STATE OF NEW YORK
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

UNIFORM BUSINESS PRACTICES
CASE 98-M-1343

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS 1

SECTION 2: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS 6

SECTION 3: CREDITWORTHINESS 17

SECTION 4: CUSTOMER INFORMATION 23

SECTION 5: CHANGES IN SERVICE PROVIDERS 27

SECTION 6: CUSTOMER INQUIRIES 41

SECTION 7: DISTRIBUTION UTILITY INVOICES 43

SECTION 8: DISPUTES INVOLVING DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES, ESCOs OR DIRECT CUSTOMERS 45

SECTION 9: BILLING AND PAYMENT PROCESSING 47

SECTION 10: MARKETING STANDARDS 61

SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS

As used in the Uniform Business Practices (UBP), the following terms shall have the following meanings:

Assignment – Transfer by one ESCO to another ESCO of its rights and responsibilities relating to provision of electric and/or gas supply under a sales agreement.

Bill ready – A consolidated billing practice that requires each non-billing party, after receiving customers' usage data, to calculate its charges and send via EDI charges, billing information, and bill messages to the billing party in a form that allows the transfer of the information to the bill in a format the billing party selects.

Billing cycle – The period for which a customer is billed for usage of electricity or natural gas.

Billing services agreement (BSA) – An agreement between the distribution utility and the ESCO stating the billing practices and procedures and the rights and responsibilities of billing and non-billing parties relating to issuance of consolidated bills to customers.

Budget billing – A billing plan that provides for level or uniform amounts due each billing period over a set number of periods, typically 12 months, and determined by dividing projected annual charges by the number of periods. Installment amounts may be adjusted during the period and may include reconciliations at the end of the budget period to account for differences between actual charges and installment amounts.

Business day – Monday through Friday, except for public holidays.

Consolidated billing – A billing option that provides customers with a single bill combining charges from more than one service provider and issued by a distribution utility providing delivery service (utility consolidated bill) or by a commodity supplier (ESCO consolidated bill).

Customer inquiry – A question or request for information from a customer relating to a rate, term, or condition of service provided by an ESCO, distribution utility or other service provider.

Cramming – The addition of unauthorized charges to a customer's bill.

Deferred payment agreement (DPA) – A fair and equitable payment plan agreed upon by a customer and utility and/or a customer and an ESCO that allows a customer to pay an overdue amount in installments. A DPA is based upon the customer's financial circumstances and ability to pay the overdue amount while making payment on current charges.

Demand – The amount of electricity or natural gas that is or could be immediately needed by a customer at any given point in time referred to as customer load. For consolidated billing, the term is used in the context of "billing period demand" for customer bills.

> Electric – The amount of electricity, measured in kilowatts (kW), that a customer uses at a point in time, the customer's usage averaged over a period, or capacity of facilities reserved for the customer for stand-by or other service.

Natural Gas – The amount of gas measured in cubic feet or therms that a customer uses or may use over a period, or capacity of facilities reserved for the customer for stand-by or other service.

Direct customer – An entity that purchases and schedules delivery of electricity or natural gas for its own consumption and not for resale. A customer with a minimum peak connected load of 1 MW at a single service point qualifies for direct purchase and scheduling of electricity provided the customer complies with NYISO requirements. A customer with annual use of a minimum of 3,500 dekatherms of natural gas at a single service point qualifies for direct purchase and scheduling of natural gas.

Distribution utility – A gas or electric corporation owning, operating or managing electric or gas facilities for the purpose of distributing gas or electricity to end users.

Distribution utility customer account number – A number used by a distribution utility to identify the account of a utility customer.

Distribution utility tariff – A schedule of rates, terms and conditions of services provided by a distribution utility.

Drop – A transaction that closes a customer's account with a provider. This term is used when: (1) a customer's enrollment is pending and the customer rescinds the enrollment; (2) a customer enrolled with an ESCO returns to distribution utility service or enrolls with another ESCO; or (3) the ESCO discontinues service to a customer.

Dual billing – A billing option that provides for separate calculation of charges and presentation of bills to the customer by the distribution utility and ESCO.

Electronic data interchange (EDI) – The computer-to-computer exchange of routine information in a standard format using established data processing protocols. EDI transactions are used in retail access programs to switch customers from one supplier to another or to exchange customers' history, usage or billing data between a distribution utility or MDSP and an ESCO. Transaction set standards, processing protocols and test plans are authorized in orders issued by the Public Service Commission in Case 98-M-0667, In the Matter of Electronic Data Interchange and available on the Department of Public Service website at: www.dps.state.ny.us/98m0667.htm.

Energy broker – A non-utility entity that performs energy management or procurement functions on behalf of direct customers or ESCOs but does not make retail energy sales to customers.

Energy services company (ESCO) – An entity eligible to sell electricity and/or natural gas to end-use customers using the transmission or distribution system of a utility. ESCOs may perform other retail service functions. Sometimes, other terms are used for such entities, such as, ESCO/Marketer to describe a supplier of both commodities, ESCO to describe a supplier of electricity and marketer to describe a supplier of natural gas. For simplicity, the term ESCO is used in the UBP to refer to suppliers of natural gas and/or electricity.

ESCO marketing representative – An entity that is either the ESCO or a contractor/vendor conducting, on behalf of the ESCO, any marketing activity that is designed to enroll customers with the ESCO.

Enroll/Enrollment – The process used to switch a customer from a distribution utility to an ESCO or from one ESCO to another.

Enrollment date – The effective date for commencement of electric or natural gas service from an ESCO or distribution utility.

Guarantor – An entity that agrees to pay another's debt or perform another's duty, liability or obligation.

Interval data – Actual energy usage for a specific time interval for a specific period recorded by a meter or other measurement device.

Load profile – Actual or estimated customer energy usage by interval over a period representing usage for a customer or average usage for a customer class.

Lockbox – A billing payment receipt method agreed upon by a distribution utility and an ESCO, involving use of a third party financial institution to receive and disburse customer payments.

Marketer – The term marketer typically refers to the supplier of natural gas. In the UBP, the term ESCO is used to refer to a supplier of either or both electricity and natural gas.

Meter – A device for determination of the units of electric or natural gas service supplied to consumers.

Meter Data Service Provider (MDSP) – An entity that provides meter data services, consisting of meter readings, meter data translations, and customer association, validation, editing and estimation.

Meter Service Provider (MSP) – An entity that installs, maintains, tests and removes meters, or other measurement devices and related equipment.

Multi-retailer model – A model for retail access that involves provision of electric or natural gas supply and of delivery service, provided separately to end use customers by two or more entities.

New York State Independent System Operator (NYISO) - An independent management organization, authorized by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, operating the bulk electric transmission system.

New delivery customer – A customer initiating delivery service by a distribution utility.

Nomination – A request for delivery of a physical quantity of natural gas or for its delivery at a specific point under a purchase, sale, or transportation agreement.

Office of Consumer Services – Office, within the Department of Public Service, which receives and makes determinations concerning customer complaints. Office of Consumer Services (OCS) identifies the exiting Office or its successor in the event the Office name is changed.

Pay-as-you-get-paid method – A payment processing method offered by a billing party presenting consolidated bills, whereby the billing party forwards payment to the non-billing party after receiving payment from the customer.

Pending enrollment – A stage in processing an enrollment that commences with validation of an enrollment transaction request and ends on the enrollment date that the new supplier is expected to deliver energy.

Pending ESCO – An ESCO is a pending ESCO from the date of receipt of an EDI notice containing the effective date for a customer's enrollment until the ESCO commences commodity service for that customer.

Plain Language – Written in clear and coherent manner using words with common and everyday meaning and avoiding legal or energy industry terms, acronyms and abbreviations that a person of ordinary intelligence would not be expected to understand. If use of a technical term is necessary, the term is clearly defined in the portion of the text where it is used.

Purchased accounts receivable – A debt owed to an ESCO by a customer for receipt of supplies of gas or electricity and transferred to a distribution utility in exchange for consideration.

> With recourse – Purchase of accounts receivable with recourse by a distribution utility means that the ESCO remains liable if its customers fail to make payments. A distribution utility that purchases accounts receivable with recourse sends payments to an ESCO at predetermined intervals for amounts billed that are not in dispute and may offset subsequent purchase payments against or obtain reimbursement from an ESCO of any unpaid amounts.
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> Without recourse – Purchase of accounts receivable without recourse by a distribution utility means that the ESCO is not liable if its customers fail to make payments. A distribution utility that purchases accounts receivable without recourse sends payments to an ESCO at predetermined intervals for amounts billed that are not in dispute and has no right to seek reimbursement from an ESCO of any unpaid amounts.

Rate ready – A consolidated billing practice that requires each non-billing party to furnish in advance of the billing cycle, rates, rate codes or prices (fixed and/or variable), tax rates, billing information, and bill messages to the billing party. The billing party, after receipt of usage data from the MDSP, uses the information on record to calculate the non-billing party's charges.

Sales agreement – An agreement between a customer and an ESCO that contains the terms and conditions governing the supply of electricity and/or natural gas provided by an ESCO. The agreement may be a written contract signed by the customer or a statement supporting a customer's verifiable verbal or electronic authorization to enter into an agreement with the ESCO for the services specified.

Single retailer model – A model for retail access that involves provision of electric and/or natural gas service to end users by an ESCO that purchases delivery service from the distribution utility and resells it along with electricity and/or natural gas to end users.

Slamming – Enrollment of a customer by an ESCO without authorization.

Special meter reading – An actual meter reading performed, upon request, on a date that is different than the regularly scheduled meter reading date.

Special needs customer – A customer who has a certified medical emergency condition, who is elderly, blind or physically challenged, or who may suffer serious impairment to health or safety as a result of service termination during cold weather periods and, thus, is eligible for special procedures before termination of service under the Home Energy Fair Practices Act (HEFPA) (Public Service Law §32(3)).

Switch – Transfer of a customer from one ESCO to another, from a distribution utility to an ESCO, or from an ESCO to a distribution utility.

Switching cycle – For electric service, the period between the date of the last meter read and the next regularly scheduled meter read. For gas customers, the period between the date of the last meter read and the next regularly scheduled meter read or the first day of the month and the first day of the following month.

Termination Fee – An amount specified in an ESCO sales agreement where such agreement permits the ESCO to assess and collect a charge in such amount to a customer who terminates the agreement before the end of a term described in that agreement, regardless of whether the assessed amount is identified as a fee, a charge, liquidated damages or a methodology for the calculation of damages, and regardless of whether it is fixed, scaled or subject to calculation based on market factors.

Verification Agent - An entity that is either the ESCO or a contractor/vendor conducting, on behalf of the ESCO, verification of a telephonic agreement with a customer to initiate service and begin enrollment or to obtain customer authorization for release of information, as required by Section 5, Attachment 1 of the UBP.

SECTION 2: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A. Applicability

This Section sets forth the process that an applicant is required to follow for a Department of Public Service (the Department) finding of eligibility to sell natural gas or electricity as an ESCO, that an ESCO is required to follow to maintain eligibility, and that a distribution utility is required to follow for discontinuance of an ESCO's or Direct Customer's participation in a distribution utility's retail access program.

B. Application Requirements

1. Applicants seeking eligibility to sell natural gas and/or electricity as ESCOs are required to submit to the Department an application package containing the following information and attachments:

a. A completed Retail Access Eligibility Form, available on the Department website: www.dps.state.ny.us.

b. A sample standard Sales Agreement for each customer class that includes the following information written in plain language:

1. Terms and conditions applicable to the business relationship between the ESCO and the customer which includes:

i. provisions governing the process for rescinding or terminating an agreement by the ESCO or the customer including provisions stating that a residential customer may rescind the agreement within three business days after its receipt;

ii. the placeholder for the price or how the price is determined, the terms and conditions of the agreement, including the term and end date, if any, of the agreement, the amount of the termination fee and the method of calculating the termination fee, if any, the amount of late payment fees, if applicable, and the provisions, if any, for the renewal of the agreement; and,

iii. a clear description of the conditions, if any, that must be present in order for savings to be provided to the customer, if savings are guaranteed.

2. Such contract shall also include on the first page thereof a Customer Disclosure Statement (the Statement). The text within this Statement shall state in plain language the terms and conditions described above (see Section 2, Attachment 1, infra). When the form contract is used by the ESCO as its agreement with the customer, the Customer Disclosure Statement shall also contain the price term of the agreement. In the event that the text in this Statement differs from or is in conflict with a term stated elsewhere in the agreement, the term described by the text in the Statement shall constitute the agreement with the customer notwithstanding a conflicting term expressed elsewhere in the agreement.

3. Procedures for resolving disputes between the ESCO and a customer;
4. Consumer protections provided by the ESCO to the customer;
5. Method for applying payments and consequences of non-payment;
6. Any charges and fees, services, options or products offered by the ESCO;
7. Department contact information, including the Department ESCO hotline at 1-888-697-7728;
8. ESCO contact information, including a local or toll-free number from the customer's service location, and procedures used for after-hours contacts and emergency contacts, including transfer of emergency calls directly to a distribution utility and/or an answering machine message that includes an emergency number for direct contact with the distribution utility.
9. A statement that the ESCO shall provide at least 15 calendar days notice prior to any cancellation of service to a customer; and
10. If a condition of service, a statement that the ESCO reserves the right to assign the contract to another ESCO.

c. Sample forms of the notices sent upon assignment of sales agreements, discontinuance of service, or transfer of customers to other providers.

d. A sample ESCO bill used when dual billing is in effect and, if applicable, a sample ESCO consolidated bill, with terms stated in clear, plain language;

e. Procedures used to obtain customer authorization for ESCO access to a customers' historic usage or credit information;

f. Sample copies of informational and promotional materials that the ESCO uses for mass marketing purposes;

g. Proof of registration with the New York State Department of State;

h. Internal procedures for prevention of slamming and cramming;

i. Name, postal and e-mail addresses, and telephone and fax numbers for the applicant's main office;

j. Names and addresses of any entities that hold ownership interests of 10% or more in the ESCO, including a contact name for corporate entities and partnerships;

k. Detailed explanation of any criminal or regulatory sanctions imposed during the previous 36 months against any senior officers of the ESCO or any entities holding ownership interests of 10% or more in the ESCO;

l. A copy of the ESCO's quality assurance program, which is designed to monitor (a) compliance with Section 10 of the UBP and (b) accuracy of the ESCO marketing materials provided to prospective customer s; and,

m. A completed Service Provider Contact Form, which can be found on the Department's website (http://www.dps.state.ny.us/ocs.html), identifying the

ESCO's employee(s) responsible for resolving consumer complaints received by the Department and referred to the ESCO.

2. Applicants shall submit to the Department Test Moderator designated EDI transactions required for syntactical verification in the Phase I testing program. The Department shall maintain a list of ESCOs that successfully complete Phase I test requirements by transaction type.

3. An ESCO that knowingly makes false statements in its application package is subject to denial or revocation of eligibility.

4. If the application package contains information that is a trade secret or sensitive for security reasons, the applicant may request that the Department withhold disclosure of the information, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law (Public Officers Law Article 6) and Public Service Commission regulations (16 NYCRR §6-1.3).

C. Department Review Process

The Department shall review the application package and conduct EDI Phase I testing as required for each applicant. An ESCO shall notify the Department of any major changes in the information submitted in the Form and/or application package that occurs during the Department review process. The Department shall advise the applicant, in writing, if the applicant submitted the required information and EDI testing is successfully completed.

1. ESCOs deemed eligible to provide commodity service by the Department must begin serving customers within two-years from the date of the letter notifying the ESCO of their eligibility status (eligibility letter). The ESCO that does not begin serving customers within such two-year period may be required to conduct additional Phase I testing before enrollments will be processed.

D. Maintaining ESCO Eligibility Status

1. An ESCO shall submit by January 31 each year (January 31 Statement):

   a. a statement that the information and attachments in its Retail Access Eligibility Form and application package are current; or

   b. a description of revisions to the Form and application package and a copy of the revised portions or, at the ESCO's option, a copy of the revised portions identifying the revisions by highlighting or other means.

2. An ESCO shall update all the information it submitted in its original application package to the Department every three years, starting from the date of its eligibility letter, consistent with the requirements of UBP Section 2.B. An ESCO's status as an eligible supplier is continuous from the date of the Department eligibility letter, unless revoked or otherwise limited in accordance with UBP Section 2.D.5. If the three year anniversary date falls within one month of January 31, the ESCO shall resubmit its application package in lieu of the January 31 statement.

3. An ESCO shall submit at other times during the year:

a. A description of any major change in the Form and/or application package and a copy of the revised portions or, at the ESCO's option, a copy of the revised portions identifying the revisions by highlighting or other means. For purposes of Subdivision D of this Section, the term, "major change," means a revision in the terms and conditions applicable to the business relationship between the ESCO and its customers, including provisions governing the process for termination of sales agreements.

b. Changes in the ESCO's business and customer service information displayed on the Department's Website.

c. No later than the 5th day of each month, each price, on a per unit basis, that the ESCO offered and would have charged for each of its services generally available to eligible residential customers as of the 1st day of that month, along with such other information about each price as is required to complete the standardized price reporting format developed by the Department.

d. Changes in personnel responsible for resolving consumer complaints received by the Department and referred to the ESCO.

4. An ESCO may be subject to the consequences listed in UBP Section 2.D.5.b for reasons, including, but not limited to:

a. false or misleading information in the application package;

b. failure to adhere to the policies and procedures described in its Sales Agreement;

c. failure to comply with required customer protections;

d. failure to comply with applicable NYISO requirements, reporting requirements, or Department oversight requirements;

e. failure to provide notice to the Department of any material changes in the information contained in the Eligibility Form or application package;

f. failure to comply with the UBP terms and conditions, including discontinuance requirements;

g. failure to comply with EDI transaction set standards and processing protocols and/or use properly functioning EDI systems;

h. repeated failures to comply with price reporting requirements, reporting misleading price information, or continuing to fail to comply with price reporting requirements after withdrawal of eligibility to enroll new customers;

i. failure to comply with the Commission's Environmental Disclosure Requirements or failure to comply with other Commission Orders, Rules or Regulations;

j. failure to reply to a complaint filed with the Department and referred to the ESCO within the timeframe established by the Department' Office of Consumer Services which is not less than five days;

k. any of the reasons stated in Subdivision F of this Section; or

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<#>The DPS shall provide written notice to an ESCO of any deficiency in the maintenance of its eligibility status, including failure of an ESCO to disclose any major change and failure of any ESCO to timely and accurately submit required price information. ¶
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<#>The ESCO shall have ten business days after receipt of written notice to provide a response or to file a request for an extension of time. ¶
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The ESCO shall have 10 days after receipt of a written determination from the DPS that price information was not timely or accurately reported to cure

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The DPS may, at any time, determine that an ESCO is no longer eligible to sell electricity and/or natural gas to retail customers

l. failure to comply with any of the Marketing Standards set forth in Section 10 of the UBP.

5. In determining the appropriate consequence for a failure or non-compliance in one or more of the categories set forth in UBP Section 2.D.4, the Commission or Department may take into account the nature, the circumstances, including the scope of harm to individual customers, and the gravity of the failure or non-compliance, as well as the ESCO's history of previous violations.

a. The Commission or Department shall:

1. Notify the ESCO in writing of its failure to comply and request that the ESCO take appropriate corrective action or provide remedies within the directed cure period, which will be based on a reasonable amount of time given the nature of the issue to be cured.

2. Upon failure of the ESCO to take corrective actions or provide remedies within the cure period, the Commission may impose the consequences listed in subparagraph b of this paragraph.

3. Consequences shall not be imposed until after the ESCO is provided notice and an opportunity to respond.

4. The notice of consequences imposed by the Commission will be published on the Department's website.

b. Consequences for non-compliance in one or more of the categories set forth in UBP Section 2.D.4 may include one or more of the following restrictions on an ESCO's opportunity to sell electricity to retail customers:

1. Suspension from a specific Commission approved retail program in either a specific service territory or all territories in New York;

2. Suspension of the ability to enroll new customers in either a specific service territory or all service territories in New York;

3. Imposition of a requirement to record all telephonic marketing presentations, which shall be made available to the Department for review;

4. Reimbursements to customers who did not receive savings promised in the ESCO's sales agreement/Customer Disclosure Statement or substantially demonstrated to have been included in the ESCO's marketing presentation or to customers who incurred costs as a result of the ESCO's failure to comply with the marketing standards set forth in Section 10 of the UBP;

5. Release of customers from sales agreements without imposition of early termination fees;

6. Revocation of an ESCO's eligibility to operate in New York; and,

7. Any other measures that the Commission may deem appropriate.

c. Consequences imposed pursuant to this paragraph shall continue to apply until the ESCO's failure to comply with the UBP has been cured or the Commission or Department has determined that no further cure is necessary.

6. An ESCO's eligibility to serve customers is valid unless: the ESCO abandons its eligibility status; or such status is revoked by the Commission through a final order pursuant to UBP Section 2.D.5.
7. The Department shall notify distribution utilities upon notice to the ESCO, and the NYISO if applicable, of any determination to revoke an ESCO's eligibility to sell natural gas and/or electricity. The distribution utility shall notify the ESCO's customers, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Subdivision F of this Section, of any Department revocation of an ESCO's eligibility.

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Deleted: authorizing discontinuance of the ESCO's participation in the distribution utility's retail access program

E. Distribution Utility Requirements

1. After receipt of the Department's compliance letter, the ESCO shall notify the distribution utility, and NYISO if applicable, of its eligibility status and intent to complete the process to commence operation in the distribution utility's service area, including execution of any operating agreement that is required.
2. Upon satisfaction of the distribution utility's and, if applicable the NYISO's requirements, and successful completion of EDI testing conducted by the distribution utility, the ESCO may enter into an operating agreement, if any is required, with the distribution utility to commence operations in its service territory.

F. Discontinuance of an ESCO's and Direct Customer's Participation in a Retail Access Program

1. In accordance with the procedures established in this Subdivision, a distribution utility may discontinue an ESCO's or Direct Customer's participation in its retail access program for the following reasons:
   a. Failure to act that is likely to cause, or has caused, a significant risk or condition that compromises the safety, system security, or operational reliability of the distribution utility 's system, and the ESCO or Direct Customer failed to eliminate immediately the risk or condition upon verified receipt of a non-EDI notice;
   b. Failure to provide natural gas (provided zero quantity) to the distribution utility's city gate;
   c. Failure to pay an invoice upon the due date;
   d. Failure to provide for delivery of at least 95% of the amount of natural gas directed by a distribution utility for delivery or at least 80% of the daily metered usage of the ESCO's customers or a Direct Customer's specified load or lower percentages included in a balancing program established in a distribution utility's tariff and/or any operating agreement;
   e. Failure to maintain a creditworthiness standard or provide required security;
   f. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of a distribution utility's tariff, operating agreement, or Gas Transportation Operating Procedures (GTOP) Manual to the extent that said documents are consistent with the provisions of the UBP;

g. Discontinuance of an ESCO's or Direct Customer's participation in a distribution utility's retail access program by the NYISO; or,

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h. Commission determination that an ESCO is not eligible to sell natural gas or electricity to retail customers.

2. To initiate the discontinuance process, a distribution utility shall send a non-EDI discontinuance notice by overnight mail and verified receipt, to the ESCO or Direct Customer and the Department. The notice shall contain the following information:

   a. The reason, cure period, if any, and effective date for the discontinuance;

   b. A statement that the distribution utility shall notify the ESCO's customers of the discontinuance if the ESCO fails to correct the deficiency described in the notice within the cure period, unless the Department directs the distribution utility to stop the discontinuance process;

   c. The distribution utility may suspend the ESCO's right to enroll customers until correction of the deficiency; and

   d. Correction of the deficiency within the cure period, or a Department directive, will end the discontinuance process.

3. The distribution utility shall send notices to the ESCO's customers informing them of the discontinuance and providing the following information:

   a. The discontinuance shall or did occur on one of the following dates selected by the distribution utility: the scheduled meter read date, the first day of the month, or another date, if readings are estimated, or on the date of a special meter read;

   b. Customers have the option to select another ESCO or return to full utility service or, if a program authorizing random assignment is in effect, to enroll with a designated ESCO through that program;

   c. Names and telephone numbers of ESCOs offering service to retail customers in the distribution utility's service territory;

   d. Any ESCO selected by a customer may file an enrollment request on the customer's behalf with the distribution utility, and the distribution utility shall charge no fee for changing the customer's provider to the new ESCO; and,

   e. During any interim between discontinuance of a customer's current ESCO and enrollment with a new ESCO, the distribution utility shall provide service under its applicable tariff, unless the distribution utility notified the customer that it is terminating its delivery services to the customer on or before the discontinuance date.

4. The distribution utility shall submit a sample copy of its discontinuance notice to the Department for review and approval prior to distribution to customers.

5. The distribution utility may request permission from the Department to expedite the discontinuance process, upon a showing that it is necessary for safe and

adequate service or in the public interest. Any expeditious discontinuance process shall include the ESCO or Direct Customer, and the distribution utility.

6. Upon any discontinuance, an ESCO or Direct Customer shall remain responsible for payment or reimbursement of any and all sums owed under the distribution utility tariffs, any tariffs on file with the FERC and service agreements relating thereto, or any agreements between the ESCO and the distribution utility.

7. The notice requirements and time limits for a distribution utility to discontinue an ESCO's or Direct Customer's participation in a distribution utility's retail access program (discontinue participation) are:

   a. Upon a distribution utility determination that an ESCO's or Direct Customer's action, or failure to act, is likely to cause, or has caused, a significant risk or condition that compromises the safety, system security, or operational reliability of the distribution utility's system and that the ESCO or Direct Customer failed to eliminate immediately the risk or condition upon verified receipt of a non-EDI notice, the distribution utility may discontinue participation as soon as practicable.

   b. Upon a distribution utility determination that an ESCO or Direct Customer responsible for the delivery of natural gas failed, except under force majeure conditions, to deliver natural gas (provided zero quantity) to the distribution utility's service territory for its load, the distribution utility may discontinue participation no sooner than two business days after receipt by the ESCO or Direct Customer of a discontinuance notice.

   c. Upon a distribution utility determination that an ESCO or Direct Customer failed to pay an invoice on the due date, as specified in the distribution utility's tariff, and the ESCO's or Direct Customer's required security or credit limit is insufficient to cover the unpaid amount, with interest, the distribution utility may discontinue participation no sooner than ten business days (cure period) after receipt by the ESCO or Direct Customer of a discontinuance notice. If the ESCO or Direct Customer pays the amount due on or before the expiration of the cure period, the distribution utility shall stop the process to discontinue participation.

   d. Upon a distribution utility determination that an ESCO or Direct Customer responsible for the nomination and delivery of natural gas failed, except in force majeure conditions, to nominate and/or deliver sufficient natural gas to the distribution utility's service territory to satisfy at least 95% of the amount of natural gas directed by a distribution utility for delivery or at least 80% of the daily metered usage of the ESCO's customers or the Direct Customer's specified load or lower percentages included in a balancing program established in a distribution utility's tariffs and/or any operating agreement on any three days during any month, the distribution utility may initiate a discontinuance process no sooner than five business days (cure period) after receipt by the ESCO or Direct Customer of a discontinuance notice. If the ESCO or Direct Customer provides adequate assurances and a description of any necessary process changes that ensure adequate nominations and

deliveries on or before the expiration of the cure period, the distribution utility shall stop the discontinuance process. Upon a determination to continue the discontinuance process because the assurances and proposed process changes are inadequate, the distribution utility shall notify the ESCO or Direct Customer that it will discontinue participation no later than 15 business days from the expiration of the cure period. The distribution utility shall notify the ESCO's customers that the distribution utility will discontinue participation on or before the expiration of 15 business days from the end of the cure period. If a failure to provide sufficient natural gas for any 3 days during a calendar month occurred during the past 12 months and the distribution utility sent a related discontinuance notice for each occurrence, it may discontinue participation no sooner than two business days after receipt by an ESCO or Direct Customer of a discontinuance notice.

e. Upon a distribution utility determination that an ESCO or Direct Customer failed to provide or maintain a creditworthiness standard or required security, the distribution utility may initiate a discontinuance process no sooner than five business days (cure period) after receipt by the ESCO or Direct Customer of a discontinuance notice. If the ESCO or Direct Customer satisfies the creditworthiness standard or provides the required security on or before the expiration of the cure period, the distribution utility shall stop the discontinuance process. Upon a determination to continue with the discontinuance process because the ESCO or Direct Customer failed to comply with the creditworthiness standard or provide adequate security, the distribution utility shall notify the ESCO or Direct Customer that it will discontinue participation no later than 15 business days from the expiration of the cure period. The distribution utility shall notify the ESCO's customers that it will discontinue participation on or before 15 days from the expiration of the cure period. If a failure to comply with the creditworthiness standard or provide adequate security occurred twice during the past 12 months and the distribution utility sent a related discontinuance notice for each failure, it may discontinue participation no sooner than two business days after receipt by an ESCO or Direct Customer of a discontinuance notice.

f. Upon a distribution utility determination that an ESCO or Direct Customer failed, except in force majeure conditions, to comply with any other applicable provision of the distribution utility's tariff, operating agreement, or GTOP manual, the distribution utility may initiate a discontinuance process no sooner than ten business days (cure period) after receipt by the ESCO or Direct Customer of a discontinuance notice. If the ESCO or Direct Customer provides adequate assurances and a description of any necessary process changes that ensure compliance on or before the expiration of the cure period, the distribution utility shall stop the discontinuance process. Upon a determination to continue the discontinuance process because the assurances and proposed process changes are inadequate, the distribution utility shall notify the ESCO or Direct Customer that it will discontinue participation no later than 15 business days from the expiration of the cure period. The distribution utility shall notify the ESCO's customers that it will discontinue

participation on or before the expiration of 15 business days after the end of the cure period.

SECTION 2, ATTACHMENT 1

SAMPLE CUSTOMER DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Price	
Fixed or Variable and, if variable, how the price is determined	
Length of the agreement and end date	
Process customer may use to rescind the agreement without penalty	
Amount of Early Termination Fee and method of calculation	
Amount of Late Payment Fee and method of calculation	
Provisions for renewal of the agreement	
Conditions under which savings to the customer are guaranteed	

SECTION 3: CREDITWORTHINESS

A. Applicability

This Section establishes creditworthiness standards that apply to ESCOs and Direct Customers. An ESCO's and Direct Customer's participation in a distribution utility's retail access program is contingent upon satisfaction of creditworthiness requirements and provision of any security.

B. ESCOs

1. An ESCO shall satisfy a distribution utility's creditworthiness requirements if:

   a. The ESCO, or a guarantor, maintains a minimum rating from one of the rating agencies and no rating below the minimum from one of the other two rating agencies. For the purposes of this Section, minimum rating shall mean "BBB" from Standard & Poor's, "Baa2" from Moody's Investor Service, or "BBB" from Fitch Ratings (minimum rating); or,

   b. The ESCO enters into a billing arrangement with the distribution utility, whereby the distribution utility bills customers on behalf of the ESCO and retains the funds it collects to offset any balancing and billing service charges provided that the distribution utility has a priority security interest with a first right of access to the funds. The ESCO shall submit an affidavit from a senior officer attesting to such utility interest and right. Except that an ESCO serving customers outside of such billing arrangement, must satisfy the security requirements of UBP Section 3.D with respect to those customers.

2. If an ESCO, or a guarantor, is not rated by Standard & Poor's, Moody's Investor Service or Fitch Ratings, it shall satisfy a distribution utility's creditworthiness requirements if the ESCO, or a guarantor:

   a. Maintains a minimum "1A2" rating from Dun & Bradstreet (Dun and Bradstreet minimum rating) and the ESCO maintains 24 months good payment history with the distribution utility; and,

   b. Provides any security required by the distribution utility, calculated in accordance with Subdivision D, after deduction of the following unsecured credit allowances:

Rating	Unsecured Credit Allowance
5A1 or 5A2	30% of an ESCO's tangible net worth, up to 5% of the distribution utility's average monthly revenues for the applicable service
4A1 or 4A2	30% of an ESCO's tangible net worth, up to 5% of the distribution utility's average monthly revenues for the applicable service
3A1 or 3A2	30% of an ESCO's tangible net worth, up to 5% of the distribution utility's average monthly revenues for the applicable service
2A1 or 2A2	50% of an ESCO's tangible net worth, up to $500,000
1A1 or 1A2	50% of an ESCO's tangible net worth, up to $375,000

An ESCO shall provide information, upon request of the distribution utility, to enable the distribution utility to verify the ESCO's equity. The distribution utility may request reasonable information to obtain the verification and shall safeguard it as confidential information and protect it from public disclosure. The distribution utility may deny the unsecured credit allowance to any ESCO that fails to provide the requested information.

3. A distribution utility may require an ESCO to provide and maintain security in the full amount of the distribution utility's credit risk, calculated in accordance with Subdivision D, if:
   a. The ESCO, or a guarantor, is not rated;
   b. The ESCO, or a guarantor, with a minimum rating is placed on credit watch with negative implications or is rated below the minimum rating;
   c. The ESCO, or a guarantor, is rated below the Dun & Bradstreet minimum rating or the ESCO fails to maintain 24 months good payment history with the distribution utility; or,
   d. An ESCO issuing consolidated bills fails to render timely bills to customers or to make timely payments to the distribution utility.
4. If a distribution utility's credit risk, associated with an ESCO's participation in its retail access program, exceeds 5% of the distribution utility's average monthly revenues for the applicable service, the distribution utility may require the ESCO, in addition to maintaining a minimum rating, to provide and maintain security in the amount of such excess credit risk.

C. Direct Customers

A Direct Customer shall satisfy a distribution utility's creditworthiness requirements if:

1. Its account is current and remained current for the past 12 months; and,
2. If its debt is rated, it maintains a minimum rating of its long-term unsecured debt securities from one of the rating agencies and no rating below the minimum rating from one of the other two rating agencies.

D. Calculation of Credit Risk and Security

The distribution utility shall calculate its credit risk and establish its security requirements as follows:

1. Delivery Service Risk
   a. For an ESCO that issues a consolidated bill under a multi-retailer model, a distribution utility may require security in an amount no greater than 45 days of peak usage of the ESCO's customers' projected energy requirements during the next 12 months, priced at the distribution utility's applicable delivery service rate and including relevant customer charges.
   b. For an ESCO that bills customers for delivery and commodity services under a single retailer model, a distribution utility may require security in an amount no greater than 60 days of peak usage of the ESCO's customers' projected energy requirements during the next 12 months, priced at the distribution utility's applicable delivery service rate and including relevant customer charges.
   c. Upon an ESCO request, the distribution utility shall establish separate security requirements for summer (April 1 - October 31) and winter (November 1 - March 31) and may retain winter security until the end of two months (April and May) after the end of the winter period.
2. Natural Gas Imbalance Risk
   a. The distribution utility may require an ESCO or Direct Customer to provide security in an amount no greater than the ESCO's customers' or a Direct Customer's projected maximum daily quantity times peak forecasted NYMEX price for the next 12 months and for upstream capacity to the city gate times 10 days.
   b. Upon the request of an ESCO or Direct Customer, the distribution utility shall establish separate security requirements for summer (April 1 - October 31) and winter (November 1 - March 31) and may retain winter security until the end of two months (April and May) after the end of the winter period.
3. Major Change in Risk
   a. A major change shall mean a change in credit risk of more than the greater of 10% or $200,000.

b. The ESCO or Direct Customer shall promptly notify the distribution utility and the Department of any major change in credit and or rating risk.

c. The distribution utility may require an ESCO or a Direct Customer, within five days, to provide additional amounts of security if a major change occurs to increase its credit risk, as follows:

1. If Standard & Poors, Moody's Investor Service, or Fitch Ratings downgrades an ESCO's, or its guarantor's, rating or a Direct Customer's debt below the minimum rating or Dun & Bradstreet downgrades an ESCO's, or its guarantor's, rating or a Direct Customer's debt; or,

2. An increase occurs in customer usage or in energy prices and such increase is sustained for at least 30 days.

d. In the event that a major change occurs to decrease a distribution utility's credit and/or rating risk, results in compliance by an ESCO or Direct Customer with creditworthiness requirements, and elimination of the basis for holding some or all of the security, the distribution utility shall return or release the excess amount of the ESCO's or Direct Customer's security with accumulated interest, if applicable. The distribution utility shall return such amount within five business days after receipt of an ESCO or Direct Customer notice informing the distribution utility of the occurrence of such major change.

E. Security Instruments

1. The following financial arrangements are acceptable methods of providing security:

a. Deposit or prepayment, which shall accumulate interest at the applicable rate per annum approved by the Public Service Commission for "Other Customer Capital";

b. Standby irrevocable letter of credit or surety bond issued by a bank, insurance company or other financial institution with at least an "A" bond rating;

c. Security interest in collateral; or,

d. Guarantee by another party or entity with a credit rating of at least "BBB" by S&P, "Baa2" by Moody's, or "BBB" by Fitch; or

e. Other means of providing or establishing adequate security.

2. A distribution utility may refuse to accept any of these methods for just cause provided that its policy is applied in a nondiscriminatory manner to any ESCO.

3. If the credit rating of a bank, insurance company, or other financial institution that issues a letter of credit or surety bond to an ESCO or Direct Customer falls below an "A" rating, the distribution utility shall allow a minimum of five business days for an ESCO or Direct Customer to obtain a substitute letter of credit or surety bond from an "A" rated bank, insurance company, or other financial institution.

F. Lockbox

If the distribution utility and ESCO arrange for a lockbox, security requirements are reduced by 50% provided that the arrangement includes the following:

1. Agreement on allocation of funds and the first right of the distribution utility, in the event of an ESCO's financial difficulty, to obtain funds in the lockbox deposited to the credit of the ESCO;
2. Establishment of rules for managing the lockbox;
3. Agreement on conditions for terminating the lockbox for non-compliance with the rules or for failure to receive customer payments on a timely basis; and,
4. Responsibility of an ESCO for any costs associated with implementing and administering the lockbox.

G. Calling on Security

1. If an ESCO or Direct Customer fails to pay the distribution utility, in accordance with UPB Section 7, Invoices, the distribution utility may draw from security provided that the distribution utility notifies the ESCO or Direct Customer five business days' in advance of the withdrawal and the ESCO or Direct Customer fails to make full payment before the expiration of the five business days.
2. If an ESCO receives a discontinuance notice or elects to discontinue service to customers and owes amounts to the distribution utility, the distribution utility may draw from the security provided by the ESCO without prior notice.
3. If an ESCO files a petition or an involuntary petition is filed against an ESCO under the laws pertaining to bankruptcy, the distribution utility may draw from security, to the extent permitted by applicable law.

H. Application by Distribution Utilities

1. Within ten business days after receipt of a complete ESCO application, a distribution utility shall complete its evaluation of initial creditworthiness, state the rationale for its determination, and provide the calculation supporting the credit limit and any resulting security requirement.
2. A distribution utility shall perform, at least annually, an evaluation, at no charge, of an ESCO's satisfaction of creditworthiness standards and security requirements.
3. A distribution utility shall perform evaluations of creditworthiness, security requirements, and security calculations in a non-discriminatory and reasonable manner.
4. Pending resolution of any dispute, the ESCO or Direct Customer shall provide requested security within the time required in this Section.
5. A distribution utility may reduce or eliminate any security requirement provided that it reduces or eliminates the requirement in a nondiscriminatory manner for any ESCO or Direct Customer. The distribution utility may request reasonable information to evaluate credit risk. If an ESCO or Direct Customer fails to

provide the requested information, a distribution utility may deny the ESCO or Direct Customer an opportunity to provide lower or no security.

SECTION 4: CUSTOMER INFORMATION

A. Applicability

This Section establishes practices for release of customer information by distribution utilities or MDSPs to ESCOs and Direct Customers and identifies the content of information sets. The distribution utility or MDSP and an ESCO shall use EDI standards, to the extent developed, for transmittal of customer information and may transmit data, in addition to the minimum information required, via EDI or by means of an alternative system.

B. Customer Authorization Process

The distribution utility or MDSP shall provide information about a specific customer requested by an ESCO authorized by the customer to receive the information.

1. An ESCO shall obtain customer authorization to request information, in accordance with the procedures in UBP Section 5, Changes in Service Providers, Attachments 1, 2, and 3. An ESCO shall inform its customers of the types of information to be obtained, to whom it will be given, how it will be used, and how long the authorizations will be valid. The authorization is valid for no longer than six months unless the sales agreement provides for a longer time.
2. A distribution utility and a MDSP shall assume that an ESCO obtained proper customer authorization if the ESCO is eligible to provide service and submits a valid information request.
3. An ESCO shall retain, for a minimum of two years or for the length of the sales agreement whichever is longer, verifiable proof of authorization for each customer. Verification records shall be provided by an ESCO, upon request of the Department, within five calendar days after a request is made. Locations for storage of the records shall be at the discretion of the ESCOs.
4. Upon request of a customer, a distribution utility and/or MDSP shall block access by ESCOs to information about the customer.
5. An ESCO and its agent shall comply with statutory and regulatory requirements pertaining to applicable state and federal do-not-call registries.

C. Customer Information Provided to ESCOs[1]

1. Release of Information. A distribution utility and a MDSP shall use the following practices for transferring customer information to an ESCO:
   a. A distribution utility shall provide the information in the Billing Determinant Information Set upon acceptance of an ESCO's enrollment request and the

[1] Upon enrollment of a customer, an ESCO shall receive usage data and any subsequent changes, corrections and adjustments to previously supplied data or estimated consumption for a period, at the same time that the distribution utility validates them for use. An ESCO issuing consolidated bills is entitled to receive billing information, in accordance with UBP Section 9, Billing and Payment Processing.

information in the Customer Contact Information Set and the Credit Information Set, upon ESCO request.

b. The distribution utility or MDSP shall respond within two business days to valid requests for information as established in EDI transaction standards and within five business days to requests for data and information for which an EDI transaction standard is not available. The distribution utility or MDSP shall provide the reason for rejection of any valid information request.

2. Customer Contact Information Set. The distribution utility or MDSP, to the extent it possesses the information, shall provide, upon an ESCO request, consumption history for an electric account and consumption history and/or[2] a gas profile for a gas account.

a. Consumption history[3] for an electric or gas account shall include:

1. Customer's service address;

2. Electric or gas account indicator;

3. Sales tax district used by the distribution utility;

4. Rate service class and subclass or rider by account and by meter, where applicable;

5. Electric load profile reference category or code, if not based on service class;

6. Usage type (e.g., kWh or therm), reporting period, and type of consumption (actual, estimated, or billed);

7. 12 months, or the life of the account, whichever is less, of customer data via EDI and, upon separate request, an additional 12 months, or the life of the account, whichever is less, of customer data via EDI or an alternative system at the discretion of the distribution utility or MDSP, and, where applicable, demand information;[4] if the customer has more than one meter associated with an account, the distribution utility or MDSP shall provide the applicable information, if available, for each meter; and

8. Electronic interval data in summary form (billing determinants aggregated in the rating periods under a distribution utility's tariffs) via EDI, and if requested in detail, via an acceptable alternative electronic format.

b. A gas profile for a gas account shall include:

1. Customer's service address;

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[2] If a distribution utility or MDSP offer a gas profile and consumption history, an ESCO may choose either option. A distribution utility or MDSP shall make available, upon request, class average load profiles for electric customers.

[3] A distribution utility or MDSP, in addition to EDI transmittal, may provide Web based access to customer history information.

[4] A distribution utility may provide data for a standard 24 months or life of the account, whichever is less, as part of its Customer Contract Information Set.

2. Gas account indicator;
3. Sales tax district used by the distribution utility for billing;
4. Rate service class and subclass or rider, by account and by meter, where applicable;
5. Date of gas profile; and,
6. Weather normalization forecast of the customer's gas consumption for the most recent 12 months or life of the account, whichever is less, and the factors used to develop the forecast.

3. Billing Determinant Information Set. Upon acceptance of an ESCO enrollment request, a distribution utility shall provide the following billing information for an electric or gas account, as applicable[5]:

a. Customer's service address, and billing address, if different;
b. Electric and/or gas account indicator;
c. Meter reading date or cycle and reporting period;
d. Billing date or cycle and billing period;
e. Meter number, if available;
f. Distribution utility rate class and subclass, by meter;
g. Description of usage measurement type and reporting period;
h. Customer's load profile group, for electric accounts only;
i. Life support equipment indicator;
j. Gas pool indicator, for gas accounts only;
k. Gas capacity/assignment obligation code;
l. Customer's location based marginal pricing zone, for electric accounts only; and,
m. Budget billing indicator.[6]

4. Credit Information Set. The distribution utility or MDSP shall provide credit information for the most recent 24 months or life of the account, whichever is less, upon receipt of an ESCO's electronic or written affirmation that the customer provided authorization for release of the information to the ESCO. Credit information shall include number of times a late payment charge was assessed and incidents of service disconnection.

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[5] As specified in the EDI standard for an enrollment request and response, the distribution utility may transmit additional data elements, based upon the request, the responding distribution utility, and the commodity type.

[6] This indicator is limited to 12 month levelized payment plans and does not include other payment plans.

D. Direct Customer Information

A Direct Customer shall receive usage data and any subsequent changes, corrections and adjustments to previously supplied data, and estimated consumption for a period, at the same time that the distribution utility validates them for use. The distribution utility or MDSP shall make available, upon request, to an electric Direct Customer, a class load profile for its service class.

E. Charges for Customer Information

No distribution utility or MDSP shall impose charges upon ESCOs or Direct Customers for provision of the information described in this Section. The distribution utility may impose an incremental cost based fee, authorized in tariffs for an ESCO's request for customer data for a period in excess of 24 months or for detailed interval data per account for any length of time.

F. Unauthorized Information Release

An ESCO, its employees, agents, and designees, are prohibited from selling, disclosing or providing any customer information obtained from a distribution utility or MDSP, in accordance with this Section, to others, including their affiliates, unless such sale, disclosure or provision is required to facilitate or maintain service to the customer or is specifically authorized by the customer or required by legal authority. If such authorization is requested from the customer, the ESCO shall, prior to authorization, describe to the customer the information it intends to release and the recipient of the information.

SECTION 5: CHANGES IN SERVICE PROVIDERS

A. Applicability

This Section establishes practices for receiving, processing, and fulfilling requests for changing a customer's electricity or natural gas provider and for obtaining a customer's authorization for the change. A change in a provider includes transfer from: (1) one ESCO to another; (2) an ESCO to a distribution utility; and (3) a distribution utility to an ESCO. This Section also establishes practices for: an ESCO's drop of a customer or a customer's drop of an ESCO, retention of an ESCO after a customer's relocation within a distribution utility's service area, assignment of a customer, and initiation or discontinuance of procurement of electricity or natural gas supplies by a Direct Customer. This Section does not establish practices for obtaining other energy-related services or changing billing options.

The process of changing a service provider is comprised of two steps. For enrollment with an ESCO, the first step is obtaining customer agreement to accept electric or natural gas service, or both, according to the terms and conditions of an offer. A sales agreement establishes the terms and conditions of the customer's business arrangement with the ESCO. The second step is enrollment and the distribution utility's modification of its records to list the customer's transfer to a provider on a specific date. This transaction is primarily between the ESCO and the distribution utility.

B. Customer Agreement Procedures

An ESCO, or its agent, may solicit and enter into a sales agreement with a customer subject to the following requirements.

1. The ESCO shall obtain a customer agreement to initiate service and enroll a customer and customer authorization to release information to the ESCO by means of one of the following methods.
   a. Telephone agreement and authorization, preceded or followed within three business days by provision of a sales agreement, in accordance with requirements in Attachment 1 – Telephonic Agreement and Authorization;
   b. Electronic agreement and authorization, attached to an electronic version of the sales agreement, in accordance with requirements in Attachment 2 – Electronic Agreement and Authorization; or
   c. Written agreement bearing a customer's signature on a sales agreement (original or fax copy of a signed document), in accordance with requirements in Attachment 3 – Written Agreement and Authorization.
2. The ESCO shall provide residential customers the right to cancel a sales agreement within three business days after its receipt (cancellation period).

C. Provision of List of ESCOs to Customers

Distribution utilities shall offer to provide a customer who requests initiation of delivery service with an up-to-date list of ESCOs and provide the list at any time, upon request of any customer.

D. Customer Enrollment Procedures

1. An ESCO shall transmit an enrollment request[7] to a distribution utility no later than 15 calendar days prior to the effective date of the enrollment. The enrollment request shall contain as a minimum, the information required for processing set forth in Attachment 4, Enrollment Request.
2. The distribution utility shall process enrollment requests in the order received.
3. The distribution utility shall accept only one valid enrollment request[8] for each commodity per customer during a switching cycle. If the distribution utility receives multiple enrollment requests for the same customer during a switching cycle, it shall accept the first valid enrollment request and reject subsequent requests.
4. An ESCO shall submit an enrollment request after it provides the sales agreement to the customer and, for residential customers, after the expiration of the cancellation period.[9]
5. After receipt of an enrollment request, the distribution utility shall, within one business day, acknowledge its receipt, and, within two business days, provide a response indicating rejection and the reason, or acceptance and the effective date for the change of provider.
6. Upon acceptance of an enrollment request, the distribution utility shall send a notice to any incumbent ESCO that the customer's service with that ESCO will be terminated on the effective date of the new enrollment. In the event that the distribution utility receives notice from the pending ESCO or the customer, no later than three business days before the effective date that a pending enrollment is cancelled, the distribution utility shall transmit a request to reinstate service to any incumbent ESCO, unless the ESCO previously terminated service to the customer or the customer requests a return to full utility service.
7. With the exception of a new installation use of an interim estimate of consumption or a special meter reading,[10] a change of providers is effective: for

[7] When a utility customer selects, or agrees to be randomly assigned to an ESCO through participation in an ESCO Referral Program, an enrollment request from an ESCO is not sent. The utility will enroll the participating customer, notify the ESCO of the customer selection or designation, and provide customer account details via a response transaction.

[8] Criteria for determining the validity of an EDI transaction are described in the EDI processing protocols adopted in Case 98-M-0667, Electronic Data Interchange.

[9] When the utility enrolls the customer with an ESCO, in conjunction with the customer's participation in an ESCO Referral Program, it is the responsibility of the ESCO to provide the customer with a sales agreement. A customer enrolled by the utility will continue to have the opportunity to cancel prior to the expiration of the initial incentive period established by the utility.

an electric customer, on the next regularly scheduled meter reading date; and, for a gas customer, on the next regularly scheduled meter reading date or the first day of the month, in accordance with provisions set forth in the distribution utility's tariff.[11] The distribution utility shall set the effective date, which shall be no sooner than 15 calendar days after receipt of an enrollment request. Service to new delivery customers is effective after the installation is complete and, if necessary, inspected.

8. An off-cycle change of an electric service provider is allowed no later than 15 calendar days before the date requested for the change if a new ESCO or a customer arranges for a special meter reading or agrees to accept an interim date for estimating consumption. The ESCO or customer is required to pay the cost for any special meter reading, in accordance with provisions set forth in the distribution utility's tariff. A change based upon an interim estimate of consumption or a special meter reading is effective on the date of the interim estimate or special meter reading. Off-cycle changes of gas service providers are allowed if the incumbent and new ESCO agree on an effective date no later than 15 calendar days following the request.

E. Customer Notification

1. The distribution utility shall send no later than one calendar day after acceptance of an enrollment request a verification letter to the customer notifying the customer of the acceptance. The notice shall inform the customer that if the enrollment is unauthorized or the customer decides to cancel it, the customer is required immediately to so notify the distribution utility and the pending ESCO.
2. Upon receipt of such cancellation, the distribution utility shall cancel the pending enrollment and reinstate the customer with the incumbent ESCO, if any, or the distribution utility, provided that no less than three business days remain before the planned effective date. If less than three business days remain, the change to the new provider shall occur and remain effective for one billing cycle. The customer shall return to full utility service at the end of the next switching cycle, unless the customer is enrolled by another ESCO at least 15 days before the beginning of the next switching cycle.
3. If a customer notifies the pending ESCO of such cancellation, the pending ESCO shall send a customer's drop request to the distribution utility at least three business days prior to the effective date for the pending enrollment.

F. Rejection of Enrollment Requests

The distribution utility may reject an enrollment request for any of the following reasons:

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[10] If meters are read bimonthly and bills are issued monthly using estimated usage, the effective date for the interim months is the date usage is estimated for billing purposes.

[11] If meters are not read within two business days of the scheduled meter reading day, the distribution utility or MDSP shall estimate usage as of the scheduled meter reading day. The effective date for a change of provider is that date, except where changes of natural gas suppliers are scheduled for the first of the month.

1. Inability to validate the transaction;
2. Missing or inaccurate data in the enrollment request;
3. ESCO's ineligibility to provide service in the specified territory;
4. No active or pending delivery service;
5. A pending valid prior enrollment request; or
6. The account is coded as ineligible for switching.

G. Customer Relocations Within a Service Territory

1. A customer requesting relocation of service within a distribution utility's service territory and continuation of its ESCO service, arranges for continuation at the new location of delivery service by contacting the distribution utility and of commodity service by contacting the ESCO.[12] Each provider contacted by the customer shall remind the customer of the need to contact the other provider to initiate the change in service or arrange for a conference call with the other provider and customer, and within two days, notify the other provider that a customer requested relocation of service.
2. The distribution utility's representative shall inform the customer, or the customer's agent, and the ESCO of the effective dates, contingent upon the customer's approval, for discontinuance of service at one location and commencement of service at the new location. The ESCO shall confirm to the distribution utility that it shall continue service to the customer at the new location.
3. In the event that the ESCO is unable, or does not wish to continue service to the customer at the new location, the distribution utility shall provide full utility service to the customer.

H. Customers Returning to Full Utility Service

1. A customer arranges for a return to full utility service by contacting either the ESCO or the distribution utility in accordance with this paragraph. An ESCO contacted by the customer shall, within two days, process the customer's request to return to full utility service. A utility contacted by a customer shall remind the customer to contact the ESCO about their returning to full utility service provided, however, that if the customer has already contacted the ESCO or wants to proceed without contacting the ESCO, the utility shall, within two days, process the customer's request to return to full utility service. If a change to full utility service results in restrictions on the customer's right to choose another supplier or application of a rate that is different than the one applicable to other full service customers, the distribution utility shall provide advance notice to the customer.

Deleted: and

Deleted: . Each provider

Deleted: notify the other provider that a customer requested a change of service and remind the customer of the need to contact the other provider to initiate the change in service providers, or arrange for a conference call with the other provider and customer. An ESCO, acting as a customer's agent, may contact the distribution utility to initiate a return to full utility service from ESCO service.

[12] In the Single Retailer Model, the customer contacts only its ESCO. The ESCO notifies the distribution utility of the customer's new service location and mailing address, if applicable. Direct customers contact only the distribution utility.

2. A Direct Customer that intends to change from procuring its own supplies to full utility service shall notify the distribution utility.
3. No ESCO shall transfer 5,000 or more customers during a billing cycle to full utility service, unless it provides no less than 60 calendar days notice to the distribution utility and Department. The transfers shall occur on the customers' regularly scheduled meter reading dates, unless the distribution utility and ESCO agree to a different schedule.
4. The following process sets forth the steps for an ESCO's return of a customer to full utility service.
   a. An ESCO may discontinue service to a customer and return the customer to full utility service provided that the ESCO notifies the customer and the distribution utility no later than 15 calendar days before the effective date of the drop. The ESCO's right to discontinue service to any customer is subject to any limitations contained in its sales agreement.
   b. An ESCO's notice to retail customers shall provide the following information:
      1. Effective date of the discontinuance, established by the distribution utility, unless the ESCO arranged for an off-cycle date;
      2. Statement that the customer has the option to select another ESCO, receive full utility service from the distribution utility, or, if available in the distribution utility's service area and the customer is eligible, accept random assignment by the distribution utility to an ESCO; and,
      3. Statement that customer shall receive full utility service until the customer selects a new ESCO and the change in providers is effective, unless the distribution utility notified the customer that it will terminate its delivery service on or before the discontinuance date.
   c. The ESCO shall provide a sample form of the notice it plans to send to its customers when it transfers 5,000 or more customers to the Department for review no later than five calendar days before mailing the notice to customers.

I. New Delivery Customers

1. A customer may initiate distribution utility delivery service and subsequently enter into a customer agreement with an ESCO for commodity supply, or arrange for both services at the same time.
2. A customer may initiate commodity supply through programs offered by some distribution utilities that involve assignments of customers to ESCOs that have agreed to accept additional customers.
3. A customer may authorize an ESCO to act as the customer's agent (ESCO agent) in establishing distribution utility service. The ESCO agent shall retain, and produce upon request, documentation that the customer authorized the ESCO to act as the customer's agent.

4. An ESCO acting as a customer's agent shall establish a new delivery account on behalf of the customer and enroll the customer with the distribution utility so that ESCO commodity service commences when distribution utility delivery service begins. The ESCO shall retain, and produce upon request, documentation that the customer authorized the ESCO to act as the customer's agent. An ESCO that is a customer's agent is authorized to submit the customer's application for new delivery service, in compliance with requirements for such applications stated in the law, rules and distribution utility tariffs. An ESCO shall provide the customer's name, service address and, if different, mailing address, telephone number, customer's requested service date for initiation of delivery service, and information about any special need customers, including any need for life support equipment. An ESCO shall refer a customer directly to a distribution utility for arrangement of distribution related matters, such as contribution-in-aid of construction and construction of facilities necessary to provide delivery service and settling of arrears and posting security.
5. Upon a customer's application for service, the distribution utility shall provide an ESCO with the effective date for initiation of delivery service and any other customer information provided to an ESCO in an acceptance of an enrollment request. The distribution utility may notify the customer of the acceptance.

J. Multiple Assignments of Sales Agreements

1. An ESCO may assign all or a portion of its sales agreements to other ESCOs provided that the assigned sales agreements clearly authorize such assignments or the ESCO provides notice to its customers prior to the assignments and an opportunity for each customer to choose another ESCO or return to full utility service. An ESCO shall provide a written notice no later than 30 calendar days prior to the assignment or transfer date to each customer and distribution utility. The notice to the distribution utility shall include a copy of the assignment document, with financial information redacted, executed by the officers of the involved ESCOs, and a copy of the notice sent to the customer, or, if a form notice, a copy of the form and a list of recipients.
2. The assignment documents shall specify the party responsible for payment or reimbursement of any and all sums owed under any distribution utility tariff or Federal Energy Regulatory Commission tariff and any service agreements relating thereto, and under any agreements between ESCOs and distribution utilities and between ESCOs and their customers.
3. An ESCO's notices to customers shall provide the following information:
   a. Effective date of the assignment;
   b. The name, mailing and e-mail addresses, and telephone number of the assigned ESCO; and,
   c. Any changes in the prices, terms and conditions of service, to the extent permitted by the sales agreement.

4. The ESCO shall provide sample forms and any major modifications of such notices to the Department for review no later than five calendar days before mailing them to customers.
5. The distribution utility shall, within two business days after receipt of an assignment request, acknowledge and initiate processing of the request and send written notice of the request to the ESCO's assigned customer.

K. Unauthorized Customer Transfers

1. A change of a customer to another energy provider without the customer's authorization, commonly known as slamming, is not permitted. The distribution utility shall report slamming allegations to the Department on at least a monthly basis.
2. An ESCO that engages in slamming shall refund to a customer the difference between charges imposed by the slamming ESCO that exceed the amount the customer would have paid its incumbent provider and pay any reasonable costs incurred by the distribution utility to change the customer's provider from the ESCO that engaged in slamming to another provider.
3. ESCOs shall retain for two years or for the length of the sales agreement whichever is longer, documentation of a customer's authorization to change providers. Such documentation shall comply with the requirements described in Attachments 1, 2 or 3.

L. Lists of ESCO Customers, Budget Billing, Charges and Fees

1. A distribution utility, upon an ESCO's request, shall provide at no charge, once each calendar quarter, a list of the ESCO's customers at the time of the request and, monthly, the number of accounts enrolled with an ESCO and the ESCO's sales (kWh and/or dekatherms). ESCOs may obtain such customer lists at other times for cost-based fees set forth in distribution utility tariffs.
2. A distribution utility shall adjust its bills rendered under a budget billing plan on the effective date for changing a provider and include the adjustments in the customer's next bill.
3. Upon enrollment of a distribution utility customer with an ESCO or return of an ESCO customer to full utility service, a distribution utility shall impose no restrictions on the number or frequency of changes of gas or electricity providers, except as provided in this paragraph. The distribution utility shall accept only one valid enrollment request for each commodity per customer during a switching cycle. If multiple requests are received for the same customer during a switching cycle, the distribution utility shall accept the first valid enrollment request and reject subsequent enrollment requests.
4. A distribution utility shall impose no charge for changing a customer's gas or electricity provider.
5. A distribution utility may establish a $20 fee in its tariffs for a special meter reading.

Attachment 1

Telephonic Agreement and Authorization Requirements

A. To enter into a telephonic agreement with a customer to initiate service and begin enrollment or to obtain customer authorization for release of information, an ESCO or its agent, shall audio record the telephone conversation with the potential customer. The conversation shall contain the following information, as applicable, to substantiate the customer's agreement or authorization:

1. A statement that the conversation is recorded and that oral acceptance of the ESCO's offer is an agreement to initiate service and begin enrollment;
2. A description in plain language of the prices, terms and conditions of the ESCO's offer, including a statement of the circumstances, if any, under which the ESCO may assess an early termination fee and the amount of any such assessment or how the assessment is calculated;
3. If savings are guaranteed, or guaranteed under only certain circumstances, the ESCO must provide a plain language description of the conditions that must be present in order for the savings to occur;
4. A statement from the ESCO that energy supply will be provided by the ESCO, and that energy delivery shall continue to be provided by the customer's utility; and that said utility will also be available to respond to leaks or other emergencies should they occur;
5. A statement from the customer, in response to a question from a verification agent, accepting such terms and conditions;
6. A description of the types of information that the ESCO needs to obtain from a distribution utility or MDSP and the purposes of its use, a request that the customer provide authorization for release of this information, and effective the effective duration of the authorization;
7. A statement from the customer providing such authorization;
8. A statement in plain language that a customer will receive a written copy of the sales agreement by mail, e-mail or fax; that a residential customer may rescind the agreement within three business days after its receipt; how such rescission can be accomplished, and that in the absence of such rescission, an enforceable agreement will be created; a statement that a customer may rescind the authorization for release of information at any time; provision of a local or toll-free telephone number or e-mail address to the customer for these purposes; upon cancellation of the agreement, the ESCO shall provide a cancellation number to the customer during the telephone call or in response to an e-mail message;
9. A statement from the customer verifying the date and time of the telephone call; and
10. A statement from the customer providing or verifying the customer's name, postal and any e-mail address (if the customer chooses to provide it), distribution

utility customer account number, and any additional information needed to verify the customer's identity.

B. The ESCO, or its agent, shall provide a copy of any Customer Disclosure Statement and sales agreement to the customer by mail, e-mail or fax within three business days after the telephone agreement and authorization occurs. The sales agreement shall set forth the customer's rights and responsibilities and describe the offer in detail, including the specific prices, terms, and conditions of ESCO service. Such agreement shall be substantially the same, in form and content, as the sample contract submitted to the Department pursuant to Section 2.B.1.b.

C. The ESCO, or its agent, shall conduct the telephone conversation in the same language used in marketing or sales materials presented to the customer, and communicate clearly and in plain language.

D. An ESCO shall retain telephonic agreement and/or authorization records for two years from the effective date of the agreement and/or authorization or for the length of the sales agreement whichever is longer. In the event of any dispute involving a telephonic agreement or authorization, the ESCO shall make available the audio recording of the customer's agreement and/or authorization within five business days after a request from the Department.

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Attachment 2

Electronic Agreement and Authorization Requirements

A. To enter into an electronic agreement with a customer to initiate service and begin enrollment or to obtain customer authorization for release of information, an ESCO, or its agent, shall electronically record communications with the potential customer. An ESCO shall provide the following electronic information, as applicable, to substantiate the customer's agreement and/or authorization:

1. A statement that electronic acceptance of a sales agreement is an agreement to initiate service and begin enrollment;
2. The Customer Disclosure Statement and the sales agreement containing the prices, terms and conditions applicable to the customer, which, if printed as a physical document, would be substantially the same, in form, and content, as the sample contract submitted to the Department pursuant to Section 2.B.1.b.
3. If savings are guaranteed, or guaranteed under only certain circumstances, the ESCO must provide a written statement which includes a plain language description of the conditions that must be present in order for the savings to be provided;
4. An identification number and date to allow the customer to verify the specific sales agreement to which the customer assents;
5. A statement from the ESCO that energy supply will be provided by the ESCO, and that energy delivery shall continue to be provided by the customer's utility; and that said utility will also be available to respond to leaks or other emergencies should they occur;
6. A requirement that the customer accept or not accept the sales agreement by clicking the appropriate box, displayed as part of the terms and conditions; after the customer clicks the appropriate box to accept the sales agreement, the system shall display a conspicuous notice that the ESCO accepts the customer;
7. Use of an electronic process that prompts a customer to print or save the sales agreement and provides an option for the customer to request a hard copy of the sales agreement; an ESCO shall send the hard copy by mail within three business days after a customer's request;
8. A description of the types of information that the ESCO needs to obtain from a distribution utility or MDSP and the purposes of its use, a request that the customer provide authorization for release of this information, and the effective duration of the authorization;
9. A requirement that the customer agree or not agree to provide such authorization by clicking the appropriate box, displayed as part of the terms and conditions;
10. A statement that a residential customer may rescind the agreement and authorization within three business days after electronic acceptance of the sales agreement; a statement that a customer may rescind the authorization for release

of information at any time; provision of a local or toll-free telephone number, and/or an e-mail address for these purposes; upon cancellation of the agreement, the ESCO shall provide a cancellation number;

11. Verification of the date and time of the electronic agreement and authorization; and

12. Provision by the customer of the customer's name, address, distribution utility customer account number, and any additional information to verify the customer's identify.

B. The ESCO shall, within three business days of any final agreement to initiate service to a customer, send an electronic confirmation notice to the customer at the customer's e-mail address.

C. The ESCO shall use an encryption standard that ensures the privacy of electronically transferred customer information, including information relating to enrollment, renewal, re-negotiation, and cancellation.

D. Upon request of a customer, the ESCO shall make available additional copies of the sales agreement throughout its duration. An ESCO shall provide a toll-free telephone number and e-mail address for a customer to request a copy of the sales agreement.

E. An ESCO shall retain documentation of a customer's agreement, in a retrievable format for two years from the effective date of the customer's acceptance and/or authorization or for the length of the sales agreement whichever is longer. In the event of any dispute involving an electronic agreement or authorization, the ESCO shall provide a copy of the customer's acceptance of the sales agreement and/or authorization for release of information or provide on-line access to the acceptance and/or authorization within five calendar days after a request from the Department.

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Attachment 3

Written Agreement and Authorization Requirements

A. An ESCO may enter into a written agreement (original or fax copy of a signed document) with a customer to initiate service and begin enrollment or to obtain customer authorization for release of information. A sales agreement shall contain, in addition to the Customer Disclosure Statement discussed in UBP Section 2.B.1.b.2, the following information, as applicable:

1. A statement that a signature on a sales agreement is an agreement to initiate service and begin enrollment;
2. A description of the specific prices, terms, and conditions of ESCO service applicable to the customer, which is substantially the same, in form and content, as the sample contract submitted to the Department pursuant to Section 2.B.1.b and, if savings are guaranteed, or guaranteed under only certain circumstances, the ESCO must provide a plain language description of the conditions that must be present in order for the savings to be provided;
3. A description of the types of information that the ESCO needs to obtain from a distribution utility or MDSP, the purposes of its use, and effective duration of the authorization;
4. A statement that acceptance of the agreement is an authorization for release of such information;
5. A customer signature and date; the sales agreement shall be physically separate from any check, prize or other document that confers any benefit on the customer as a result of the customer's selection of the ESCO;
6. A statement that a residential customer may rescind the agreement within three business days after signing the sales agreement; a statement that a customer may rescind the authorization for release of information at any time; provision of a local, toll-free telephone number, and/or e-mail address for these purposes; the customer may fax a copy of a signed sales agreement to the ESCO; upon cancellation of the agreement, the ESCO shall provide a cancellation number; and
7. The customer's name, mail and any e-mail address (if the customer chooses to provide it), distribution utility account number, and any additional information to verify the customer's identify.
8. A statement from the ESCO that energy supply will be provided by the ESCO, and that energy delivery shall continue to be provided by the customer's utility; and that said utility will also be available to respond to leaks or other emergencies should they occur;

B. ESCOs shall retain written agreements and/or authorizations for two years from the effective date of the agreement and/or authorization or for the length of the agreement whichever is longer. In the event of any dispute involving a sales agreement or

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authorization, the ESCO shall provide a copy of the sales agreement and/or authorization within five business days after a request from the Department.

Attachment 4

Enrollment and Drop Requests Information Requirements

A. An ESCO shall provide the following information for enrollment requests, and an ESCO or distribution utility shall provide the following information for drop requests:

1. Utility ID (DUNS# or tax ID);
2. ESCO ID (DUNS# or tax ID);
3. Commodity requested (electric or gas); and,
4. Customer's utility account number (including check digit, if applicable).

B. The following information is required for enrollment requests:

1. Customer's bill option;
2. For distribution utility rate ready consolidated billing:
   a. an ESCO's fixed charge, commodity price, sales and use tax rate or rate code;
   b. ESCO customer account number;
   c. budget billing status indicator; and,
   d. tax exemption percent and portion taxed as residential.
3. For Single Retailer Model: special needs indicator;
4. For gas service: gas capacity assignment/obligation indicator, and, if applicable, gas pool ID, gas supply service options, and human needs indicator;
5. For electric service: indicator for a partial requirements customer, if applicable.

C. The following information is required for drop requests:

1. Reason for the drop;
2. For distribution utility request, service end date;
3. For ESCO initiated request, effective date of customer move, if applicable; and
4. For ESCO initiated request in Single Retailer Model, customer's service and mailing address.

SECTION 6: CUSTOMER INQUIRIES

A. Applicability

This Section establishes requirements for responses by an ESCO or distribution utility to retail access customer inquiries. An ESCO or distribution utility shall respond to customer inquiries sent by means of electronic mail, telecommunication services, mail, or in meetings. The subjects raised in inquiries may result in the filing of complaints.

B. General

1. Distribution utilities and ESCOs shall provide consistent and fair treatment to customers.
2. Distribution utilities and ESCOs shall maintain processes and procedures to resolve customer inquiries without undue discrimination and in an efficient manner and provide an acknowledgement or response to a customer inquiry within 2 days and, if only an acknowledgement is provided, a response within 14 days.
3. Distribution utilities and ESCOs shall provide local or toll-free telephone access from the customer's service area to customer service representatives (CSRs) responsible for responding to customer inquiries and complaints.
4. CSRs shall obtain information from the customer to access and verify the account or premises information. Once verification is made, the CSR shall determine the nature of the inquiry, and, based on this determination, decide whether the distribution utility or the ESCO is responsible for assisting the customer.
5. The CSR shall follow normal procedures for responding to inquiries. If the inquiry is specific to another provider's service, the CSR shall take one of the following actions:
   a. Forward/transfer the inquiry to the responsible party;
   b. Direct the customer to contact the responsible party; or,
   c. Contact the responsible party to resolve the matter and provide a response to the customer.
6. Each distribution utility and ESCO shall maintain a customer service group to coordinate and communicate information regarding customer inquiries and designate a representative to provide information relating to customer inquiries to the Department.
7. ESCOs may provide a teletypewriter (TTY) system or access to TTY number, consistent with distribution utility tariffs.

C. Specific Requests for Information

1. A distribution utility or ESCO shall respond directly to customer inquiries for any information that is related to commodity supply and/or delivery service, to the extent it has the necessary information to respond.
2. The entity responsible for the accuracy of meter readings shall respond to customer inquiries related to usage.
3. The distribution utility and ESCO shall respond to customer inquiries about billing and payment processing, in accordance with UBP Section 9, Billing and Payment Processing.

D. Emergency Contacts

1. An emergency call means any communication from a customer concerning an emergency situation relating to the distribution system, including, but not limited to, reports of gas odor, natural disaster, downed wires, electrical contact, or fire.
2. The ESCO CSR shall transfer emergency telephone calls directly to the distribution utility or provide the distribution utility's emergency number for direct contact to the distribution utility. If no ESCO CSR is available, the ESCO shall provide for after-hours emergency contacts, including transfer of emergency calls directly to a distribution utility or an answering machine message that includes an emergency number for direct contact to the distribution utility.
3. Each ESCO shall provide periodic notices or bill messages to its customers directing them to contact the distribution utility in emergency situations and providing the emergency number.

SECTION 7: DISTRIBUTION UTILITY INVOICES

A. Applicability

This Section establishes procedures for invoices of charges for services provided by the distribution utility directly to an ESCO or Direct Customer. A distribution utility and ESCO or Direct Customer may agree to establish other arrangements and procedures for presentation and collection of invoices for services rendered.

B. Invoices

1. An ESCO or Direct Customer shall pay the full amount due, without deduction, set-off or counterclaim, within 20 calendar days after the date of electronic transmittal or postmarked date (due date). Subsequent to the due date, charges are overdue and subject to late payment charges at the rate of 1.5% per month. The overdue charges include the amount overdue, any other arrears, and unpaid late payment charges. The distribution utility may provide, upon request, supporting or back-up data in electronic form, if available on its computer system.
2. A distribution utility shall provide interest at the rate of 1.5% on an overpayment caused by the distribution utility's erroneous billing, provided that it may, without applying interest, credit all or a portion of the overpayment to the next bill issued within 30 days and/or refund all or a portion of the overpayment, upon request, within 30 days after its receipt. The distribution utility shall refund any credit balances, upon request.
3. An ESCO or Direct Customer shall make payments by means of an electronic funds transfer. A distribution utility shall use any partial payments first to pay any arrears and second to pay current charges.

C. Billing Inquiries and Disputes

1. An ESCO or Direct Customer shall make any claims relating to inaccuracies of invoices in writing no later than 90 calendar days after the date of electronic transmittal or postmarked date. ESCOs and/or Direct Customers are responsible for payment of disputed charges during any pending dispute.
2. A distribution utility shall designate an employee and provide a telephone number and e-mail address for receipt of inquiries from an ESCO or Direct Customer relating to invoices. The employee shall direct an ESCO or Direct Customer that presents an inquiry or complaint to the responsible and knowledgeable person able to explain charges on an invoice.
3. A distribution utility shall acknowledge in writing receipt of an inquiry within five calendar days after its receipt. A distribution utility shall investigate and respond in writing to the inquiry within 20 calendar days after its receipt.
4. A distribution utility shall refund any overpayments, including interest, within five calendar days after it makes a determination that an ESCO or Direct Customer made an overpayment. It may provide the refund by applying a credit to any overdue amounts or making direct payment of any remainder. The

distribution utility shall provide refunds by means of an electronic funds transfer. Interest is calculated at the rate of 1.5 % per month from the date of the overpayment to the refund.

5. No interest is required on overpayments voluntarily made by an ESCO or Direct Customer to an account, unless an overpayment is applied to security.

SECTION 8: DISPUTES INVOLVING DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES, ESCOs OR DIRECT CUSTOMERS

A. Applicability

This Section describes the dispute resolution processes available at the Department to resolve disputes relating to competitive energy markets involving utilities, ESCOs and/or Direct Customers, including disputes alleging anti-competitive practices. The processes are not available to resolve disputes between retail customers and ESCOs or distribution utilities. They are also not applicable to matters that, in the opinion of the Department Staff, should be submitted by formal petition to the Public Service Commission for its determination or are pending before a court, state or federal agency. The availability of the processes does not limit the rights of a distribution utility, ESCO or Direct Customer to submit any dispute to another body for resolution.

B. Dispute Resolution Processes

The parties shall in good faith use reasonable efforts to resolve any dispute before invoking any of these processes. Distribution utility tariffs and operating and service agreements between the parties shall identify the processes used to resolve disputes, and shall refer to the dispute resolution processes described in this Section as acceptable processes to resolve disputes.

1. Standard Process

The parties shall use a method to send documents described in this paragraph that will verify the date of receipt.

Any distribution utility, ESCO or Direct Customer may initiate a formal dispute resolution process by providing written notice to the opposing party and Department Staff. Such notice shall include a statement that the UBP dispute resolution process is initiated, a description of the dispute, and a proposed resolution with supporting rationale. Department Staff may participate in the process at this or any later point to facilitate the parties' discussions and to assist the parties in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution.

a. No later than ten calendar days following receipt of the dispute description, if no mutually acceptable resolution is reached, the opposing party shall provide a written response containing an alternative proposal for resolution with supporting rationale and send a copy to Department Staff.

b. No later than ten days after receipt of the response, if no mutually acceptable resolution is reached, any party or Department Staff may request that the parties schedule a meeting for further discussions. The parties shall meet no later than 15 calendar days following such request, upon advance notice to Department Staff, unless the parties and Department Staff agree upon another date. The Department may assign one or more Staff members to assist the parties in resolving the dispute.

c. If no mutually acceptable resolution is reached within 40 calendar days after receipt of the written description of the dispute, any party may request an initial decision from the Department. A party to the dispute may appeal the initial decision to the Public Service Commission.

d. If the parties reach a mutually acceptable resolution of the dispute, they shall provide to Department Staff a description of the general terms of the resolution.

2. Expedited Process

In the event that an emergency situation arises to justify immediate resolution of a dispute, any party may file a formal dispute resolution request with the Secretary to the Public Service Commission asking for expedited resolution. An emergency situation includes, but is not limited to, a threat to public safety or system reliability or a significant financial risk to the parties or the public. The filing party shall provide a copy of the request to other involved parties and the Department Staff designated to receive information related to dispute resolution under this Section. The request shall describe in detail the emergency situation requiring expedited resolution, state in detail the facts of the dispute, and, to the extent known, set forth the positions of the parties.

SECTION 9: BILLING AND PAYMENT PROCESSING

A. Applicability

This Section establishes requirements[13] for billing and payment processing options offered by a distribution utility and ESCO in a multi-retailer model. This Section does not establish requirements for billing and payment processing in the single retailer model. A distribution utility and ESCO shall comply with the requirements established in this Section, unless they agree upon modifications or other procedures for billing and payment processing in a Billing Services Agreement.

B. Billing and Payment Processing Options: General Requirements

1. A distribution utility shall offer to ESCOs without undue discrimination the billing and payment processing options available in its service territory.
2. A customer participating in a retail access program shall select from the billing and payment processing options offered by ESCOs.
3. A distribution utility shall allow its customers to select, through their ESCOs, one of the billing and payment options available in the distribution utility's service territory. An ESCO may offer to its customers billing and payment processing options available in the customer's service territory and shall maintain or provide for the capability of issuing a separate bill for its services under the dual billing option. An ESCO customer may direct the billing party to send its consolidated bills or dual bills to a third party for processing and payment.
4. A distribution utility or ESCO may perform the responsibilities of a billing party for a customer and the other provider (non-billing party) based upon the billing and payment processing options available to the customer and the customer's choice.
5. A distribution utility or MDSP shall make validated usage information available to the billing and non-billing parties at the time that the distribution utility or MDSP determines that the information is acceptable.[14]
6. Information on customer usage, billing, and credit is confidential. A distribution utility or MDSP may release such information, upon a customer's authorization, in accordance with the UBP Section 5, Changes in Service Providers.
7. A distribution utility and ESCO shall demonstrate the technical capability to exchange information electronically for their billing and payment processing options.
8. An ESCO shall provide 60 calendar days notice by mail, e-mail or fax to a distribution utility of any plan to offer a billing option that is not currently offered to its customers. The distribution utility may agree to a shorter notice period preceding initiation of the option. The 60 calendar-day notice shall not impose any obligation on any party to proceed without

[13] The requirements are applicable when EDI is available upon issuance by the Commission of data standards applicable to a bill model and operational upon successful completion of the testing required for a bill model.

[14] A distribution utility or MDSP shall provide electronic interval data in summary form (billing determinants aggregated in the rating periods under a distribution utility's tariffs) via EDI and, if requested, in detail via an acceptable alternative electronic format if retrieved from meters.

a successful test of data exchange capability and the fulfillment of other obligations described in this Section. If an ESCO later changes its system, it shall provide adequate advance notice and conduct any additional testing required.

9. A distribution utility and an ESCO are responsible for separately remitting their tax payments to the appropriate taxing authorities.

C. Consolidated Billing: General Requirements

1. A distribution utility and ESCO shall establish in a billing services agreement (BSA) detailed expectations for their responsibilities, including consequences for any failure to carry out such responsibilities.
2. A distribution utility may use the bill ready or rate ready method[15] for issuing consolidated bills. An ESCO that offers consolidated billing shall use a bill ready method.
3. A customer receiving delivery service from a distribution utility that is a combination natural gas and electric corporation (combination retail access customer) may receive a consolidated bill for both energy services if:
   a. The distribution utility issues the consolidated bill;
   b. One ESCO supplies the customer with both natural gas and electricity;
   c. An ESCO supplying only one of the commodities agrees to bill for charges for the service provided by the other ESCO; or,
   d. Separate distribution utility accounts are established for each service.
4. A combination retail access customer may receive separate consolidated bills for each commodity or a dual bill for one commodity and a consolidated bill for the other provided that the distribution utility's system is capable of providing separate accounts for each commodity. A distribution utility shall establish bill cycles and payment due dates. A distribution utility may charge a fee, as set forth in its tariff, to an ESCO to establish, upon the ESCO's request, a separate account for one of the commodities the distribution utility provides.

D. Consolidated Billing: Functions and Responsibilities

1. A billing party shall perform the following functions and responsibilities:
   a. If the bill ready method is used, receive bill charges and other billing information from the non-billing party;
   b. If the rate ready method is used, receive rates, rate codes and/or prices (fixed and/or variable) and other billing information from the non-billing party;
   c. Receive bill messages and bill inserts from the non-billing party;
   d. If the bill ready method is used, acknowledge receipt of the non-billing party's information and accept or reject it;

[15] A distribution utility electing the rate ready method for utility consolidated billing is not obligated to calculate or bill separately for other goods and services that an ESCO may provide.

e. If the rate ready method is used,[16] calculate billed charges, including sales and use taxes; the non-billing party is required to provide the customer's sales and use tax rate to the billing party;

f. Print or make available electronically consolidated bills that state the non-billing party's charges, including taxes, arrearages, late fees, and bill messages;

g. Insert in bill envelopes consolidated bills and inserts required by statute, regulation or Public Service Commission order;

h. Stamp, sort and mail consolidated bills or, if authorized, transmit bills electronically;

i. Cancel and rebill charges;

j. Notify the non-billing party of amounts billed, by account, within two business days after rendering bills to customers;

k. Receive and record customer payments;

l. Allocate and transmit the non-billing party's share of receipts, by account, to the non-billing party;

m. Respond to general inquiries and complaints about the bill and its format; refer customers to the non-billing party for inquiries and complaints related to the non-billing party's rates, charges, services, or calculations; and,

n. Maintain records of billing information, including amounts collected, remaining and transferred, and dates.

2. If the bill ready method is used, each party shall calculate and separately state sales and use taxes applicable to its charges; if the rate ready method is used, the billing party shall calculate and separately state the state sales and use taxes applicable to its charges and the non-billing party's charges.

3. A party that requires a customer's deposit shall administer it. If a non-billing party applies a customer deposit to an outstanding balance, it shall notify the billing party.

4. Upon receipt of payments, a non-billing party shall notify the billing party.

5. To initiate consolidated billing using the rate ready method, the non-billing party shall provide the billing party with the rates, rate codes, and/or prices (fixed and/or variable) and tax rates necessary to calculate the non-billing party's charges. The billing party shall specify in the BSA the number of prices for each service class per commodity accepted, deadline for transmission, effective date, and acceptable frequency of changes.[17]

6. The billing party may process special handling requests from customers provided that it obtains agreement from the non-billing party for requests that affect it;

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[16] A distribution utility is not required to calculate or bill for ESCO services that are not directly related to the commodity it delivers.

[17] If a billing party's billing system is capable of providing the service, a billing party shall, upon request, apply a different rate, rate code, and/or price and tax rate to usage during different portions of the billing cycle to service provided after the effective date of the change. The non-billing party shall request a change in the rate, rate code, and/or price no later than four business days prior to the effective date requested.

7. The billing party is not required to calculate or provide separate statements to customers regarding gross receipts taxes applicable to a non-billing party's charges. The non-billing party may calculate and provide information on the gross receipts taxes applicable to its charges in a bill message or, if the bill ready method is used, as a line item on the bill.
8. The non-billing party may offer special billing features, such as budget billing or average payment plans.

E. Consolidated Billing: Initiation, Changes or Discontinuance

1. Initiation

   a. An ESCO that proposes to issue consolidated bills shall establish and provide to a distribution utility written procedures for billing and payment processing that ensure billing accuracy and timeliness, proper distribution of a distribution utility's bill messages and inserts, and proper allocation and transfer of distribution utility funds.

   b. No distribution utility may impose a fee on an ESCO to process its application to offer consolidated billing.

2. Changes

   A request to change a customer's billing option shall be made on or before 15 calendar days prior to the scheduled meter reading date.

3. Suspension and Discontinuance

   a. A distribution utility may suspend or discontinue an ESCO's right to offer consolidated billing as a billing party or a non-billing party for failure to comply with a BSA. Suspension of the right to offer consolidated billing means that the ESCO is prohibited from offering consolidated billing to new customers.

   b. Upon a determination by a distribution utility to suspend or discontinue an ESCO's right to offer consolidated billing to customers, it shall provide notice on or before 15 calendar days prior to the proposed date for the suspension or discontinuance (cure period) to the ESCO and state the reason for its determination. Upon failure of the ESCO to correct the deficiency on or before the expiration of the cure period, the distribution utility may require a change to dual billing for the ESCO's customers.

   c. Upon discontinuance of consolidated billing rights, an ESCO may reapply to the distribution utility to offer consolidated billing. A distribution utility shall expedite consideration of such requests. Customers may begin receiving consolidated bills again after requirements are satisfied, including submission of transaction requests to establish consolidated billing for customers.

F. Consolidated Billing: Customer Requests

1. A customer may request an ESCO to change its billing option. The ESCO shall request the bill option change on or before 15 calendar days prior to the scheduled meter reading date. An EDI change request is used to request a change in a customer's bill option. After receipt of the change request, a distribution utility shall, within one business day, acknowledge receipt of the request and, within two days, provide a response indicating rejection and the reason or acceptance and the effective date.

2. No distribution utility may impose a charge on a customer or an ESCO for changing a billing option.
3. When more than one request to change a customer's billing option is transmitted for a billing cycle, a billing party shall accept the last timely request received.
4. A distribution utility may deny a request to initiate consolidated billing or discontinue consolidated billing for a customer with an amount past due for at least 38 calendar days, unless the past due amount is subject to a DPA and the customer is fulfilling DPA obligations.

G. Consolidated Billing: Content

1. A billing party may decide upon the format for its consolidated bill provided that it states a summary of total charges and separately states distribution utility and ESCO charges in sufficient detail to allow a customer to judge their accuracy. Such separate statements shall appear in clearly separated portions of the bill and identify their source, distribution utility or ESCO. An ESCO that provides consolidated billing shall state on its consolidated bill the unadjusted distribution utility charges for delivery services provided by a distribution utility, without change.
2. A consolidated bill shall contain the information listed in Attachment 1, General Information, preferably in a summary section. The billing party may place the information on the bill in any order or location.
3. A consolidated bill shall contain the information listed in Attachment 2, Distribution Utility Content, separately stated for each distribution utility.
4. A consolidated bill shall contain the information listed in Attachment 3, ESCO Content, separately stated for each ESCO.
5. If the rate ready method is used, the ESCO shall provide to the distribution utility information listed in Attachment 3, ESCO Section Content, to the extent necessary for the distribution utility to calculate and issue bills. To initiate utility consolidated billing using the rate ready method, an ESCO shall provide the information to the distribution utility on or before 15 calendar days prior to the scheduled meter reading date. An ESCO may request a price or rate change no later than four business days prior to its effective date.
6. If a billing party and non-billing party agree to show the non-billing party's logo on the bill, the non-billing party shall provide it in an acceptable electronic format at least thirty days before its initial use.
7. If the rate ready method is used, a non-billing party is not required to provide information after it is initially submitted, except when a change is made.
8. When an ESCO issues a consolidated bill and the distribution utility transmits bill ready data, the distribution utility shall transmit to the ESCO at the appropriate time the applicable information listed in Attachment 2, Distribution Utility Content, items d – q, and the customer's name and service address.
9. When an ESCO issues consolidated bills on behalf of other ESCOs and distribution utilities and the other ESCOs provide information, the non-billing ESCOs shall provide bill ready information listed in Attachment 3, ESCO Content to the billing ESCO.

10. No party shall engage in cramming.

11. A non-billing party may display its bill messages up to 480 characters in length on the bill provided that the billing party raises no reasonable objection to the message. There is no limit in message length for the billing party. If the bill ready method is used, the non-billing party shall transmit the text of the messages or agreed upon message codes in the same EDI transaction as the billed charges. If the rate ready method is used, a non-billing party shall submit a common bill message on or before 15 calendar days before the date used. Unless a final print date is provided, the billing party shall continue to print the message on bills until the non-billing party transmits a different message or requests its discontinuance. In emergencies requiring printing of messages on bills, the billing party shall accommodate the needs of the non-billing party, if practicable.

12. The billing party shall, in a timely manner, print on bills or insert into bill envelopes information that a statute, regulation, or Public Service Commission order requires a distribution utility or ESCO to send to its customers. The billing party may not assess charges for inclusion of required inserts that do not exceed one-half ounce. A distribution utility may charge for any excess weight in accordance with its tariff. The party responsible for providing the information shall submit it to the billing party. If the information is provided in a bill insert, the responsible party shall deliver the inserts in preprinted bulk form in a proper size on or before 15 calendar days before the date requested for initiation of distribution to customers to a location designated by the billing party.

13. Due dates and other general payment terms and conditions shall be identical for distribution utility and ESCO charges, unless different terms and conditions would have no impact on them. In the event of a conflict, the distribution utility's payment terms and conditions shall govern.

H. Consolidated Billing: Bill Issuance

1. No late charge may be applied to customers' bills for distribution utility charges, if payment is received by the billing party within the grace period.

2. If the bill ready method is used, the non-billing party shall transmit its charges and other information to the billing party on or before two business days after receipt of valid usage data for a customer account. If the rate ready method is used, the non-billing party shall transmit any revisions in rate and/or price data to the billing party on or before four business days prior to the prescribed date.

3. If the bill ready method is used, a billing party that receives a non-billing party's transaction within the prescribed time and rejects the transaction for cause shall, within one business day after receipt of the transaction, send the non-billing party an EDI reject transaction and state the reason for the rejection. The non-billing party may, if time permits, submit a corrected file containing billing charges for inclusion in the current billing statement.

4. If a non-billing party's transaction is sent to the billing party outside the prescribed time frame, the billing party may reject the transaction and shall notify the non-billing party on or before two business days after its receipt that the charges were not billed. The non-billing party may resubmit its charges the following billing period in accordance with prescribed time limits and without late charges. If the bill ready method is used, the non-billing party may submit a separate bill to the customer and notify the billing party of the action. The

parties may also agree that the billing party shall hold the non-billing party's charges for inclusion in the next bill.

5. If a non-billing party's transaction is accepted using the bill ready method, the billing party shall render a bill within two business days after receipt of the transaction. If a rate ready method is used, a billing party shall render a bill in accordance with the distribution utility's regular bill issuance schedule. A bill is rendered upon transfer to the custody of the U.S. Postal Service or other delivery service or, if authorized by a customer, sent electronically to a valid e-mail address or telefax number, displayed on a secure website, or presented directly to the customer or customer's representative.
6. If the billing party has not purchased a non-billing party's accounts receivable, is able to process the non-billing party's transaction, and is unable to render a bill within the prescribed time, the billing party shall notify the non-billing party immediately. A billing party shall afford customers the same grace period to pay the bill.
7. If the rate ready method is used, the billing party shall provide to the non-billing party within two business days after bill issuance, a statement of the accounts billed, date of issuance and amount of the non-billing party's charges shown on the bill (past due, current, and late payment charges and taxes).

I. Consolidated Billing: Cancellations and Rebills

1. If non-billing party errors occur and are not corrected before the bill is issued, a billing party is not required to cancel bills or issue new bills. The non-billing party shall provide any necessary explanations to the customer and billing party and make any necessary adjustments on the next bill.
2. If billing party errors cause the non-billing party charges to miss the billing window, the billing party shall cancel and reissue the bills within two business days after notification, unless the billing party and non-billing party arrange an alternative bill correction process.[18] A billing party shall afford customers the same grace period to pay bills.
3. If no party errs, the parties may agree to cancel and rebill.
4. To cancel a bill, a billing party shall:
   a. Cancel usage by billing period;
   b. Send consumption in the cancel transaction that matches consumption sent in the original transaction;
   c. Send cancelled usage at the same level of detail as the original usage;
   d. Using the rate ready method, if a bill is to be cancelled and reissued, recalculate charges and issue revised bills to customers within two business days after receipt of the revised usage data;
   e. Using the bill ready method, if a bill is to be cancelled and reissued, issue the revised bill to customers within two business days after receipt of the revised usage data.

[18] Such errors do not include usage-related adjustments necessary when an actual meter reading becomes available to replace an estimated reading required, for example, because a customer denies access to a meter.

5. To restate usage for a period, the distribution utility or MDSP shall first cancel usage for that period and then send the full set of restatement transactions.

J. Consolidated Billing: Payment Processing and Remittance

1. The parties shall set forth their responsibilities, performance parameters, financial arrangements and other details associated with payment processing and remittance in a BSA, subject to the requirements in this Section.

   a. In the Pay-as-You-Get-Paid Method, the billing party sends payments to the non-billing party, within two business days of receipt and posting of the funds and processes the payments in accordance with the required priority for application of payments established in this Section.

   b. A BSA shall establish procedures for processing payments made on any purchased accounts receivable.

2. Payment Processing

   a. The billing party shall notify the non-billing party that payment is received and send payments to the non-billing party, within two business days after receipt and posting, by use of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), Automated Clearing House (ACH), or similar means to banks or other entities as agreed upon by the parties. The notice shall include, in account detail, the payments received from customers, the date payments are posted, the date payments are transferred, and the amounts allocated to the non-billing party's charges.

   b. The billing party may impose late payment charges on unpaid amounts not in dispute for the non-billing party provided the terms of the late payment charges are stated in a tariff or a sales agreement and previously disclosed to the customers. If the bill ready method is used, each party shall calculate its late payment charges. If the rate ready method is used, the billing party shall calculate the non-billing party's late payment charges under terms agreed upon by the parties. If a customer's check is returned for any reason, the billing party may charge the customer's account for the return fee and any reasonable administrative fee.

   c. Upon failure of the billing party to pay the non-billing party its proper share of customer payments within two business days after their receipt and posting or at the time agreed upon when accounts receivable are purchased, the billing party shall pay interest on the unremitted amount. The billing party shall calculate the interest at the rate of 1.5 percent per month from the date the payment was due to be received by the non-billing party or its bank.[19] The payment of interest is in addition to, and not in lieu of, the rights and remedies otherwise available to the parties.

3. Collections

   The billing party is not responsible for collection of non-billing party funds, unless agreed to in a BSA.

[19] Upon request, the billing party shall provide the non-billing party with a verified copy of the posting log of payments received and transferred to the non-billing party during any calendar month specified by the non-billing party.

4. Application of payments

   a. The billing party[20] shall allocate customer payments to the following categories of charges on the bill or contained in a notice that are not in dispute in this order of priority of payment: (1) amounts owed to avoid termination, suspension or disconnection of commodity or delivery service; (2) amounts owed under a DPA, including installment payments and current charges; (3) arrears; and (4) current charges not associated with a DPA. The billing party shall pro-rate payments to the charges within each category in proportion to each party's charges in that category. After satisfaction of the charges in a category, assuming available funds, the remainder of the payment shall apply to the next highest category according to the priority of payments and in the same manner as described above until the payment is exhausted.

   b. The billing party may retain any payment amounts in excess of the amounts due as prepayments for future charges or return the excess amounts to customers. The billing party shall, in a timely manner, combine any excess payment amounts with the customer's payment on the next bill, and allocate and pro-rate the sum as set forth in Section 9.J.4.a.[21]

   c. When the billing or non-billing party enters into a multi-month payment agreement with a customer or waives any charges, that party shall notify the other party of such action.

   d. The billing party shall hold payments received without account numbers or enough information for the billing party to identify the accounts and attempt to obtain information to identify the payer. If sufficient information is not obtained to identify the account information prior to the next bill, the billing party shall present the unpaid amount and late charge, if applicable, on the bill. If the customer contacts the billing party to inquire about the late charge and the lack of payment credit, the billing party shall resolve the matter and reverse the late charges. The billing party shall notify the non-billing party of the matter and its resolution and then allocate payments as necessary to balance the account.

5. Multiple Account Payment Processing

   Processing of a single customer payment for multiple accounts requires proactive action on the part of the billing party and the non-billing party to apply payments correctly. The parties shall set forth arrangements for multiple account payment processing in a BSA.

6. Non-billing Party's Balance

   a. Except as provided in Section 9.J.6 d., when a final bill is issued, the billing party shall maintain a current and past due balance for each account of the non-billing party until payment of the last bill issued for service provided by the non-billing party or 23 days

[20] Distribution utilities supplying delivery service for both natural gas and electricity to customers receiving consolidated bills shall apply the receipts to the separate services in accordance with their regular procedures. Where a consolidated bill displays delivery charges for separate gas and electric distribution utilities, the customer's payments shall be first prorated between the utility accounts in accordance with the amount each is due compared with the total amount due both distribution utilities.

[21] Where the customer elects to make a charitable donation, such as funding a low income program, satisfaction of the donation shall be made prior to allocation and pro-ration of the customer's excess payment.

after issuance of such bill, whichever is sooner. After such time, the account shall be considered "inactive."

b. Except as provided in Section 9.J.6 d., when a customer changes to a new ESCO, the billing party shall continue to receive and apply a customer's payments for the active account of the prior ESCO. If the customer does not pay the outstanding balance owed to the prior ESCO on or before 23 days after the final bill containing the prior ESCO's charges is issued, the billing party shall notify the ESCO and report the balance due.

c. With regard to a new distribution utility/ESCO relationship following a change of ESCOs or a change in a distribution utility, the new billing party shall, upon request of the new non-billing party, bill for the balances that may exist at the time of the change. The new billing party may include the arrears on current bills or in a separate bill if its billing system is not capable of accepting prior charges. If a change of providers occurs, a distribution utility is not required to post any arrears of the prior ESCO on consolidated bills issued after the final billing of its charges, unless the arrears become the property of the new ESCO and it provides documentation of its property right to the distribution utility.

d. Upon ESCO termination of the commodity supply of a residential customer due to failure to pay charges, the billing party shall maintain a current and past due balance for the account of the terminating ESCO for one year from the date of termination by the ESCO. In the event that the terminating ESCO seeks suspension of delivery service within one year of the termination, or the residential customer has a DPA, the billing party shall maintain a current and past due balance for each account of the terminating ESCO until the arrears are paid in full.

7. Customer Disputes: Initiating a Bill Complaint

a. A customer or authorized representative may initiate a customer complaint regarding some or all of the charges on the customer's bill at any time.

b. When a complaint relates to the entire bill, to only the billing party's charges or services, or, using the rate ready method, to calculation of the billing or non-billing party's charges, the customer should contact the billing party. The billing party shall resolve the complaint and, if appropriate, place the customer's account in dispute. In the event the inquiry concerns only a non-billing party's bill, charges, services, or calculations, the billing party shall refer the customer to the non-billing party.

8. Customer Complaints: Notification

a. Upon a determination that a complaint affects the entire bill, the billing party shall notify the non-billing party of the subject and amount in dispute, if known.

b. The non-billing party shall inform the billing party of disputes related to non-billing party charges that would affect the billing process.

c. Once such complaints are resolved and the billed amounts are no longer in dispute, the other party shall be notified.

K. Consolidated Billing: Call Centers

A billing party shall provide call centers with toll-free or local telephone access available 24 hours a day and an answering machine or voice mail service during the hours when call center staff is not available. A billing party shall maintain adequate staff to respond to customers' inquiries or refer inquiries to the non-billing party, where appropriate, within two business days.

L. Dual Billing

1. The distribution utility and ESCO, acting as separate billing parties, shall render separate bills directly to the customer or the customer's representative. The customer or its representative shall pay the distribution utility and the ESCO separately.
2. The distribution utility's bill shall conform to the standards set by the Public Service Commission.
3. The distribution utility or MDSP shall transmit usage data to the ESCO at the time the information is available for rendering bills to customers, which may or may not coincide with meter reading cycle dates.
4. The ESCO may decide upon its bill format provided that it states its charges in sufficient detail to allow customers to judge the accuracy of their bills. At a minimum, an ESCO shall provide the following information:
   a. Customer's name and billing address and, if different, service address;
   b. Customer's account number or ID;
   c. Period or date associated with each product or service billed;
   d. Name of the entity rendering the bill;
   e. Address to which payments should be sent or the location where payments may be made;
   f. Local or toll free number for billing inquiries; if an ESCO enrolls and communicates with customers electronically, an e-mail address and telephone number with area code;
   g. Due date for payment and a statement that late payment charges shall apply to payments received after the due date; and
   h. Amount and date of payments received since the last bill.
5. Whenever a distribution utility or MDSP cancels consumption for an account, it shall provide a notice of cancellation and restated billing parameters for the account to an ESCO and a distribution utility, if applicable, and shall:
   a. Cancel usage by billing period;
   b. Send consumption in the cancel transaction that matches consumption sent in the original transaction;
   c. Send cancelled usage at the same level of detail as the original usage; and,
   d. To restate usage for a period, cancel usage for that period and send the full set of billing parameter restatements.

Attachment 1

General Information

A. Customer name

B. Service address

C. Billing address, if different than service address

D. Billing party account number, if any

E. Start of billing cycle period (prior meter reading date for metered customers)

F. Starting period meter reading (for metered customers)

G. End of billing cycle period (current meter reading date for metered customers)

H. Ending period meter reading (for metered customers)

I. Billing period metered usage, any multiplier necessary to convert usage to billing units and resulting billing units (for metered customers)

J. Billing period demand, if applicable

K. Indicators, if usage is estimated, actual or customer provided

L. Total current charges (total of billing and non-billing party charges, including late charges and taxes)

M. Total prior billed charges (total of billing and non-billing party prior bill charges, including prior late charges and taxes)

N. Total credits since last bill (total of billing and non-billing party credits);

O. Date through which the credits are applied

P. Total current bill (total of billing and non-billing party charges plus prior bill charges less credits)

Q. Billing party name (and billing party logo, if billing party wishes it shown)

R. Billing party address

S. Billing party toll-free or local telephone number, and for a billing party that enrolls and communicates electronically with customers, an e-mail address and telephone number with area code, in lieu of a toll-free or local telephone number

T. Distribution utility toll free-or local telephone number and emergency telephone number

U. Method and location for payments

V. Date of bill

W. Payment due date

X. Billing party messages of any length that apply in general to the bill and services provided by billing and non-billing parties, that are not reasonably objectionable to the parties

Attachment 2

Distribution Utility Content

A. Distribution utility name, and logo, if the parties agree

B. Distribution utility address, if the distribution utility is not the billing party

C. Distribution utility toll-free or local telephone number for inquiries about the distribution utility portion of the bill, if the distribution utility is not the billing party, and distribution utility emergency number

D. Distribution utility customer account number, if the distribution utility is not the billing party

E. Distribution utility rate classification identifier

F. Distribution utility rates per billing unit, if applicable

G. Distribution utility rates not based on billing units, if applicable, and unbundled, if applicable

H. Distribution utility charge adjustments and adders, separately stated

I. Taxes on distribution utility charges, if separately stated

J. Billing period total distribution utility charges

K. Prior billing period total distribution utility charges, including any prior late charges

L. Credits on prior distribution utility charges

M. Net prior distribution utility balance remaining, unless included in total prior billed charges stated in the General Information Section

N. Late charge for unpaid prior distribution utility balance, unless included in total prior billed charges stated in the General Information Section

O. Total amount due for distribution utility services

P. If a budget bill, applicable billing information and resulting budget bill amount due for distribution utility services

Q. The distribution utility's bill message, if any, up to 480 characters, if the distribution utility is not the billing party

Attachment 3

ESCO Content

A. ESCO name and logo, if parties agree

B. ESCO address, if the ESCO is not the billing party

C. ESCO toll-free or local telephone number for billing inquiries if the ESCO is not the billing party; ESCOs that enroll and communicate electronically with customer may provide an e-mail address and telephone number with area code in lieu of a toll-free or local telephone number; if a rate ready method is used, the billing party shall include a notice directing ESCO customers to call the billing party first to clarify bill calculations

D. ESCO account number, if the ESCO is not the billing party and has a unique account number

E. ESCO rate classification, if applicable

F. ESCO rate per billing unit, if applicable

G. ESCO rate not based on distribution utility unit, if applicable

H. ESCO charge adjustments and adders, if any, separately stated

I. Taxes on ESCO charges, if required to be separately stated

J. Billing period total ESCO charges

K. Prior billing period total ESCO charges, including any prior late charges, unless included in total prior billed charges stated in the General Information Section

L. Credits on prior ESCO charges

M. Net prior ESCO balance remaining

N. Total amount due for ESCO services

O. If a budget bill, applicable billing information and resulting budget bill amount due

P. The ESCO's bill message, if any, up to 480 characters, if the ESCO is the non-billing party.

SECTION 10: MARKETING STANDARDS

A. Applicability

This Section describes the standards that ESCOs and ESCO marketing representatives must follow when marketing to customers in New York.

B. Training of Marketing Representatives

ESCOs shall ensure that the training of their marketing representatives includes:

1. Knowledge of this Section and awareness of the other Sections of the New York Uniform Business Practices;
2. Knowledge of the ESCO's products and services;
3. Knowledge of ESCO rates, payment options and the customers' right to cancel, including the applicability of an early termination fee;
4. Knowledge of the applicable provisions of the Home Energy Fair Practices Act that pertains to residential customers; and,
5. The ability to provide the customer with a toll-free number from which the customer may obtain information about the ESCO's mechanisms for handling billing questions, disputes, and complaints.

C. Contact with Customers

1. In-Person Contact with Customers

ESCO marketing representatives who contact customers in person at a location other than the ESCO's place of business for the purpose of selling any product or service offered by the ESCO will, as soon as possible and prior to describing any products or services offered for sale by the ESCO:

a. Produce identification, to be visible at all times thereafter, which:

1. Prominently displays in reasonable size type face the full name of the marketing representative;
2. Displays a photograph of the marketing representative and depicts the legitimate trade name and logo of the ESCO they are representing;
3. Provides the ESCO telephone number for inquires, verification and complaints.

b. Shall identify the ESCO which they represent as an independent energy marketer, and shall identify him or herself as a representative of that specific ESCO. During the sales presentation, the marketing representative must also state that if customer purchases natural gas and/or electricity from the ESCO, that the customer's utility will continue to deliver their energy and will respond to any leaks or emergencies. This requirement may be fulfilled either (a) by an oral statement by the ESCO marketing representative, or (b) written material left by the ESCO marketing representative. Further, ESCOs that are affiliates of distribution utilities should not describe or disclose their relationship to the distribution utility unless such information is specifically requested by the customer.

c. Never represent that the ESCO marketing representative is an employee or representative or acting on behalf of a distribution utility. In addition, the ESCO marketing representative must clearly indicate that taking service from an ESCO will not affect the customer's distribution service and such service will continue to be provided by the customer's distribution utility;

d. An ESCO marketing representative shall leave the premises of a customer when requested to do so by the customer or the owner or occupant of the premises.

e. An ESCO marketing representative will provide the customer with written information regarding ESCO products and services immediately upon request which shall include the ESCOs name and telephone number for inquires, verification and complaints.

f. Where it is apparent that the customer's English language skills are insufficient to allow the customer to understand and respond to the information conveyed by the ESCO representative or where the customer or another third party informs the ESCO marketing representative of this circumstance, the ESCO marketing representative shall either find a representative in the area who is fluent in the customer's language to continue the marketing activity in his/her stead or terminate the in-person contact with the customer. The use of translation services and language identification cards is permitted.

2. Telephone Contact with Customers

ESCO marketing representatives who contact customers by telephone for the purpose of selling any product or service offered by the ESCO shall:

a. Provide the ESCO marketing representative's first name and, on request, the identification number;

b. State the name of the ESCO on whose behalf the call is being made;

c. Never represent that the ESCO marketing representative is an employee or representative or acting on behalf of a distribution utility. In addition, the ESCO marketing representative must clearly indicate that taking service from an ESCO will not affect the customer's distribution service and such service will continue to be provided by the customer's distribution utility;

d. State the purpose of the telephone call;

e. Where it is apparent that the customer's English language skills are insufficient to allow the customer to understand and respond to the information conveyed by the ESCO representative or where the customer or another third party informs the ESCO marketing representative of this circumstance, the ESCO marketing representative will immediately transfer the customer to a representative who speaks the customer's language, if such a representative is available, or terminate the call; and,

f. Remove Customers' names from the marketing database upon Customers' request.

3. Conduct

ESCOs shall:

a. Not engage in misleading or deceptive conduct as defined by State or federal law, or by Commission rule, regulation or Order;

b. Not make false or misleading representations including misrepresenting rates or savings offered by the ESCO;

c. Provide the customer with written information, upon request, or with a website address at which information can be obtained, if the customer requests such information via the internet;

d. Use reasonable efforts to provide accurate and timely information about services and products. Such information will include information about rates, contract terms, early termination fees and right of cancellation consistent with Section 2 of the UBP and any other relevant Section;

e. Ensure that any product or service offerings that are made by an ESCO contain information written in plain language that is designed to be understood by the customer. This shall include providing any written information to the customer in a language in which the ESCO representative has substantive discussions with the customer or in which a contract is negotiated;

f. Investigate customer inquiries and complaints concerning marketing practices within five days of receipt of the complaint; and,

g. Cooperate with the Department and PSC regarding marketing practices proscribed by the UBP and with local law enforcement in investigations concerning deceptive marketing practices.

4. Dispute Resolution

ESCOs will maintain an internal process for handling customer complaints and resolving disputes arising from marketing activities and shall respond promptly to complaints forwarded by the Department.