Joint Utilities Briefing on Alternatives to Bill Option on EDI 867 Transaction

Background

On July 09, 2020 representatives from the Joint Utilities met with staff to discuss their views on converting the previously agreed-on optional bill type indicator into a mandatory bill option field in 867 transactions. This bill option field indicates whether the customer is billed on utility consolidated billing or is dual-billed, requiring the ESCO to separately bill for its supply. During this meeting, the JUs expressed concern over mandating this field, stating that there are alternative ways ESCOs and EDI providers can find this information using the existing technology. Staff then asked the JUs to put together a list of ways that current EDI transactions and utility systems allow ESCOs or EDI providers to identify where there is a billing issue with a customer to discuss during the July NY EDI Working Group call both to review viability and for learning purposes. In addition to these system indicators, ESCOs can, and presumably should, be discussing with a potential or existing customer how the customer is billed, whether the customer is enrolled in any special utility-offered programs, etc. ESCOs can easily add these types of questions to their scripts if they do not already have them.

Review 824 Rejections

For utilities that are bill ready, when receiving an 824 rejection, the ESCO or provider can review the item to determine if an 810 (the transaction that includes supply charges) was sent at the proper time or if another issue may have caused the rejection. As part of the investigation, the ESCO or provider can contact the utility to ask how the account is supposed to be billed.

Ongoing Customer Lists

Some utilities, including Central Hudson, Con Edison, and O&R include the bill type in the monthly customer listings that are posted to a supplier's website. NYSEG/RG&E are considering adding a column to the weekly customer list that posts to ESCO secured websites that indicates the bill option so ESCOs/third parties can periodically preform a bill option reconciliation. This is an easy indicator of the way all ESCO customers are billed. To the extent supplier websites are not open to or shared with EDI providers, the ESCOs themselves can easily work with EDI providers to make sure they have whatever information is necessary to make their relationships work.

814 Initial Enrollments

The bill type is indicated in the 814 responses sent back to the ECSOs. ESCOs can easily review this information to determine the way their customers are billed to the extent they haven't already determined that in the sign-up process or otherwise.

810s and 820s

If an ESCO receives 810 or 820 transactions, these are indicators that the customer in question is single-billed at the utility, and if the ECSO doesn't then this is an indicator that the customer is dual-billed at the utility. ESCOs can monitor the types of billing transactions to make sure they are properly accounting for the way their customers are billed.

Utility Contact

If ESCOs or third parties have questions about a customer's current bill option, they can email their Supplier Relations contact.

Conclusion

The joint utilities agree that the above-mentioned tools can be used to determine whether a customer is single or dual-billed and that these should be sufficient to avoid over or undercharging customers. As this is not a necessary change, the JUs think it better to focus time and resources on those changes which are needed.

Examples of Individual Utility Write-Ups

The following are two examples of individual utility write-ups JUs may potentially create. This will help ESCOs and EDI providers understand the tools each individual utility has to address the bill option issue.

NYSEG/RG&E - current EDI transactions/tools currently in place which they can use to determine the bill option, as well as potential new ones

Outside Bill Window (OBW) rejection

ESCO's/third parties are responsible for reviewing EDI transactions.

If 824 rejection received, please review EDI transactions for the following

- Confirm 810 was actually sent during open bill window (would confirm this with your third party provider –if applicable)
- Bill windows are 2 business days (holidays and weekends not counted), not 48 hours.

  The first day you receive the EDI 867 is Day 1, you have until 4:30 p.m. the following business day (Day 2) to return your 810 or it will reject OBW. If the 810 is received after 4:30pm on Day 2, it will reject. ESCO/EDI Providers are responsible to track this and apply the missed bill window charges on the next 810; or if the account is finaled and will not be another open bill window you will need to dual bill)

  Two-Day Bill Window Example: You receive an EDI 867 MU (usage record) on a Friday; you have until 4:30 p.m. the following Monday to return your EDI 810. Anything received after 4:30 p.m. is considered as received the following day.

- If 810 was sent during open bill window, please check your records for the following
  - Is the account single or dual billed? If account is dual billed, OBW rejection will be sent. (to determine this you would check EDI to see if you enrolled it dual billed or if you sent an 814c to change to dual billing; OR check to see if the utility sent you an email alerting you it needed to be changed to dual billing (rare circumstance where customer has elected a specialized billing option not compatible with single bill)
  - Was the correct 867 cross reference used on the 810?
  - Did you use the ESCO account# referenced in the 867mu?
  - NYSEG/RG&E are looking into adding a column to the weekly customer list that post to ESCO secured website that indicates the bill option so ESCOs/third parties can periodically preform a bill option reconciliation.
  - If ESCOs or third parties have questions about a customer's current bill option –they can email their Supplier Relations contact

Central Hudson

Central Hudson lists the bill type on the monthly customer listing that is posted to the supplier website. They may also reach out to retailaccess@cenhud.com if there are any questions.