

NEM argues at New York PSC for consumer data access

The National Energy Marketers Assn (NEM) told the New York PSC Friday it shares its vision of customers being able to have ready access to their power-use information and easily share that with vendors they pick. The trade group offered suggestions on how to give the retailers it represents access to more timely and granular data.

Better data will let the firms develop time-of-use and other smart-meter-enabled products, NEM said.

One option for data sharing the PSC is considering is the “Green Button,” which started as a White House initiative in 2011. The vision was that consumers could download their own data with the click of a green button.

The Green Button comes with a “Connect” option that lets customers transfer their data to third parties, but it is not billing-quality information.

“It is important to understand the history and purpose of Green Button as a customer-facing device intended to increase consumer engagement in energy usage management,” NEM said. “Green Button was not designed to be a solution to provide ESCOs with access to energy-usage data that is needed to animate a suite of time-of-use and other smart meter-enabled products and services.”

Retailers need access to billing quality data, once their customers authorize it, and they should not have to make multiple requests for each individual customer, NEM said.

As a baseline, retailers should get hourly, interval, billing-

quality data on a monthly basis via New York’s Electronic Data Interchange. Non-billing quality data should be provided on a next day basis over the internet, it added.

A progressive, phase approach to providing retailers with access to the data should start with access to hourly interval data and then move to shorter intervals and eventually real-time data, NEM said.

Utilities should not be allowed to charge retailers or other vendors for data that is provided via Green Button or another alternative. That data belongs to the customer, not the utility and the monopoly firms should not be allowed to put up barriers to competition, it added.

“Utilities recover the costs of metering and metering infrastructure from ratepayers,” NEM said. “Customers have paid utilities for the installation and use of the meters and the information those meters generate.

“As a result, customers should be able to authorize third-party providers to have access to their information, and the access should be free of charge.” Letting utilities charge for data access would amount to a double payment to ESCOs as utilities already enjoy a competitive advantage due to their ease of access to the information.

NEM urged the PSC to come up with a standardized platform to let utilities share the data with third parties, as authorized. It cited the Texas example of “SmartMeterTexas.com,” a service run by ERCOT that provides suppliers with data as an example.