

Public Utility Commission of Texas

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News Release
Wednesday, June 8, 2011

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Texas PUC Chairman joins effort to reduce electricity prices in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania looks to improve its competitive electricity market

The Chairman of the Public Utility Commission of Texas, Barry Smitherman, offered suggestions to Pennsylvania officials on Wednesday as part of that state's effort to encourage shopping by residential electric customers to help drive down prices.

"Our best practices can help Pennsylvania consumers because Texas electric customers can choose a product tailored to needs such as price, customer service and environmental concerns," said Chairman Smitherman. "The Texas competitive model provides tremendous consumer benefits because we required utilities to divide into three separate companies for the wholesale, distribution and retail electric functions."

In his presentation, http://www.puc.state.pa.us/electric/PDF/RetailMI/EnBanc060811-P-PUCTX_Opening.pdf Chairman Smitherman noted that Texas residential electric customers today have more than twice as many service options compared to just three years ago, including:

- Fixed price offers below nine cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh).
- Variable price offers below six cents per kWh
- Renewable generation offers below eight cents per kWh.
- More than 35 retail electric providers offering more than 200 rate packages.

Texas residential electric customers in competitive areas can get the latest pricing information at www.powertochoose.org or by calling 1-866-797-4839 toll-free.

The Chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Robert F. Powelson, asked Chairman Smitherman to give the opening address at Wednesday's event that launched a renewed effort to improve retail electric competition in the Keystone State.

"Our goal is to make recommendations for improvements to ensure a properly functioning and workable competitive retail electricity market," said Chairman Powelson.

As of Jan. 1, 2011, 54 percent of the 5.6 million residential electric customers in the competitive Texas market switched to a competitive retail electric provider. Pennsylvania's current rate of switched customers stands at 19 percent.

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