



For Immediate Release
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Illinois Commerce Commission Initiates Rulemaking Changes for Retail Electric Suppliers

Chicago, IL – By unanimous vote, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) today took action to initiate a rulemaking proceeding to consider changes to the marketing rules applicable to retail electric suppliers in Illinois.

The Commission’s Order requires completion of a first draft of the rule within 180 days, ensuring an expeditious resolution of the issues at hand.

“Many residential customers in Illinois now choose an alternative retail electric supplier (ARES) for power, and as of today, close to 50 retail electric suppliers market retail electric choice options to residential customers,” said ICC Chairman Brien Sheahan. “The changes proposed to the rule will result in additional consumer protections by providing residents with more of the information they need to make informed decisions regarding their household electric needs.”

Commissioner Miguel del Valle added, “This rulemaking begins what has been a long-awaited and much needed step toward increasing transparency and improving marketing practices by retail electric suppliers.”

Last September, the Commission issued a Notice of Inquiry (“NOI”) in an attempt to address a range of topics and concerns pertaining to consumer electric choice, marketing practices and the retail electric market as a whole. The NOI sought comment from interested parties on 24 specific proposals related to variable rate offers, renewable energy offers, the utilities’ price-to-compare information, consumer education, as well as cancellation and rescission procedures. The ICC also commissioned three workshops on the subject and received three rounds of written comments in which several parties responded. All comments can be viewed at www.icc.illinois.gov/ormd/NOI2014.aspx.

Today’s Commission action will culminate in amendments to current Commission rules and address several areas of concern involving the marketing practices of retail electric suppliers, including:

- Establishing standard terms and greater uniformity for the different types of offers.

Controlling the use of terms like “green energy” on the list of residential offers posted by suppliers on www.pluginillinois.org.

- Requiring comparisons between the rate offered by the new supplier and the regulated utility's supply rate.
- Broadening the definition of "door-to-door" sales to include all in-person sales, providing for verification and additional guidelines for in-person sales, requiring that all sales over the telephone be recorded and those records retained, clarifying that the sales person may not be present for third-party verification of in-person sales.
- Requiring disclosure of a supplier's past variable residential rates and requiring that retail electric suppliers post their residential offers on PlugInIllinois.org.
- Restricting the use of utility names and logos and incorporating termination fee limits as imposed by recent legislation.

The ICC's aforementioned official electric choice website, www.pluginillinois.org, will also be enhanced and promoted to make consumers better aware of their rights and options as they shop the market. Interested parties are encouraged to participate in the rulemaking process by filing a public comment or a petition to intervene in Docket Number 15-0512 via e-docket at <http://www.icc.illinois.gov>.

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About the Illinois Commerce Commission

The Illinois Commerce Commission's mission is to pursue an appropriate balance between the interests of consumers and existing and emerging service providers to ensure the provision of adequate, efficient, reliable, safe and least-cost public utility services. The Commission pursues this mission through three bureaus: the Consumer Services Bureau provides educational information on utility issues, resolves customer/utility disputes and develops rules on utility service and consumer protection; the Public Utility Bureau focuses on financial and operational analysis, policy development, public safety and enforcement activities related to electric, natural gas, water, sewer and telecommunications companies; the Transportation Bureau includes trucking insurance and registration, railroad safety, relocation towing, safety towing and household goods moving company enforcement activities. The ICC's five commissioners are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Illinois State Senate for five-year terms.