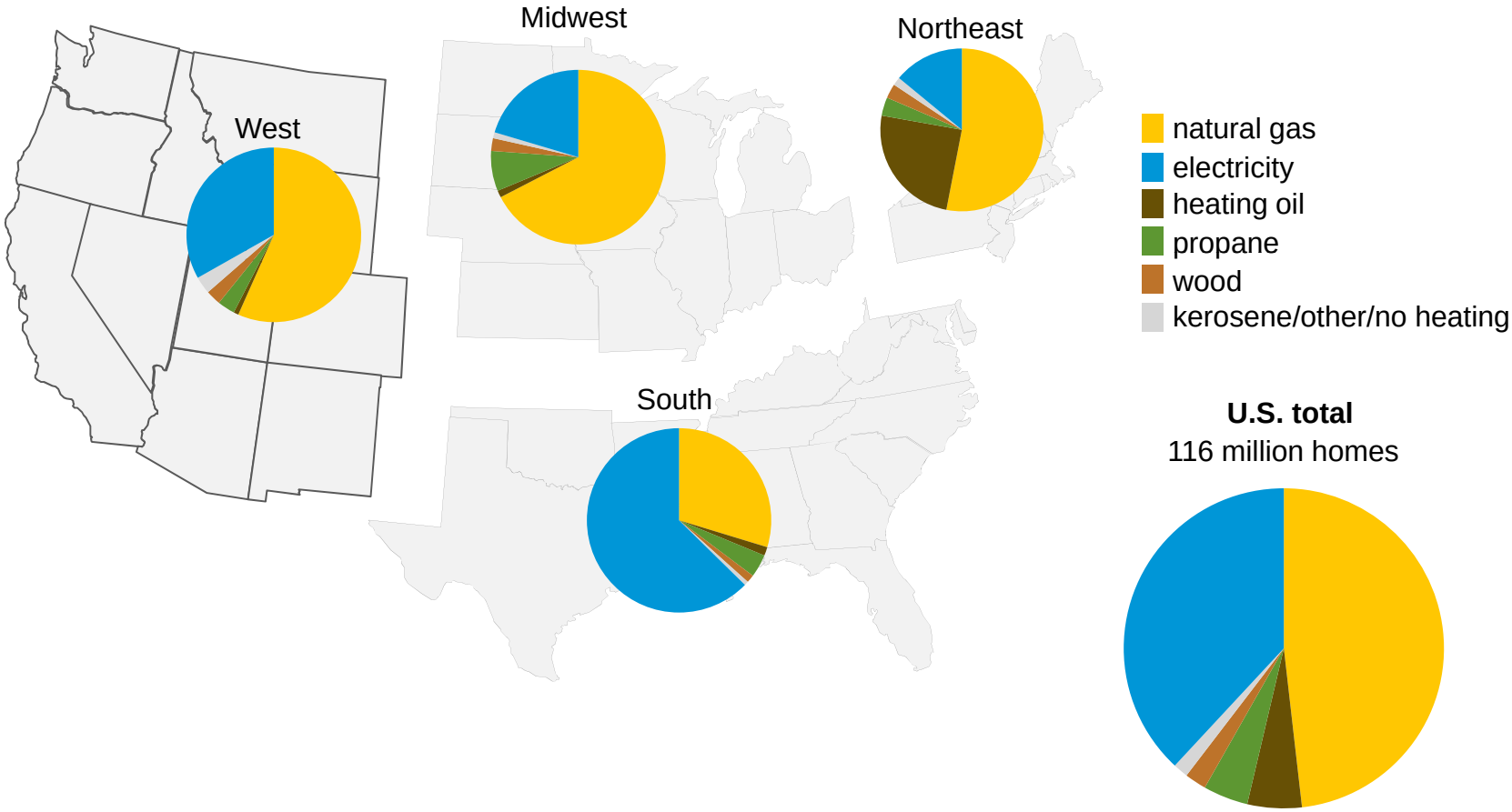
Fuel bill	Base case forecast	If 10% warmer than forecast	If 10% colder than forecast
Heating oil	**-2**	-13	9
Natural gas	**13**	3	25
Propane *	**9**	-	-
Electricity	**2**	-1	6

* Propane expenditures are a volume-weighted average of the Northeast and Midwest regions. All others are U.S. volume-weighted averages. Propane prices do not reflect prices locked in before the winter heating season starts. Propane prices are not available for the warm and cold cases.

Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

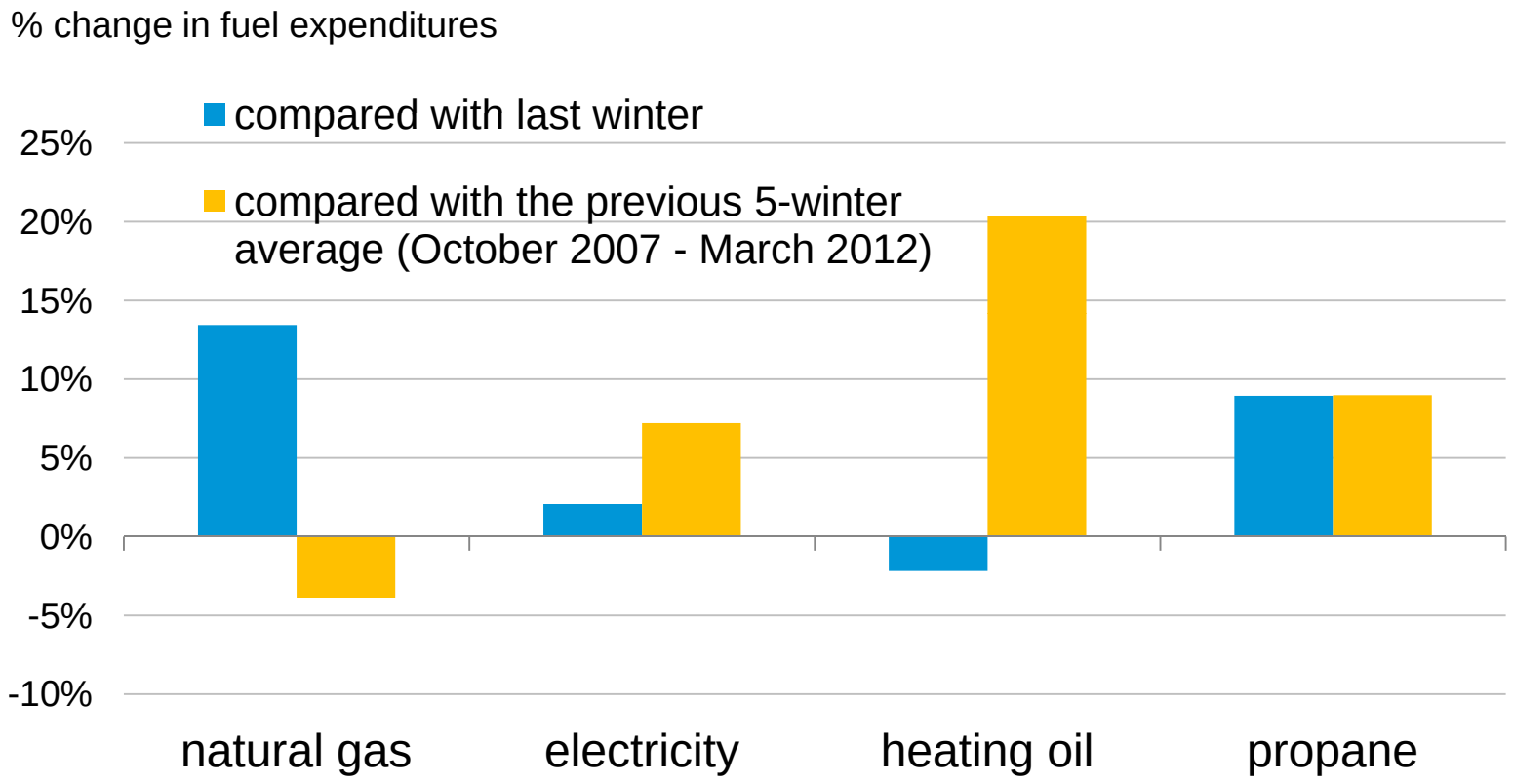
Heating fuel market shares vary regionally

Share of homes by primary space heating fuel and Census Region



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *2012 American Community Survey*

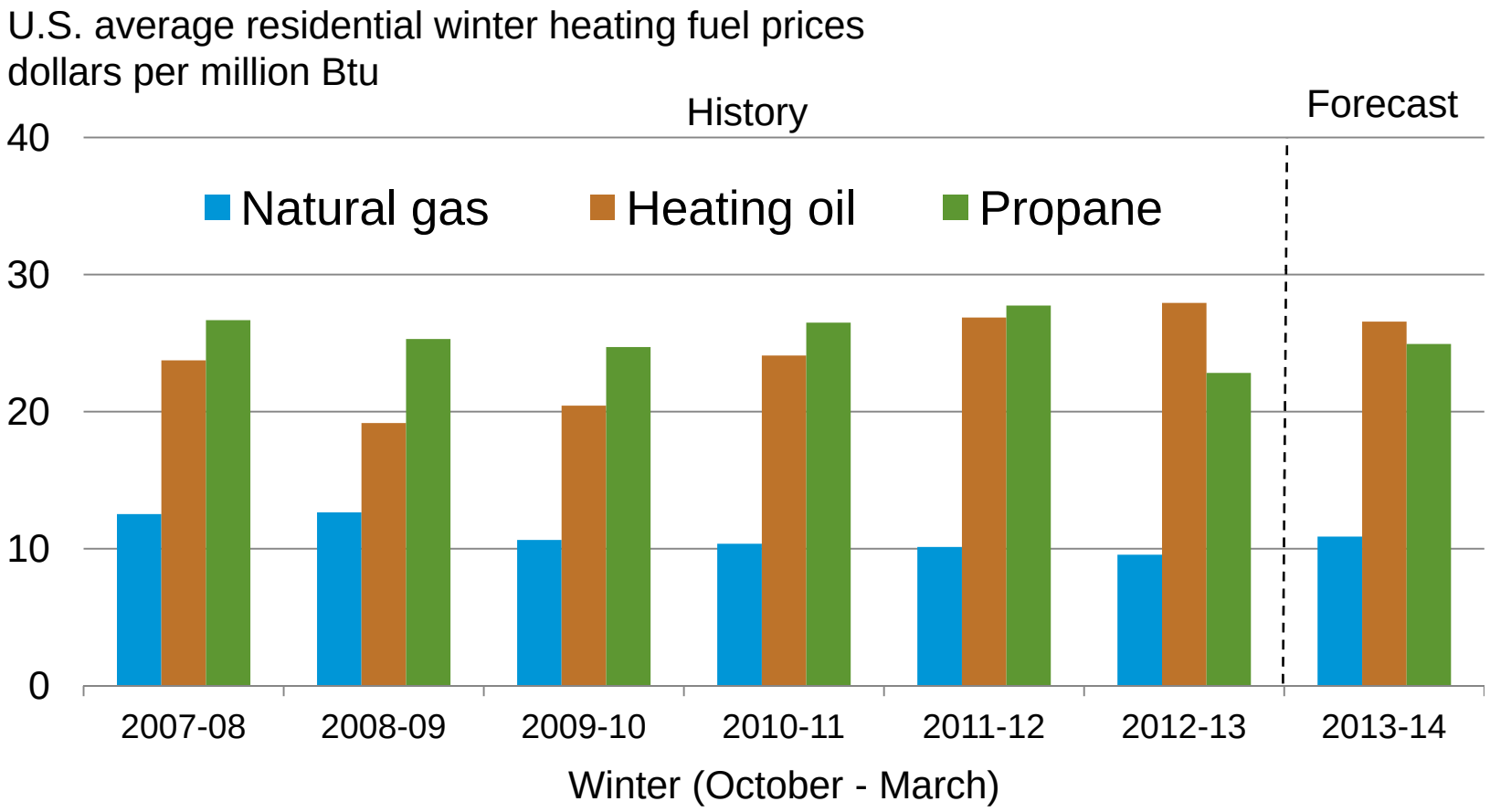
Although forecast natural gas expenditures are significantly higher, they are still lower than the previous 5-year average



Note: All prices are U.S. averages except propane, which is an average of Northeast and Midwest prices.

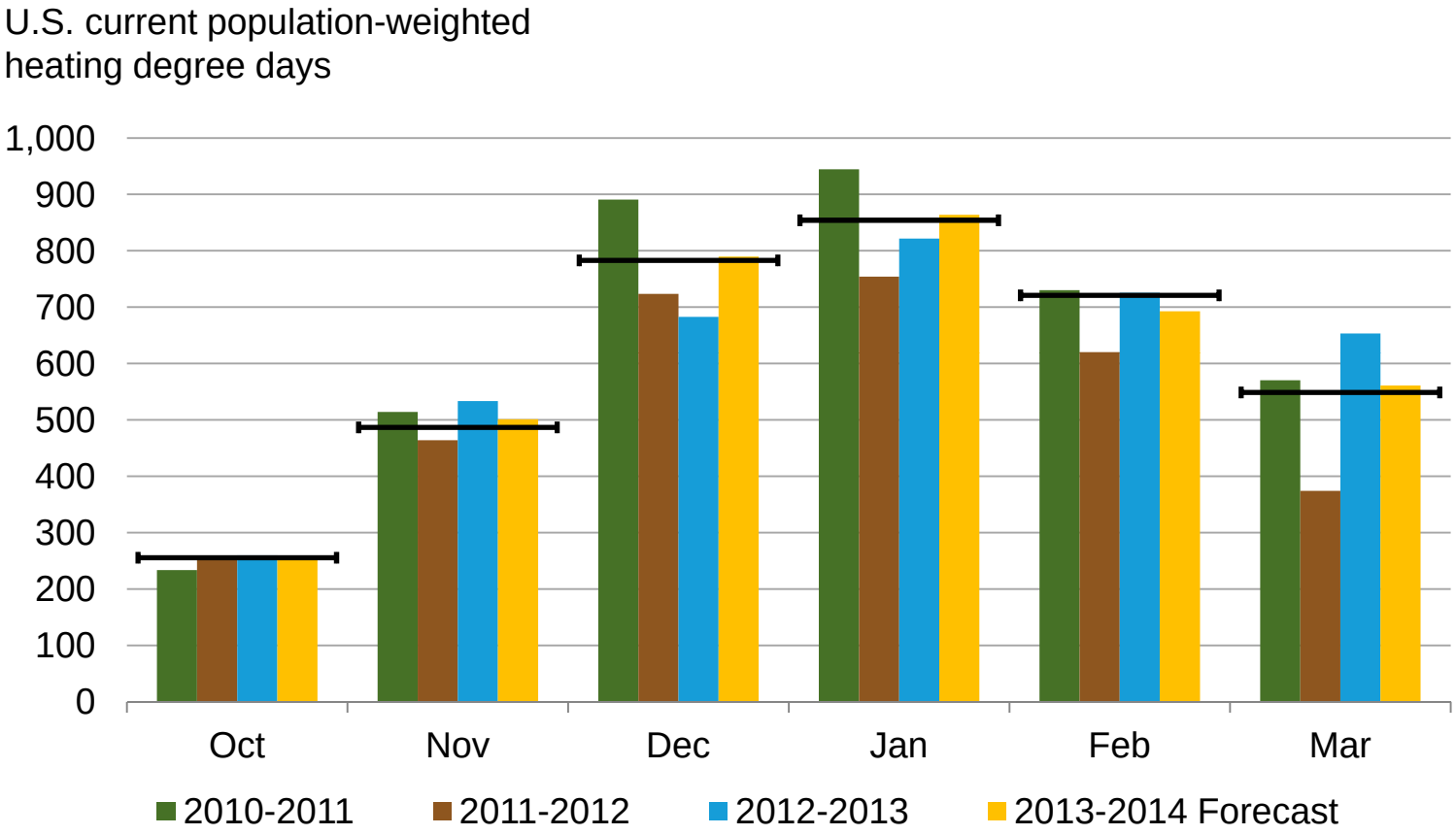
Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

The differences between natural gas, heating oil, and propane prices narrow this winter, with natural gas price 14% higher, heating oil price down 5%, and propane price up 9%



Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

The U.S. winter 2013-14 heating season forecast is very close to last winter and the 10-year average



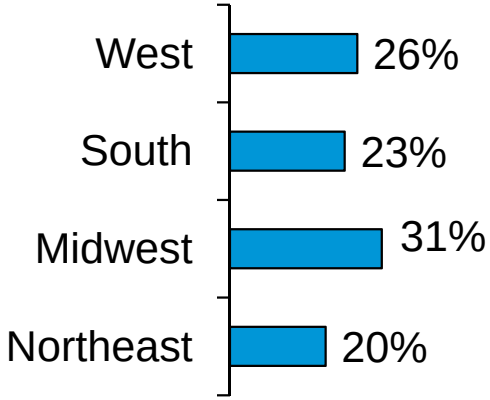
Note: Source: EIA calculations based on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) data. Horizontal lines indicate 10-year average over the period Oct 2003 – Mar 2013. Projections reflect NOAA's 14-16 month outlook.

Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

Natural Gas

Higher natural gas prices raise average fuel bills in all regions this winter

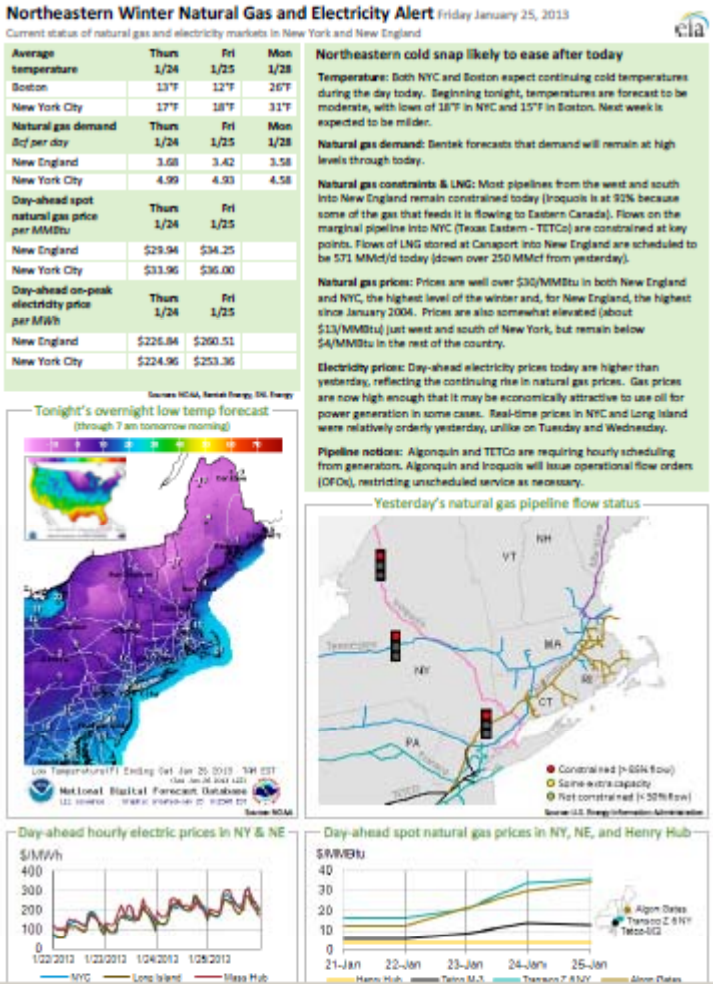
Regional share of all U.S. households that use natural gas as primary space heating fuel



Percent change from last winter (forecast)		
Consumption	Average price	Total expenditures
-2	10	7
0	13	13
-1	14	13
3	15	18

Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

Natural gas pipeline constraints into New England may produce periods of localized higher wholesale pricing



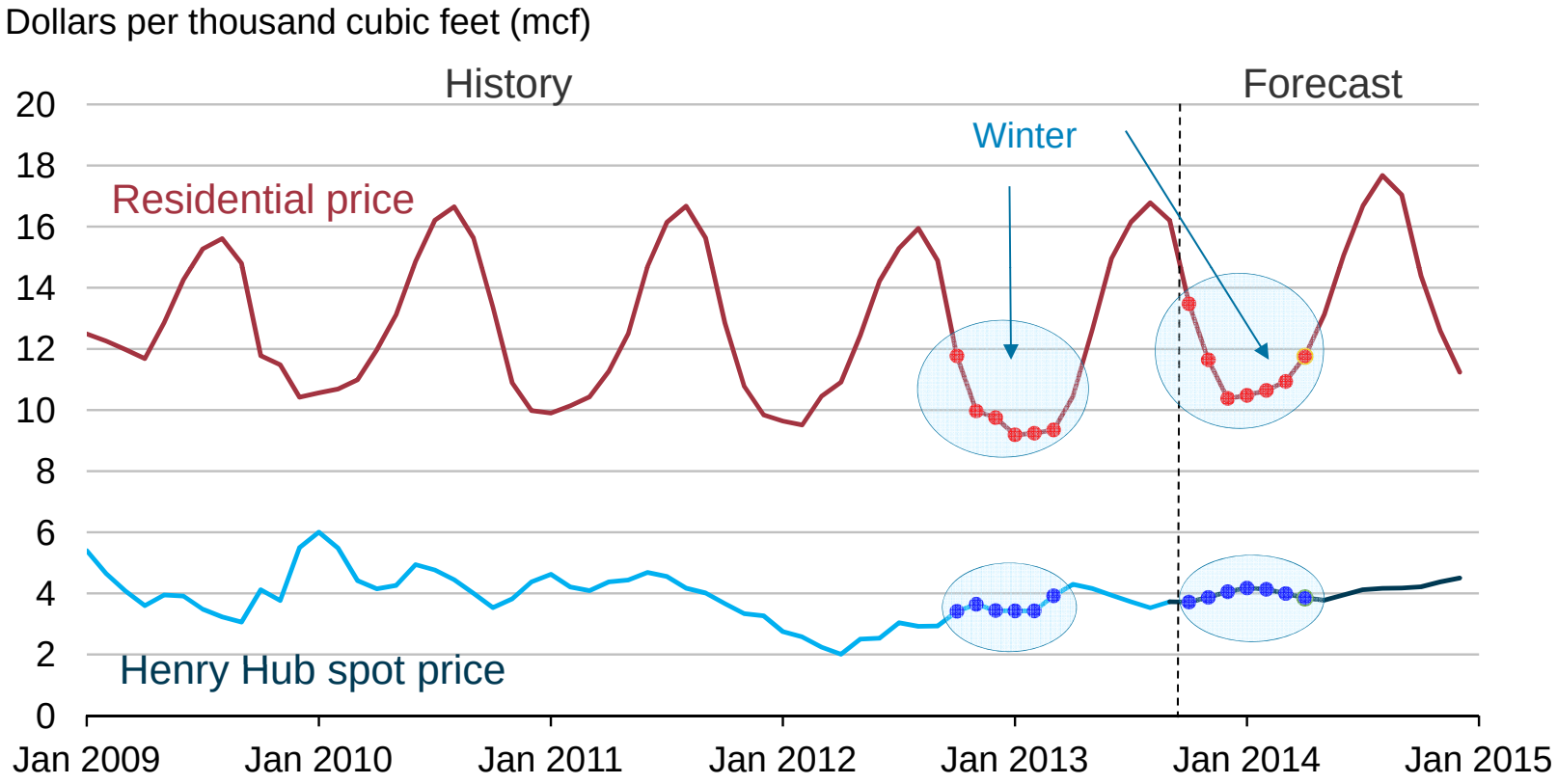
Natural gas fueled less than 30% of the electricity generated in New England in 2001, but that figure rose to 52% in 2012.

Increased gas use for power generation has contributed to pipeline transportation constraints in the New England regional natural gas market.

These pipeline constraints are more pronounced in winter months and contributed to extreme price spikes in spot natural gas and electricity prices in New England during January and February 2013.

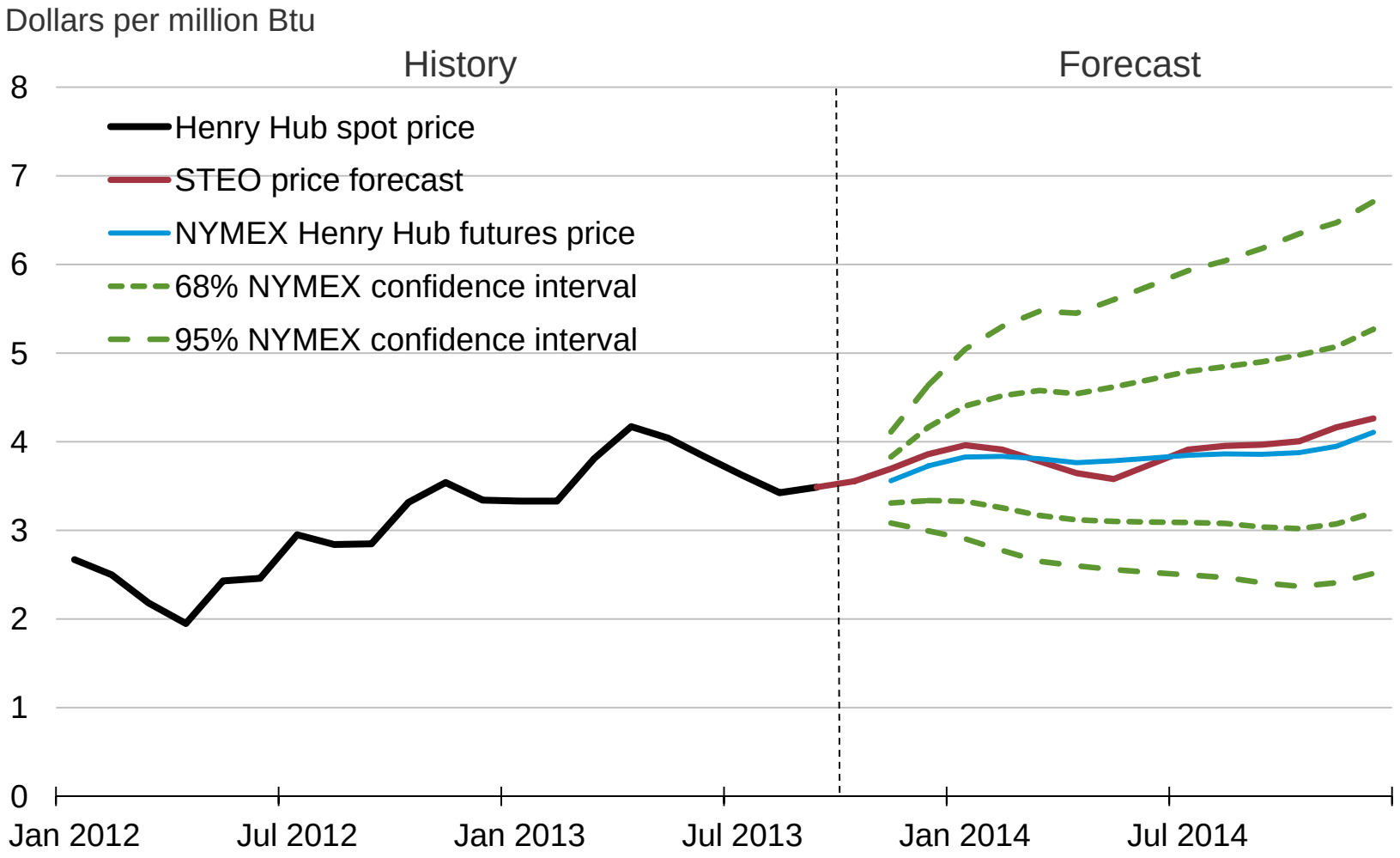
EIA's Market Alerts are published on eia.gov during periods of stress caused by cold snaps in the winter or heat waves in the summer.

EIA expects residential natural gas prices to be higher than last winter's prices



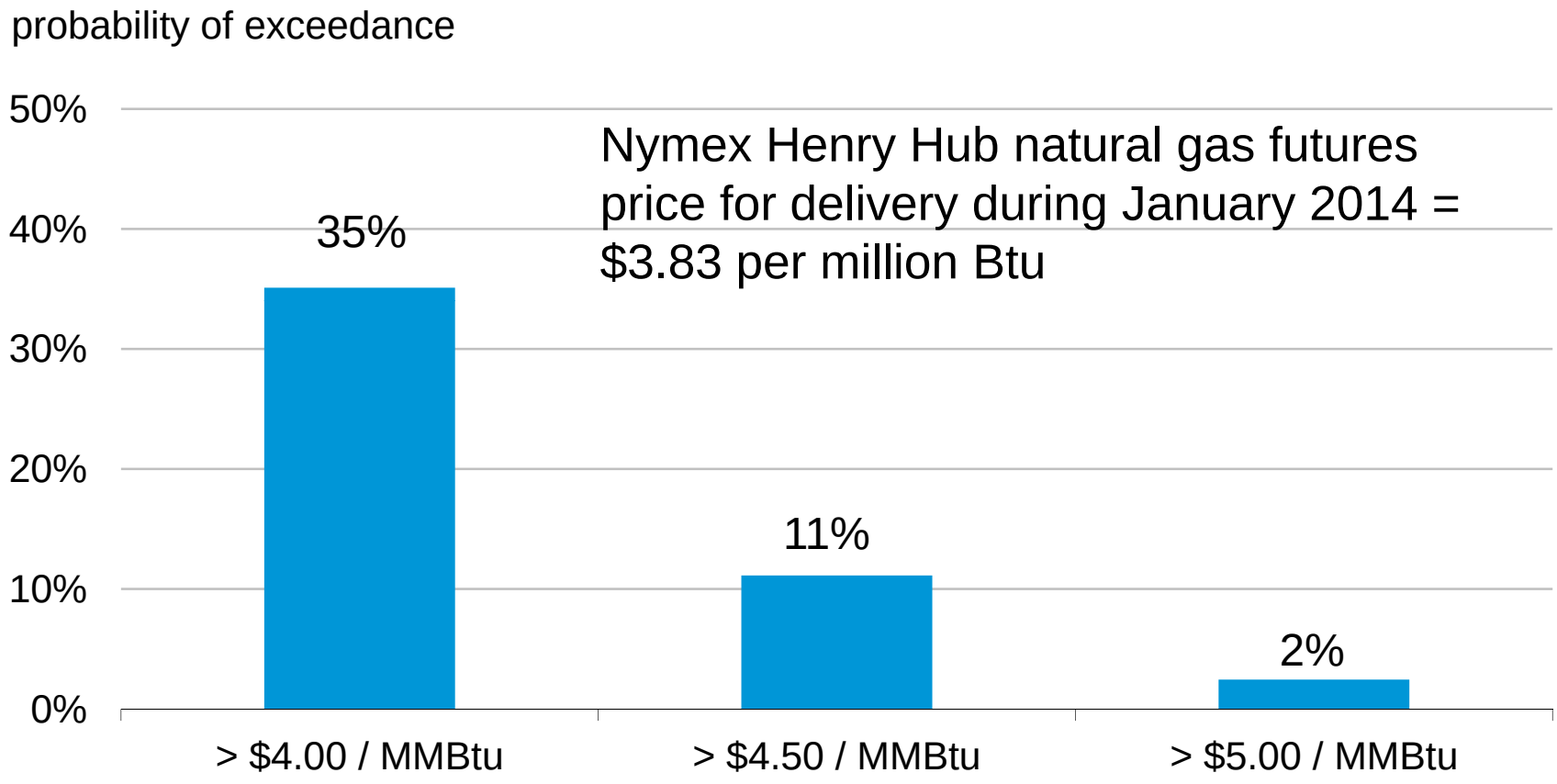
Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

Future natural gas prices remain highly uncertain



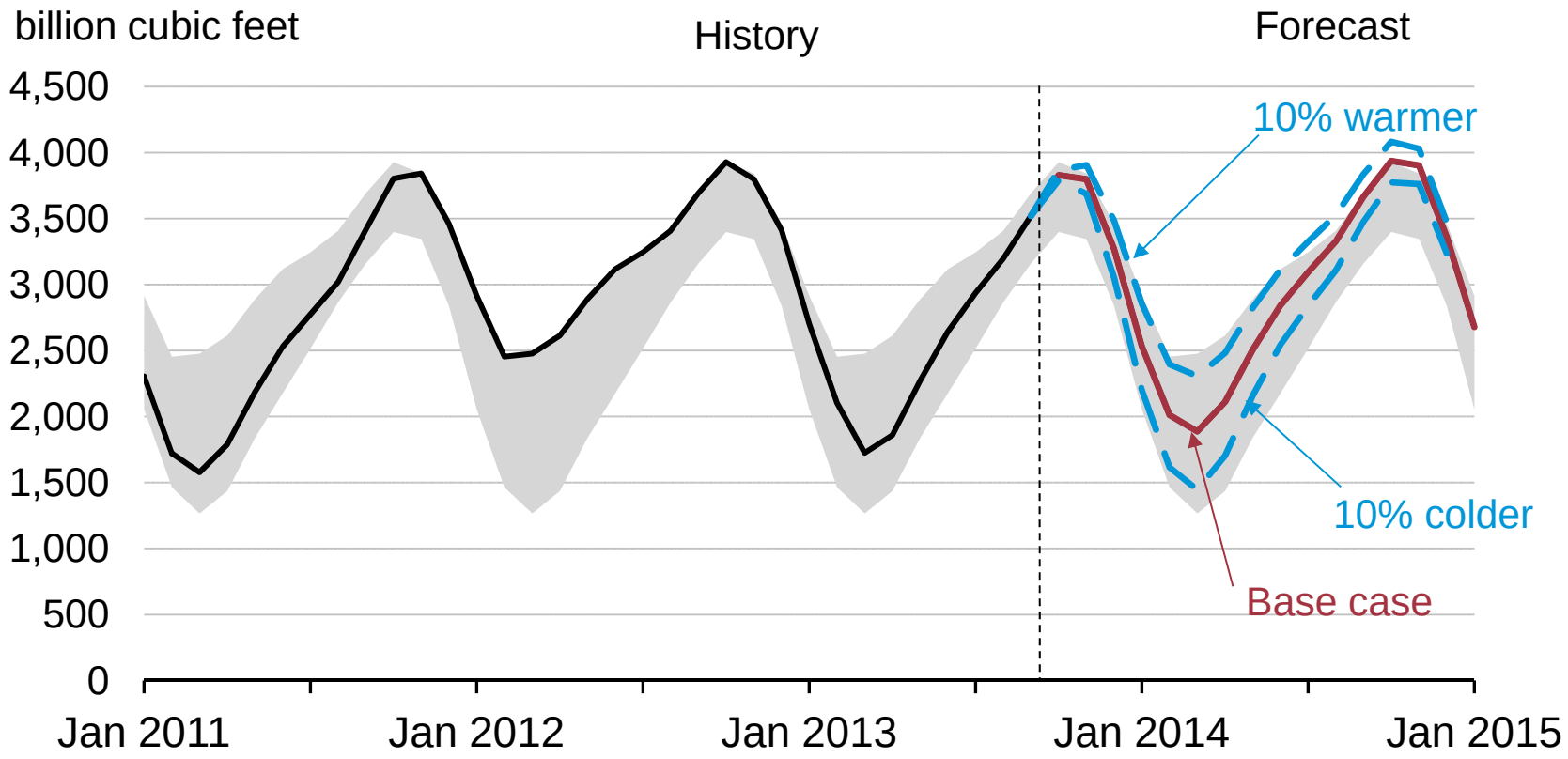
Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013, and CME Group

The probability of the January 2014 Henry Hub natural gas price being higher than $4.50 per MMBtu is about 11%



Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013, and CME Group (Nymex closing prices for 5 trading days ending Oct. 3, 2013)

Forecast natural gas inventories start this winter about 100 bcf lower than last winter, but 70 bcf above the previous 5-year average

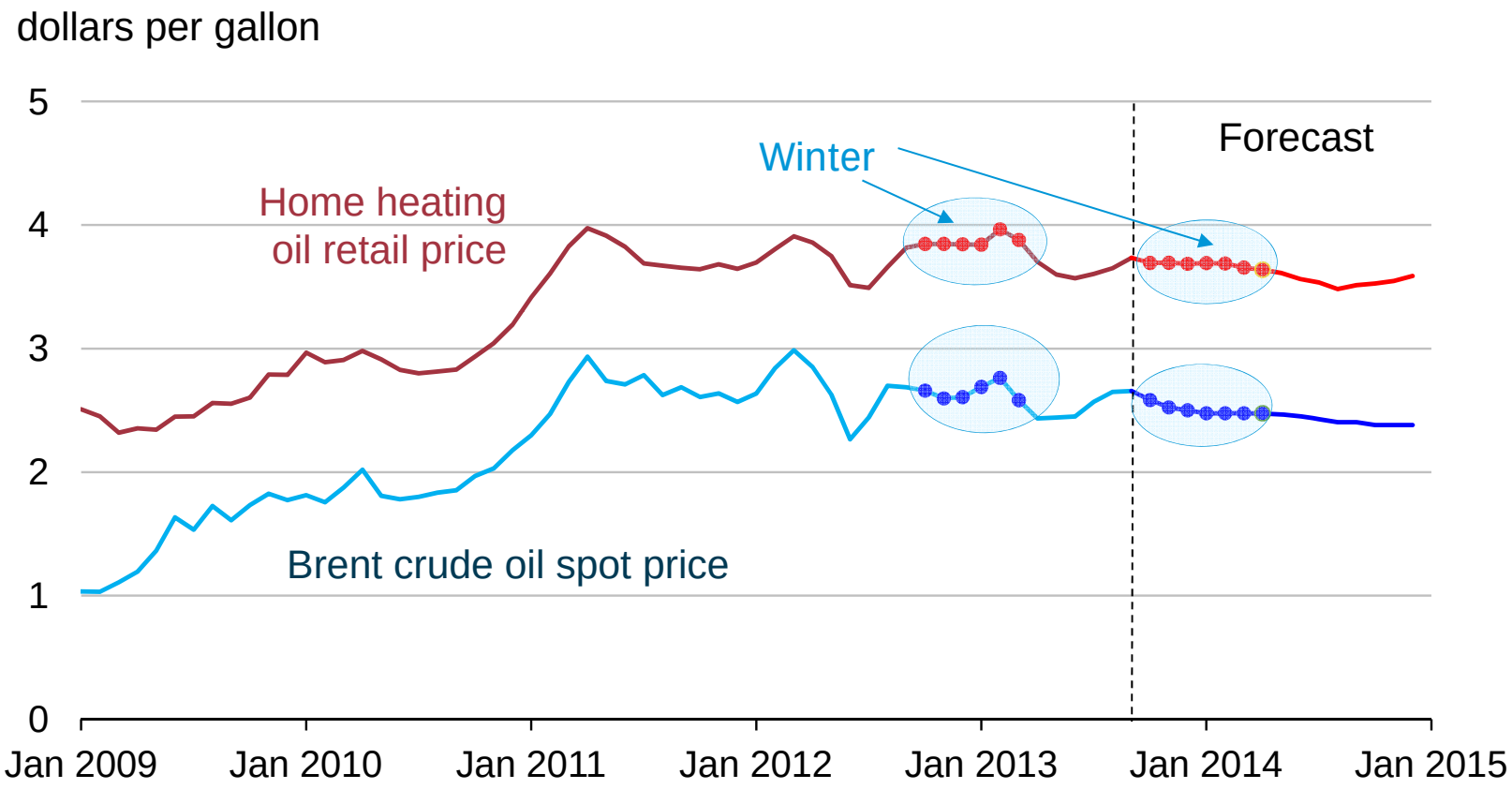


Note: Normal range (gray band) represents the range between the minimum to maximum from Jan. 2008 to Dec. 2012.

Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

Heating Oil

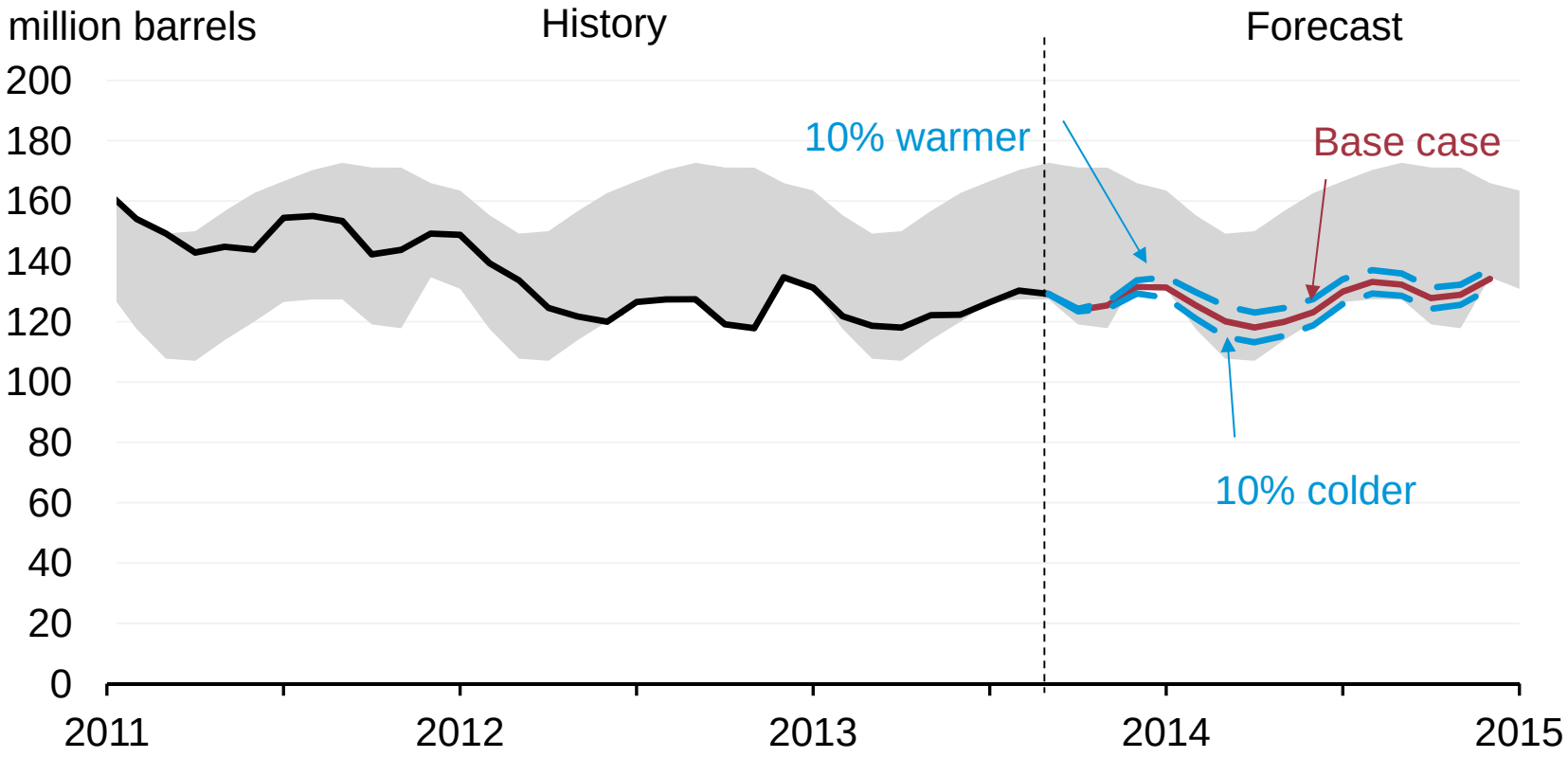
EIA expects residential heating oil prices to average 5% lower this winter than last



Home heating oil retail price includes taxes.

Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

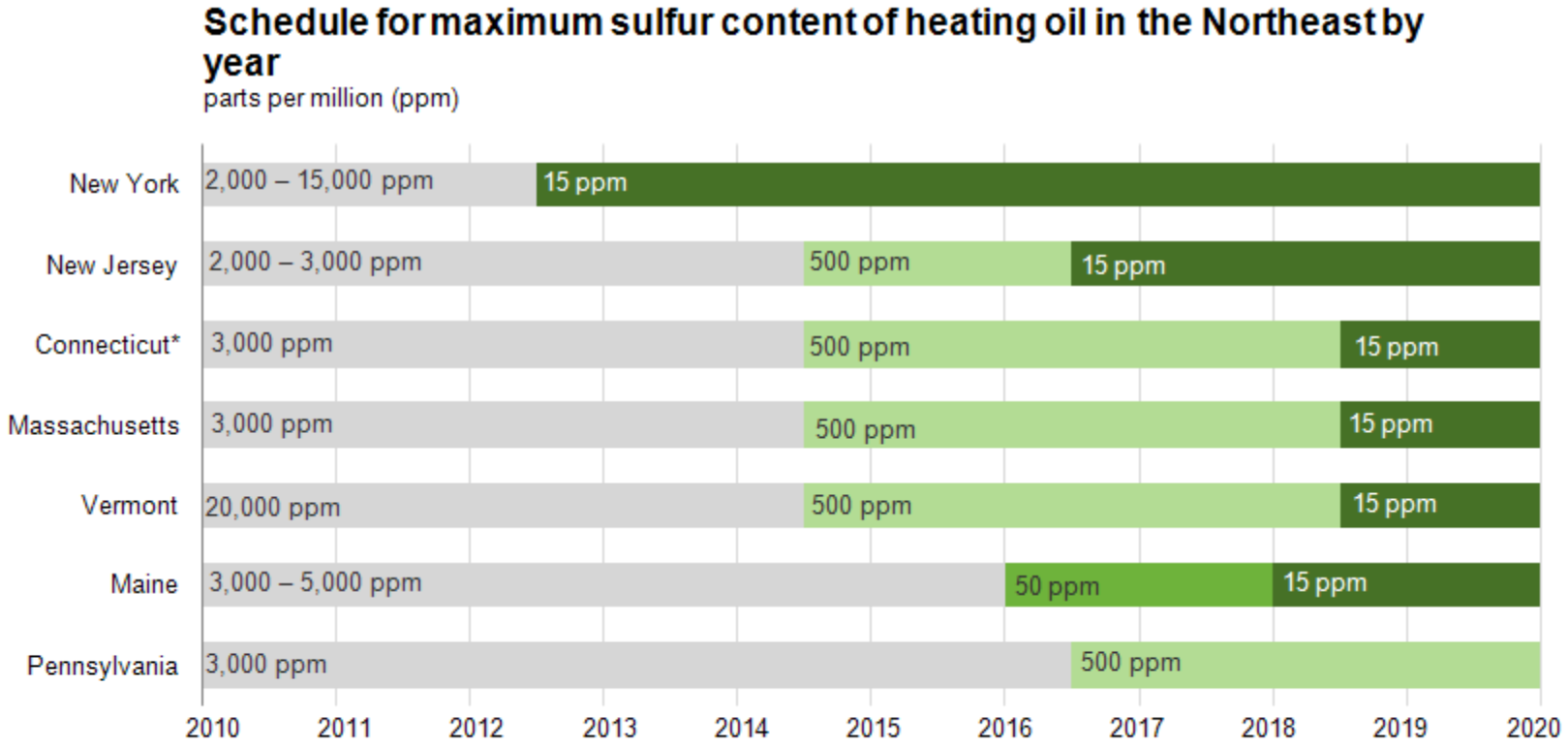
Going into winter, distillate inventories remain at the low end of their normal range



Note: Normal range (gray band) represents the range between the minimum to maximum from Jan. 2008 to Dec. 2012.

Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

New York, which represents almost 1/3 of the Northeast heating oil market, now requires ultra-low sulfur fuel

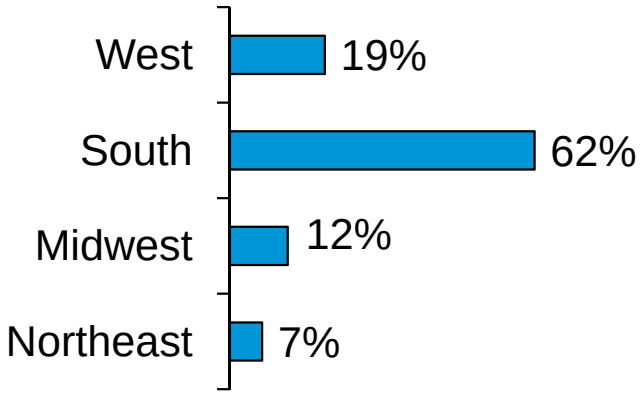


Note: Specifications change on July 1 of the years shown, with the exception of Maine's requirements, which change on January 1.
* Connecticut's requirements will only go into effect after New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island have implemented similar requirements. Rhode Island has not finalized a sulfur requirement.
Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Electricity

Winter electricity bill forecasts are slightly higher than last winter

Regional share of all U.S. households that use electricity as primary space heating fuel



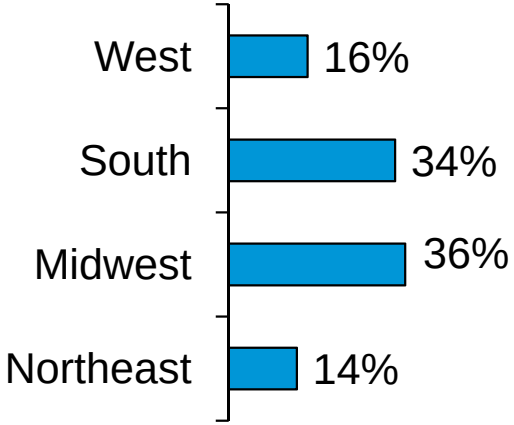
	Percent change from last winter (forecast)		
	Consumption	Average price	Total expenditures
West	-1	3	2
South	0	2	2
Midwest	-1	2	2
Northeast	1	3	4

Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

Propane

Forecast propane expenditures also higher than last winter because of higher prices

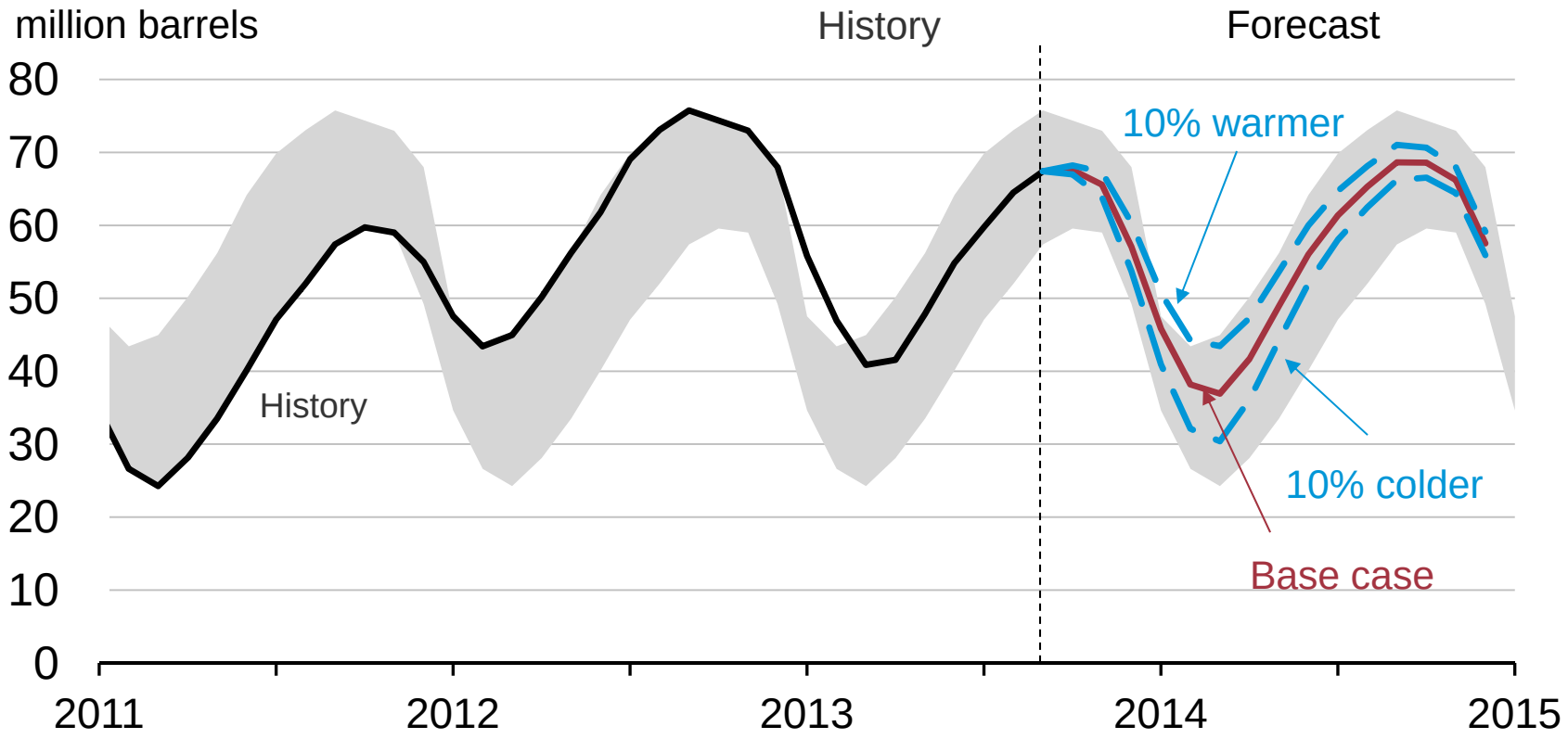
Regional share of all U.S. households that use propane as primary space heating fuel



	Percent change from last winter (forecast)		
	Consumption	Average price	Total expenditures
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-1	10	9
	3	7	11

Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

Propane inventories remain near the middle of their historical range during the upcoming winter



Note: Normal range (gray band) represents the range between the minimum to maximum from Jan. 2008 to Dec. 2012.

Source: EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2013

For more information

U.S. Energy Information Administration home page | www.eia.gov

Short-Term Energy Outlook | www.eia.gov/steo

Annual Energy Outlook | www.eia.gov/aeo

International Energy Outlook | www.eia.gov/ieo

Monthly Energy Review | www.eia.gov/mer

State Energy Portal | http://www.eia.gov/state