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Illinois Commerce Commission Launches Investigation of Sperian Energy Corporation

Chicago, IL – The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) today launched an investigation into the marketing practices of Sperian Energy Corp, a certified alternative retail electric supplier in Illinois. In its order initiating the investigation, the Commission summarized a report from ICC staff alleging misleading and deceptive telemarketing practices; failure to adhere to solicitation and verification disclosure requirements; failure to adhere to necessary minimum contract terms and conditions; and inadequate training of retail electric supplier agents.

“The investigation into Sperian follows a detailed ICC staff analysis of the company’s marketing and sales tactics that again and again have led to customer confusion and complaints,” said Commissioner Miguel del Valle. “The Commission is determined to investigate and hold accountable companies that are potentially misleading customers about their utility bills.”

The ICC keeps a Complaint Scorecard to show retail electric suppliers’ rate of complaints filed by customers. Sperian has ranked in the lowest category, one star, for customer complaints throughout 2015. The Scorecard can be viewed at www.pluginillinois.org/complaints.aspx.

During the ICC investigation, Sperian will have the opportunity to address allegations of noncompliance before an administrative law judge who will weigh the evidence and propose a ruling. Potential action taken by the Commission for findings of violations or non-conformance may include:

1. A cease and desist order or order to correct any violation of or non-conformance with the Public Utility Act.
2. Financial penalties up to \$10,000 per occurrence of a violation or non-conformance with the Act, or up to \$30,000 per day for violations or non-conformances which continue after the Commission issues a cease and desist order.
3. Altering, modifying, revoking or suspending Sperian Energy Corporation’s designation as an energy supplier.

The Illinois Electric Service Customer Choice and Rate Relief Law of 1997 restructured the state's electric service industry to allow customers a choice of electric suppliers. Sperian Energy is one of many suppliers licensed in Illinois which can sell directly to residential and commercial customers. The ICC Consumer Services Division is available to answer consumer questions about electric choice at 800-524-0795.

The Sperian investigation is Docket No. 15-0438 and can be viewed at www.icc.illinois.gov/docket/search.aspx.

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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.