

Best Practices from States: Customer education campaigns

Hear from state commission staff and receive a summary on the tools and resources states have developed along with best practices and lessons learned in consumer education and protection endeavors.



Nils Hagen-Frederiksen

Press Secretary
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission



consumer outreach & education campaigns

the PAPUC approach

www.puc.pa.gov
www.PAPowerSwitch.com
www.PAGasSwitch.com



rundown.

overview

consumer focused

comprehensive approach

multi-channel – earned / shared / events

"home base" – our shopping sites

consumer attitudes

what works?

issues / concerns

follow us

questions?



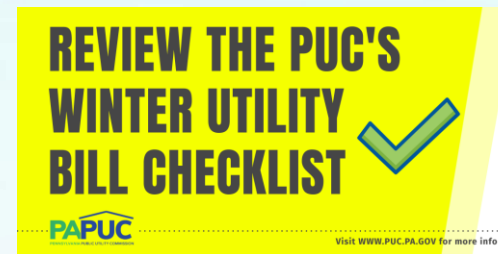
disclaimer.

This presentation is for educational purposes only. Opinions or points of view expressed in this presentation represent the view of the presenter, and do not represent the official position or policies of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, individual PUC commissioners or PUC staff.



overview

The PUC's Office of Communications works closely with the Commissioners, the Office of Competitive Market Oversight (OCMO) and other PUC Bureaus to address consumer issues in a comprehensive manner – focusing on building awareness, highlighting opportunities and addressing points of concern.



The quarterly and semi-annual resets for Default Service rates are regularly highlighted with PUC press releases.

During and immediately following the pandemic, the PUC promoted #CallUtilitiesNow to encourage proactive consumer steps.

During the price spikes of 2022 the PUC encouraged conservation and efficiency with our #UtilityChecklist.

As supplier prices dropped again in early 2023, we launched #SaveInPA to highlight potential savings from energy shopping.

consumer focused



Timely

PA PUC @PA_PUC · May 23, 2022
Options are available to help manage summer utility bills. If struggling to pay bills, [#CallUtilitiesNow](#) to discuss utility assistance programs [puc.pa.gov/press-release/...](#)

Prepare for Rising Summer Energy Bills
#CallUtilitiesNow

REVIEW ASSISTANCE OPTIONS

CONSERVATION & EFFICIENCY SHOP FOR ENERGY DEALS

PAPUC

3 retweets, 4 likes



Clear

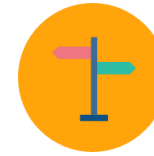
PA PUC @PA_PUC · Jul 18, 2022
Consumers should watch out for deceptive or high-pressure energy marketing efforts & misleading claims about savings [ow.ly/qkfZ50JYnyG](#) [#PUC4U](#)

BEWARE OF ENERGY SCAMS
Watch for deceptive or high-pressure energy marketing efforts and misleading claims about savings

CLEAR RULES FOR ENERGY MARKETING
Sales agents must immediately identify themselves and explain the reason for the call or visit

PAPUC

2 retweets, 2 likes



Actionable

PA PUC @PA_PUC · Jul 24, 2022
Tip to conserve energy during this heat wave. [#WaysToStayCool](#)
More tips at [ow.ly/fmp450K2XVu](#)

DON'T COOL UNNEEDED SPACE

Close off unused rooms and adjust air vents or thermostats to avoid unnecessary cooling expenses.

PAPUC

1 retweet, 1 like

comprehensive approach

print

PUC Urges Consumers to #CheckForID When Dealing with Door-to-Door or In-Person Energy Sales Agents

Published on 6/5/2023

Filed under: [Consumer Education](#) [Electric Gas](#)

Offers Key Tips to Help Identify Legitimate Sales Agents and Avoid Deceptive, Misleading or High-Pressure Marketing Pitches

HARRISBURG – As in-person sales and marketing activities increase across Pennsylvania – driven by warmer weather and continuing fluctuations in energy prices – the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) today is offering consumers key tips to help identify legitimate door-to-door energy sales agents and avoid potential scams.

"Pennsylvania has clear rules regarding energy sales practices, and the PUC encourages consumers to understand these important protections," said Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, PUC Chairman. "PUC regulations provide consumers with essential tools to help recognize deceptive sales practices and avoid falling victim to unscrupulous sales agents."



Tip #1: Always #CheckForID

Pennsylvania's regulations for energy sales and marketing require agents who conduct door-to-door activities, or appear at public events, to wear badges that clearly identify themselves and the supplier they are working for.

graphics



video & audio



multi-channel - earned / shared / events

Direct to media press release, graphics, video & audio

Follow up 1:1 interviews / live or tape / in-person or zoom

Website Front page banners / embedded materials

Social share Regular social posts for campaigns

Events Community groups & legislative events
(the tempo and number of these events has been steadily increasing, post-pandemic)

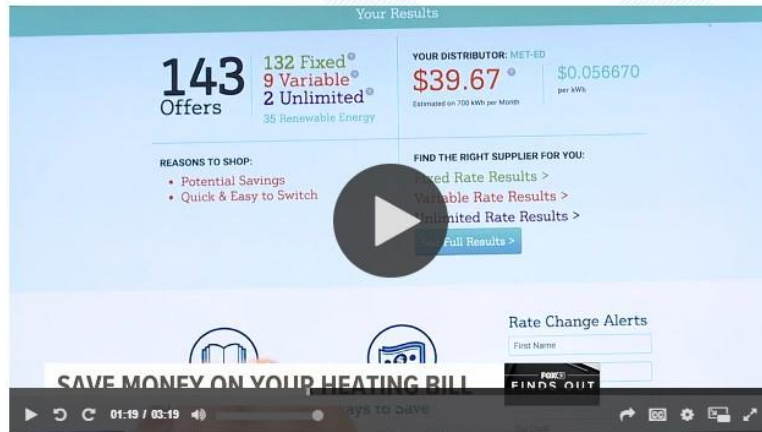


they use it

FOX43 FINDS OUT

Energy prices are expected to spike this winter—here's how you can save some money | FOX43 Finds Out

Home heating prices could be 54% higher than last year. FOX43 Finds Out how you can shop around to save money.



The screenshot shows a website interface for energy price comparison. It features a large play button in the center, indicating a video player. The interface includes a 'Your Results' section with '143 Offers' and '132 Fixed', '9 Variable', and '2 Unlimited' energy plans. A 'YOUR DISTRIBUTOR: MET-ED' section shows a price of '\$39.67' and '\$0.056670 per kWh'. Below this, there are links for 'FIND THE RIGHT SUPPLIER FOR YOU:' with options for 'Fixed Rate Results >', 'Variable Rate Results >', 'Unlimited Rate Results >', and 'Full Results >'. At the bottom, there is a 'Rate Change Alerts' section with a 'First Name' input field. A video player control bar at the bottom shows '01:19 / 03:19' and 'ways to save'.



LOCAL

How not to empty your savings paying your energy bill



By Jennifer Tomazic, WPXI-TV

February 17, 2023 at 6:34 pm EST

we use it



it works!

Conservation alert

55 stories in 12 hours
\$966,000 ad equivalent



PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION CONSUMER ALERT



#CallUtilitiesNow

350+ mentions since launch
State & international awards



#CallUtilitiesNow

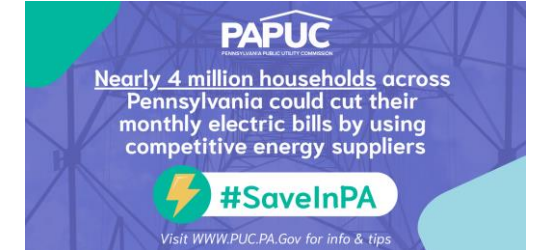
Call your public utilities now to discuss affordability programs and assistance options before possible service termination.

Help is available for income-qualified consumers



#SaveInPA

300 mentions since March
Highest PUC engagement rate



Top engagement

Always!

PA PUC @PA_PUC · Dec 23, 2022

High winds bring down power lines - stay away - no line is ever safe to touch. Report downed power lines and outages to your electric utility.

IF YOU LOSE POWER:
Remember to contact your utility company directly & report the outage

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Citizens' Electric | 1-570-524-2231 |
| Duquesne Light | 1-888-393-7000 |
| Met-Ed | 1-888-544-4877 |
| PECO | 1-800-841-4141 |
| Penelec | 1-888-544-4877 |
| Penn Power | 1-888-544-4877 |
| Pike County | 1-855-855-2433 |
| PPL | 1-800-342-5775 |
| UGI | 1-800-276-2722 |
| Wellsboro Electric | 1-570-724-3516 |
| West Penn Power | 1-888-544-4877 |

207

PA PUC @PA_PUC · Dec 24, 2022

#BreakingNews #ConsumerAlert - Consumers across Pennsylvania and several other states are being asked to conserve electricity throughout the holiday weekend because of extreme cold -- at the request of the region's power grid operator.
ow.ly/I7tN50MbV55

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION CONSUMER ALERT

URGENT

CONSERVE ELECTRICITY

Consumers Urged to Conserve Electricity Throughout the Holiday Weekend

3,621

2022

PA PUC @PA_PUC · May 23, 2022

Options are available to help manage summer utility bills. If struggling to pay bills, #CallUtilitiesNow to discuss utility assistance programs
[puc.pa.gov/press-release/...](https://puc.pa.gov/press-release/)

Prepare for Rising Summer Energy Bills

#CallUtilitiesNow

REVIEW ASSISTANCE OPTIONS

CONSERVATION & EFFICIENCY

SHOP FOR ENERGY DEALS

3

4

TIME FOR A UTILITY BILL "CHECK UP"

JUNE 1 ELECTRIC GENERATION PRICES INCREASE FOR NON-SHOPPING CUSTOMERS

Visit the PUC's free power shopping website for more information:
www.papowerswitch.com

2023

Electric Shopping

#SaveInPA

Millions of Pennsylvania consumers & businesses can find substantially lower electric energy prices by shopping.

Visit WWW.PUC.PA.GOV for info & tips

#CheckForID

For door-to-door energy sales & marketing, always know who you are dealing with!

VISIT PUC.PA.GOV FOR TIPS AND MORE INFO ABOUT ENERGY SALES IN PA

KNOW YOUR ENERGY CONTRACT

Don't be surprised by changes after your contract expires!

KEY INFO FROM YOUR CONTRACT EXPIRATION NOTICE:

- End Date for your energy supplier contract.
- Renewal Offers (from the supplier notice).
- Other options, like switching to another supplier or returning to default service from your utility.

Visit the PUC's electric shopping website at PAPowerSwitch.com for more tips and information

WINTER UTILITY BILL CHECKLIST

LEARN ABOUT MANAGING YOUR WINTER UTILITY BILLS!

Visit WWW.PUC.PA.GOV for more information

"home base" - our shopping sites



highly regarded

~1 million

Annual visitors to PAPowerSwitch

7 of 10

Say it is extremely/very easy to navigate

90%

When making decisions I will visit PAPowerSwitch

90%

Provides helpful information

89%

Is educational for energy shopping

88%

Recommend to a friend or family member

86%

It is easy to find what I am looking for

consumer attitudes

Largest
factor =
lower bills
(74%)

Magic
number?
23%

94%
awareness
of ability
to shop

3/4 who
have
switched
say it is
extremely
easy

4 out of 10
who are
aware have
switched

Likely to
research &
switch:

Younger
Farther east

No switch?

Happy
Variable prices
Low savings
Hassle

issues / concerns



An energy telemarketer called the head of the office that monitors energy telemarketing. It didn't go well



ANYA LITVAK
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
aliveli@post-gazette.com

JUN 22, 2023 12:37 PM



It was a mix of bad behavior and bad luck that landed Great American Power in its current predicament.

The Georgia-based company that sells electricity to consumers in Pennsylvania and Maryland is facing a litany of allegations of deceptive telemarketing after an investigation by state regulators.

It began when an agent representing Great American Power happened to dial the director of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission office in charge of overseeing the state's electricity retail market.

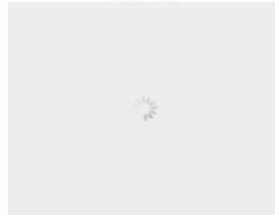
The director was taking detailed notes.

Last week, after a yearlong investigation by PUC's Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement, the agency's five commissioners unanimously rejected a settlement that carried a \$92,500 fine and a one-year suspension of contracted telemarketing, among other terms.

Instead, commissioners Stephen DeFrank and John Coleman wrote in a memo that the agency might want to consider suspending or revoking Great American Power's license to sell electricity in Pennsylvania.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

ADVERTISEMENT



LATEST BUSINESS

7.5 million Baby Shark bath toys are being recalled. 12 kids were cut or stabbed playing with them

Workers are losing power in the job market. That's good news for the Fed.

Highmark Health trims workforce by 259 this year

Primed for Amazon? E-commerce giant is the likely tenant for massive New Stanton warehouse

In Europe's empty churches, prayer and confessions make way for drinking and dancing

Caught on camera: Electric supplier sales rep makes questionable statements. Are they true?

Share   

WGAL 8

Updated: 5:12 AM EDT May 9, 2023

Infinite Scroll Enabled

 **Brian Roche**   
Anchor



SHOW TRANSCRIPT

A knock on your door and an offer to switch your electric supplier: Falling rates mean more suppliers are likely coming to your door.

A switch could save you money, but it could also make you a target for misleading sales pitches.



Advertisement

In a **News 8 On Your Side** investigation, we have a doorbell camera video showing one example of this pressure to switch. Watching it could help protect you.

"I'm Carly from Inspire here checking up on the statewide PPL notice. No one responded from the home, so we've been sent out," said a woman who claimed she was with Inspire Energy, one of more than 130 licensed electric suppliers in Pennsylvania.

Her statement is questionable because PPL doesn't serve the entire state, and PPL doesn't send representatives to customers'

homes.

"OK, you guys, since you haven't responded, this home has been forced into the dirty energy category, and your home is not a state regulation," the sales rep said.

**SCAM
ALERT**

follow us



**search for Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
on major social channels**



thank
you



Nils Hagen-Frederiksen
Press Secretary, PAPUC
nhagen-fre@pa.gov 717-418-2701

Consumer Education & Awareness

A review of state best practices in public-facing communications and resources to empower customers in competitive markets with information and options.



@ChooseMyEnergy
#MACRUC

Do ratepayers know they can shop?

Survey Results: Aware of Energy Choice

(1,000 household energy decision-makers in DE, PA, NJ, MA, IL, OH)

- Awareness of their ability to shop: 78%
- Currently enrolled with a supplier: 37%
- Planning to switch in next six months: 21%



@ChooseMyEnergy
#MACRUC

PAPUC_ConsumerEd @PAPUCConsumerEd · Dec 21, 2022

.@PA_PUC Consumer Education is one of the commissions core purposes and throughout 2022 the PUC urged financially-stressed households across the state to explore the many options available to help keep their monthly utility bill affordable. #CallUtilitiesNow




Consumer Education Resources

- Energy market education videos
- Dedicated space on retail shopping on commission website
- Dedicated space on utility bill on options available to ratepayers with link to state shopping platform
- Community engagement
- Promotion of state shopping website

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio @PUCOhio · Feb 28

Energy choice is an opportunity, not a mandate. So how do you know if switching is right for you? Or what protections you have?

Learn more about Ohio's energy choice options and what that means for you in the latest PUCO News Bureau article: puco.ohio.gov/news/news-bure...



| | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Supply | \$53.88 | Usage from May 15 - Jun 14 | \$46.59 | Delivery |
| NextEra Energy Services - Res 1-800-882-1276 | Effective Date 6/5/23 | | | PPL Electric Utilities |
| See Supply Details for information. | | <p>Usage Charges \$100.47</p> <p>Consider making a monthly pledge to Operation HELP to assist those in need to heat their homes.</p> <p>WANT TO SAVE? Shaded air conditioning units use up to 10% less electricity than if they operate in the sun.</p> | | |
| <p>PPL Electric Utilities Price to Compare</p> <p>\$0.12126 Use this price when comparing supplier offers.</p> | | | | |
| <p>SHOP FOR ELECTRICITY</p> <p>Visit PAPowerSwitch.com or www.oca.state.pa.us If you're shopping, know your contract expiration date. Account Number: 25310-67028 The price to compare is updated June 1st and December 1st. Rate: RS. View schedule at pplelectric.com/rates</p> | | | | |

Example of language making customers aware of their ability to shop on a utility bill in Pennsylvania. This also includes information on where customers can shop and where they can look up the utility rate and scheduled changes.

Do ratepayers know how to shop?

Survey Results: Barriers to Switching

(1,000 household energy decision-makers in DE, PA, NJ, MA, IL, OH)

- Satisfied with current service
- Concerns of price increases
- Concerns of switching fees
- Savings are not big enough to switch
- Concerned of worse service
- Wasn't aware of ability to switch
- Concerned with reliability/power outages
- Unaware of how to switch
- Too hard to switch





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Learn more about Ohio's energy choice options and what that means for you in the latest PUCO News Bureau article: puco.ohio.gov/news/news-bure...

The graphic features the Ohio Public Utilities Commission logo in the top left. Below it, the text "how do I know what's best for my bill?" is written in a small font. The main title "making the energy choice" is displayed in large, bold, white letters on a blue background. Below the title, a row of five apples (green, red, green, red, green) is shown. At the bottom right, there is an orange button with the text "READ FULL ARTICLE".

Shopping Resources

- State Shopping Website
 - Filter functionality
 - Current utility price to compare, future utility price to compare
 - Renewable makeup of utility supply and retail offers
 - Value-added product information
- Shopping Guide
- Glossary of terms found on utility bills and supply contracts
- Frequently asked questions
- List of licensed retail energy providers



@ChooseMyEnergy
#MACRUC

Competitive Markets Forum

Hosted by the Retail Energy Advancement League

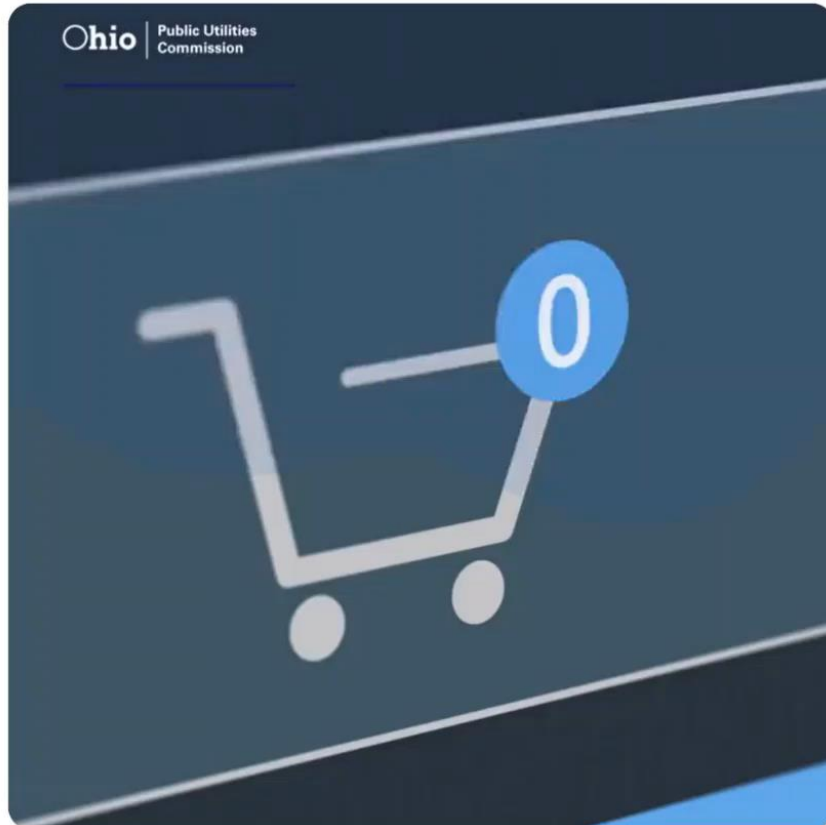
Providing ratepayers a full view of rates on the state shopping platform for informed decision-making

← Tweet



Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
@PUCOhio

If you've decided to switch energy suppliers, there's a few things you should do to get the most out of it. Let's break down the steps:



Sort by
Price (low to high)

Price

- Variable price
- Fixed price
- Unlimited price

Term Length

- Any -

- Introductory Price
- Discounts/Incentives Available

Terms & Conditions

- No Cancellation Fee
- No Monthly Fee
- No Enrollment Fee

Special Programs

- Net Metering
- Renewable Energy
- PA Wind
- Renewable PA
- Solar

Past Prices | Current Price | Future Price

PPL Electric Utilities \$0.12126 per kWh | **\$84.88** Estimated per Month

1-800-DIALPPL

Your Individual Price to Compare depends on your actual usage. For more information, please visit [PPL Electric Utilities's website](#).

Rate Schedule: RS - Regular Residential Service

| Date | Price per kWh |
|------------|---------------|
| 2016-06-01 | 0.075 |
| 2016-12-01 | 0.075 |
| 2017-06-01 | 0.085 |
| 2017-12-01 | 0.075 |
| 2018-06-01 | 0.075 |
| 2018-12-01 | 0.070 |
| 2019-06-01 | 0.075 |
| 2019-12-01 | 0.075 |
| 2020-06-01 | 0.075 |
| 2020-12-01 | 0.075 |
| 2021-11-30 | 0.075 |
| 2021-12-31 | 0.095 |
| 2022-05-31 | 0.090 |
| 2022-11-30 | 0.125 |
| 2023-05-31 | 0.145 |

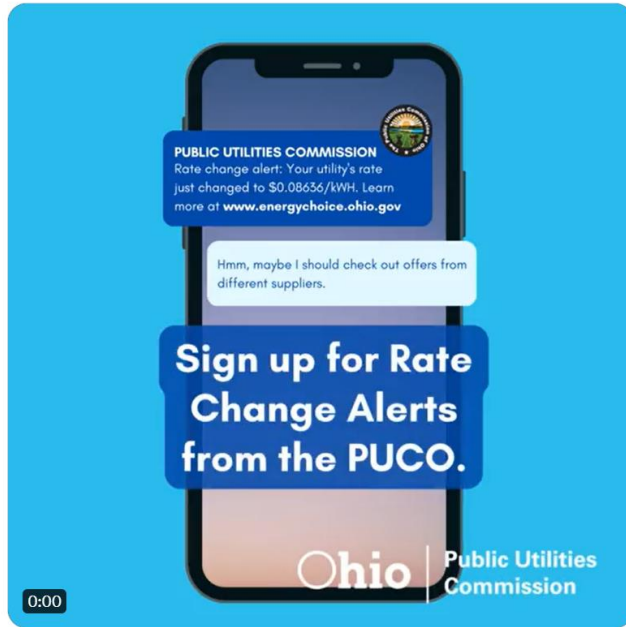


@ChooseMyEnergy
#MACRUC



Public Utilities Commission of Ohio @PUCOhio · Apr 24

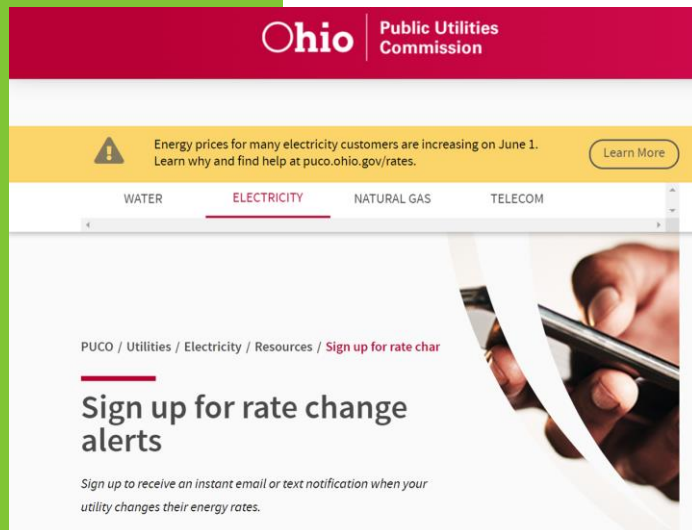
This could be you, if you signed up for Rate Change Alerts from the PUCO. bit.ly/rate-change-al...



Do ratepayers receive timely updates on changes that may affect their energy plan?

Timely Updates

- Changes in Utility Rates
 - Subscription for rate change alerts
 - Press Release
 - Social media
 - Partner amplification
- Seasonal Usage Reminders



@ChooseMyEnergy
#MACRUC

PAPUC

CONSUMER ALERT

Act Now to Manage Summer Energy Costs



✓
Use Energy
Efficient
Appliances

Shop for Energy



SCAN ME

✓
Explore
Conservation &
Ways to Save



Lindsey Williams
@SenWilliamsPA



How much can you #SaveInPA by shopping for an electric supplier? 💡
🔌💰 The average Pennsylvania household could save up to \$49 per month, according to offers on the PUC's PAPowerSwitch electric shopping website. Learn more about how you can save: buff.ly/3nhZeD1

A graphic with a teal background and a purple and green wave at the bottom. It features a lightning bolt icon, the hashtag #SaveInPA, and three circular icons with statistics. At the bottom, it says 'Visit WWW.PUC.PA.GOV for information and tips' and has the PAPUC logo.

#SaveInPA

Explore Electric Shopping!

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 3.9 million | Up to 49% | \$2 - \$49 |
| Many residential customers could save | Substantial energy cost reduction | Notable average monthly savings |

Visit WWW.PUC.PA.GOV for information and tips

PAPUC
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION



@ChooseMyEnergy
#MACRUC

Are customers empowered with information to identify a scam?

Consumer information and protections

- Questions to ask a supplier
- Contract term requirements
- Supplier marketing requirements
- How to report noncompliance



PAPUC
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

#CheckForID

For door-to-door energy sales & marketing, always know who you are dealing with!

VISIT PUC.PA.GOV FOR TIPS AND MORE INFO ABOUT ENERGY SALES IN PA

The graphic features a blue background with a white dotted pattern. On the right side, there is a stylized illustration of a white utility meter with a green dial and orange/red markings. The text is in white and yellow, providing clear instructions for consumers.



Energy choice: How to handle a door-to-door sales pitch



Do you have the right partners?

Education and amplification partners

- Media
- Consumer advocate
- Legislators
- Towns and local government
- Consumer groups
- Community groups
- Retail energy suppliers
- Industry trade groups
- Organizations that represent minorities



PUC Educational Forum

April 26, 2022 | 6 p.m.



Summary of Resources Available Online

retailenergychoice.org/summary-of-resources-consumer-education

Examples from state commissions

- Energy choice explanations
- Questions to Ask
- Mailers
- Videos
- Campaign materials
- Graphics
- Press releases

Resources from REAL

Unbranded materials available upon request

- State shopping guides
- Monthly market summaries



THE NEXT COMPETITIVE MARKETS FORUM TOPIC:

Customer Complaint Reporting and Recordkeeping Virtual Meeting in August (date to be confirmed)

States share current processes on fielding and managing customer complaints, deliverables like scorecards, reports and rating systems and how to make this information accessible to customers so they are empowered to choose the best supplier for their needs.



Stephanie Bolton

Director, Consumer Affairs Division
Maryland Public Service Commission



Chris Burch

Director, Customer Protection Division
Public Utility Commission of Texas



@choosemyenergy
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