

STATE OF NEW YORK  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF'S  
PROPOSED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO INQUIRIES AND  
REQUESTS BY PROSPECTIVE NATURAL GAS CUSTOMERS

INTRODUCTON

By Order issued November 30, 2012, the Commission instituted this proceeding to examine our policies concerning the use of natural gas and consider whether we should take steps to foster its use through expansion of the natural gas delivery system or otherwise. The order invited comments in response to 21 specific questions and issues and directed Staff to convene a technical conference. On January 9, 2013, Staff convened the technical conference in Albany.

Based on submitted comments and informal discussions at the January 9, 2013 technical conference it became apparent that a significant disparity exists among individual utility practice regarding the collection, retention and utilization of data related to inquiries and requests for new or expanded natural gas service. The Department of Public Service Staff believes that improved collection of certain data points regarding this information will allow the major<sup>1</sup> natural gas local distribution companies (LDCs) to more effectively manage their natural gas franchises including planning and designing system expansions. Therefore, Staff recommends that for each customer "inquiry" and each customer "request" regarding gas service, the Commission order the major LDCs to maintain a data base to include the data listed below. Staff also recommends that the Commission require the major LDCs to file with the Secretary on a quarterly basis, a report developed from the

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this proceeding "major" refers to LDCs with more than 15,000 customers. T

data. The contents of the recommended report are also described below.

Staff believes that the information to be contained in the proposed database is critical to maintaining and/or improving efficiencies regarding infrastructure expansion opportunities as well as planning for incremental natural gas load from new and existing customers along existing infrastructure. The data Staff proposes for the quarterly reports is meant to provide an overview of gas conversion and expansion activities. The additional data should also be available for further investigation by Staff if warranted from a review of information provided on a quarterly basis.

### Proposed Reporting Requirements

#### **I. Definitions:**

##### A. Conversions

"Conversions" include those customers who used no gas before the conversion and those non-heating gas customers that install gas heating equipment.

##### B. Inquiries

An "inquiry to convert" represents contacts made by potential customers who are interested in converting to natural gas service. If warranted, the company may need to determine if an additional amount is owed by the customer to extend mains/services and/or needs to determine if the existing gas distribution system needs reinforcement before responding to an inquiry. The time period for a pending inquiry represents the number of days between the date the customer inquired about converting to natural gas and the date the utility informs the customer that it can provide the customer with natural gas and the amount due from the customer, if any.

##### C. Requests

A "request to convert" assumes that the customer has affirmatively agreed to the conversion (with or without an initial inquiry) and has agreed to pay any amounts due in

accordance with tariff provisions if any. The time period for a pending request represents the number of days between the date the customer agreed to convert to natural gas (and pay any additional amounts due) and the date the utility actually begins providing natural gas to the customer.

## **II. Database requirements:**

All LDCs should track and maintain the following data. This data does not all need to be reported but should be available to Staff or the Commission upon request. As discussed below, this data should be tracked by both customer class (Residential, Small Commercial, Large Commercial, Municipal or Industrial) and by request type (less than 100 feet from main, greater than 100 feet from main, new franchise required). Contact information is important for future planning and, when provided by the customer, the LDC should maintain the information, whether conversion occurs or not.

This database should include but not be limited to the following data for each "inquiry to convert" received by an LDC:

- Customer name and address
- Customer type: residential commercial, industrial, municipal (Service Classification)
- Demand Requirement:
  - Number of potential gas burning devices
  - Type of potential gas burning devices
  - Usage estimate
- Distance from existing gas main
  - Service footage required
  - Additional main required
  - Other facilities required
- Whether there are any other customers within a half mile of this customer that have already requested natural gas service, and if so how many
- Date of customer inquiry
- Date of company reply to customer about inquiry
- Contribution in Aid of Construction estimate given to customer (where appropriate)
  - Dollar value and footage involved
  - Date quote given

This database should include but not be limited to the following data for each "request to convert" received by an LDC:

- Date of customer request
- Did the request result from an "inquiry to convert"

- Date of company reply to customer about request
- Number of individual customer contacts, in immediate area
- Next steps for either company or customer
  - Service initiation date (actual or estimated)
  - Reason for denial if request is denied
  - Reason for failure to initiate service if request is approved and not acted upon
  - Additional planned company action

### **III. Reporting Requirements**

The LDC should provide to the Department of Public Service the following information on a quarterly basis within 45 days from the end of each calendar quarter:

All data should be reported by both customer class (Residential, Small Commercial, Large Commercial, Municipal or Industrial) and by request type (less than 100 feet from main, greater than 100 feet from main, new franchise required).

- A. Number of conversions performed by month and year to date;
- B. Number of pending inquiries to convert, disaggregated in the following manner:
  - i. Less than 30 days
  - ii. Between 30 and 60 days
  - iii. Between 60 and 90 days
  - iv. Greater than 90 days
- C. Number of pending requests to convert, disaggregated in the following manner:
  - i. Less than 30 days
  - ii. Between 30 and 60 days
  - iii. Between 60 and 90 days
  - iv. Greater than 90 days
- D. Number of requests (> 90 days) not acted on:
  - i. Equal to or less than 100 feet from main
  - ii. Greater than 100 feet from main
  - iii. Outside franchise footprint (area)
- E. Total amount of customer contributions in aid of construction by number of customers paid and amount received by month and year to date.