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For Immediate Release

Maryland PSC Launches New Gas Choice Shopping Website

Residential customers can now shop online for electricity and gas

(BALTIMORE, MD-September 29, 2020) – Just in time for the winter heating season, the Maryland Public Service Commission has unveiled a new website for gas supply, to supplement the electricity shopping site unveiled earlier this year. MDGasChoice.com is the PSC's stand-alone site where consumers can shop for and sort offers to supply their home's energy needs – whether they are seeking the lowest price per therm, environmentally-friendly gas supply, no monthly or early termination fees, etc. The companion site for residential electricity shoppers, MDElectricChoice.com was launched in March of this year.

“The new site means Maryland consumers can make informed choices when shopping online for all of their energy supply. Both sites are attractive and user-friendly, with a design and layout making it easy for energy shoppers to navigate and find products that are most beneficial to them,” said Jason M. Stanek, Commission Chairman. “In addition to the shop-and-compare features, the websites also contain a great deal of educational information to help answer questions consumers may have.”

Maryland utility customers have the option of buying their energy commodity from companies other than their local utility (e.g., BGE, Washington Gas, etc.). While the Commission does not regulate the prices competitive suppliers charge, it does license them and oversees their behavior in the energy marketplace to ensure compliance with the Commission's regulations and consumer protections.

After clicking the 'Shop Now' button, a residential customer looking for an energy supplier will first select their local gas utility (BGE or Washington Gas), then enter their monthly gas usage, which can be found on their utility bill. If usage is unknown, the system will default to an estimate of 100 therms per month and display a list of offers starting with the lowest price per therm. The customer will also see an estimate of their monthly costs for the energy supply (this would include any monthly fees charged by the supplier).

Results can also be filtered to include only environmentally-friendly products, those with no monthly or cancellation fees, fixed or variable price, length of contract term, etc. Energy suppliers will include a link to their own websites in the offer, provide information

on any incentives or promotions (such as gift cards, airlines miles, bill credits, etc.) and may also provide a link directly to the offer so customers can easily sign up or seek more information.

The new website also provides information on customers' rights, details on understanding utility bills, frequently asked questions, a list of all licensed suppliers including their PSC-issued license numbers, contact information for suppliers and utilities, links to the PSC's online complaint portal, a link to share the site with family and friends, and more.

The new websites are among several recent initiatives the Commission has taken to strengthen protections for energy consumers, including:

- Establishing a Compliance and Enforcement Unit within its Consumer Affairs Division (CAD), to provide more proactive oversight of utilities and third-party energy suppliers to ensure compliance with the Commission's regulations;
- Posting complaint statistics involving retail energy suppliers [online](#), and,
- Taking action against a natural gas supplier (SmartOne Energy) for enrolling customers without their consent—a practice known as 'slamming.' The Commission last year revoked SmartOne's license to do business in Maryland and levied a record \$561,000 civil penalty. Four other complaint proceedings involving energy suppliers are currently in litigation before the Commission's Public Utility Law Judge Division.

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About the Public Service Commission:

The Maryland Public Service Commission regulates electric and gas utilities and suppliers, telephone companies (land lines), certain water and sewer companies, passenger motor vehicle carriers for hire (sedans, limousines, buses, Uber, Lyft), taxicab companies (in Baltimore City and County, Charles County, Cumberland and Hagerstown) and bay pilot rates.

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