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PSC Approves Process for Municipalities to Pursue Purchasing Street Lights from Utilities, Supporting Communities Considering More Efficient Lighting Options

— More LED-Street Lighting Advances State Energy Goals by Lowering Taxpayer Costs, Increasing Efficiency and Improving the Environment —

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission), as part of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) efforts to increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in New York’s communities, today approved procedures clarifying the steps necessary for municipalities interested in purchasing street lighting systems from their local utility.

“Governor Cuomo is a strong advocate of the need for municipal government efficiency and greater local control over energy use,” said Commission Chair Audrey Zibelman. “To help in that effort, the Commission encourages municipalities to consider the benefits associated with installing energy-efficient street lighting. Owning the street lights provides municipalities with options to reach local environmental and efficiency objectives.”

On November 20, 2015 Governor Andrew M. Cuomo amended the Public Service Law by adding a new section which establishes procedures for the transfer of ownership of complete street lighting systems to municipalities or other government entities. With the change in ownership, municipalities take control of the lighting on their own streets and have the opportunity to install state-of-the-art, energy efficient lights and new technologies to lower costs to taxpayers and protect the environment.

Providing municipalities with the opportunity to have more control over energy usage fits into Governor Cuomo’s strategy to provide all consumers more control over the energy they consume. By empowering communities to have more say over their energy use, street lighting conversions help local governments lower municipal energy expenditures while lowering overall emissions, thereby advancing the State’s efforts to lead on climate change. The change does not impact New York City since it already owns its street lights and is already converting to LED lighting.

Approximately 1 million municipal streetlights across the State could be converted to higher efficiency lights. This number includes both utility- and customer-owned streetlights. A recent study on the latest energy efficient lights, known as light-emitting diodes (LEDs), found that LED-technology uses significantly less energy than traditional street lighting. For an average municipality, streetlights may account for up to 40 percent of total local government electric energy consumption. LED-lighting can reduce energy consumption by up to 60 percent when compared to traditional street lighting.

LED-related energy savings can contribute significantly to the state's energy and environmental goals. In fact, if these 1 million street lights were converted to LED fixtures the energy savings potential is estimated to be enough electricity to power 53,000 homes. Financial savings from this reduced energy use could be as much as \$28 million per year. Given these cost and energy savings opportunities, municipalities across the State have been showing interest in exploring options for converting to LEDs.

As street-lighting technologies continue to advance, it will be important to take advantage of additional functionalities that can improve costs and public safety, while meeting and balancing both the environmental and economic impacts of conversions. To that end, proper design and outreach and education within communities will be a key component to the overall success of LED-street light conversions.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering case numbers 15-E-0745 [Central Hudson]; 15-E-0746 [NYSEG]; 15-E-0747 [National Grid]; 15-E-0748 [RG&E] and 15-E-0749 [Orange & Rockland] in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.

About Reforming the Energy Vision:

Reforming the Energy Vision is Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's strategy to lead on climate change and grow New York's economy. Reforming the Energy Vision is building a cleaner, more resilient and affordable energy system for all New Yorkers by stimulating investment in clean technologies like solar, wind, and energy efficiency, in part through the recent adoption of New York's Clean Energy Standard which requires that 50 percent of the state's electricity needs be generated from renewable energy sources by 2030. Already, Reforming the Energy Vision has driven 600 percent growth in the statewide solar market, enabled over 105,000 low-income households to permanently cut their energy bills with energy efficiency, and created thousands of jobs in manufacturing, engineering, and other clean tech sectors. Reforming the Energy Vision is ensuring New York State reduces statewide greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030 and achieves the internationally-recognized target of reducing emissions 80 percent by 2050. To learn more about Reforming the Energy Vision, including the Governor's \$5.3 billion investment in clean energy technology and innovation, please visit www.ny.gov/REV4NY and follow us at @Rev4NY.