

STATE OF NEW YORK

Public Service Commission

Garry A. Brown, Chairman

Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223
Further Details: James Denn
james_denn@dps.state.ny.us | 518.474.7080
<http://www.dps.state.ny.us>

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ENERGY SHOPPING WEBSITE UPDATED, REVAMPED — Significant Improvements Made to ‘Power to Choose’ —

Albany, NY—08/23/10—The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today announced a totally revamped and significantly improved website custom-designed to help residential consumers competitively shop for electricity and natural gas suppliers. The website can be found at www.newyorkpowertochoose.com.

“Providing consumers with the ability to compare prices and products being offered by companies that sell electricity and natural gas in their communities is an important goal,” said Commission Chairman Garry Brown. “To fully participate in the competitive energy marketplace requires consumers to have an understanding of how the marketplace works. This new and improved website provides the wherewithal for consumers to become better-informed about energy suppliers and services.”

Energy bills in New York consist of two parts: supply and delivery. The supply can be purchased from either a local electric or gas utility or another company. Meanwhile, the local utility will continue to provide delivery. Currently, more than a million residential customers in New York are purchasing their electricity and natural gas from an energy service company (ESCO).

There are many ESCOs providing a wide variety of “products” and price options. Some provide long-term fixed prices; others offer variable rates that change with market conditions; others give the option for customers to lock-in a rate during certain peak months of energy use. Some ESCO service is provided at a variable price on a month-to-month basis that can be cancelled at any

time. In other cases, ESCOs require customers to enter into a contract for their purchase of electricity and natural gas. In some instances the contract requires the customer to commit to purchasing its energy from the ESCO for a specified period of time. The consumer selects the choice that's best for them.

To participate in New York's competitive energy marketplace, ESCOs must take the following steps before offering customers energy including: demonstrate they are a certified business registered with the New York State Department of State; meet the Public Service Commission's eligibility criteria, including the filing of their standard customer contracts and disclosure statements; establish a complaint handling procedure which is consistent with the New York State Home Energy Fair Practices Act (HEFPA); and provide financial information to the local utility to fulfill required credit-worthiness standards.

Before choosing an ESCO, consumers should: compare prices and services offered; review terms which may cover special fees, deposits, renewals and switching procedures; consider customer service features including complaint handling, hours of operation, and toll-free numbers; and research the company's background. Always review the terms and conditions before committing to an ESCO offer.

The Power to Choose website has been in existence since 2005. The changes made include allowing for real time offers and rates to be presented. The public can also search for offers in their zip code, compare offers, and save and print offers. More than 60 ESCOs are now using the system.

In addition to the pricing information, the website contains contact information on ESCOs that have met the Commission's and utility requirements to provide energy supply, electricity or natural gas, and other services in New York.