

STATE OF NEW YORK
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

At a session of the Public Service
Commission held in the City of
New York on May 22, 2002

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Maureen O. Helmer, 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 ADOPTING REINSTATEMENT TRANSACTION STANDARD
AND TEST PLANS FOR THE
ACCOUNT MAINTENANCE TRANSACTION STANDARD

(Issued and Effective May 29, 2002)

BY THE COMMISSION:

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is the computer-to-computer exchange of routine business information in a standard form. In Opinion 00-05¹ the Commission required retail access market participants to begin implementing EDI systems to facilitate the electronic exchange of the data necessary to support various retail access activities such as switching customers from one commodity supplier to another, providing historic and current usage data, updating customer records,

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

rendering bills and collecting payments. The transition to EDI standards was subsequently re-affirmed in Opinion 01-03.²

The implementation of EDI in New York requires the development, approval, programming and testing of a variety of EDI data standards. The Accredited Standards Committee of the American National Standards Institute currently maintains the X12 version of national EDI standards. These national standards, which have been in place for many years, were created to accommodate the business needs of a wide range of user industries. More than 100 transaction set standards are currently available. In prior orders, the Commission has already adopted a number of EDI data standards for use in New York, modeled on these national standards, and implementation of these adopted standards is now being tested.³

By this order the Commission approves an 814 Reinstatement Transaction Standard⁴ and adopts test plans for

² Case 98-M-0667, In the Matter of Electric Data Interchange, Opinion No. 01-03, Opinion and Order Approving EDI Data Standards and Data Protocols and Modifying the New York Uniform Business Practices for EDI Implementation, (issued July 23, 2001).

³ For example, the New York TS814 Enrollment Request & Response standard is used by an ESCO/Marketer to request enrollment for a specific customer and is used by the Utility to respond to the ESCO/Marketer request. Similarly, the New York TS814 Consumption History Request & Response standard is used to request a customer's historic data and to respond to that request.

⁴ The 814 Reinstatement Transaction Standard pertains to requests to reinstate a customer with their previous commodity supplier when an enrollment request is currently pending for a new supplier. This standard is comprised of three documents: Reinstatement Business Processes, an 814 Reinstatement Implementation Guide, and an 814 Reinstatement Data Dictionary.

the New York 814 Account Maintenance Standard (Change).⁵ A proposed Reinstatement standard was filed by the New York EDI Collaborative on December 17, 2001,⁶ and noticed in the State Register on January 2, 2002. The test plans associated with the Change transaction were filed on December 21, 2001, and noticed in the State Register on January 9, 2002. The comment periods expired on February 16 and February 23, 2002, respectively. Comments were filed by New York State Electric and Gas Corporation (NYSEG) and jointly by Consolidated Edison of New York, Inc. and Orange & Rockland Utilities, Inc. (Con Edison).

We shall approve the filed documents with the modifications set forth in the discussion below. With respect to the 814 Reinstatement Standard, the standards documents will be published on the Commission's web site and distributed electronically to the EDI Active Parties List. In addition, we expect proposed test plans for the approved Reinstatement Standard to be filed for formal comment within 21 days. With respect to the test plans associated with the 814 Change Standard, parties are directed to commence Phase I testing on this standard within 60 days.

⁵ The 814 Change standard is used by either the Utility or ESCO/Marketer to apprise the recipient of changes in a specific customer's status such as changes in mailing address, meter or bill cycle, bill option, enrollment or termination of budget billing, prices or rates used to calculate customer's bills, meter or measurement changes, etc. The test plans for this transaction are quite complex because of the scope of the data elements that can be changed and the fact that a change in one element may result in changes in other information.

⁶ The proposed Phase I, Phase II and Phase III test plans for the 814 Change transaction standard are documented in Supplement 2 to the Technical Operating Profile for Electronic Data Interchange in New York.

SUMMARY AND DISPOSITION OF COMMENTS

Comments on 814 Change Test Plans

In its comments, Con Edison suggested that Supplement 2 of the Technical Operating Profile, containing the Phase I test scenarios for the Change transaction standard, be modified to eliminate two test scenarios, to address tax information transfers, to clarify four other test scenarios, and to add four additional test scenarios to the plan.

Elimination of Some Tests

Con Edison recommends eliminating a test scenario in which a Utility would request that a customer's bill option be changed to the ESCO Bill Ready model (AC-UTIL02REQ). These comments were filed prior to release of a related order in the billing proceeding. That order now makes Con Edison's comments on this test moot. For similar reasons, Con Edison also recommended that a test of an ESCOs ability to reject a Utility request for a change in billing option should be eliminated.

Discussion

The Business Practices have been modified to clarify that customers seeking a change in their billing option must contact their ESCOs to make such a request.⁷ The proposed test cited by Con Edison is now unnecessary since an 814 Change transaction would never be initiated by the Utility to change a customer's bill option to the ESCO Bill Ready model. These tests will be eliminated from the plan based on the fact that the Business Practices have been modified to clarify that customers seeking a change in their bill option must contact the ESCO to make such a request.

⁷ Case 99-M-0661, In the Matter of Customer Billing Arrangements, and Case 98-M-1343, In the Matter of Retail Access Business Practices, Order Resolving Petitions for Rehearing (issued March 14, 2002) at page 14.

Modification of Utility Test

Con Edison recommends modifying a test for a utility accept response to multiple requested changes (AC-UTIL06RES) to change the phrase "tax exemption percent" to "tax information." In their view, this would allow ESCO/Marketers to provide tax rate information via an EDI transaction that Con Edison contends is a requirement.

Discussion

With regard to tax information, the March 14 order on billing practices states that "...the billing party will calculate the sales and use taxes added to customers' bills based on tax rate information acceptable to the non-billing party."⁸ It should be noted that Con Edison has filed a petition for rehearing of the March 14 order in which they suggest that ESCOs be required to provide tax rate information to the utility. Small Marketers have filed reply comments in opposition to Con Edison's suggested practice. We reject the request to modify this test at this time since resolution of this issue is pending in another proceeding.

Clarification of certain ESCO tests

Con Edison contends that the documentation for four ESCO tests is inadequate since the descriptions do not clearly indicate which data element(s) would be changed. Two of these tests were designed to accommodate scenarios in which the ESCO's customer is enrolled for Utility Rate Ready billing and the ESCO wants to change the price or rate used by the Utility to calculate billed charges for the ESCO's customer. One test concerns a change in either commodity price or fixed charge amount (AC-EM02REQ) while the other test (AC-EM03REQ) focuses on a request to change a rate code when the ESCOs customer is on

⁸ Ibid., page 5.

Utility Rate Ready billing and references to codes, in lieu of prices, will be used to calculate the customer's billed charges.

Con Edison believes that the description of a third test (AC-EM04REQ) should be modified to "include the change to billing option dependent data elements" and that a test for an ESCO accept response to a utility request for multiple changes (AC-EM05REQ) should specify what meter information is being changed. According to Con Edison, the documentation for this test should also clarify that meter exchange information is being communicated.

Discussion

We are satisfied that all of these tests are sufficiently documented and no modifications or clarifications to the test scenarios are necessary.

Addition of other tests

Lastly, Con Edison recommends that certain other tests be added to Supplement 2 "...because the tests proposed in the filing do not address all common scenarios." The four tests proposed by Con Edison are: 1) ESCO/Marketer Test for changes to ESCO/Marketer rate and tax rate where billing option is Utility Rate Ready with ESCO/Marketer commodity charge at account level, 2) ESCO/Marketer Test for change in billing option from Dual Bill to Utility Rate Ready, 3) ESCO/Marketer Test for change in billing option from ESCO Bill Ready to Dual Bill, and 4) ESCO/Marketer Test for change of ESCO/Marketer customer account number.

Discussion

The first three proposed tests will be added. They are fundamental bill option changes that clearly require Phase I testing. The fourth proposed test is unnecessary because the ESCO/Marketer customer account number is an optional parameter and most of the utilities will not track or process this data on

a change request transaction. Further, a change in an account number is a simple change and is unrelated to changes in any other data elements.

Comments on 814 Reinstatement Transaction Standard

In its comments, NYSEG notes that timely implementation of EDI is critical to the continued success of the provision of retail access to consumers and that such systems will greatly facilitate the transition to a robust retail access environment. NYSEG generally endorsed the EDI business processes and data standards and notes that it believes that the requirements in the filings will ensure, to the extent possible, statewide uniformity in the EDI systems of market participants.

Con Edison seeks minor modifications in the text of the Reinstatement Business Process document and the 814 Reinstatement Implementation Guide. In addition, it takes issue with the business processes associated with the Reinstatement Standard.

An 814 Reinstatement transaction is used to reinstate a customer with its previous commodity supplier when an enrollment request is currently pending for a new supplier. Under the Uniform Business Practices as modified in Opinion 01-03, when a request is received from an ESCO/Marketer to enroll a customer, the utility must send a verification letter to the customer within three calendar days. The verification letter notifies the customer that an enrollment with a new

supplier is pending, and if they do not contact the utility by a specific date, they will be enrolled with the new supplier.⁹

Based on the date a customer contacts the utility to cancel a pending enrollment either (A) the customer is switched to bundled utility service or is reinstated with their current ESCO/Marketer, at the customer's discretion, or (B) the customer is switched to the new supplier for at least one cycle. Option A is only possible when the utility receives notice from the customer a minimum of three business days in advance of the effective date for the pending enrollment; otherwise Option B applies. If Option B were implemented, supply service with the new ESCO/Marketer would automatically be discontinued on the customer's next regularly scheduled meter read date, or for gas, on the first of the month.

First, Con Edison requests that the Reinstatement Business Process Document be modified to make it clear that the utility is the only party who may initiate an EDI Reinstatement request transaction. Next, Con Edison requests that a new segment be added to the Reinstatement Standard to permit the exchange of a Utility assigned account number for the ESCO/Marketer.

In addition to these minor corrections, Con Edison raises concerns with what it describes as the disadvantageous consequences of implementing Option B, as described above, in instances in which a customer wants to cancel the pending enrollment but did not provide timely notice to the utility.

⁹ In Opinion 01-03, we modified the Uniform Business Practices to reduce the amount of time the utility has to send the verification letter to the customer (from five days to three calendar days) and to increase the pending period for an enrollment (from 10 days to 15 days) thereby increasing the time customer's have to contact a utility to cancel a pending enrollment.

Con Edison believes that this process will result in customer complaints due to confusion and dissatisfaction and will not allow customer requests to be fulfilled in accordance with customer expectations, particularly with respect to instances of slamming and requests for consolidated billing. Based on Con Edison's experience in such cases, it asserts that customers do not want to become active with an ESCO/Marketer, even for the limited period of one billing cycle (the period they would be required to enroll with the "slamming ESCO/Marketer"). In addition, Con Edison asserts that this process limits the utility's ability to carry out other customer requests, such as honoring a request to change the customer's bill option.

Discussion

The Reinstatement Business Process Document has been modified to make it clear that the utility is the only party who may initiate an EDI Reinstatement request transaction. The technical documents have been modified to add an account number data segment to be exchanged with the mutual agreement of the Utility and ESCO/Marketer. Further, Staff has recommended that this change be made to all transaction standards of the 814 type to maintain consistency across these standards. Following a required statutory notice period, Staff's proposes to issue for Commission approval updated versions of all approved 814 transaction standards to incorporate this additional data segment provided that no party files compelling arguments in opposition.

Con Edison has not presented a persuasive argument for modifying the conclusions reached in Opinion 01-03 regarding the reinstatement process. Under the process originally proposed by the Collaborative in the Enrollment Business Process Document, customers could have canceled a pending enrollment up to the day before the effective date and then the customer would

automatically default to utility bundled service. That process would have afforded the pending ESCO/Marketer little or no notice that the enrollment had been canceled. In addition the customer who had been switched to utility bundled service had to initiate a new enrollment to be reinstated with their current supplier. The process adopted in Opinion 01-03 mitigated both concerns by ensuring that pending ESCO/Marketers receive a minimum of two days notice when an enrollment is canceled and customers who cancel within the prescribed time limits can be seamlessly reinstated with their prior supplier. As Con Edison has pointed out in its comments, a small group of customers could be disadvantaged by the current reinstatement process. Con Edison underscores the potential for confusion and dissatisfaction on the part of customers who may have been slammed but must be enrolled with the pending ESCO/Marketer anyway.

The determination that slamming has occurred is an after-the-fact determination made by Staff, not the utility. The utility cannot determine whether a customer has been slammed at the time a customer contacts it to cancel a pending enrollment. If Staff later finds that this customer was actually slammed, the ESCO/Marketer is still fully responsible for all wrongful charges applied to customers' bills and for all reasonable costs incurred by the utilities. Thus customers who are initially switched to a pending E/M against their wishes because they did not provide the utility with timely notice of cancellation are not, in the long term, financially disadvantaged if in fact they were slammed. Further, Staff reports that the number of customers who have actually been slammed by ESCO/Marketers is a small percentage of the total number of slamming incidents reported by the utilities.

Con Edison did not offer an alternative to the current process that would address the concerns raised by the parties. The business processes associated with reinstatement must balance a number of competing interests and there is as yet no alternative that would satisfy the interests of all parties. Con Edison should mitigate some of the anticipated customer confusion and dissatisfaction through its customer outreach efforts and in modifying its customer verification letters to highlight the need for prompt customer action.

The Commission orders:

1. All affected parties are directed to comply with the Phase I, II and III testing procedures for the 814 Change transaction, with modifications set forth in the discussion herein, documented in Supplement 2 of the Technical Operating Profile document. Parties are directed to commence Phase I testing on this standard within 60 days.
2. The 814 Reinstatement Standard is adopted with modifications as discussed herein.
3. This proceeding is continued.

By the Commission,

(SIGNED)

JANET HAND DEIXLER
Secretary

Note: The following documents are 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">• Technical Operating Profile for Electronic Data Interchange in New York, Supplement 2
SUPPLEMENT B	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New York EDI Transaction Standard for TS814 Reinstatement• TS814 reinstatement Data Dictionary• Reinstatement Business Process