

Your New Choices

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NEW YORK'S COMPETITIVE GAS MARKET MORE CHOICES AND BENEFITS FOR CONSUMERS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS GUIDE

The New York State Public Service Commission recently approved utility plans that will allow consumers to choose who will deliver or purchase their gas—either from a nonutility supplier or continue to buy it from their utility. To assist you in making informed choices about these options, we have provided a list of commonly asked questions and answers.

HOW WILL THESE CHOICES WORK?

Consumers who use natural gas will be able to choose to purchase gas from the utility or from a nonutility supplier. If you decide to choose a nonutility supplier, the utility will continue to deliver gas just as it always has and bill you.

WHY DID THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION CHANGE NEW YORK'S GAS INDUSTRY?

The Commission believes that wider choice and options for natural gas supply will benefit consumers and stimulate New York's economy.

WHAT IS A NONUTILITY SUPPLIER?

A nonutility supplier buys the natural gas and sells it to you, including arrangements for its delivery through a utility. The nonutility supplier will bill you for the gas delivered based on a service agreement.

CAN SMALLER RESIDENTIAL OR BUSINESS CUSTOMERS PARTICIPATE IN THIS NEW MARKET?

A group of smaller customers may coordinate arrangements with a nonutility supplier. The nonutility supplier will develop a plan to purchase gas services and manage administrative functions.

WHAT WILL THE UTILITY'S ROLE BE IF I PURCHASE GAS THROUGH A NONUTILITY SUPPLIER?

The utility will continue to transport the gas to your home or



business and provide certain services, such as meter testing and reading, and, in some cases, billing gas costs for the nonutility supplier. You should request information on the available services. You will continue to pay the utility for the reduced services. It will still be responsible for the safe, reliable delivery of gas through its distribution system to your home or business. Always report any possible safety problems, such as noticeable odor or gas leak, immediately to the utility's emergency number.

WHERE CAN CONSUMERS GET INFORMATION ABOUT NONUTILITY SUPPLIERS?

Your utility will provide a list of nonutility suppliers who have met certain financial criteria to sell in its service territory. The utility will not recommend a particular supplier or guarantee its performance. When the information becomes available, you should study what rates suppliers have been charging over a period of time AND seek out other customers for references. You should consider discussing service options with several nonutility providers before making an informed decision about your needs. Lastly, examine your energy usage patterns to guide the selection of service choices.

HOW CAN I GET INFORMATION ABOUT MY ACCOUNT FROM THE UTILITY?

At your request, the utility will provide your account information and history of usage.

HOW CAN CUSTOMERS APPLY TO A NONUTILITY SUPPLIER FOR GAS SALES?

Each consumer chooses to purchase gas through a nonutility supplier will be required to enter into a service agreement that will be filed with the utility. After the utility verifies the agreement, the nonutility supplier will begin supply of the gas and charge for this service.

WILL I BE ABLE TO CHANGE SUPPLIERS?

You may change suppliers subject to the terms of your contract. And, your options to choose service through other suppliers will depend on the market in your area. You will be responsible for notifying the utility of the change, including the

name of the supplier and the effective date for new service. If you choose to return to the utility as a supplier, you will receive the same opportunity as any new customer.

IF I CONTINUE TO PURCHASE GAS FROM THE UTILITY, WILL ANYTHING CHANGE IN DELIVERY OR SERVICE?

The delivery of gas and services currently offered by your local utility will remain the same.

HOW WILL I BE BILLED IF I CHOOSE A NONUTILITY SUPPLIER?

You may receive two separate bills: one from the utility for the delivery of the gas and other customer services; and the other from the nonutility supplier for gas costs. However, the nonutility supplier and the utility may agree to provide you with one combined bill.

HOW MUCH WILL MY GAS COST IF I CONTINUE TO BUY IT FROM THE UTILITY?

Your cost will depend on your gas usage and the purchase price. Gas bought from the utility will be sold at prices set by the state. The price of gas purchased through nonutility suppliers is unregulated and may be higher or lower than utility rates depending on market conditions. You are still obligated to pay the utility for the delivery of gas to you. Prices are set by regulation.

ARE NONUTILITY SUPPLIERS REQUIRED TO ACCEPT ME AS A CUSTOMER?

No. Nonutility suppliers are not obligated to sell you gas. If you arrange for the purchase of gas through a nonutility supplier, the relationship between you and supplier is a matter of contract.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I HAVE A QUESTION OR COMPLAINT ABOUT A NONUTILITY SUPPLIER BILL?

You should first contact the supplier and use its complaint resolution process to address an issue. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may want to consider assistance through community dispute resolution services or legal processes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I HAVE A QUESTION OR COMPLAINT ABOUT A UTILITY'S BILL?

As you did with your prior utility service, you should first contact the utility.

CAN A NONUTILITY SUPPLIER

DISCONNECT MY SERVICE?

Only the utility has access to physically disconnect your service. The contract between you and your nonutility supplier is dissolved for any reason, the nonutility supplier may suspend its service. Nonutility suppliers must provide a written notice to you 15 days before disconnecting service to allow you an opportunity to pay overdue bills or request service from another provider. Either the consumer or the nonutility supplier should notify the utility immediately. Since only the utility has access to the shut off valve, the gas will continue to flow. At this point, you will become the customer of the utility and pay the utility directly for the gas supply.

GETTING MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about your choices in this new marketplace, please contact your utility company or a nonutility supplier. It is expected that nonutility gas suppliers will advertise their services to consumers. Additionally, both the utility and the Public Service Commission will provide a list of nonutility suppliers. You may get additional information by writing to us at the following address: New York State Public Service Commission, Consumer Services Division, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223; or by accessing the Public Service Commission's Website at <http://www.dps.state.ny.us> or calling our toll-free information number at 1-888-ASKPSC1. If you would like to give us your opinion on competition in the gas industry, call our toll-free number at 1-800-335-2120.

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ENERGY, INC.

Service That Never Sleeps

Since 1930

1 Booth Lane - PO Box 11029

Albany, NY 12211

Ph: 866-722-2273

Fax: 518-438-5991

EMAIL: askme@maincareenergy.com