



Citizens Utility Board

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STATEMENT BY CUB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID KOLATA ON ICC RULING TO HELP IL CONSUMERS GAIN EASY ACCESS TO NEW MONEY-SAVING TECH

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) has approved a proposal that will help consumers maximize the benefits of the smart grid by making it easier to take advantage of new services and apps that are customized to help them cut their electric bills. The ICC ruling comes after months of discussion and work among many stakeholders, including utility officials, ICC staff, the Mission: data Coalition, Elevate Energy, the Citizens Utility Board (CUB), and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF).

Under new guidelines approved by the ICC on March 23, Commonwealth Edison and Ameren Illinois, which are now installing advanced digital meters across Illinois, have agreed to adhere to national “Green Button Connect” standards—an industrywide effort to present energy information in an automated, customer-friendly format. The guidelines also allow consumers—as long as they give consent—to quickly, seamlessly and securely share their energy-usage data with third-party businesses.

Such guidelines are designed to protect customers’ data while sparking innovation in services and apps that help everyday consumers save energy, cut power bills and reduce carbon pollution. This is about helping Illinois consumers obtain the intelligence they need to maximize the benefits of the smart grid.

CUB thanks the ICC, under Chairman Brien Sheahan, for standing up for Illinois consumers and opening the door for people to take advantage of the smart technology they need to save money on their utility bills.

Background

*ComEd and Ameren are currently installing about five million advanced digital meters across Illinois. While advanced meters collect large amounts of data, third-party technologies, such as smart thermostats or smartphone apps, are needed to help consumers convert that information into energy-saving actions at home.

*In August of 2014, EDF and CUB helped begin a discussion with many stakeholders to come up with new data standards designed to help consumers take advantage of the data-gathering capabilities of the new meters.

*In connection with that initial proposal, the ICC approved an order on Wednesday, March 23 (Docket #15-0073). It sets standards under which customers can authorize utilities to share their data with third parties and creates standard authorization language utilities can use to secure consent. It also sets the stage for utilities to begin to implement “Green Button Connect,” to present energy-usage data in more automated, consumer-friendly formats.

*This ruling is one part of a larger, long-term effort by consumer advocates to adopt an “Open Data Access Framework” to assure that homes get quick, easy access to data about their power usage gathered by the new meters.

CUB is Illinois’ leading nonprofit utility watchdog. Created by the Illinois Legislature, CUB opened its doors in 1984 to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers. Since then, it has saved consumers more than \$20 billion by helping to block rate hikes and secure refunds. For more information, call CUB’s Consumer Hotline, 1-800-669-5556, or visit its award-winning website, www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org.

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