

STATE OF NEW YORK

Public Service Commission

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NEW YORKERS URGED TO BE HEAT SMART THIS WINTER

— **Helpful Tips to Conserve Energy and Stay Warm This Winter** —

Albany, NY—11/17/11—The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today received a report from staff of the Department of Public Service (staff) outlining its outreach and education plan for the 2011-2012 heating season. The plan highlights the activities that are being carried out by staff on behalf of the Commission to ensure that consumers are aware of the actions they can take and the programs they can participate in to reduce their energy usage and help control their winter energy bills.

Staff's outreach and education program provides information on the two most important subjects related to managing winter heating bills—how to reduce usage in no-and-low-cost ways, and how to access financial assistance to help pay heating bills.

The outreach and education program's key messages focus on informing consumers about: financial assistance programs; bill payment options; energy efficiency programs and how to participate; and simple, affordable energy saving tips that can reduce energy costs and increase comfort. This program will include plain-language publications, grassroots outreach at public events, speaking presentations, partnerships with consumer and service organizations, and features the Commission's www.AskPSC.com consumer Web site.

Energy Saving Tips

- Keep the cold air outside and warm air in by making sure attics are properly insulated, and by adding caulking and weather-stripping around doors and windows.
- Install inexpensive styrofoam or foam rubber gaskets behind light switch receptacle covers on exterior walls.
- Install storm or thermal windows and doors, or heat shrink plastic sheeting over windows.
- Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as needed. Make sure they are not blocked by furniture, carpeting, or drapes.
- Open drapes during the day to capture warmth and close them at night to prevent heat loss through windows.
- Have your heating system cleaned and inspected by a qualified contractor.
- If your heating system has a filter, clean or replace it every month during the heating season.
- Install an automatic setback thermostat to turn the heating system up and down at pre-set times to maintain comfort and lower heating costs.
- Shut off the heat in unused rooms and close the fireplace damper when the fireplace is not in use.

The Commission's statewide energy efficiency programs are available through the New York State Energy Research Development and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and your local utility. More information on NYSERDA-administered programs is available at www.nyserdan.ny.gov or by calling toll-free 1-877 NY-Smart. Additionally, contact your local utility for information on the company's energy efficiency programs; look for their phone number and/or Web site address on your utility bill.

The Public Service Law and Commission regulations provide a wide range of consumer protections regarding electric and natural gas utility service. The New York State Home Energy Fair Practices Act (HEFPA) provides certain cold weather protections during the period November 1 through April 15 regarding utility service terminations, service reconnections and deferred payment agreements and other related matters. More information concerning HEFPA

can be found by visiting the Commission's www.AskPSC.com consumer Web site or by calling toll-free 1-888-Ask-PSC1 (1-888-275-7721). Additional assistance can be obtained by calling the Department of Public Service call center Helpline toll-free at 1-800-342-3377.