



NEWS RELEASE

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LANSING, October 24. The Michigan Public Service Commission moved swiftly to advance natural gas customer choice for Consumers Energy Company's natural gas customers, approving the company's October 17, 2000 application for a voluntary, expanded natural gas customer choice program. Under the expanded program, beginning April 1, 2001, up to 600,000 Consumers Energy natural gas customers will be eligible to participate in the program. Effective April 1, 2002, up to 900,000 natural gas customers will be able to participate, and on April 1, 2003, all Consumer Energy natural gas customers may select an alternate natural gas supplier. The expanded program will replace a Consumers Energy natural gas three-year experimental program which, in 2000, allowed up to 300,000 customers to participate. The experimental program concludes on April 1, 2001.

The expanded program, like the experimental program, is voluntary for Consumers Energy's natural gas customers. In years 2001 and 2002, participating customers will be selected on a first come first served basis.

"The Commission has actively promoted customer choice for utility services, where possible in Michigan, and recently adopted terms and conditions for providing permanent gas customer choice programs for residential and commercial customers," said Chairman John Strand. "We are very pleased to approve an expanded customer choice program that will provide all Consumers Energy natural gas customers with a choice by 2003."

Consumers Energy, headquartered in Jackson, provides natural gas service to about 1.6 million Michigan customers.

The MPSC is an agency within the Department of Consumer and Industry Services.

Case No. U-12680
October 24, 2000
(MPSC approved expanded Consumers Energy natural gas customer choice program)
