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John B. Rhodes, Chair

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Public Service Commission Permits Upstate Communities Seeking Lower Electricity Bills and Clean Energy Options to Purchase Electricity on Behalf of Residents and Small Businesses

— Community Choice Aggregations Approved for City of Elmira and Six Other Towns and Villages in Broome, Otsego, Schuyler and Chemung counties —

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved an implementation plan to allow the City of Elmira and six other Upstate municipalities to purchase electricity on behalf of their residents and small businesses – a key part of Reforming the Energy Vision, Governor Andrew Cuomo’s strategy to build a cleaner, more-resilient and affordable energy system for all New Yorkers. Additional municipalities will be allowed to form Community Choice Aggregations (CCAs) in the future, according to today’s order.

“Community Choice Aggregations enable communities to take greater control of their energy choices through a transparent and competitive process driven by the consumers themselves,” **said Commission Chair John Rhodes**. “Residential and small business ratepayers can reduce their energy bills, take advantage of renewable energy choices and enjoy other money-saving services thanks to the leverage enabled by bulk energy purchasing by these community-based associations.”

Today’s action will allow CCAs to be formed in the City of Elmira (Chemung County) and the towns of Oneonta (Otsego County), Montour (Schuyler County), Horseheads (Chemung County), Union and Binghamton (Broome County), as well as the Village of Montour Falls (Schuyler County). Additional cities, towns and villages will be allowed to join the CCA in the future by means of subsequent compliance filings submitted by MEGA -- the Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance, Inc. -- a non-profit Local Development Corporation that has been helping local governments reduce their energy costs since 2001.

Under today’s order, MEGA will help these Upstate communities to form CCAs which could begin operations early next year. The seven local governments have already taken preliminary steps in this process by approving local laws that name MEGA as the CCA Administrator.

While New York State’s first CCA was created in 2015 among 20 municipalities in Westchester County, other organizations have been working on CCA implementation plans. One such organization, Good Energy, has submitted an implementation plan that would help form CCAs in other parts of Upstate New York.

In the Commission's initial CCA Framework Order, the Commission recognized that CCA offers residential and small non-residential customers an opportunity to receive more favorable energy supply terms through the bargaining power that bulk purchasing provides, the expertise provided by municipal or consultant experts, and the competitive public process for choosing an energy supplier.

To complete the CCA approval process, MEGA and each of these local governments must:

- Undertake a public outreach and education campaign;
- Contract with one or more energy suppliers to negotiate electricity rates and provide other Consumer services; and
- Provide electric customers an opportunity to opt-out of the program before it takes effect next year.

Once a contract is reached between the CCA administrator and an energy supplier, residents will have 30 days to opt out of the CCA. A letter will be mailed to every CCA-eligible customer explaining their right to either join the CCA or opt out and remain a customer of their local utility.

As part of forming the CCA call centers will be established to provide customer service and to respond to any complaints related to each municipality's CCA program.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will provide technical assistance to municipalities and CCA administrators in their development of outreach and education campaigns.

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 16-M-0015 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 (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.