

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE

CASE 14-M-0224 – Proceeding on the Motion of the Commission to Enable
Community Choice Aggregation Programs

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF PROPOSAL FOR MODIFICATION TO
OUTREACH AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Dated: May 19, 2023

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Proposals for Modification to Existing Requirements.....	2
2.1.	Outreach and Education Period.....	3
2.2.	Outreach and Education Gap	3
2.3.	Performance of Outreach and Education Actions.....	4
2.4.	Outreach and Education Locations	4
2.5.	Outreach and Education Forms.....	5
2.6.	Outreach and Education Material	7
2.7.	Pricing.....	8
2.8.	NYS Environmental Disclosure Program Disclosure	9
2.9.	Opt-Out Letter.....	9
2.10.	CCA Administrator Websites	10
2.11.	Utility Account Numbers.....	11
3.	Proposed Adoption of New Requirements.....	12
3.1.	Community Awareness.....	12
3.2.	Program/Contract Expiration	13
3.3.	Newly Eligible Opt-Out Letters.....	13
3.4.	Municipality Bill of Rights	14
4.	Conclusion	14

1. Introduction

A well-designed Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program can create benefits for participating communities and their residents, while supporting New York State's clean energy policies and the Public Service Commission's (Commission) efforts to build a cleaner, smarter, and more distributed electric system through the Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) initiative.¹ CCA programs provide substantial opportunities for local, community, and individual engagement on topics related to energy needs, such as innovative energy programs, products, and services that promote and advance local goals as well as the achievement of the State's clean energy goals. Ensuring that the CCA programs are implemented with the proper consumer education and protections in place is imperative to the success of these programs.

On April 21, 2016, the Commission issued the CCA Framework Order, which authorized the establishment of CCA programs by municipalities statewide and instituted the process and CCA Rules for developing and implementing a CCA program.² The CCA Rules define requirements for, among other things, customer outreach and education. The Commission also recognized that the CCA Framework Order was a starting point for the development of the State's CCA program and that there may be a need for modifications, or expansion, of the initial requirements based upon program monitoring and lessons learned.

While the CCA Rules have served as the starting point and guidance for CCA programs, the Commission has provided clarification and refinements to the outreach and education requirements included as part of the CCA Rules, in the subsequent orders that approved CCA Administrators. Consistent with this understanding of potential future need for modification, Staff filed the CCA Whitepaper, which described the then-current status of New York's CCA programs, detailed the successes and challenges faced since the initiation of these programs, and presented recommendations, including but not limited to, modification and expansion of the outreach and education requirements.³

¹ Case 14-M-0101, Reforming the Energy Vision, Order Instituting Proceeding (issued April 25, 2014).

² Case 14-M-0224, Proceeding on Motion of the Commission to Enable Community Choice Aggregation Programs, Order Authorizing Framework for Community Choice Aggregation Opt-Out Program (issued April 21, 2016) (CCA Framework Order), Appendix D: CCA Rules Summary.

³ Case 14-M-0224, Department of Public Service Staff Whitepaper on Community Choice Aggregation Programs (filed April 14, 2021) (CCA Whitepaper).

In consideration of these recommendations, in its CCA Modification Order, the Commission adopted the use of standardized templates and specific guidelines for CCA Administrator compliance filings.⁴ This included templates and guidelines for the Outreach and Education Record, opt-out letters, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). The CCA Modification Order also recognized that, based upon on-going feedback and participating community complaints, there continues to be a lack of CCA program awareness which, in some instances, is supported by CCA Administrator Outreach and Education records that show little to no participants at the CCA informational events. The Commission found “that it is more important than ever to ensure that CCA Administrators are doing their due diligence in providing more than just adequate outreach and education to potential opt-out program participants,” and directed Department of Public Service Staff (Staff) to file proposed changes to the outreach and education requirements.⁵ These proposed changes were to include, but not be limited to: (1) extending the outreach and education period; (2) increasing the number of necessary items and events; and (3) requesting additional outreach and education when a CCA Administrator is unable to prove sufficient community awareness of opt-out enrollment or when there is a specific circumstance that should require additional outreach and education events to be performed in a community.

In response to the Commission's directives, Staff provides the modifications proposed herein to the outreach and education requirements intended to provide reassurance to consumers and municipalities that the appropriate protections are in place to safely participate in opt-out CCA programs. These recommendations will also enable Staff to ensure that there has been an appropriate level of community awareness before allowing the CCA program to begin opt-out enrollment of potential participants. This proposal will be issued for public comment and subject to Commission consideration, with the expectation that any changes adopted by the Commission will be reflected in the applicable templates and CCA Rules.

2. Proposals for Modification to Existing Requirements

The following section discusses existing rules which are currently tied to the CCA program's outreach and education requirements. Each existing rule, laid out below, includes a proposed modification to the rule and/or requirement. Staff then includes the reasoning for why

⁴ Case 14-M-0224, Order Modifying Community Choice Aggregation Programs and Establishing Further Process (issued January 19, 2023) (CCA Modification Order).

⁵ CCA Modification Order, p. 61.

the proposed modification is recommended and how it will improve customer awareness of their CCA program.

2.1. Outreach and Education Period

Existing requirement: O&E must be performed over a period of no less than 60 days. This period begins with the first O&E action conducted in the municipality after the passing of the Local Law.

Proposed new requirement: O&E must be performed over a period of no less than 90 days. This period begins with the first O&E publicly held meeting conducted in the municipality by the CCA Administrator after the passing of the municipality's Local Law. The public meetings must be held in person and be open to municipal residents. A webinar may be offered in conjunction with the public meeting if it allows for the ability for participants to ask questions.

Purpose: In order to ensure CCA participants receive the necessary level of program awareness, particularly due to the program's opt-out method of enrollment, Staff believes that it is necessary to extend the required O&E period and commence the period with the first publicly held meeting in the municipality. Up to this point, Staff has been made aware that CCA programs continue to demonstrate a lack of awareness by community members. Extending the required period will allow additional time for community awareness of opt-out enrollment in a CCA program. Kicking off the O&E period with an in-person meeting will allow potential participants to engage face-to-face with Administrators. Participants will also be able to better understand the additional O&E that will be conducted and available to them over the O&E period. When combined with the additional proposals below, this change will advance the goal of ensuring robust O&E that results in greater customer awareness and understanding of the program being implemented in their municipality.

2.2. Outreach and Education Gap

Existing requirement: If O&E was completed more than 6 months previous to the opt-out enrollment request, a new 60-day O&E period will be necessary before being approved to move forward.

Proposed new requirement: When there has been a 6-month or more gap between the last verified O&E action and the time of the Municipality Filing, the CCA Administrator will be required to complete another full 90-day O&E Period before the program will be eligible to go forward.

Purpose: Clarification of the gap period between O&E action times will provide clarity to the CCA Administrators and stakeholders as to what is necessary to move the program forward during times where there has been a gap in O&E actions. This clarification will also address Staff's concerns related to O&E not being performed recently and, therefore, not providing the necessary level of community awareness that should exist before the program moves forward with opt-out enrollment.

2.3. Performance of Outreach and Education Actions

Existing requirement: O&E actions must be performed by the CCA Administrator authorized in the Master Implementation Plan.

Proposed new requirement: O&E actions must be performed by the CCA Administrator authorized in the Master Implementation Plan or their representative, as long as the representative clearly identifies themselves as the CCA Administrator.

Purpose: While most CCA Administrators do their own O&E, there are some who hire other organizations to perform these community actions for them. This modification will allow credit for these actions when performed by a company hired or consulted by the CCA Administrator when the individuals represent themselves as representatives of the CCA Administrator. These entities cannot perform CCA O&E actions while representing their individual company or organization, they must clearly identify themselves as being acting on behalf of the CCA Administrator. This will reduce customer confusion when attending O&E events.

2.4. Outreach and Education Locations

Existing requirement: O&E actions must be conducted within the municipality that the program serves in order to satisfy O&E requirements.

Proposed new requirement: O&E actions must be conducted within the municipality that the program serves to satisfy O&E requirements. The public meetings must be held in person and be open to municipal residents. A webinar may be offered in conjunction with the public meeting if it allows participants the ability to ask questions. If there is some reason the public meetings are not able to be held in the municipality, such as the municipality does not have a library, fire station, or municipal building where the meeting could be held, the CCA Administrator will need to detail why they were unable to meet that requirement and the Municipal Official will need to sign off on the notification that this is correct. This acknowledgement would be included as part of the Municipality filing.

Purpose: This modification would ensure no municipality, or its constituents would be treated any differently based upon its size or location. Every potential CCA municipality should have O&E actions performed within its borders for its residents. CCA Administrators are able to continue to conduct group meetings (i.e. single meetings with multiple municipalities in attendance), however, these meetings will not count toward the individual municipal O&E minimum requirements. That said, group meetings are fully supported and encouraged by Staff as a means to conduct additional program O&E.

2.5. Outreach and Education Forms

Existing requirement: Multiple forms of O&E must be provided to ensure sufficient customer education and awareness of their opt-out enrollment in the CCA program. These forms may include:

- Public meetings that are held in person and are open to municipal residents. A webinar may be offered in conjunction with the public meeting as long as it allows for the ability for participants to ask questions.
- Tabling events within the municipality to promote the program.
- Media such as: Local radio and television advertisements about the program (advertising of upcoming meetings/events does not count).
- Newspaper ads about the CCA program (advertising of upcoming meetings/events does not count).
- Posters or other print media placed in community public locations such as local government offices, community centers, etc.

Proposed new requirement: Multiple O&E actions must be completed to ensure sufficient customer education and awareness of their opt-out enrollment in the CCA program. These actions must include:

- No less than two public meetings during the initial and any subsequent 90-day O&E period, and a minimum of two post-award meetings.
 - A postcard must be mailed to eligible participants, after the signing of the ESA, advising them of the contract terms/conditions and include notification of at least one of the post-award meetings. Similar to the current opt-out letters, postcards will be template based.
- In addition to these public meetings, at least two supplemental forms of O&E must be conducted. This can be:

- Tabling events within the municipality to promote the program.
- Media such as: Local radio and television advertisements about the program (advertising of upcoming meetings/events does not count).
- Newspaper ads about the CCA program (advertising of upcoming meetings/events does not count).
- Posters or other print media placed in community public locations such as local government offices, community centers, etc.
- Public Meeting Requirements:
 - The public meetings must be held in person and be open to municipal residents. A webinar may be offered in conjunction with the public meeting if it allows for the ability for participants to ask questions.
 - The meetings must be recorded, and they should be placed on the Administrators website, in the O&E section, for review by any interested party.
 - Meetings must be advertised via multiple forms such as newspapers, flyers, radio announcements, etc. Proof of such advertisement is required for verification. While encouraged as an additional option, stand-alone social media posts do not count as verifiable advertisements as the success of such postings hinges on not only community awareness of the social media page (which could be for the municipality, program, or Administrator) but on the customers' access to the internet and utilization of social media.
 - Advertising of the event must occur at least 15 days prior to the date of the event.
 - A record of attendance numbers must be kept and should not include attendees representing the CCA Administrator, the ESE, or the municipality.
 - For post-award meetings held after the approval of the Municipality Filing, this information should be placed on the CCA Administrators municipality specific CCA program webpage in the O&E section, that should include all O&E actions performed.

Purpose: Staff continues to see CCA Administrator confusion around requirements for O&E and a lack of what would be otherwise considered sufficient O&E, therefore, there is a need to provide clear and defined O&E requirements to ensure that all municipalities, and potential CCA participants, are receiving the same level of engagement and information sharing, regardless of who the CCA Administrator is. CCA policy goals - to facilitate customer awareness, actions, and energy choices - will only be feasible if customers are properly informed about their municipal program and fully engaged about their potential energy offerings. Staff has found that the current

requirements are not resulting in sufficient customer awareness of CCA programs in their municipalities. Staff have also seen numerous examples of poorly attended meetings and propose requiring an additional two meetings with the intention of providing more opportunities for community engagement. This proposal will ensure that sufficient O&E is being conducted and should lead to a reduction in the number of customer complaints regarding not being aware of their opt-out enrollment in a CCA program.

2.6. Outreach and Education Material

Existing requirement: At a minimum, O&E material must include the following information:

- CCA Administrator name and, if applicable, program name;
- CCA Administrator contact information and program specific website link;
- General information about the program;
- Information to inform municipal residents of opt-out enrollment;
- Information that informs customers how to read and comprehend their energy bills; and
- When available, contract terms, pricing, ability to opt-up or opt-down, and a price comparison that includes a disclosure that customers may pay a premium for renewable supply services though they will be contributing to NYS clean energy goals, if applicable.

Proposed new requirement: Staff proposes expansion of this required information regarding how a customer can read and comprehend their energy bills to now include an example of bill impacts using the contact pricing, including all pricing levels, in the post-award meetings. Staff also proposes to clarify that, while the general expectation is that all O&E material will include all the specified details, there may be instances in which that level of detail is not possible, such as including how to read and understand an energy bill on a postcard, flyer, or radio ad. Thus, Staff proposes that the requirement to provide information that informs customers how to read and comprehend their energy bills only be required in instances where a verbal presentation is made, such as in-person meetings.

Purpose: Once contract terms are in place, an Administrator will be capable of explaining to a potential customer how the supply contract's rate and options – if multiple supply options exist – will potentially change their energy payment. This will ensure that customers understand the estimated monetary impact their choice will have on their energy bill. Administrators will need to disclose that the utility posted 12-month trailing average⁶ used for price comparison is

⁶ Links to the utility posted 12-month trailing averages can be found on the Department's CCA webpage, available at: <https://dps.ny.gov/community-choice-aggregation>.

historical data and, therefore, a complete bill impact study is unfeasible. This additional requirement will enable the customer to make an informed decision on whether or not to participate and, if they choose to join the program, which supply option – if more than one is available to them – will be best for them. Also, this proposal allows the CCA Administrators, and the municipality they represent, the flexibility in developing an O&E plan that includes all necessary information while still taking into account practical limitations in certain O&E channels.

2.7. Pricing

Existing requirement: Fixed-rate products shall be limited to a price no greater than 5% above the trailing 12-month average utility supply rate, and variable-rate products must guarantee a savings compared to what the customer would pay as a full-service utility customer. Renewable product offerings will not have a price cap.

Proposed new requirement: When a CCA Administrator’s Municipality Filing includes a product offering with pricing higher than the utility posted 12-month trailing average, the municipality will need to affirmatively acknowledge the pricing differences between the CCA program and the distribution utility, as well as indicating their understanding of the potential bill impacts that would be experienced by CCA program participants. This acknowledgement would be included as part of the Municipality filing. Staff has further considered a requirement that municipalities communicate such pricing disparities directly to participating customers. This would result in two communications to the customer; one from the CCA Administrator via the opt-out letter and another from the municipality. Staff seeks comment on the feasibility of such a notification and the form it could take.

Purpose: Over the last few years, due predominantly to volatile market conditions, there has been an increase in the number of contracts that included pricing higher than the utility posted 12-month trailing average for both standard and renewable supply product offerings. The CCA Modification Order imposed additional pricing requirements to CCA product offerings.⁷ However, there is still a responsibility for ensuring potential participant awareness of these pricing differences and the potential for an increase in customer bills. The municipality, who is making the decision to go forward with the pricing on behalf of all eligible participants, has a responsibility to customers who would be opt-out enrolled under these pricing terms. This

⁷ CCA Modification Order, p. 51.

municipal acknowledgement is intended to ensure that municipalities and the potential program participants are aware of the pricing and its potential for unfavorable bill impacts on participants.

2.8. NYS Environmental Disclosure Program Disclosure

Existing requirements: Energy Service Companies (ESCOs) selling green products are required to disclose to customers the premium the customer will be charged for the purchase of the green product separate from the underlying commodity charge, and ESCOs providing green energy in the context of CCA must maintain auditable New-York-specific records to demonstrate that such customers are receiving green energy compliant with the environmental attributes and delivery rules of the Commission's Environmental Disclosure Program.

Proposed new requirements: Staff proposes to allow this requirement to be met by the existing disclosure requirements for the comparison of the utility posted 12-month trailing average, and for renewable product offerings, satisfied through the disclosure that the customer would be paying a premium for the offering.

Purpose: This modification reduces the potential for customer confusion by not requiring redundant, and potentially confusing, information to be included on customer communications since the opt-out letter already includes a disclosure statement that meets the requirement for disclosure of the premium the customer may be paying for the renewable product offering.

2.9. Opt-Out Letter

Existing requirements: The opt-out letter must explain that customers that do not opt-out will be enrolled in ESCO service under the contract terms and that information on those customers, including energy usage data and low-income status, will be provided to the ESCO serving the program.

Proposed new requirements: The opt-out letter notice of data sharing should be expanded to include notification that the customer contact information may be used for contact regarding additional opt-in product offering options. Administrators will provide a link for customers to find additional data sharing information; the link will include options for customers to opt-out of data sharing for the purposes of receiving marketing material for opt-in offerings. For clarification, the CCA Administrator only has access to the customer contact information and no other data, such as account number or customer energy usage data, would be available to any entity other than the ESCO serving the CCA program without the customer first consenting to that data to be shared with the CCA Administrator. To facilitate the ability for a customer to use a link and opt-out of sharing of their data for any purposes beyond CCA supply program

participation, the CCA Administrators would need to create a Data Privacy Rights process, consistent with current standards, that includes full disclosure to the customer of what data would be shared, for what purpose, for what length of time, and includes a means by which a customer can opt-out of their data being shared for these additional purposes, and request the return/destruction of any data previously shared. To be clear, a customer is unable to opt-out of their data being shared as part of their participation in the CCA supply program while simultaneously participating in the program. In other words, a customer who does not want any of their data (customer contact information and customer energy usage data) shared can simply opt-out of the entire program. A customer who wants to participate in the CCA's supply program but not be marketed for opt-in offerings via the CCA program can opt-out of data sharing. This decision to opt-out must also be recognized for the life of the program, consistent with current Commission opt-out requirements.

Purpose: This modification would ensure customers are adequately notified regarding what data will be shared, for what purpose and timeframe, and provide the ability for them to opt-out of their information being used for purposes outside of what is necessary to provide them with supply service. Adoption of this proposal would be consistent with Commission assertion of the data belonging to the customer and their ability to choose, how their data is shared, with whom, and for what purposes.⁸ With that, and in recognition of a customer's data rights, Staff continues to encourage Administrators to offer their participants opt-in offerings that promote and advance local energy goals as well as the achievement of the State's clean energy goals.

2.10. CCA Administrator Websites

Existing Requirement: To ensure necessary information is available to municipalities and customers, the following data points must be included on CCA program websites:

- CCA Administrator name and contact information.
- A list and link to all participating municipalities' program information including:
 - i) contract information with rates, identification of the ESCO providing commodity, price to compare information, opt-out periods, and O&E;
 - ii) municipal liaison information;
 - iii) customer service and complaint filing information;
 - iv) links to clearly identified opt-in offerings;

⁸ Case 20-M-0082, Strategic Use of Energy Related Data, Order Adopting a Data Access Framework and Establishing Further Process (issued April 14, 2021).

- v) links to the Department’s CCA webpage and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) CCA resource information (NYSERDA CCA Toolkit);
- vi) contact information for incumbent utility; and
- vii) adopted FAQs.

Proposed new requirement: Staff propose the CCA Administrator websites should have an O&E section on their website that is easy to find and includes all the O&E actions, including both necessary minimum requirements for compliance as well as additional channels utilized, with verification of such reported in the Municipality Filing. The Municipality Filing could then have a hyperlink to the supporting documentation for Staff review such that any interested stakeholder is able to find all O&E materials in a single place.

Purpose: This change would reduce the amount of information necessary to be included in filings and to provide a consistent avenue for information to be readily available and easy to find on each CCA Administrator website, regardless of who is looking for the information.

2.11. Utility Account Numbers

Existing requirement: Utilities are prohibited from providing CCA Administrators with customer utility account numbers and such account numbers should not be utilized for facilitation of a CCA program. Alternatively, CCA Administrators may use the utility provided Proxy Id# for identification of customers for opt-out enrollment. Additionally, the CCA Data Security Agreement (DSA) states that the “Aggregator shall not collect or retain customer account numbers through such interactions associated with its CCA program.”⁹

Proposed new requirement: Staff clarifies this requirement is for all CCA purposes, such that utility account numbers would not be required for any CCA program supply product offering enrollment (opt-out, opt-in, opt-up, opt-down) consistent with the existing requirement for the customer contact information data set for opt-out enrollment. This prohibition would also apply to customers affirmatively opting into a value-added offering. Staff seeks stakeholder feedback on how these opt-in enrollments could best be effectuated.

Purpose: This clarification ensures customer information is protected the way the Commission has intended it to be when it directed the removal of the account number from the available customer data, instead allowing the utilities to use an alternative method to identify customers, and excluded the ability for the CCA Administrator to collect or retain customer account

⁹ CCA DSA, p. 7.

numbers. The CCA Administrators have a list of all eligible customers and, after the opt-out period, participating customers. This listing provides sufficient details, including but not limited to the customer's name, address, and telephone number, for the CCA Administrators to be able to properly identify and process the customer request without the need for a utility account number.

3. Proposed Adoption of New Requirements

The below section proposes new requirements and includes a purpose for why the proposed modification is being recommended as part of the O&E requirements.

3.1. Community Awareness

Proposed new requirement: In the event that there are specific circumstances that demonstrate insufficient community awareness, Staff will request a response from the CCA Administrator and municipality regarding the O&E and, if necessary, file a request to the Commission to impose additional O&E requirements on a CCA Administrator. Staff does not expect this to be a necessary action in most instances, but if Staff is made aware of a significant lack of community awareness, even after a program is already active, from customer complaints, municipal contact, ESE contact, or by other means, Staff may then request additional information from the CCA Administrator, and, if deemed necessary, make a request to the Commission to require additional O&E actions be performed, such as O&E that is more specific to the municipality and the details of opt-out enrollment. For example, if the community is predominantly limited English proficiency (LEP) customers and there has not been any outreach performed to reach those individuals, then there may be a requirement for a meeting specific to that part of the municipal population.

Purpose: Administrators need to be able to demonstrate that the O&E plans for each municipality are the right size plan and provide the necessary details for that community in a way that reaches as many of the constituents as possible. Meaning, that while a small municipality with a beneficial rate may only need the minimum O&E standards identified, larger communities or those with pricing concerns would need to have a much more robust O&E plan that demonstrates the CCA Administrators actions have been tailored to that community and to reach as many of the potential participants as possible. The Administrators could be looking at municipal demographic information for things like population size, ages, and LEP needs, when determining the municipality O&E plan. This proposal would allow for the Commission to impose additional O&E requirements, on a case-by-case basis, if it has been demonstrated that there is a specific

circumstance that should require it, or a CCA Administrator is unable to demonstrate sufficient community awareness of opt-out enrollment. Thereby further protecting opt-out eligible customers and ensuring that CCA Administrators, and the municipalities they serve, are properly and sufficiently educating potential program participants.

3.2. Program/Contract Expiration

Proposed new requirement: At a minimum, the Administrator must provide one letter at least 30-days prior to the anticipated end date of the program/contract to the municipality and program participants. This notification must include:

- a. Notification that the contract/program is ending and the reason why;
- b. Plans for any future actions if known, such as starting back up at a later time or plans to seek better pricing;
- c. Advise the participant that they will be returned to the utility for supply services after a specific date; and
- d. Provide contact information for questions.

Purpose: This requirement will ensure that municipalities and program participants are aware of what is happening with the CCA program at the time when the existing supply contract is coming to an end. This will give participants time to decide if they wish to seek an alternative provider instead of returning to the incumbent utility and will afford municipalities time to decide if they wish to seek out an alternative CCA Administrator for a different program offering.

3.3. Newly Eligible Opt-Out Letters

Proposed new requirement: Current process has the newly eligible opt-out letters being approved as part of the Municipality Filing with the understanding that only date fields would be changed before being mailed to the newly opt-out eligible account holder. Staff proposes that the newly eligible opt-out letter continue to be approved as part of the Municipality Filing but that the Price to Compare information be updated prior to the mailing of the letters each month such that the customer is furnished with the most up to date price to compare at the time of enrollment. The CCA Administrator would not need approval before mailing the letters but would need to e-file a copy of the updated Newly Eligible letter that includes the current Price to Compare information.

Purpose: Potential CCA program participants should be provided with the same level of information and detail when making their decision to participate or not, as those who were part of the initial opt-out period. For this to happen, the Newly Eligible letters must be required to

provide the most recent utility posted 12-month trailing average and not use the outdated information from the initial opt-out letters. By requiring a subsequent filing of the updated letter, stakeholders, and Staff, are able to easily verify what information was included on the letters when they were mailed.

3.4. Municipality Bill of Rights

Proposed new requirement: To ensure a municipality is aware of the rights and responsibilities of all parties, Staff recommends the adoption of a Municipality Bill of Rights that must be signed by each municipality and included as part of the Municipality Filing. The proposed Municipality Bill or Rights is included with this filing and, if adopted, would be a template included on the Departments CCA webpage.

Purpose: There have been instances where a municipality does not seem to have been made aware of its rights and responsibilities when they have implemented a CCA program. Staff believes that providing this notification, with municipal signature, will increase the awareness of the municipal leaders about what the municipality is entitled to as part of their participation in a CCA program, the municipality responsibilities, even when they have a CCA Administrator, and of the resources available for questions or assistance at both a municipal and participant level.

4. Conclusion

This proposal makes recommendations intended to strengthen the O&E requirements to provide reassurance to consumers and municipalities that the appropriate protections are in place to safely participate in an opt-out CCA program, as well as enable Staff to efficiently and effectively continue program oversight and promote compliance. These proposals provide more clarity and definition around the minimum requirements that must be met for approval to move forward with an opt-out CCA program. Staff seeks comments on these proposals and any additional recommendations intended to build robust O&E plans and increase the amount of community awareness from what has been seen in the past.