



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE **NEAL P. GOODMAN**

## 123RD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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## A GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THE END OF ELECTRIC RATE CAPS

As I'm sure you are aware, rate caps are coming off PPL's electric generating rates on Jan. 1. This newsletter will explain why the caps are coming off and what you can do.

A law passed in 1996, years before I took office, deregulated the supply of electricity in Pennsylvania with the goal of creating competition and driving down prices. The deregulation law capped rates at 1996 levels for a number of years while utilities recovered their infrastructure costs incurred prior to the transition. Those rate caps are now expiring.

I do not believe rate caps should expire at this time, and have supported legislation to extend them.

The good news is that the deregulation law allows consumers to choose which company generates the electricity they use and competition has worked in other parts of the state to lower utility bills below what they were when rate caps were in place.

As chairman of the Northeast Democratic Delegation, I have worked with the PUC, Office of Consumer Advocate, PPL and the companies that plan to sell electricity to residents in PPL's service territory to do what I can to lessen the impact on consumers. I also voted for Act 129, which requires electric companies to help consumers reduce their bills by reducing electricity consumption and by adopting other strategies to ensure the least cost to customers.

If you need help or have questions about deregulation or choosing a new electricity supplier, you may contact my offices for assistance. It is my goal to help consumers lessen the impact of the end of rate caps in January as much as possible. Thank you,



### Shopping for Electricity Shop Carefully

Many current PPL customers are being contacted by electricity companies offering to supply their electricity. If you decide you want to switch your energy supplier, make sure you sign up with a **licensed** provider. For the most up-to-date information on licensed suppliers and their prices, check the Office of Consumer Advocate Web site at [www.oca.state.pa.us](http://www.oca.state.pa.us) or call toll free 800-684-6560. Detailed shopping guides also are available through the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission at [www.puc.state.pa.us](http://www.puc.state.pa.us) or PPL Electric Utilities at [www.pplelectric.com](http://www.pplelectric.com).



### What to do if you decide to switch suppliers:

- Contact the supplier you've chosen, and tell them you'd like to switch. They'll send you a new contract.
- Ask the supplier what other steps you need to take to make the switch.
- Once you select a new supplier, that supplier will contact your current supplier to start the enrollment process. You may receive a notice from the current supplier confirming your change.

### What happens if I switch suppliers?

If you choose an alternative supplier, you will continue to receive your monthly electric bill from PPL, which will contain all charges. While a new company will be generating the electricity you use, PPL will continue to serve as the company that distributes the electricity to your home, maintains power lines, provides customer service and responds to emergencies.

By shopping for the best price on electricity generation, you are contributing to the generation of competition in the marketplace.



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## What can I do to save money?

- Check the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Web site, [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us), for information about state programs such as the Pennsylvania Sunshine Fund, Keystone Help Residential Energy Efficiency Program and High Performance Building Program. Other programs may be available in the future.
- Federal tax subsidies can offset 50 to 80 percent of the costs of making your home or business energy-efficient. More information is available at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).
- In the coming months, PPL will start programs to help customers save on energy, including rebates for energy-efficient appliances, energy audits and incentives to install solar energy systems and geothermal heat pumps. These programs will be available even if you are not a PPL customer.  
**These programs are the result of Act 129 of 2008 – legislation I supported to help consumers save through reduced electricity consumption.**

## Payment assistance programs

There are several programs that can help with payment assistance if you are struggling to pay bills. They include:



**BUDGET BILLING** — Budget billing divides your electricity use for the year into even amounts so your bill is the same for each month. It does not reduce your bill, but it makes payments even throughout the year. Contact PPL at 1-800-358-6623 for more information.

**ON TRACK** — This is a special PPL payment plan that offers reduced monthly payments, protection from shutoffs and debt forgiveness for residential customers struggling with bills. To see if you qualify, call 1-800-358-6623.

**LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** — LIHEAP provides grants for heating bills and emergencies. To see if you qualify, call the Schuylkill County Assistance Office at 570-621-3000.

**OPERATION HELP** — This is a PPL program that provides emergency financial help for families with financial hardships. Contact Schuylkill Community Action for more information about this and other utility assistance programs at 570-622-1995.

**WINTER RELIEF AND WEATHERIZATION PROGRAMS** — These programs help residents living on low- or fixed-incomes reduce their electric bills and make their homes more comfortable through energy education, energy-efficient appliances and home weatherization services. For more information, contact Schuylkill Community Action at 570-622-1995.