



Electric Consumers Will Be Protected

Updated October 2007

This publication is updated quarterly.

From the onset of electric restructuring, the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, has represented the interests of residential electric customers and insisted that consumer protection standards be included in the law. State legislation required the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to establish certain customer rights to be enforced throughout the electric choice program.

Electric suppliers must be certified in the state of Ohio. The certification process is important because all suppliers wishing to provide electricity in Ohio must prove their company meets a certain level of standards.

Ohio's electric choice program provides for consumer protection standards to ensure a safe and successful competitive marketplace. For example, all electric suppliers marketing materials and agreements must be consistent with the following protections:

- Suppliers must reveal the type of rate they offer, a Fixed Rate (same rate for generation service throughout the length of the agreement) or a Variable Rate (a rate that can fluctuate based on numerous factors), as well as a clear and understandable explanation of the factors that may cause a rate to vary.
- No supplier can market electric services to you with false or misleading information. This includes promises of savings that may not exist, failure to disclose specifics of the agreement or providing false information about the energy sources used to produce the electricity.
- Suppliers cannot solicit by telephone those customers who requested the PUCO place their name on its "Do Not Call" list.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

Agreement

Every certified electric supplier must provide you with a service agreement upon enrollment. Included on that agreement must be the following information:

- The supplier's name, toll free telephone number and address.
- Switching fees, if applicable, to transfer from your local utility to a new supplier.
- An itemized list of prices, fees and the amount of recurring and non-recurring charges, billing cycle and late payment fee information and other terms and conditions.
- An outline of the electric suppliers' complaint handling procedures.
- Notice with any applicable automatic renewal provisions.

If you are part of an *aggregated community*, you will receive information about your agreement terms and conditions from your aggregated group.

Enrollment

There are several ways to enroll: mail, fax, the Internet and by phone. Once an agreement has been executed, the supplier is required to notify your local electric utility within three to five days, depending on how you enrolled, that you have chosen a new supplier. Your local utility will then mail you a confirmation notice. Included with the confirmation notice must be information explaining your right to cancel the contract should you choose to. Customers have seven days from the postmarked date on the confirmation notice to cancel their contract without penalties.

Note: Once the seven day cancellation period has passed, customers will automatically be enrolled with the supplier. If you choose to then cancel that agreement, make sure you check with the supplier for any penalties associated with the early termination of an agreement.

For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

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