

# CHARGE Conference Call

March 4, 2010 – 9:30 a.m.

Call-in number: 1-866-618-6746 and Access Code: 6060145

## Recap of Discussion

### 1. Budget Billing

- Clarifications were provided about when an EDI transaction exists for an EDC to provide budget billing status (whether the customer is on budget billing) to the EGS, as follows:
  - Prior to enrollment, no EDI transaction exists
  - During enrollment, EDC may send budget bill status to EGS in 814 Enrollment Response transaction under the REF\*NR segment
  - After enrollment, no provision in the EDI change transaction supports a change in budget billing status
- EGSs have asked for budget billing status to be added to the customer eligibility lists; not sure of status of that request
- Customers are complaining to EGSs about the amount of their budget bills compared to their budget bill amounts they were paying PPL; some are switching back to PPL; volumes of calls in some cases is 100/day
  - Since PPL adjusts budget bills 3 or 4 times per year, many budget bill amounts have not yet been recalculated to reflect default service rate increase; as a result, customers are continuing to see an artificially lower rate
  - Also EGSs may be using a different method to calculate budget bill amounts
  - If EGS sends PPL spreadsheet with list of customers, PPL will provide budget bill amounts and when they will be changed
  - It was suggested that a sentence be added to the confirmation letter noting that: “If you have selected budget billing for your supplier’s charges, please note that the budget bill amount you pay to PPL may not have yet been adjusted to reflect the higher default service rates.”
    - Group will discuss this suggestion on the 3/18 call; as an alternative, perhaps we could have further discussion of the possibility of a bill message

## 2. Confirmation Letters

- Discussion continued about standardizing the EDC 10-day confirmation letter to make clear that it is intended to avoid an unauthorized switch and not to provide customer with a penalty-free right to rescind or cancel their EGS contract
- The agreed-upon language is: **“Your contract with A/S name may have conditions that apply if you cancel your enrollment. If you have questions about your enrollment or terms of service with A/S name, please contact them at phone number 1.”**
  - The sample confirmation letter containing this language is attached
- PPL is removing reference on website to rescission during the confirmation period today, 3/4

## 3. EGS Marketing Activities

- Staff will circulate a straw proposal to the group for best practices governing EGS direct marketing activities; target date is 3/15
- In-person meeting with telephonic monitoring will be on 4/8 at 10 a.m., Executive Chambers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Keystone Building, Harrisburg
- Group discussed applicability and scope; staff has proposed that best practices apply to:
  - Residential and small business customers
  - All types of direct marketing, including door-to-door, telemarketing and direct mailing
  - Electric industry and later work on natural gas industry
- Based on discussion, staff is still considering applicability to natural gas industry and the best vehicle for expediting issuance of best practices, such as issuing as interim guidelines or limiting scope and applicability
- PA Office of Attorney General has issued an opinion indicating that EGSs are covered by the telemarketing law; copy of opinion is attached to 2/18 Recap; OCMO strongly encouraged EGSs to review it and review telemarketing operations to ensure compliance

## 4. 90 Days in Arrears

- Issue was discussed on 2/18 call about customers who are 90 days in arrears previously blocked from switching to an EGS; PPL has now eliminated this block
  - Re-enrollments have been coming in to PPL
  - Using Excel spreadsheets from EGSs of customers who they are re-enrolling, PPL has done data repair to switch customers by the next meter read date

- CHARGE has referred the longer-term issue to the RMWG of ensuring that PECO, First Energy and Allegheny correct this practice before rate caps expire at the end of 2010

#### **5. Drop Notices - Customer Accounts Number Changes**

- Issue was raised during the call about Drop Notices being generated by EDC when customer account number changes, such as due to name change
- Discussion centered on need to re-enroll customer, customer's loss of EGS rate for one or two billing cycles, EGS's loss of customer/load-at least temporarily, lack of customer awareness re: effect of change; magnitude of problem is fairly extensive-e.g. name change of large bank
- Illinois and New York have faced similar problem; no final resolution yet; may be an interim measure to use EDI 568 Information or 814 Advance Notice transactions
- Staff took matter under advisement and will place on 3/18 agenda for further discussion

#### **6. Handling of Negative 810s under PPL's POR Program**

- Concern has been raised about the handling of negative 810s on a case-by-case-basis because it is resource intensive since many customers might cancel budget billing with a credit or due to a negative cancel/rebill
- PPL cannot handle negative 810s except on case-by-case basis
- PPL s still studying internally; follow-up meeting is planned

#### **7. Borderline Customers**

- About 200 customers have service addresses in PPL's area but are connected to a customer of another utility; no automated meter reading is available so PPL reads them only twice per year, estimates the bills and settles with the bordering utility; 55 have signed up with EGSs
- PPL has asked whether EGSs are okay with estimated meter reads and willing to settle with the bordering utility for generation in the same way they do; no concerns have been raised but a follow-up meeting will be held with affected EGSs during week of 3/8

#### **8. Default Service Bid Information**

- Group discussed proposal for development of a consistent process for releasing default service bid information and projected retail prices, which would allow EGSs to effectively plan for 2011 market entry; recommendations are as follows:
  - Each EDC should publicly post aggregate results by customer class shortly after completion of default service solicitation

- Each EDC should publicly post projected retail prices by customer class, along with transmission costs and other costs included in the Price to Compare
- The posted information should clearly specify how the following cost components are treated and reflected in bid results and retail prices: GRT, line losses, NITS, AEPS costs, and other any other costs included in the PTC
- Staff will discuss issue offline with all EDCs, noting that the PPL model provides much of the information being requested by EGSs, to work toward establishing uniformity and transparency in the timely release of both default service bid results (aggregate, by class) and projected retail prices, along with explanation of what is or is not included

#### **9. Acceptance of EDI 810**

- Question raised about how EGS knows when an EDI 810 is accepted by EDC
- EGS would know by receipt of EDI 997-Functional Acknowledgement

#### **10. Notice of Service Terminations**

- EGSs have expressed interest in receiving advance notice of a service termination so the EGS has an opportunity to potentially mitigate market losses and pursue contractual penalties (for larger non-residential customers)
- Group sought EDC feedback on this suggestion, which ideally would then be achieved through a standard EDI transaction
- No concerns were raised and CHARGE referred matter to EDEWG for development of EDI transaction, following its normal protocols for establishing priorities

#### **11. Electric Shopping Website**

- PUC's electric shopping website – PA Power Switch – went live on 2/23
  - List of EGSs
  - OCA Shopping Guide
  - Energy conservation tips
  - FAQs
  - Tell a neighbor
- Subsequent phases will feature zip code search, interactive worksheet, email alerts of price changes, Spanish translation, and extranet availability for EGSs to update prices and information

- Secretarial Letter about including link to [www.PAPowerSwitch.com](http://www.PAPowerSwitch.com) and updating prices and information will be issued soon

## **12. CHARGE Contact List**

- Contact list is on website at the following link:

[http://www.puc.state.pa.us/electric/electric\\_CompetitiveMarketOversight.aspx](http://www.puc.state.pa.us/electric/electric_CompetitiveMarketOversight.aspx)

- Please send contact information or updates to [ra-ocmo@state.pa.us](mailto:ra-ocmo@state.pa.us)

## **13. Meeting Schedule for Next Few Months**

- March 18, 9:30 a.m.
- April 8 (In-person meeting), 10:00 a.m., Exec. Chambers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Keystone, Harrisburg
- April 29, 9:30 a.m.
- May 13, 9:30 a.m.
- May 27, 9:30 a.m.
- June 10, 9:30 a.m.
- June 24, 9:30 a.m.

**Electric Utilities Choice Registration Confirmation Letter--One Bill**

PPL Electric Utilities  
827 Hausman Road Allentown, PA 18104-9392  
Tel. 800.342.5775 (800 DIAL PPL) Fax 484.634.3484  
<http://www3.pplweb.com/choice/>

**Ratepayer Name** **Month/dd/yyyy**  
**Ratepayer name, line 2 (if required)**  
**Mailing Address Line 1**  
**Mailing Address Line 2**

Bill Account No: **99999-99999** For : **Service Address Line 1**  
**Service Address Line 2**

Effective Date: **mm-dd-yyyy**

Dear Customer Choice Participant:

We received notice that the following company will be your electric supplier for the Pennsylvania Electric Choice Program:

**A/S name**  
**Phone number1**

Our records also indicate that you will receive one (1) bill from PPL Electric Utilities, which will reflect PPL's charges and those of your electricity supplier.

We are confirming your supplier to make sure that this is the supplier you selected before billing begins. If this information is correct, you do not need to call us. If you did not select this company or billing option, please call 1-888-668-4775 within ten (10) days from the date of this letter and we will work with you to make any necessary changes.

**Your contract with [A/S name] may have conditions that apply if you cancel your enrollment. If you have questions about your enrollment or terms of service with [A/S name], please contact them at [phone number 1]."**

Your new supplier will begin providing you with energy when your meter is read on or about the date shown above as the "Effective Date." You will receive your first bill showing this supplier's charges the following month.

If you have any questions about Electric Choice, please contact us at 1-888-668-4775 between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Sincerely,

*PPL Electric Utilities' Customer Contact Center*