

**STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

1999 Natural Gas Survey

Survey Instrument

STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE

THREE EMPIRE STATE PLAZA, ALBANY, NY 12223-1350

Internet Address: <http://www.dps.state.ny.us>

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February 1999

Dear Natural Gas Customer:

The Department of Public Service is conducting a survey about customer experience with competition in the natural gas industry. We are contacting consumers who have experience purchasing gas from a supplier other than their local utility. **For the survey to be most effective, we ask that the person(s) most involved in making energy decisions complete this survey.** The overall purpose of the survey is to get the customer's perspective on the development of the competitive natural gas market in New York State.

You have been randomly selected to receive this survey. Please take a few minutes to complete it, and return it as soon as possible in the enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope. This survey is anonymous. All individual responses will remain confidential.

We look forward to receiving your response. If you have any questions, please call us, toll-free, at 1-800-342-3377. Thanks for your assistance!

Very truly yours,


Raj Addepalli
Acting Director
Office of Consumer Affairs

Attachment

Natural Gas Survey

1. Are you involved in or do you expect in the future to participate in energy decisions for your home or business? Yes [] No [] *if no, go to Question 18.*

2. Which *one* of the following **best** describes your natural gas account?
Residential [] Commercial []

3. Which *one* of the following **best** describes the location where you use natural gas?
Single Family home [] 2-4 Family home [] Apartment house []
Commercial/Retail []

4. Who pays the natural gas bill? You [] Landlord [] Other []

5. Which of the following describes your use of natural gas? (*check all that apply*)
Heating [] Hot water heating [] Cooking [] Clothes drying []
Manufacturing [] Other (list) _____

6. a) Please indicate how you learned about purchasing gas directly from a supplier?
(*check all that apply*) TV [] Radio [] Newspaper [] Trade journal []
Brochure [] Word of mouth [] Other(list) _____

- b) Please indicate who gave you specific information about purchasing gas:
(*check all that apply*) Utility [] Supplier [] Trade organization []
Religious organization [] Community organization []
Public Service Commission (PSC) [] Other Government organization []
Other(list) _____

- c) What information did you find helpful? _____

- d) What additional information would have been helpful? _____

7. What is the name of your natural gas supplier? (optional) _____

8. Why did you select your supplier? _____

9. a) Did you sign a contract? Yes [] No []

b) Did you have to pay a deposit? Yes [] No []

If yes: was it reasonable? Yes [] No []

10. a) How long has it been since you signed up with your natural gas supplier?
Less than six months [] Six months to one year [] Over one year []

b) Are you still purchasing gas from a non-utility gas supplier? Yes [] No []

11. Please rate your overall experience with your non-utility gas supplier. Are you:

Very satisfied [] Satisfied [] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied []

Dissatisfied [] Very dissatisfied []

12. a) Please rate your overall satisfaction with your **utility's** enrollment process (that is the steps you had to take) to become a customer of a gas supplier. Were you:

Very satisfied [] Satisfied [] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied []

Dissatisfied [] Very dissatisfied []

Why? _____

b) Please rate your overall satisfaction with your **gas supplier's** enrollment process (that is the steps you had to take) to become a customer of a gas supplier. Were you:

Very satisfied [] Satisfied [] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied []

Dissatisfied [] Very dissatisfied []

Why? _____

The next two questions ask about features and services offered by your gas supplier. **Question 13 generally asks how important various features are to you in selecting a gas supplier.** (Please answer the question even if your supplier did not offer the service.) **Question 14 asks specifically about your most recent experience with the supplier you selected.**

13. Please rate how important each of the following factors is when considering whether to buy natural gas from a supplier other than the local utility. For each factor would you say it was: *Very Important, Important, Somewhat Important or Not At All Important.* (check one)

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not At All Important</u>
a) Reliability of service	[]	[]	[]	[]
b) Overall bill savings	[]	[]	[]	[]
c) Clarity of bill	[]	[]	[]	[]
d) Customer service	[]	[]	[]	[]
e) Supplier offers other services (e.g., furnace repair)	[]	[]	[]	[]
f) Supplier offers other utilities (e.g., cable, electric)	[]	[]	[]	[]
g) No security deposit required	[]	[]	[]	[]
h) Supplier offers choice of billing options:				
Budget billing (equal monthly bills)	[]	[]	[]	[]
Direct payment by charge card	[]	[]	[]	[]
Automatic billing to bank account	[]	[]	[]	[]
i) Other important factors (please list here): _____				

14. For each of the following factors, please rate how well your expectations have been met with your gas supplier. For each factor would you say your expectations were: *Exceeded, Met, Partially Met, or Not Met at All* (check one).

	<u>Exceeded</u>	<u>Met</u>	<u>Partially Met</u>	<u>Not Met At All</u>
a) Reliability of service	[]	[]	[]	[]
b) Overall bill savings	[]	[]	[]	[]
c) Clarity of bill	[]	[]	[]	[]
d) Customer service	[]	[]	[]	[]
e) Supplier offers other services (e.g., furnace repair)	[]	[]	[]	[]
f) Supplier offers other utilities (e.g., cable, electric)	[]	[]	[]	[]
g) Supplier offers billing choices	[]	[]	[]	[]
Other comments: _____				

over

15. What level of savings on your total bill would you estimate you have realized in buying natural gas from a new supplier? Under 5% [] 6-10% []
11% to 15% [] 16% to 20% [] Over 20% []

16. Is there anything else you want to tell us about your experience with your gas supplier? _____

17. Please indicate the name of your *local* natural gas utility: _____

18. *If you would like information about purchasing gas from a non-utility supplier, please note your name and address below, or call toll free at 1-800-342-3377.*

Thank you for your assistance!

**Please return this survey in the enclosed pre-paid envelope and mail to:
Natural Gas Survey, Second Floor
New York State Department of Public Service
3 Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223**

STATE OF NEW YORK

Public Service Commission

Maureen O. Helmer, Chairman

Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223

UTILITY SERVICE AREAS EXAMINED

UTILITY SERVICE AREAS EXAMINED	SURVEYS MAILED (8,000)	SURVEYS MAILED (%)
Brooklyn Union	3,250	41
Central Hudson Gas & Electric	5	1
Consolidated Edison	2,196	27
Coming Gas	11	1
Long Island Lighting	685	8
National Fuel Gas	955	11
New York State Electric & Gas	139	2
Niagara Mohawk	469	6
Orange & Rockland	197	2
Rochester Gas & Electric	93	1
Total	8,000	100

Notes: As of fall 1998, about 50,000 residential and small commercial customers purchased gas from marketers. We selected 8,000 (or 16%) of these customers for the survey.

SURVEY RESPONSE RATE

Utility Area	Surveys Mailed	Total Identified Returns	Percent Returned
Keyspan ¹	3,935	530	13
Con Ed	2,196	380	17
NMPC	469	104	22
NFG	955	328	34
Subtotals	7,555	1,342	21
Others	455	277	18
TOTALS	8,000	1,619	20

Notes: **Surveys mailed out on February 25, 1999.**
 Total Returned at 21% (n=1,711)
 Total Returned with Late Returns at 23% (n=1,821)

In the following tables, the data is analyzed for Keyspan, Con Ed, NMPC and NFG, the companies with the largest number of customers taking service from marketers. The "N" at the top of each table includes the total number of respondents from all companies for that category and is larger than the sum of the subtotals for the four largest companies.

¹Includes Brooklyn Union and Long Island Lighting.

WHAT IS YOUR ESTIMATED BILL SAVINGS

RESIDENTIAL USERS (N=766)

	Total	Keyspan (N=302)	Con Ed (N=192)	NMPC (N=16)	NFG (N=156)
Under 5%	36%	37%	58%*	38%	5%
6-10%	35	39	29	25	33
11-15%	20	14	6	19	48*
16-20%	7	7	3	13	13*
Over 20%	3	3	4	6	1

Source: OSC Slide #35

WHAT IS YOUR ESTIMATED BILL SAVINGS

COMMERCIAL USERS (N=471)

	Total	Keyspan (N=302)	Con Ed (N=192)	NMPC (N=16)	NFG (N=156)
Under 5%	20%	22%	30%*	18%	13%
6-10%	46	48	37	39	57*
11-15%	23	20	26	29	17
16-20%	9	10	5	11	8
Over 20%	3	1	2	3	5

Source: OSC Slide #35

PLEASE RATE YOUR OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR MARKETER

RESIDENTIAL USERS (N=955)

	Total	Keyspan (N=360)	Con Ed (N=265)	NMPC (N=22)	NFG (N=181)
TOP TWO BOXES	54%	57%	36%*	59%	76%*
Very Satisfied	19	15	9	32	38
Satisfied	35	42	26	27	39
Neither	30	34	31	41	22
Dissatisfied	10	6	21	0	2
Very Dissatisfied	6	3	13	0	1

Source: OSC Slide #13

PLEASE RATE YOUR OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR MARKETER

COMMERCIAL USERS (N=502)

	Total	KEYSPAN (N=144)	CON ED (N=107)	NMPC (N=82)	NFG (N=133)
TOP TWO BOXES	71%	67%	53%*	81%*	83%*
Very Satisfied	30	26	22	39	35
Satisfied	41	41	32	42	48
Neither	19	25	18	16	14
Dissatisfied	6	7	14	2	3
Very Dissatisfied	4	1	15*	1	1

Source: OSC Slide #13

**PLEASE RATE YOUR OVERALL
EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR MARKETER**
(differentiated by perceived bill savings)

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS

	Savings Under 10% (N=269)	Savings 10-20% (N=157)
TOP TWO BOXES	52%	80%
Very Satisfied	16	36
Satisfied	35	44
Neither Satisfied/Dissatisfied	32	17
Dissatisfied	12	2
Very Dissatisfied	5	2

Source: OSC Slide #13

PLEASE RATE YOUR OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR MARKETER

(differentiated by perceived bill savings)

COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS

	Savings Under 10% (N=351)	Savings 10-20% (N=167)
TOP TWO BOXES	64%	89%
Very Satisfied	22	47
Satisfied	43	43
Neither Satisfied/Dissatisfied	21	9
Dissatisfied	9	1
Very Dissatisfied	6	1

Source: OSC Slide #13

**PLEASE RATE YOUR OVERALL
EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR UTILITY
ENROLLMENT PROCESS TO BECOME A
CUSTOMER OF A MARKETER**

RESIDENTIAL USERS (N=965)

	Total	Keyspan (N=368)	Con Ed (N=261)	NMPC (N=21)	NFG (N=181)
TOP TWO BOXES	66%	67%	56%*	67%	80%*
Very Satisfied	21	18	14	19	35
Satisfied	45	49	42	48	45
Neither	22	24	25	14	14
Dissatisfied	8	7	12	10	4
Very Dissatisfied	5	2	7	10*	2

Source: OSC Slide #14

**PLEASE RATE YOUR OVERALL
EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR UTILITY
ENROLLMENT PROCESS TO BECOME A
CUSTOMER OF A MARKETER**

COMMERCIAL (N=504)

	Total	Keyspan (N=142)	Con Ed (N=109)	NMPC (N=81)	NFG (N=136)
TOP TWO BOXES	72%	73%	55%*	77%	77%
Very Satisfied	23	23	13	21	27
Satisfied	50	50	42	56	50
Neither	21	21	31	15	18
Dissatisfied	4	6	6	5	4
Very Dissatisfied	3	1	8	4	1

Source: OSC Slide #14

**PLEASE RATE YOUR OVERALL
EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR MARKETER'S
ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

RESIDENTIAL USERS (N=955)

	Total	Keyspan (N=364)	Con Ed (N=257)	NMPC (N=21)	NFG (N=180)
TOP TWO BOXES	70%	70%	60%*	86%*	84%*
Very Satisfied	22	19	15	33	39
Satisfied	47	51	45	52	45
Neither Satisfied/ Dissatisfied	20	23	23	14	12
Dissatisfied	7	5	11	0	3
Very Dissatisfied	4	2	6	0	1

Source: OSC Slide #15

**PLEASE RATE YOUR OVERALL
EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR MARKETER'S
ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

COMMERCIAL USERS (N=496)

	Total	KEYSPAN (N=137)	CON ED (N=106)	NMPC (N=82)	NFG (N=135)
TOP TWO BOXES	82%	81%	68%*	87%	83%
Very Satisfied	27	26	15	29	31
Satisfied	55	55	53	57	52
Neither Satisfied/Dissatisfied	14	15	21	9	14
Dissatisfied	2	3	4	2	2
Very Dissatisfied	2	2	8	2	1

Source: OSC Slide #15

**PLEASE RATE HOW IMPORTANT THE
FOLLOWING FACTORS ARE TO YOU**

Factor	Residential (N=956)	Commercial (N=506)
Overall Bill Savings	97%	99%
Reliability of Service	96	94
Clarity of Bill	88	89
Customer Service	84	82
No Security Deposit Required	58	58
Budget Billing (Equal Monthly Payments)	51	34
Multiple Utility Services Offered	37	36
Other Services (e.g., Furnace Repairs)	35	25
Direct Payment by Charge Card	23	14
Automatic Billing To Bank Account	18	11

Source: OSC Slide #26

HOW HAVE YOUR EXPECTATIONS BEEN MET FOR THE FOLLOWING FACTORS

RESIDENTIAL USERS (N=877)

Factor	Total	Keyspan (N=337)	Con Ed (N=248)	NMPC (N=20)	NFG (N=163)
Service Reliability	94%	94%	94%	100%*	96%*
Bill Clarity	62	69	42*	80*	74
Customer Service	60	63	47*	85*	67
Bill Savings	52	50	35*	65*	79
Billing Choices	44	44	29*	55	68
Supplier Offers Other Services	31	40	26	45	19
Supplier Offers Other Utilities	31	27	38	30	21

Source: OSC Slide #34

HOW HAVE YOUR EXPECTATIONS BEEN MET FOR THE FOLLOWING FACTORS

COMMERCIAL USERS (N=491)

Factor	Total	Keyspan (N=143)	Con Ed (N=96)	NMPC (N=81)	NFG (N=137)
Service Reliability	97%	99%	93%	99%	100%
Bill Clarity	76	72	69	84	80
Customer Service	74	69	71	82	80
Bill Savings	72	70	64	70	77
Billing Choices	41	41	37	47	47
Supplier Offers Other Services	36	35	41	36	33
Supplier Offers Other Utilities	34	33	42	36	33

Source: OSC Slide #34

HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT PURCHASING GAS FROM A MARKETER?

RESIDENTIAL USERS (N=840)

	Total Respondents	Upstate (N=193)	Downstate (N=574)
Brochures	57%	29%*	74%*
Word of Mouth	30	33	17
Newspaper	27	36	28
Radio	15	45*	11
TV	10	11	11
Trade Journal	8	N/A	N/A

COMMERCIAL USERS (N=370)

	Total Respondents	Upstate (N=163)	Downstate (N=207)
Brochures	47%	38%*	56%*
Word of Mouth	46	55*	35
Newspaper	23	22	26
Radio	8	8	10
TV	6	4	10
Trade Journal	17*	19	20

Source: OSC Slide #6

DID YOU SIGN A CONTRACT?

RESIDENTIAL USERS (N=961)

	Total Respondents	Keyspan (N=368)	Con Ed (N=257)	NMPC (N=22)	NFG (N=178)
YES	80%	80%	66%*	86%	87%
NO	20	20	34*	13	13

COMMERCIAL USERS (N=513)

	Total Respondents	KEYSPAN (N=145)	CON ED (N=109)	NMPC (N=81)	NFG (N=136)
YES	86%	83%	83%	91%	85%
NO	14	17	17	9	15

Source: OSC Slide #8

DID YOU HAVE TO PAY A DEPOSIT?

RESIDENTIAL USERS (N=947)

	Total Respondents	Keyspan (N=363)	Con Ed (N=259)	NMPC (N=22)	NFG (N=174)
YES	7%	2%	1%*	14%	29%
NO	93	98	99	86	71

COMMERCIAL USERS (N=500)

	Total Respondents	Keyspan (N=140)	Con Ed (N=108)	NMPC (N=81)	NFG (N=134)
YES	5%	4%	6%	3%	8%
NO	95	96	94	98	93

Source: OSC Slide #9