



## STATE OF CONNECTICUT NEWS RELEASE

Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

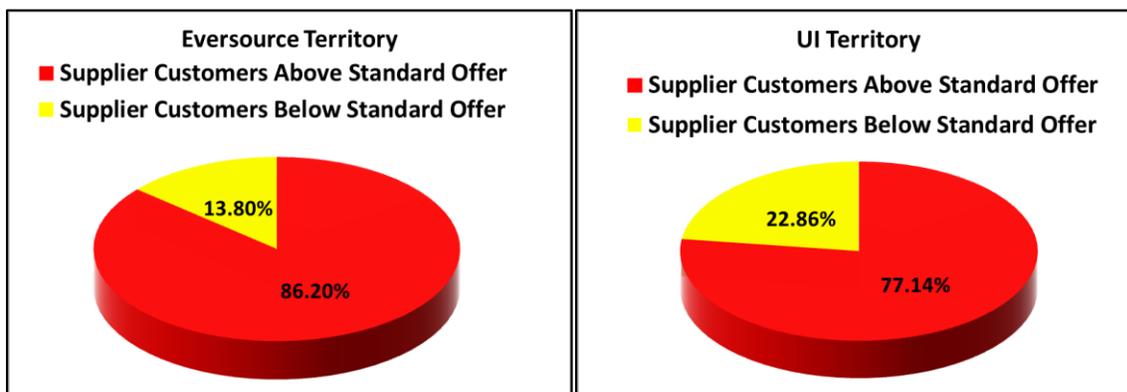
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### **MOST CUSTOMERS OF ELECTRIC SUPPLIERS PAID MORE THAN THE STANDARD SERVICE RATE IN AUGUST; OVERALL COST TO ELECTRIC SUPPLIER CUSTOMERS IS \$23 MILLION EXTRA THIS YEAR.**

**NEW BRITAIN, Conn. (October 19, 2015)** – Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz is advising Connecticut consumers who currently purchase their electricity from third-party retail electric suppliers to take a close look at their electric bills this month. Data provided to the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) demonstrates that 86 percent of Eversource customers and 77 percent of United Illuminating (UI) customers paid more than the standard service rate in August if they used a retail electric supplier, with some customers paying prices as high as 23.7 cents per kilowatt hour (cents/kWh).



The Eversource standard service rate is 8.2 cents/kWh, while the United Illuminating (UI) standard service rate is 9.12 cents/kWh. Both standard service rates are set through December 31, 2015. In August 2015 alone, Eversource customers who chose electric suppliers paid, in aggregate, approximately **\$8.4 million more** than the standard service rate for their electric generation, and UI customers who chose electric suppliers paid, in aggregate, approximately **\$2 million more** than the standard service rate.

"Customers should be aware that switching to a retail electric supplier can be a risky proposition," said Consumer Counsel Katz. "Some suppliers are charging certain customers more than twice the standard service rate, even in the summer months. OCC has determined that between January and August of this year, Connecticut customers of electric suppliers, as a group, paid more than \$23 million more for electricity than if they had been on standard service. OCC will continue to update this number, as well as OCC's Fact Sheet on the Electric Supplier Market provided on OCC's website, as more data becomes available."

The following electric suppliers charged a significant number of their customers 13.9 cents/kWh or more (50% more than the CL&P standard offer) in August:

<b>Suppliers Charging at Least 20% of their Customers 13.9¢/kWh or more in August</b>			
Electric Supplier	% of Eversource Customers paying over 13.9 cents	% of UI Customers paying over 13.9 cents	Supplier Phone Number
Choice Energy	50.66%	58.16%	(888) 565-4490
Clearview Electric	39.22%	40.03%	(888) 257-8439
Connecticut Gas & Electric	39.17%	49.41%	(866) 568-0289
Direct Energy Services, LLC	35.36%	40.81%	(888) 998-6415
Energy Plus Holdings, LLC	71.72%	64.51%	(888) 766-3509
NRG Retail Solutions	79.15%	N/A	(855) 500-8703
Palmco Power CT, LLC	89.10%	90.53%	(877) 726-5862
Public Power, LLC	38.36%	36.54%	(888) 354-4415
Spark Energy LP	52.22%	49.55%	(877) 374-8013
Starion Energy, Inc.	38.68%	44.29%	(800) 600-3040
Verde Energy USA, Inc.	31.91%	32.51%	(800) 388-3862
Viridian Energy Inc.	21.74%	27.62%	(866) 663-2508

Eversource, which serves a total of 1,107,562 residential customers in Connecticut, has reported that 384,437 of its customers – representing 34.7 percent – are served by retail electric suppliers. UI, which serves a total of 297,408 residential customers in Connecticut, has reported that 114,542 of its customers – representing 38.5 percent – are served by electric suppliers.

Checking an electric bill to determine the generation service rate is easy. Your current electric bill details the generation services rate and the terms of that rate, including the expiration date, on the lower left side of the bill. Switching to standard service is also easy. To make the switch, simply call Eversource at 800-286-2000 or United Illuminating at 800-722-5584, and the utility should effect the switch within 72 hours. Be aware that some electric suppliers do charge early termination fees, and whether you will be subject to a fee should be disclosed in your service contract; termination fees are capped by law at \$50 for residential customers. Consumers may also check whether other electric suppliers have rate offers that are below the standard service rate by visiting [www.energizect.com/compare-energy-suppliers](http://www.energizect.com/compare-energy-suppliers). In comparing supplier offers, consumers should also be mindful of any fees charged by suppliers that would diminish any projected savings.

Legislation passed this year prohibits electric suppliers from signing up customers for variable rate contracts with rates that can change monthly and from renewing existing contracts into variable rates; the prohibition began October 1, but applies only to new contracts and contracts that are renewed after October 1, and does not eliminate variable rates if a customer was on such a rate as of October 1.

Legislation passed in recent years to reform the electric supplier market has created new consumer and rate disclosure requirements, decreased the switch delay when consumers choose to leave a supplier, imposed a fixed-rate requirement in supplier contracts and empowered the state Public Utilities Regulatory Authority to develop new regulations on sales and telemarketing practices.

Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz thanks her staff, including John Viglione, Dave Thompson, Victoria Hackett, Lauren Bidra and Joe Rosenthal, for developing the data provided in the OCC Fact Sheet and in this press release.

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*The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) is the State of Connecticut's advocate for consumers on issues relating to electricity, natural gas, water, and telecommunications. For more information, visit [www.ct.gov/occ](http://www.ct.gov/occ).*