|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **PENNSYLVANIA**  **PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**  **Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265** |  |
|  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Public Meeting held March 17, 2011 |
| Commissioners Present: |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Robert F. Powelson, Chairman  John F. Coleman, Jr., Vice Chairman  Tyrone J. Christy  Wayne E. Gardner  James H. Cawley | |
|  | |
|  | |
| License Application of Discount Energy Group, LLC for Approval to Offer, Render, Furnish or Supply Electricity or Electric Generation Services as a Generator and Supplier of Electric Power. | Docket Number: A-2010-2199551 |

# ORDER

**BY THE COMMISSION:**

On August 26, 2010, Discount Energy Group, LLC (Discount Energy) filed an application seeking to become a licensed electric generation supplier (EGS) in the service territories throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The application was filed pursuant to the Commission’s regulations at 52 Pa. Code §§54.31-54.43, which became effective on August 8, 1998, and which were established under Section 2809 of the Public Utility Code, 66 Pa. C.S. §2809.

§2809 provides in pertinent part that:

License Requirement.--No person or corporation, including municipal corporations which choose to provide service outside their municipal limits except to the extent provided prior to the effective date of this chapter, brokers and marketers, aggregators and other entities, shall engage in the business of an electric generation supplier in this Commonwealth unless the person or corporation holds a license issued by the Commission. 66 Pa. C.S. §2809.

An electric generation supplier is defined as:

A person or corporation, including municipal corporations which choose to provide service outside their municipal limits except to the extent provided prior to the effective date of this chapter, brokers and marketers, aggregators or any other entities, that sells to end-use customers electricity or related services utilizing the jurisdictional transmission and distribution facilities of an electric distribution company, or that purchases, brokers, arranges or markets electricity or related services to end-use customers utilizing the jurisdictional transmission and distribution facilities of an electric distribution company. 66 Pa. C.S. §2803.

Discount Energy is a new foreign limited liability company organized in the State of Delaware on August 20, 2010, and registered to do business in Pennsylvania as of August 25, 2010. Discount Energy proposes to act as a generator and supplier of electric power to residential, small commercial (25 kw and under demand), large commercial (over 25 kw demand), industrial and governmental customers in the service territories throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. More specifically, Discount Energy intends to sell, purchase, broker, arrange, or market electricity and/or related services to retail electric customers using the jurisdictional transmission or distribution facilities of an electric distribution company. Discount Energy will be taking title to the electricity. Discount Energy will utilize consolidated billing with the electric distribution companies, and therefore will be paid by the electric distribution companies. Discount Energy will market directly by sending mail asking the reader to call or check their website, and at some point may use a telemarketing company to handle incoming calls and possibly do some outbound marketing. Discount Energy will not be engaged in door-to-door marketing.

Discount Energy is directed to inform any future independent consultants, who arrange for the sale of Discount Energy’s energy products to end-users, that they will be required to be licensed as an EGS if they arrange for the sale of energy products to end-users from another supplier, in addition to Discount Energy.

Since Discount Energy proposes to provide electric generation supplier services to residential customers it is required to comply with, and be governed by, applicable Chapter 56 residential service regulations as set forth in the Commission Order *Guidelines for Maintaining Customer Service at the Same Level of Quality Pursuant to 66 Pa. C.S. §2807(d), and Assuring Conformance with 52 Pa. Code Chapter 56 Pursuant to 66 Pa. C.S. §2809(e) and (f)*, at Docket No. M-00960890 F0011, Order entered July 11, 1997*.* Thus, we deem it appropriate to reiterate certain items with respect to Chapter 56 of our regulations. Chapter 56 (52 Pa Code Chapter 56) is applicable to residential accounts. An electric generation supplier cannot physically disconnect a residential customer from the electricity grid; therefore, the rules relating to residential service termination are not applicable to electric generation suppliers. An electric generation supplier may seek to terminate its generation service through an appropriate written notice to the customer and the distribution company. The residential customer can then attempt to repair their relationship with the supplier, seek a new supplier, or return to utility service at default service rates in accordance with the utility's obligations under Section 2807(e), 66 Pa. C.S. §2807(e). The customer would only be disconnected from the electricity grid pursuant to appropriate regulations if the customer failed to meet its obligations to the utility or the electric generation supplier that has been designated by the Commission as the provider of last resort.

Additionally, we specifically note that the licensee must comply with, and ensure that its employees, agents, representatives and independent contractors comply with the standards of conduct and disclosure for licensees set out in Commission regulations at 52 Pa. Code §54.43 that were enacted to protect consumers of this Commonwealth. These standards include, *inter alia,* the provision of timely and accurate information about the services offered by the licensee, the practice of nondiscrimination in service in regard to race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, etc., the safeguarding of a consumer’s personal information, and compliance with applicable state and federal consumer protection laws. Also, we take this opportunity to remind the licensee of its agreement to abide by, and to ensure that its employees, representatives, agents and independent contractors abide by all applicable federal and state laws, and Commission regulations, procedures and orders, including Emergency Orders, which may be issued verbally or in writing during any emergency situations that may unexpectedly develop from time to time in the course of doing business in Pennsylvania.

We also note that that the licensee must comply with our decision in Docket No. M-2010-2157431, Motion adopted at the February 11, 2010, Public Meeting, regarding EGS membership in the PJM Interconnection (PJM). Specifically, our Motion directed that such EGS applicants must file with the Commission, within 120 days of receiving an EGS license, proof of membership in the PJM as a Load Serving Entity (LSE) or proof of a contractual arrangement with an existing PJM LSE that facilitates the applicant’s retail operations. Since Discount Energy is taking title to the electricity, it is required to comply with this requirement.

Discount Energy has provided proofs of publication in Pennsylvania newspapers and proofs of service to the interested parties as required by the Commission.

Regarding the financial and technical requirements of the license application, Discount Energy submitted an organizational chart, proof of commercial insurance, projected first year financials through October 2011, and current financials as of December 31, 2010, and as of February 28, 2011, which reflect sales activity in New Jersey where Discount Energy has already begun providing service. Discount Energy also provided extensive resume data for its chief officers showing energy industry, regulatory, sales and marketing, energy consulting, and energy procurement experience. Sufficient information has been provided by Discount Energy to demonstrate its financial and technical fitness in order to be licensed as a supplier of retail electric power in the service territories throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Discount Energy has provided a $250,000 surety bond as required by the license application.

Discount Energy has provided the required Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) contact information.

As of March 1, 2011, no protests have been filed.

We find that the applicant:

1. Is fit, willing and able to properly perform the service proposed in conformance with applicable provisions of the Public Utility Code and lawful Commission orders and regulations, specifically including 52 Pa. Code Chapter 56 (relating to Standards and Billing Practices for Residential Utility Service).

2. Has agreed to lawfully abide by all Commission regulations, procedures and orders, including Emergency Orders, which may be issued verbally or in writing during any emergency situations that may unexpectedly develop from time to time in the course of doing business in Pennsylvania.

3. That the proposed service, to the extent authorized by the license, will be consistent with the public interest and the policy declared in the Electricity Generation Customer Choice and Competition Act.

Upon full consideration of all matters of record, we find that approval of this application is necessary and proper for the service, accommodation and convenience of the public; **THEREFORE,**

**IT IS ORDERED:**

1. That the application of Discount Energy Group, LLC for approval to offer, render, furnish or supply electricity or electric generation services as a generator and supplier of electric power is hereby approved, consistent with this Order.

2. That a license be issued authorizing Discount Energy Group, LLC to begin to offer, render, furnish or supply electric generation supplier services to residential, small commercial (25 kw and under demand), large commercial (over 25 kw demand), industrial and governmental customers in the service territories throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

3. That Discount Energy Group, LLC must submit within 120 days, proof that it is a PJM registered Load Serving Entity as a party to the reliability assurance agreement or that it has a contract with an entity who is such a party.

4. That Discount Energy Group, LLC is directed to inform any independent consultants that arrange for the sale of Discount Energy Group, LLC’s energy products to end-users, that they will be required to be licensed as an EGS if they arrange for the sale of energy products to end-users from another supplier, in addition to Discount Energy Group, LLC.

5. That a copy of this Order be served on the Department of Revenue, Bureau of Corporation Taxes.

6. That this proceeding at Docket No. A-2010-2199551 be closed.



**BY THE COMMISSION,**

Rosemary Chiavetta

Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: March 17, 2011

ORDER ENTERED: March 18, 2011