

STATE OF NEW YORK
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

CASE 14-M-0565 - Proceeding on the Motion of the Commission to
Examine Programs to Address Energy
Affordability for Low Income Utility Customers.

NOTICE OF ADDITIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARINGS

(Issued October 2, 2015)

In January 2015, the New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) opened a proceeding to examine the low income programs offered by the major electric and gas utilities in New York State. The primary purposes of the proceeding are to standardize utility low-income programs to reflect best practices where appropriate, streamline the regulatory process and ensure consistency with the Commission's statutory and policy objectives.

The Commission directed Staff of the Department of Public Service (Staff) to conduct an examination of the utility low income programs, in order to identify best practices, evaluate the effectiveness of the current low income program designs, and develop a set of recommendations for any improvements that may be warranted. Staff conducted its program review in conjunction with interested parties, including the utility companies and low-income consumer advocates.

On June 1, 2015, Staff filed a Report on the results of its examination, including a Straw Proposal for a new statewide approach to low-income programs that addresses design and implementation elements including eligibility, enrollment processes, benefit structures, rate discount levels, treatment of participant arrears, reconnection fees, budgeting, and cost recovery. The Staff Low Income Report may be obtained from the Commission's website, www.dps.ny.gov by entering the Low Income

Proceeding case number (14-M-0565) into the search field on the homepage.

On August 21, 2015, the Commission issued a Notice of Public Statement Hearings. The Notice identified four locations across the state where public information sessions and public statement hearings will be held throughout September and October to gather public input on the Low Income Report and Straw Proposal. Obtaining public input from consumers, the utilities, public interest groups and other interested stakeholders is critical to developing energy affordability programs that incorporate best practices and help reduce terminations and collection costs for these vulnerable customers.

TAKE NOTICE that the Commission has scheduled additional opportunities for public information and comment on the Low Income Report and the Straw Proposal. The new information sessions and public statement hearings will be held as follows:

Syracuse

**Monday, October 19, 2015
Southwest Community Center
401 South Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13204**

**2:00 PM - 3:00 PM Information Session
3:00 PM Public Statement Hearing Begins**

**6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Information Session
7:00 PM Public Statement Hearing Begins**

Albany

**Wednesday, October 21, 2015
New York State Museum, Clark Auditorium
222 Madison Avenue, Albany, NY 12230**

**2:00 PM - 3:00 PM Information Session
3:00 PM Public Statement Hearing Begins**

**6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Information Session
7:00 PM Public Statement Hearing Begins**

In the hour prior to each Public Statement Hearing, representatives from Staff will present an information session on the Low Income Report and be available to answer questions. The information sessions will be immediately followed by Public Statement Hearings where all those wishing to comment on the Low Income Report will have an opportunity to make a statement on the record. It is not necessary to be present at the start of the hearing, to make an appointment in advance, or to present written material to speak at the hearing. Persons will be called to speak after completing a request card. The public statement hearing will remain open for a minimum of one hour and will continue until everyone wishing to speak has been heard or other reasonable arrangements have been made. A verbatim transcript of the hearings will be made for inclusion in the record of these proceedings and will be posted on the Commission's website.

Disabled persons requiring special accommodations should call the Department of Public Service's Human Resources Management Office at (518) 474-2520 as soon as possible. TDD users may request a sign language interpreter by placing a call through the New York Relay Service at 711. Individuals with difficulty understanding or reading English are encouraged to call the Commission at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this notice.

Public comments will be accepted throughout the pendency of this proceeding, but parties are encouraged to comment on the Low Income Report at one of the Public Statement Hearings, or by other means described below. All comments will become part of the record considered by the Commission.

Other Ways to Comment

For those who cannot attend or prefer not to speak at a public statement hearing, there are several other ways to provide your comments to the Commission. Comments should refer to "Case

14-M-0565."

Via the Internet or Mail: The public may submit comments electronically to the Hon. Kathleen H. Burgess, Secretary, at secretary@dps.ny.gov, or by mail or delivery to Secretary Burgess at the New York State Public Service Commission, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223-1350. Comments also may be entered directly into the 14-M-0565 case file from the Commission's website, www.dps.ny.gov, by entering the case number into the Search field on the homepage and selecting the "Post Comments" button on the upper right hand corner of the page.

Toll-Free Opinion Line: Individuals may choose to submit comments by calling the Commission's Opinion Line at 1-800-335-2120. This line is set up to receive in-state calls 24 hours a day. These calls are not transcribed but a summary will be reported to the Commission.

(SIGNED)

KATHLEEN H. BURGESS
Secretary