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Audrey Zibelman, Chair

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PSC Establishes Easier Path to Help Residential and Small Business Electricity Consumers Create Power Purchase Associations in New York

— Municipalities Can Gradually Introduce ‘Community Choice Aggregation,’ Providing Consumer Savings on Electric Bills and Greater Choices for Renewable Power —

ALBANY — New York City and other municipalities will now be able to form associations to purchase power for residents and small businesses in a single neighborhood or an entire borough, under an order approved today by the New York State Public Service Commission (Commission). These money-saving associations, called Community Choice Aggregation (CCAs), are a key part of Governor Cuomo’s Reforming the Energy Vision or REV, Governor Cuomo’s strategy to build a cleaner, more resilient and affordable energy system as a leader in the fight against climate change while growing New York’s clean energy economy.

“With greater bargaining power, power purchasing associations or CCAs can negotiate with energy suppliers to bring customers the best energy prices available along with new choices in renewable power resources that reduce bills and meet local clean energy goals,” said Chair Audrey Zibelman. “In large cities, such as New York, a gradual roll-out of CCAs is more practical than trying to introduce this concept to every city resident all at once. Starting with a single neighborhood or an entire borough, a CCA could provide a great option for more and more New Yorkers to benefit from clean and renewable energy options.”

In April, the Commission allowed CCAs to be formed throughout New York State. This followed the Commission’s decision to create the first CCA in Westchester County, which currently serves roughly 100,000 residents in 20 municipalities. Westchester Power has negotiated to buy electricity at a bulk, fixed price from a single supplier.

CCAs are now being considered by several communities in Upstate New York. A multi-county CCA has been proposed by the Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance, Inc. (MEGA). MEGA’s plan is to eventually serve roughly 500,000 residents in 11 counties from the Finger Lakes to the Hudson Valley.

Today’s order by the Commission takes several other steps to make it easier to form power purchasing organizations:

- Keep the present plan for registering participants in a CCA program. The current system allows a municipality to create a CCA and every resident is a member of this power purchase association unless they opt-out;
- Utilities are required to share certain and applicable customer data with a CCA, but that data will not include phone numbers or the economic status of a customer; and,
- Clarified that each proposed CCA plan must comply with the public comment requirements and other provisions in the State Administrative Procedure Act.

“Just as communities come together under Governor Cuomo’s Regional Economic Development Councils, CCAs will foster cooperation among municipal officials, community leaders, environmental organizations and business professionals to produce the best energy solutions for their region”, Chair Zibelman said.

These community-led initiatives will also be a key tool in achieving Governor Cuomo’s Clean Energy Standard, a mandate to generate enough renewable power to meet half of the state’s power needs by the year 2030. CCAs will also meet other key goals of REV: creating a greater number of small, local, clean power plants throughout the state and increasing the benefits of retail competition for residential and business customers.

About Reforming the Energy Vision:

Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) is Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s strategy to lead on climate change and grow New York’s economy. REV 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 and generating 50 percent of the state’s electricity needs from renewable energy by 2030. Already, REV 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. REV 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 REV, including the Governor’s \$5 billion investment in clean energy technology and innovation, please visit www.ny.gov/REV4NY and follow us at @Rev4NY.

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 Number 14-M-0224 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.