

STATE OF NEW YORK

# Public Service Commission

Garry A. Brown, Chairman

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FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATELY

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## **PSC OKs ADDED ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS** — Financially Struggling Central Hudson Customers Get Much-Needed Help —

Albany, NY—11/12/08—The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation's petition to provide \$1.9 million in supplemental energy assistance benefits to low-income customers for the upcoming heating season.

“Energy commodity prices have been extremely volatile since last winter,” said Commission Chairman Garry Brown. “These volatile prices present an acute need for supplemental assistance benefits for low-income customers. The added assistance we are approving will help the utility's neediest customers better deal with the rising cost of heating bills during the cold weather and, more importantly, avoid loss of service.”

Central Hudson will provide a one-time supplemental benefit of \$200 to approximately 8,000 customers who are expected to receive Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). An additional \$100 supplemental benefit will be provided to each of those customers currently enrolled or eligible for its existing Enhanced Powerful Opportunities Program (EPOP).

Because customer participation levels in the program have been below the targets established, the Commission approved the use of unspent funds to provide immediate relief this winter to HEAP recipients. This new initiative will take effect December 1, 2008.

The account credits being provided will help customers remain current on their account, thereby avoiding service termination. The EPOP Program provides payment assistance and energy reduction services to provide customers with the tools needed to help manage their energy bills, improve their financial situation and stay current with future monthly budget bills.

To ensure that families have the tools and assistance they need for the coming winter, Governor Paterson recently launched [www.HeatSmartNY.org](http://www.HeatSmartNY.org) to provide consumers with easy, do-it-yourself tips to lower heating bills, as well as information about New York's heating season-related assistance programs.

The Commission's decision today, when issued, may be obtained from the Commission's [www.dps.state.ny.us](http://www.dps.state.ny.us) Web site by accessing the Commission's File Room section of the homepage and referencing Case 05-E-0934. Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission orders may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500).