

MD PSC Survey of Residential Electric Customers

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>int1< Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling from RKM Research and Communications on behalf of the Maryland Public Service Commission. We are conducting a survey and we'd like to speak to one of the heads of household who makes decisions about your household utilities.

“...would that be you?” or “...is he/she available?”

Please be assured that this is not a sales call. We are only interested in your opinions.

I want to assure you that your telephone number was chosen randomly, and all of your responses are completely confidential.

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|----------------------|
| <1> | Eligible respondent | Continue |
| <2> | Call back | Setup an appointment |
| <9> | Refusal | Thank and terminate |

>scr1< First, I want to verify that I have reached you at [fill telephone number]?

| | | |
|-----|----------------------|---------------------|
| <1> | Yes, correct number | Continue |
| <2> | No, incorrect number | Thank and terminate |

>scr2< And are you 18 years of age or older?

| | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| <1> | Yes | Continue |
| <2> | No | Speak to adult decision maker [if not available: terminate] |

>scr3< Do you, or anyone in your household, work for:

Read responses:

| | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| <1> | A natural gas, propane, oil, gas, or electric company | Terminate |
| <2> | The Public Service Commission | Terminate |
| <3> | No | Continue |

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Awareness of Electricity Issue:

>q01< Do you recall reading, hearing or seeing anything in the news about the supply of electricity during the past 6 months?

Do not read: (Circle all mentioned)

<0> Nothing in particular

<1> California situation (rolling black-outs) electricity shortages

<2> Electric deregulation / restructuring (in California)

<3> Introduction of electric competition in Maryland

<4> Electric deregulation / restructuring in Maryland

<8> Other (specify)

>q01a< Enter Second Response:

>q01b< Enter Third Response:

Current Electric Utility:

>q02< What is the name of your current local electric utility company?

Do not read:

<1> A & N Electric Cooperative

<2> Allegheny Power

<3> Baltimore Gas and Electric (BG&E)

<4> Berlin Municipal Electric Company

<5> Choptank Electric Cooperative

<6> Delmarva / Conectiv

<7> Easton Utilities Commission

<8> Hagerstown Municipal Electric Light

<9> Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO)

<10> Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative

<11> Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative

<12> Thurmont Municipal Light Company

<13> Williamsport Municipal Electric System

<88> Other (specify)

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Interest and View Toward Competition:

>q03< How much have you heard about electric competition in Maryland?

Read responses:

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|------------|
| <1> | A great deal | [goto q04] |
| <2> | Only a little | [goto q04] |
| <3> | Nothing at all | [goto q05] |

>q04< Where do you recall reading, hearing or seeing anything about electric competition in Maryland?

Do not read:

(Circle all mentioned)

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|
| <1> | A community organization | <8> | Story on the TV news |
| <2> | An advertisement | <9> | Information on the Internet |
| <3> | Radio | <10> | Your current local electric utility |
| <4> | Newspaper | <11> | A friend, neighbor, co-worker |
| <5> | Magazine | <12> | A family member |
| <6> | Television commercial | <13> | A representative from the PSC |
| <7> | Article in a newspaper | <14> | A business organization |
| | | <15> | Toll-free 1-800 number |
| | | <16> | Website (Internet) |
| | | <88> | Other (specify) |
| | | <99> | Don't know / unsure |

>q04a< Enter Second Response:

>q04b< Enter Third Response:

>q05< As far as you know, what is the current status of electric competition in Maryland?

Read responses:

(Circle all mentioned)

- | | |
|-----|--|
| <1> | It is a fully regulated industry |
| <2> | It is in a transition period between a fully regulated industry and fully competitive industry |
| <3> | It is a fully competitive industry |
| <9> | Don't know / unsure |

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>q06< Based on what you've read or heard, do you think that competition in the electric industry is a good idea or a bad idea?

<1> Good idea [goto q08]

<2> Bad idea [goto q07]

<9> Don't know / no opinion [goto q08]

>q07< In your own words, why do you think it is a bad idea?

Open-ended

====>[specify]

>q08< How interested are you in the idea of being able to choose which supplier you purchase your electricity from?

Read responses:

<1> Very interested

<2> Somewhat interested

<3> Not interested

<9> Don't know / no answer

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Understanding and Knowledge of the Electric System:

>q09< In general, how would you describe your overall knowledge of the way electricity is generated, transmitted and distributed to residential customers in Maryland?

Read responses:

- <1> Very knowledgeable
- <2> Somewhat knowledgeable
- <3> Not very knowledgeable

- <9> Don't know / no answer

>q10< Now I'm going to ask you a series of yes or no questions. We are only interested in finding out what you know about the current electric industry. If you are unsure about a question, please feel free to say so.

After standard offer service ends, the cost to transmit and distribute electricity to your home will continue to be regulated by the Public Service Commission?

- <1> Yes (correct)
- <2> No

- <9> Unsure/don't know

>q11< After standard offer service ends, customers will receive more than one electric bill each month?

- <1> Yes (correct: commercial customers)
- <2> No (correct: residential customers)

- <9> Unsure/don't know

>q12< After standard offer service ends, the new electric power suppliers are responsible for repairs of poles and power lines following an outage?

- <1> Yes
- <2> No (correct)

- <9> Unsure/don't know

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- >q13< In order to switch to a new electric power supplier, customers are required to first notify their current local utility company?
- <1> Yes
<2> No (correct)
<9> Unsure/don't know
- >q14< If a customer does not choose a new electric power supplier, that customer will eventually be placed in default power service?
- <1> Yes (correct)
<2> No
<9> Unsure/don't know
- >q15< Once a customer is in default power service, that customer is still able to switch to a new electric power supplier?
- <1> Yes (correct)
<2> No
<9> Unsure/don't know
- >q16< After standard offer service ends, there will be fewer regulations to prevent the electric power suppliers from shutting off electric service to residential and business customers?
- <1> Yes
<2> No (correct)
<9> Unsure/don't know
- >q17< The change from standard offer service to a fully competitive market place will happen at different times for residential and commercial customers in each utility's service area over the next 6 years.
- <1> Yes (correct)
<2> No
<9> Unsure/don't know

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>q18< If your competitive electricity supplier goes out of business, or decides to no longer sell electricity in Maryland, you will be automatically placed in default service with no interruption of service.

<1> Yes (correct)

<2> No

<9> Unsure/don't know

>q19< After standard offer service ends, who do you call if your electricity goes out?

Do not read:

<1> Current electric utility

<2> New electric power supplier

<8> Other (specify)

<9> Unsure/don't know

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Status of Electric Competition:

>q20< How well do you understand the current status of electric competition in Maryland? Would you say that:

Read responses:

- <1> The issue is very clear to you
- <2> The issue is somewhat clear to you
- <3> The issue is not clear at all to you

- <9> Don't know / unsure

>q21< Depending where you are located in Maryland, standard offer service will eventually come to an end and the price to generate electricity will be determined by market forces. How would you describe your overall knowledge about the end of standard offer service?

Read responses:

- <1> Very knowledgeable
- <2> Somewhat knowledgeable
- <3> Not very knowledgeable

- <9> Don't know / no answer

>q22< At the end of standard offer service, consumers will automatically receive default service if they have not selected a new electric power supplier. What does default service mean to you?

Open-ended

===>[specify]

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>q23<

Default service is the current term used to describe the type of service that is automatically available to all consumers who have not chosen an electric supplier, or whose supplier either goes out of business or withdraws from the Maryland marketplace. This type of service occurs so that consumers experience no loss of service when switching between suppliers, or when a supplier no longer offers service. In your view, which of the following would be the most appropriate term to describe this type of service?

Read responses:

[note.- random order the list]

- <1> Automatic service
- <2> Backup service
- <3> Basic service
- <4> Default service
- <5> Generic service
- <6> Non-competitive service
- <7> Standard service

- <9> No preference

>q24<

Let's presume for a moment that you live in a service territory where standard offer service will not end for 3 years. How important is it for the state to keep you informed about the status of electric competition between now and the time when standard offer service ends and a fully competitive electric market begins?

Read responses:

- <1> Very important
- <2> Only somewhat important
- <3> Not important at all

- <9> Don't know / unsure

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Impact on Service Quality:

>q25< Please tell me how you think each of the following would be affected after standard service ends. If you are unsure, please feel free to say so.

After standard offer service ends, do you think that electric service will be more reliable, less reliable, or will it be the same?

<1> More reliable

<2> Same

<3> Less reliable

<9> Don't know / no answer

>q26< After standard offer service ends, do you think that responsiveness to emergencies, power outages and downed poles and lines is faster, slower, or is it the same?

<1> Faster responsiveness

<2> Same

<3> Slower responsiveness

<9> Don't know / no answer

>q27< After standard offer service ends, do you think that there are more consumer protections - such as those related to payments arrangements or additional disconnection protections during periods of extreme hot and cold weather - fewer consumer protections, or is it the same?

<1> More protections

<2> Same

<3> Fewer protections

<9> Don't know / no answer

>q28< After standard offer service ends, do you think that your current local utility is more likely to respond to your service requests if you switched to a new retail electric provider, less likely, or is it the same?

<1> More likely

<2> Same

<3> Less likely

<9> Don't know / no answer

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>q29< Do you think that problems associated with generating enough electricity for consumers in Maryland would be worse in a competitive electric market, better, or will it be the same?

<1> Better

<2> Same

<3> Worse

<9> Don't know / no answer

>q30< Do you think that problems associated with the transmission system that moves electricity from power plants to the places where electricity is used would be worse in a competitive electric market, better, or is it the same?

<1> Better

<2> Same

<3> Worse

<9> Don't know / no answer

>q31< If the price of electricity were determined by market forces, do you think that the rate you pay electricity would be higher, lower or the same as the rate you pay today?

<1> Higher

<2> Same

<3> Lower

<9> Don't know / unsure

====>

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Information about Electric Competition:

Paid media recall:

>q32< Have you read, seen or heard any type of advertising about electric competition in Maryland in the past 12 months?

<1> Yes

<2> No

<9> Don't know / unsure

Earned media recall:

>q33< Apart from any advertising you may have seen, have you read, seen or heard any news stories about electric competition in the newspaper, the radio or on television?

<1> Yes

<2> No

<9> Don't know / unsure

Consumer guide:

>q34< Have you or anyone in your family obtained a copy of a consumer guide from the Maryland Public Service Commission on the topic of electric competition?

<1> Yes

<2> No

<9> Don't know / unsure

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Website:

>q35< Are you aware that there is a website that consumers in Maryland can use to get information about electric competition?

<1> Yes [goto q36]

<2> No [goto q38]

<9> Don't know / unsure [goto q38]

>q36< Have you visited the website?

<1> Yes [goto q37]

<2> No [goto q38]

>q37< Do you happen to recall the URL or website address?

Do not read:

<0> No - do not recall

<1> Yes - (www.md-electric-info.com)

<2> Yes - other (specify)

<9> Don't know / unsure

>q38< How likely is it that you would visit the website in the future if you wanted to get more information about electric competition in Maryland? Would you say you:

Read responses:

<1> Definitely would

<2> Probably would

<3> Probably would not

<4> Definitely would not

<9> Don't know / unsure

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Answer Center:

>q39< Are you aware that there is an answer center with a toll-free number that consumers in Maryland can use to call someone to get information about electric competition?

<1> Yes [goto q40]

<2> No [goto q42]

<9> Don't know / unsure [goto q42]

>q40< Have you called the answer center?

<1> Yes [goto q41]

<2> No [goto q42]

>q41< Do you happen to recall the toll-free number?

Do not read:

<0> No - do not recall

<1> Yes - (1-800.800.4491)

<2> Yes - other (specify)

<9> Don't know / unsure

>q42< How likely is it that you would call the answer center in the future if you wanted to get more information about electric competition in Maryland? Would you say you:

Read responses:

<1> Definitely would

<2> Probably would

<3> Probably would not

<4> Definitely would not

<9> Don't know / unsure

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>q43< When you are ready to look for information about electric competition in Maryland, where would you be most likely to look?

Do not read:

(Circle all mentioned)

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|
| <1> | A community organization | <8> | Story on the TV news |
| <2> | An advertisement | <9> | Information on the Internet |
| <3> | Radio | <10> | Your current local electric utility |
| <4> | Newspaper | <11> | A friend, neighbor, co-worker |
| <5> | Magazine | <12> | A family member |
| <6> | Television commercial | <13> | A representative from the PSC |
| <7> | Article in a newspaper | <14> | A business organization |
| | | <15> | Toll-free 1-800 number |
| | | <16> | Website (Internet) |
| | | <88> | Other (specify) |
| | | <99> | Don't know / unsure |

>q43a< Enter Second Response:

>q43b< Enter Third Response:

>q44< As you may know, there are only a few new electric power suppliers offering service to residential customers in Maryland. Which of the following best describes your view on this issue?

Read responses:

- <1> You are concerned that there are not enough suppliers to choose from today
- <2> You are concerned that there will not be enough suppliers to choose from when you are ready to switch in the future
- <3> You are not concerned about the number of new power suppliers because it takes time for a competitive electric market to develop
- <9> Don't know / unsure

>q45< Which of the following best describes how well prepared you feel you are to make an informed decision regarding your choice of an electric power supplier.

Read responses:

- <1> You could make an informed decision today
- <2> You would need a little more information to make an informed decision
- <3> You would need a lot more information to make an informed decision
- <4> You have not thought about at all
- <9> Refused

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Classification:

>d01< Now just a few questions for classification purposes.

Into which of the following categories does your age fall?

Read responses:

<1> 18 to 24

<2> 25 to 34

<3> 35 to 44

<4> 45 to 54

<5> 55 to 64

<6> 65+

<9> No answer

>d02< What is the highest grade or year in school you completed?

Do not read:

<1> Less than high school

<2> Graduated high school

<3> Some college/Vocational training

<4> Graduated vocational/technical college (2-year Associate Degree)

<5> Graduated college (4-year Bachelor Degree)

<6> Attended Graduate or Professional school (Masters, Ph.D, MPA, Lawyer)

<9> No Answer

>d03< Do you own or rent the place where you live?

<1> Own

<2> Rent

<8> Other

>d04< What is your average monthly ELECTRIC bill during a typical month in SUMMER?

If Unsure: "Even a rough guess would be helpful."

<1-5000> monthly bill in DOLLARS

<NA> Don't know / no answer [terminate]

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>d05< Have you switched to a new electric supplier?

<1> Yes

<2> No

<9> Don't know / unsure

>d06< Do you have access to the Internet from home or work or both?

<1> Yes - Home only

<2> Yes - Work only

<3> Yes - Home and Work

<4> No - neither

>d07< What is your race? Would you say:

Read responses:

<1> White

<2> Black

<3> Asian, Pacific Islander

<4> American Indian, Alaska Native, or

<5> Other

<9> No answer

====>

>d08< Are you of Spanish or Hispanic origin?

<1> Yes

<2> No

<9> No answer

====>

>d09< Is your total household income above or below \$40,000 per year before taxes?

<1> Above \$40,000 [goto d10b]

<2> Below \$40,000 [goto d10a]

<9> No answer [goto conc]

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>d10a< Would you say it is:

Read responses:

<1> Less than \$20,000

<2> \$20,000-\$30,000

<3> \$30,000-\$40,000

<99> No answer

===>[goto conc]

>d10b< Would you say it is:

Read responses:

<4> \$40,000-\$50,000

<5> \$50,000-\$60,000

<6> \$60,000-\$70,000

<7> \$70,000-\$80,000

<8> \$80,000-\$90,000

<9> \$90,000-\$100,000

<10> Over \$100,000

<99> No answer

===>[goto conc]

>conc< Thank you very much for your time. Your comments are greatly appreciated.

>gr< INTERVIEWER: Enter Gender of the Respondent

<1> Male

<2> Female