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Data Collection, Monitoring, and Information Dissemination

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Questions About Data Collection

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- What data do you need?
- Do you have the authority to request and collect the data you need?
- Where is the data located?
- Who owns the data?
- How do you acquire the data?
- At what intervals do you receive the data?
- How do you verify the data?
- How long can you keep the data?

Information to Customers and Disclosure by Suppliers

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- Information shall be in a clear and understandable format that allows consumers to compare prices and services uniformly.
- Customers must receive written confirmation of the terms of their agreements.
- Suppliers must provide written notification of the expiration date of a customer agreement, and whenever it proposes changes to that agreement.
- Electric distribution companies (EDCs) are required to release all customer name, address and usage information to suppliers, unless the customer tells the utility to not release the information.

Consumer Protection

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- Providing protections and services to assist customers.
- Commission handles complaints about EDCs and suppliers related to billing, meter reading, credit and collections.
- Unauthorized transfer of utility services (slamming) without the customer's permission is prohibited.
- All agreements with a supplier on the telephone or over the Internet has to be confirmed by the supplier in writing in an email, regular mail or in-person hand-delivery.
- When a customer does not choose a supplier or if a supplier declines or cancels service for any reason, the local EDC is obligated to provide power.

Commission Staff Monitoring

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- Commission staff observes market conditions regularly
- Staff reports to the Commissioners on a regular and as-needed basis
- Technical analyses followed by recommended legal actions

Tools for Monitoring

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- Review of daily and future electricity prices
- Monitor natural gas pipeline activity
- Designated staff members to receive confidential data
- Regular discussions current and relevant energy issues with staff from other states
- Maintain historical database of energy markets
- Monitor utility websites regularly

Regular Reports

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- Quarterly financial statements are filed by companies
- Annual rate/price comparison report
 - all rate elements from all gas and electric companies
 - assembled into the report for the Legislature
- Annual reports, compliance tariffs, quarterly revenues, utility operations, supplier bonding monitored and forwarded to Commission for prosecution when deficiencies occur or violations detected

Summary & Conclusions

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- Data needs should reflect legal mandates
- While enforcement of regulations to prevent abuse is still key, the first action during an outage is not necessarily “to point fingers” but rather to ensure that the utility can restore service immediately
- The regulator can provide reasonable information to legislators and other government officials as well as the public
- Major issues: customer protection and market monitoring
- Technology should not dictate what can be accomplished
- Coordination among other agencies
- Recognize that each state/country is affected by actions outside its borders