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GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES ENERGY BILL REFUNDS FOR MORE THAN 1,500 NEW YORKERS

State's Consumer Advocate Secures Nearly \$1 Million in Refunds from Ambit Energy Following Customer Complaints

Governor Cuomo today announced that an investigation by the Department of Public Service's Consumer Advocate has resulted in 1,566 utility consumers receiving \$950,700 in energy bill refunds from Ambit Energy, a retail electricity provider, following customer complaints filed against the company in New York State.

"New York has no tolerance for companies who change the rules and rob ratepayers of an even playing field," **Governor Cuomo said.** "The State's Consumer Advocate was created to correct these inequities and, as this action illustrates, return hard-earned money to New Yorkers who have been wronged."

"It is critically important that energy providers follow New York's vigorous rules and regulations and adhere to best practices in regards to customer service," **Audrey Zibelman, Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Public Service said.** "Rather than run the risk of losing its ability to do business in New York, Ambit agreed to address the outstanding consumer complaints investigated by our DPS Consumer Advocate and refund the approximately \$1 million owed to customers."

The investigation was launched after the Department of Public Service raised concerns over Ambit's customer disclosure statements and renewal notices, particularly for customers who were moved from a guaranteed-savings plan into a variable rate plan charging significantly more.

As a result of the investigation, Ambit has made major adjustments to customers' bills in an effort to both resolve concerns raised by the Department and satisfy customers who were charged more after being moved out of the guaranteed-savings plan. In concluding its investigation, the Department reviewed the company's response and determined that it had adequately addressed deficiencies and had appropriately adjusted customer rates and bills. The actual level of refund is dependent on a number of factors, including how long the customer was charged a higher rate.

Service Territory	Electric & Gas Customers	Refunds
Hudson Valley	43	\$14,300
New York City	153	\$62,200
Central / Eastern New York	774	\$500,100
Southern Tier	396	\$275,900
Western New York	200	\$98,200
Grand Total	1,566	\$950,700

*While more than 1,500 customer accounts will be receiving refunds, some may receive a refund for both electric and gas.

The Department of Public Service's Consumer Advocate led the investigation into Ambit's activities. First established in 2015, the Consumer Advocate works to ensure consumers receive the utmost protection from energy companies and regulated utilities, and that these companies, as well as third-party service providers, adhere to rules regarding customer services. Since January, consumers have seen more than \$3 million in returned fees as a direct result of investigations conducted by the Office of Consumer Advocate, not including Ambit's refunds.

The Department closely monitors the number and types of complaints received against all utilities and energy service companies operating in New York State. The Department ensures that utilities and energy companies fulfill their obligations to provide effective customer service in compliance with the laws, rules, regulations and policies that the Department enforces.

Energy service companies such as Ambit are required to comply with the Department's Uniform Business Practices (UBP) to sell natural gas and electric services in New York. Failure to comply with the UBP may result in a variety of enforcement actions, including the State Public Service Commission revoking a competitive energy provider's eligibility to serve customers in New York State. Customers who believe their rates are not accurate are encouraged to file a complaint with the Department of Public Service's Consumer Advocate.

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