

STATE OF NEW YORK  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

At a session of the Public Service  
Commission held in the city of  
Albany on March 16, 2004

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

William M. Flynn, Chairman  
Thomas J. Dunleavy  
James D. Bennett  
Leonard A. Weiss  
Neal N. Galvin

CASE 98-M-0667 - In the Matter of Electronic Data Interchange.

ORDER MODIFYING ELECTRONIC DATA  
INTERCHANGE (EDI) STANDARDS AND DIRECTING  
THE PROVISION OF CERTAIN NON-EDI DATA

(Issued and Effective March 22, 2004)

BY THE COMMISSION:

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

Retail access market participants were required to begin implementing Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) systems to facilitate the exchange of data necessary to support various retail access initiatives.<sup>1</sup> This implementation requires the development, approval, programming and testing of a variety of EDI Transaction Set Standards. To date thirteen EDI Standards and corresponding test plans have been approved. Periodically it is necessary to modify these standards to recognize changes in statute, regulation, Uniform Business Practices, or to accommodate changes in retail access market structure or procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> Case 98-M-0667, In the Matter of Electronic Data Interchange, Opinion No. 00-05 (issued April 12, 2000).

By this Order, modifications in the 814 Enrollment,<sup>2</sup> 867 Monthly Usage,<sup>3</sup> 867 Consumption History/Gas Profile<sup>4</sup> and the 814 Account Maintenance (Change)<sup>5</sup> standards are approved. These modifications are necessary to enable transmission of more detailed usage measurements to energy services companies (ESCOs), to permit provision of therm factor data via web site access, and to facilitate ESCO compliance with the requirement to provide a customer's tax rate at enrollment with the ESCO when the customer chooses utility rate ready consolidated billing.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Version 1.3 of the 814 Enrollment Transaction Set Standard is comprised of the TS814 Enrollment Request and Response Implementation Guide, the TS814 Enrollment Data Dictionary and the Enrollment Business Processes Document. The Enrollment Business Processes Document is not modified as a result of this Order and remains as previously issued in this proceeding on July 23, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Version 2.1 of the 867 Monthly Usage Transaction Set Standard is comprised of the TS867 Monthly Usage Implementation Guide, the TS867MU Data Dictionary and the Usage Business Processes - Monthly. Version 2.0 of the Usage Business Processes - Monthly is not modified as a result of this Order and remains as previously issued in this proceeding on November 26, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Version 1.1 of the 867 Consumption History/Gas Profile Transaction Set Standard is comprised of the TS867 Consumption History/Gas Profile Implementation Guide and the TS867HU Data Dictionary.

<sup>5</sup> Version 1.3 of the 814 Change (Account Maintenance) Transaction Set Standard is comprised of the TS814 Change Implementation Guide, the TS814 Change Data Dictionary and the Change Business Process Document. The Change Business Process Document is not modified as a result of this Order and remains as previously issued in this proceeding on November 7, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Case 98-M-1343, In the Matter of Uniform Business Rules, Order Adopting Revised Uniform Business Practices (issued November 21, 2003), p. 37.

A proposed change in the Monthly Usage standard sought by the Village of Hilton, New York (Hilton), is rejected. Rochester Gas & Electric Corporation (RG&E), however, is directed to continue providing certain usage data to Hilton in a non-EDI manner.

Notices of the proposed modifications were published in the State Register on April 16, 2003, May 14, 2003 and December 3, 2003. Comments on the change in the Monthly Usage Standard sought by Hilton were received from RG&E; technical comments on Staff's proposed modifications to the Enrollment and Change Standards pertaining to transmission of tax rate data were received from Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (Niagara Mohawk).

#### CHANGES

Various market participants proposed the modifications in the 867 Monthly Usage and 867 Consumption History Standards. Staff developed and circulated draft revisions to the Enrollment and Change Standards designed to align those standards with a recently approved change in the Uniform Business Practices.

#### Consumption Measurement Code Changes

Modifications in the Enrollment, Consumption History and Monthly Usage Standards were requested by Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (Con Edison) and Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc. (O&R), to add several new measurement codes to enable transmission of more detailed usage measurements to ESCOs.

#### Discussion

The new measurement codes are necessary to differentiate between usage on high and low tension lines and between peak and non-peak usage during summer versus winter periods. These changes enable the utilities to align EDI usage measurement descriptors for electric usage with the usage

descriptions in its respective electric tariffs. More detailed measurement data may also facilitate ESCOs offering more complex pricing arrangements tailored to the specific needs of large electric customers. The revisions requested by Con Edison and O&R are approved.

Therm Factor Data

National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation (NFG) seeks to eliminate a requirement in the Monthly Usage Standard that it provide therm factor<sup>7</sup> data via EDI. Although NFG participated in the development of revisions to the Monthly Usage Standard necessary to support data exchange under the Single Retailer model, it now recognizes that transmitting therm factor data via EDI is inefficient for both the utility and the ESCOs. It notes that although the therm factor may change over time, it does not vary by customer.

Discussion

Since the Monthly Usage transaction is specific to an individual account, it would be more efficient to make the therm factor accessible on NFG's web site rather than transmitting it monthly in an EDI transaction for every customer enrolled with an ESCO. This change is approved and the documents modified accordingly.

Availability of Gas Meter Read Data

A change in the rules governing the use of the Monthly Usage Standard was proposed by Hilton who, at the time of its request, was functioning as a Single Retailer in the service territory of RG&E<sup>8</sup>. In that model, the ESCO is the only entity

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<sup>7</sup> The therm factor is used to convert a volume of gas measured in hundred cubic feet (CCF) to therms.

<sup>8</sup> The Village ESCO offers natural gas service, as an eligible ESCO, to approximately 20% of the Village residents and is the second largest gas ESCO in RG&E's service territory and has satisfied all current EDI testing requirements.

issuing bills to retail access customers. Unlike other consolidated bill models, if the utility does not provide meter read data to a Single Retailer ESCO, such data would not appear on customers' bills.

Pending development in 2002 of the EDI standards necessary to support the Single Retailer model, RG&E relied on non-EDI methods to provide ESCOs with consumption, meter read and delivery charge data. By the time the Monthly Usage Standard was modified<sup>9</sup> to enable transmission of necessary meter data via EDI, RG&E's implementation of EDI had been delayed pending a determination in its rate proceeding regarding continuation of the Single Retailer model in its service territory.

In March 2003, the order establishing revised electric and gas rates directed RG&E to transition to a multi-retailer model of its choosing<sup>10</sup>. Accordingly to Hilton, shortly thereafter, RG&E notified ESCOs that it would offer utility bill ready consolidated billing beginning March 2004.

At that time, version 2.0 of the Monthly Usage Standard provided utilities the option of transmitting meter read data "with the mutual agreement of the parties". Nevertheless, RG&E informed its active ESCOs that meter read data<sup>11</sup> would no longer be provided once transition to EDI and utility bill ready billing was complete.

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<sup>9</sup> Case 98-M-0667, In the Matter of Electronic Data Interchange, Order Modifying Electronic Data Interchange Standards for Monthly Usage and Enrollment (issued November 26, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> To be implemented no later than March 2004; Case 02-E-0198, et al., Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation - Rates, Order Adopting Recommended Decision with Modifications (issued March 7, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Meter read data at issue is the beginning and ending meter read. Consumption, e.g. 100 therms and the measurement period dates are exchanged via EDI.

Hilton subsequently requested that the EDI Collaborative complete development on the ESCO Bill Ready Standards so that Hilton could continue to provide a single bill to its customers after EDI implementation in RG&E's service territory was complete<sup>12</sup>. Prior to implementation of ESCO bill ready billing, Hilton would transfer its customers to dual billing, but requested that RG&E be directed to continue to provide meter read data to Hilton in the interim.

In Hilton's view, without this data, the customer would have no choice but to call RG&E for the information. In its view, the discontinuance of the Single Retailer model in RG&E's service territory should not have the unintended effect of lowering the quality of service to its existing retail access customers. Following RG&E's cutover to EDI, Hilton customers would begin receiving two bills - one for RG&E delivery charges and one for Hilton commodity charges - instead of the single bill they have become accustomed to. In addition, without historic meter read data Hilton would be unable to handle routine high bill inquiries.

RG&E comments that under the multi-retailer model it is unnecessary to provide Hilton with meter read data because the end-use customer will see detailed meter usage information on the delivery service bill and its customer service representatives will answer questions relating to usage information. Accordingly, it should not be required to undertake extensive and unnecessary programming and testing to satisfy Hilton's request. Such a change would be costly to both RG&E and other ESCOs participating in its service territory and

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<sup>12</sup> Under this model, the ESCO would render a single bill and the utility would be required to provide the ESCO with meter read data for presentation on the customer's bill.

the re-testing that would be necessary to implement this change would further delay implementation of EDI.

Discussion

At this juncture, reprogramming RG&E's EDI interface to provide the data requested by Hilton is not practical, particularly since all phases of EDI testing in its service territory have already been completed and Hilton is the only entity seeking provision of meter read data via EDI. The Commission has also been apprised that Hilton now believes that its implementation of the ESCO Bill Ready model would not be economically feasible.

It should be noted that all other data necessary to support the dual billing model chosen by Hilton can be provided via EDI. Recognizing concerns expressed by RG&E on the cost of maintaining dual data exchange "systems", the Commission is not persuaded that continuing to provide the minimal meter read data sought by Hilton in a non-EDI manner would be cost prohibitive. Further, it would be incompatible with established objectives for retail access programs to discourage ESCOs who seek to offer high quality service to their customers. Accordingly, RG&E is directed to make available to Hilton, using non-EDI means, the meter read data by account previously provided under the Single Retailer model, coincident with Hilton's receipt of customer's consumption data by account via EDI. This alternative is less costly to RG&E than reprogramming to enable transmission of this data via EDI and is also acceptable to Hilton. Accordingly, the change proposed - to delete the language in the Monthly Usage Standard for mutual consent for transmission of meter read data is no longer necessary and is considered withdrawn.

Tax Rate Data

The revised Uniform Business Practices required ESCOs to ascertain sales tax rates and any exemptions for their customers because these rates and exemptions may differ for

customers who purchase supplies from distribution utilities and those who take commodity from ESCOs due to changes in the Tax Law (Chapter 63 of the Laws of 2000)<sup>13</sup>. Accordingly, an ESCO is now required to provide the utility with the customer's applicable tax rate<sup>14</sup> when the customer's requested bill option is utility rate ready consolidated billing<sup>15</sup>.

To align the EDI Standards with this aspect of the revised Uniform Business Practices (UBP)<sup>16</sup>, Staff developed and solicited comments on adding new data segments to the Enrollment and Change Standards to be used to communicate tax rate data.<sup>17</sup> Niagara Mohawk filed comments opposing the specific language in the standards that would govern how ESCOs may satisfy the new UBP requirement.

Niagara Mohawk points out that the UBP as revised allows a utility and ESCO to agree upon modifications or other procedures for billing and payment processing in a Billing Services Agreement<sup>18</sup>. It requests that any changes to the Enrollment Standard regarding the exchange of tax information be

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<sup>13</sup> Case 98-M-1343, In the Matter of Retail Access Business Rules, Order Adopting Revised Uniform Business Practices (issued November 21, 2003), p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Appendix B, Section 5, p. 37 (Attachment 4), B.2.a.

<sup>15</sup> In this model, the utility calculates the ESCO's charges (including taxes) for presentation on the consolidated bill issued to the customer; accordingly the utility must have current rate/price and tax information to correctly calculate the ESCO's charges.

<sup>16</sup> To fully align the Standards with the revised Uniform Business Practices and regulations pursuant to the revised Home Energy Fair Practices Act, other modifications in these and other standards will need to be made.

<sup>17</sup> The new segment would be labeled "Customer's Tax Rate for E/M Charges".

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Section 9A, p. 44.

required only of those utilities and ESCOs whose arrangements are such that the ESCO, and not the utility, will provide tax information. It points out that it currently provides tax information regarding ESCO customers at no charge to the ESCO.

Discussion

Niagara Mohawk's current procedure satisfies the requirement in the UBP order that ESCOs must "ascertain sales tax rates and any exemptions" but is inconsistent with the text at Attachment 4 of the Practices which requires tax rate data to be included in an enrollment transaction when the bill option is utility rate ready billing. Accordingly, the text of Attachment 4 is modified<sup>19</sup> to explicitly recognize the flexibility afforded to utilities and ESCOs by Section 9 of the Practices such that the method of exchanging the data may be left to methods, other than EDI, agreed upon in individual Billing Services Agreements. At the same time, the rules governing the use of the new data segments in the Enrollment transaction should be changed to "conditional" from "mandatory" to permit the flexible arrangement now in effect in Niagara Mohawk's service territory regarding exchange of tax data. Notwithstanding these changes, the ESCO retains responsibility for ensuring that the correct tax amount(s) appear on the customer's bill and are remitted to the proper taxing authorities.

CONCLUSION

The standards documents listed in Attachment A reflect the approved modifications as discussed herein and will be made available on the Commission's web site coincident with the

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<sup>19</sup> To add a footnote indicating tax rate data may be provided prior to, at the same time as or subsequent to transmitting an enrollment request based upon mutually agreeable methods documented in the billing services agreement between the parties.

issuance of this order. These documents also incorporate certain non-controversial technical corrections currently posted on the Commission's web site. Supplemental interactive EDI testing (Phase III) for the approved changes is not necessary, but may be requested at the discretion of affected ESCOs.

The Commission orders:

1. Version 1.3 of the Enrollment standard, Version 2.1 of the Monthly Usage standard, Version 1.1 of the Consumption History/Gas Profile standard and Version 1.3 of the Account Maintenance (Change) standard are approved in the manner described in the body of this order.

2. Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation is directed to continue to make available to the Village of Hilton, using non-EDI means, the meter read data previously provided under the Single Retailer Model, as described in the body of this order.

3. This proceeding is continued.

By the Commission,

(SIGNED)

JACLYN A. BRILLING  
Secretary

The following documents will be available electronically from the Commission's web site at <http://www.dps.state.ny.us/98m0667.htm>.

Supplement	Description
SUPPLEMENT A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TS814 Enrollment Request &amp; Response Implementation Guide, Version 1.3</li> </ul>
SUPPLEMENT B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TS814 Enrollment Data Dictionary, Version 1.3</li> </ul>
SUPPLEMENT C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TS867 Monthly Usage Implementation Guide, Version 2.1</li> </ul>
SUPPLEMENT D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TS867 Monthly Usage Data Dictionary, Version 2.1</li> </ul>
SUPPLEMENT E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TS867 Consumption History/Gas Profile Implementation Guide, Version 1.1</li> </ul>
SUPPLEMENT F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TS867 Consumption History/Gas Profile Data Dictionary, Version 1.1</li> </ul>
SUPPLEMENT G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TS814 Account Maintenance (Change) Implementation Guide, Version 1.3</li> </ul>
SUPPLEMENT H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TS814 Account Maintenance (Change) Data Dictionary, Version 1.3</li> </ul>