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May 16, 2016

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Rosemary Chiavetta, Secretary
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17101-3265

Re: Natural Gas Distribution Company Customer Account Number Access
Mechanism for Natural Gas Suppliers, Docket No. M-2015-2468991

Dear Secretary Chiavetta:

This letter is submitted on behalf of the Retail Energy Supply Association (“RESA”) in response to the Reply Comments filed on April 14, 2016 in the above-captioned matter, responding to RESA’s Comments filed on February 8, 2016. Although the Commission has not solicited this response, we are proffering it for the purpose of generally addressing issues raised by those Reply Comments in an effort to clarify RESA’s objectives and facilitate a prompt and effective resolution of the issues.

At the outset, RESA expresses its appreciation to the Commission for taking various initiatives designed to improve the functioning of the competitive retail market for natural gas supply. The account number access mechanism, designed correctly, has great potential to ease the enrollment process for consumers. RESA also welcomes the additional information and clarifications provided by the natural gas distribution companies (“NGDCs”) in their Reply Comments, particularly with respect to specific features included in, or previously absent from, their proposed Compliance Plans.

The Reply Comments of several NGDCs, and the Energy Association of Pennsylvania, suggest that RESA’s Comments to the Compliance Plans are in the nature of an untimely petition for reconsideration to the Commission’s Final Order entered on July 8, 2015. As the Commission is aware, Section 703(g) permits the Commission to amend or rescind a final order *at any time*, after notice and opportunity to be heard. 66 Pa. C.S. § 703(g). The 15-day period for petitions for reconsideration in the Commission’s regulations applies to formal contested proceedings and is designed to ensure that the Commission has an opportunity to act on such

petitions before appeals are filed with the Commonwealth Court. 52 Pa. Code § 5.571; Pa.R.A.P. 1701.

When RESA reviewed the NGDCs' Compliance Plans that were filed on January 8, 2016, it was struck by the contrasting and inconsistent approaches taken by the NGDCs, which would render use of the account number access mechanism across the Commonwealth very challenging and potentially ineffective. Even the cost allocation methods, which would benefit from consistency, vary greatly. Given RESA's review of the Compliance Plans, and the experience of some RESA members using the mechanism in the electric industry over the past year, the benefits became clear of revisiting the inputs and outputs with the objective of implementing a workable mechanism that produces robust and reliable results.

Before the NGDCs expend funds to implement the mechanism, RESA believes that now is the time to ensure that they are developed to work in a manner that fulfills customers' expectations regarding the enrollment process. While RESA does not believe that a significant delay is required to modify the Compliance Plans, a short delay that produces a workable and useful mechanism is better than having time and money spent to develop a tool that fails to achieve the intended goals. In fact, RESA sought by its earlier Comments to have an interactive discussion with the NGDCs and other stakeholders, facilitated by the Office of Competitive Market Oversight ("OCMO") and aimed at promptly and effectively resolving these issues. The Reply Comments are silent as to this suggestion.

The Commission has long recognized the importance of access to customer information by competitive suppliers. *See Interim Guidelines for Natural Gas Company Eligible Customer Lists*, Docket No. M-2012-2324075 (Order entered September 23, 2013). Through their resistance to consider enhancements to the proposed mechanisms, the NGDCs appear to be seeking to preclude NGS access to the essential account number, which consumers rarely know or carry with them.

Indeed, it is puzzling to RESA why the NGDCs have expressed views on many of the topics covered by RESA's Comments. For example, the NGDCs should be indifferent to whether the Commission ultimately allows use of the mechanism in situations involving other types of sales other than in public venues or continues to require natural gas suppliers ("NGSs") to first consult the eligible customer list. Even with the specific features of the mechanism, it is unclear why NGDCs would oppose certain aspects of the process provided they are compatible with their systems and they will be afforded the opportunity for cost recovery.

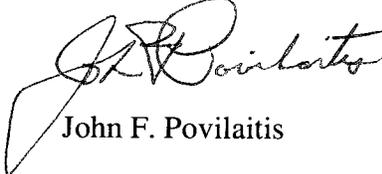
As to the concerns raised by various Reply Comments about the importance of consumer privacy and consumer protections, RESA shares those views. RESA fully recognizes the role of the Commission to arrive at a proper balance between NGS access to consumer information and protecting the privacy of that information. Consistent with the Commission's findings in other proceedings, however, the NGDCs should not be placed in a gatekeeper role of preventing NGSs the access permitted by the Commission.

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RESA would appreciate the Commission's consideration of these additional points in its review of the NGDCs' Compliance Plans, and just as importantly, asks the Commission to consider a short implementation delay that produces a workable and useful mechanism to achieve the intended goals. As always, RESA continues to welcome a dialogue with OCMO and interested stakeholders about the account number access mechanism.

We are providing courtesy copies of this letter via electronic mail to the parties who filed Reply Comments, along with the Office of Competitive Market Oversight, as noted below. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,



John F. Povilaitis

JFP/bb

cc: Office of Competitive Market Development (via email)
Natural Gas Distribution Companies (via email)
Energy Association of Pennsylvania (via email)
Office of Consumer Advocate (via email)