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July 22, 2026

Via Electronic Filing

Matthew Homsher, Secretary
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Petition of FirstEnergy Pennsylvania Electric Company for Approval of Its Default
Service Program for the Period from June 1, 2027 to May 31, 2031
Docket No. P-2026-3060298

Dear Secretary Homsher:

Enclosed for electronic filing please find the Retail Energy Supply Association's ("RESA")
Reply Brief with regard to the above-referenced matter. Copies to be served in accordance with
the attached Certificate of Service.

Sincerely,



Deanne M. O'Dell.

DMO/dmc

Enclosure

cc: Honorable Mark A. Hoyer (*via email*)
Honorable Erin L. Gannon (*via email*)
Cert. of Service w/enc.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that this day I served a copy of RESA's Reply Brief, upon the persons listed below in the manner indicated in accordance with the requirements of 52 Pa. Code Section 1.54.

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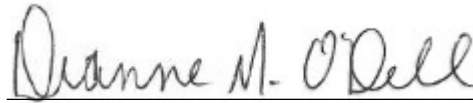
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A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Deanne A. O'Dell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Deanne" is written with a large, looped 'D'. The middle initial "A." is written in a smaller, simpler script. The last name "O'Dell" is written with a large, looped 'O' and a distinct 'D'.

Deanne A. O'Dell

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Petition of FirstEnergy Pennsylvania :
Electric Company for Approval of its :
Default Service Program for the Period : Docket No. P-2026-3060298
from June 1, 2027 through May 31, :
2031 :

**REPLY BRIEF OF
RETAIL ENERGY SUPPLY ASSOCIATION**

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I. INTRODUCTION

As detailed in its Main Brief, the Retail Energy Supply Association (“RESA”)¹ opposes the Joint Petition for Non-Unanimous Settlement filed on July 2, 2026 (“Joint Petition” or “Non-Unanimous Settlement”). This Reply Brief does not revisit every proposal-specific argument or evidentiary dispute addressed in RESA's Main Brief but incorporates the arguments therein by reference. Rather, it addresses the common legal errors underlying the Joint Petition and the supporting briefs filed by FirstEnergy Pennsylvania Electric Company (“FE PA”), the Office of Consumer Advocate (“OCA”), and The Coalition for Affordability Utility Services and Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania (“CAUSE-PA”) (collectively “Joint Proponents”) that compel rejection of the proposals to: (1) restructure the Purchase of Receivables (“POR”) program; (2) eliminate the Customer Referral Program (“CRP”); (3) automatically return electric generation supplier (“EGS”) customers to default service upon contract expiration; (4) require quarterly affirmative customer consent for continued service under month-to-month variable-priced contracts; and, (5) shift additional wholesale market risks onto customers which are now borne by sophisticated wholesale default service suppliers.²

¹ The comments expressed in this filing represent the position of the Retail Energy Supply Association (RESA) as an organization but may not represent the views of any particular member of the Association. Founded in 1990, RESA is a broad and diverse group of retail energy suppliers dedicated to promoting efficient, sustainable and customer-oriented competitive retail energy markets. RESA members operate throughout the United States delivering value-added electricity and natural gas service at retail to residential, commercial and industrial energy customers. More information on RESA can be found at www.resausa.org.

² Electricity Generation Customer Choice and Competition Act (“Competition Act”), 66 Pa. C.S. §§ 2801–2812, read as a whole, including its legislative findings in §

The Joint Proponents each seek wide-ranging and unprecedented restrictions on Pennsylvania's competitive retail electricity market. The core supporting reasoning is because some shopping customers paid more than the Price to Compare (“PTC”). They seek to restructure long-standing and successful competitive market mechanisms by misleading customers about the relative attractiveness of default service and imposing baseless new burdens on competitive suppliers and consumers. The Competition Act supports neither that premise nor the proposed result.

The General Assembly did not direct the Commission to measure the success of retail competition by a simplistic comparison of competitive prices to default service, nor did it authorize the Commission to recalibrate Pennsylvania's competitive market whenever default service appears less expensive. Instead, the Legislature made a different policy choice. Through the Competition Act, it removed electric generation from traditional rate regulation and determined that competitive market forces—not Commission regulation of competitive generation prices—would provide the long-term discipline necessary to promote affordability, innovation, and customer choice. The question before the Commission is not whether every competitive product outperforms default service. Rather, it is whether Pennsylvania continues to maintain the robust competitive marketplace the General Assembly envisioned, and whether the restrictions proposed here are consistent with the intention of the statutory framework.

The Commission's implementation of the Competition Act has consistently reflected the General Assembly's policy judgment that improving competition—not restricting it—is the preferred means of addressing retail market concerns unless another statutory mandate requires otherwise.”³ Included herein as **Appendix A** are

2802, implementation provisions in §§ 2804 and 2806, and market remediation provisions in § 2811.

³ The Commission is an administrative agency charged with implementing the Competition Act and must do so consistent with the statutory framework enacted by

representative examples of the Commission's longstanding efforts to strengthen customer protections and continuously improve Pennsylvania's competitive retail market from 1998 through 2024 in furtherance of its obligations under the Competition Act.⁴ Those efforts consistently focused on improving the framework within which customers make informed choices—not on requiring customers who had already affirmatively chosen competitive supply to repeatedly recreate that decision. When confronted with concerns regarding Pennsylvania's retail electricity market, the Commission consistently responded by improving the conditions under which competition operates. Through enhanced customer disclosures, default service design, procurement reforms, market infrastructure, and other targeted measures designed to strengthen competition while protecting consumers, it did not treat evidence that some customers paid more than the PTC as justification for restricting competition itself.

This Reply addresses three legal errors underlying the Joint Proponents' position. First, the Competition Act does not measure the success of competition by whether shopping customers ultimately pay more than the PTC. Second, preserving customer choice requires more than merely allowing customers to enroll with an EGS; it requires preserving the competitive market framework through which customers exercise that choice. Third, although the Commission has, in limited circumstances, approved restrictions affecting competition to implement separate statutory mandates such as

the General Assembly. See *Dauphin Cnty. Indus. Dev. Auth. v. Pa. Pub. Util. Comm'n*, 123 A.3d 1124, 1133 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2015) (hereinafter “*DCIDA*”)

⁴ Appendix A illustrates the manner in which the Commission has historically exercised its authority to address developments in the competitive retail market. The examples are not intended to suggest that every market concern has been eliminated, but rather demonstrate that the Commission has consistently refined customer protections, disclosures, enrollment procedures, and market rules while preserving customer choice.

universal service, the proponents identify no comparable legislative directive here. Instead, they ask the Commission to revisit the Legislature's policy judgment that competition is the means by which affordability is to be achieved.

Accordingly, this Reply focuses on the common legal errors underlying the Joint Petition and the supporting briefs and should be read together with RESA's Main Brief, Mr. Lacey's testimony, and the record as a whole. For the reasons detailed below, and for the reasons set forth in RESA's Main Brief, the Commission should reject the Joint Petition and each of the proposal-specific changes challenged by RESA.

II. THE PROPOSED RETAIL MARKET RESTRICTIONS ARE INCONSISTENT WITH THE COMPETITION ACT

The arguments advanced by FE PA, OCA, and CAUSE-PA in support of restricting Pennsylvania's competitive retail market ultimately rest on three related propositions:

- that the Commission may evaluate the success of Pennsylvania's competitive retail market solely by comparing competitive supplier prices to the PTC;
- that the Competition Act is satisfied so long as customers remain legally free to shop; and
- that current affordability concerns justify imposing overly broad new restrictions on Pennsylvania's competitive market.

Each proposition misapprehends both the statutory framework adopted by the General Assembly and the Commission's longstanding implementation of that framework over the past three decades, summarized in Appendix A. For those reasons, the proposed retail market restrictions should be rejected.

A. The Competition Act Does Not Measure Competition By Whether Customers Pay More than the Price to Compare

FE PA, OCA and CAUSE-PA's main briefs all rest upon the same fundamental premise: because some EGS customers paid more than the PTC, and because FE PA attributes various downstream consequences to those higher prices, Pennsylvania's

competitive retail market is no longer functioning as intended by the Competition Act.⁵ That premise underlies each of FE PA's proposed restrictions on Pennsylvania's competitive retail market and forms the basis upon which OCA and CAUSE-PA ask the Commission to uphold those proposals.

The starting point for the supporting parties' analysis is simplistic and flawed. Their argument begins with the observation that some shopping customers paid more than the PTC, but this is the nature of any competitive market, be it energy or otherwise. That is not a defect of competition; it is an inherent characteristic of a market in which customers voluntarily choose among different products, prices, contract terms, and allocations of market risk. As RESA explained in its Main Brief, the General Assembly deliberately removed generation pricing from traditional rate regulation and substituted competition—not Commission regulation of generation prices—as the mechanism for disciplining those prices.⁶ It therefore makes little sense to judge whether competition is functioning by asking whether competitive suppliers consistently beat the Commission-approved default service product.⁷ That inquiry does not measure competition; it measures the extent to which competitive products resemble default service. The Competition Act did not replace monopoly generation service with a competitive market only to evaluate that market by reference to the regulated benchmark it was designed to

⁵ FE Initial Brief at 40-53; OCA Main Brief at 32-45; CAUSE-PA Main Brief at 18-29.

⁶ RESA Main Brief at 1-12; 66 Pa. C.S. § 2802(12)-(14); § 2804(1), (2), (6).

⁷ *See Rulemaking Re Electric Distribution Companies' Obligation to Serve Retail Customers at the Conclusion of the Transition Period Pursuant to 66 Pa.C.S. § 2807(e)(2)*, Docket No. L-00040169, Final Rulemaking Order at 5-7 and 33-34 (Pa. P.U.C. entered May 10, 2007); *See also Coalition for Affordable Utility Services & Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania v. Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission*, 120 A.3d 1087, 1093-96 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2015) (hereinafter “CAUSE-PA Order”)

replace. In fact, in its earliest implementation of regulations, the Commission expressly recognized that “the Commission may not dictate the pricing in a competitive market,” but instead required standardized disclosures so customers could make informed purchasing decisions.⁸

If the Competition Act does not measure the success of competition by whether shopping customers ultimately pay more or less than the PTC, what does it require? The Competition Act answers that question through its overall statutory design. Read as a whole, the Act reflects the General Assembly's objective of fostering and maintaining a properly functioning and workable competitive retail electricity market.⁹ Neither the statute nor Commission precedent defines that inquiry by reference to whether shopping customers ultimately pay more or less than the PTC. Rather, when evaluating whether Pennsylvania's retail market is functioning as intended, the Commission has consistently focused on the structural conditions necessary to foster a robust competitive market—including supplier participation, barriers to entry, meaningful customer choice, customer price signals, and whether default service promotes or impedes effective competition.¹⁰

This understanding is consistent with both recent Commission precedent and Pennsylvania appellate precedent. In PECO DSP VI, the Commission reiterated that the Competition Act mandates direct access to a competitive retail generation market and rests on the General Assembly’s determination that competitive market forces are more

⁸ See *Customer Information Disclosure for Electricity Providers*, Docket No. L-00970126, Final Rulemaking Order at 11-12 (Pa. P.U.C. entered Apr. 30, 1998)

⁹ 66 Pa.C.S. §§ 2802(12)-(14), 2804(1), (2), (6), 2806(a), 2811; See also RESA Main Brief at 6-12 and 46-49.

¹⁰ *Investigation of Pennsylvania's Retail Electricity Market: End State of Default Service*, Docket No. I-2011-2237952, Final Order at 10-15 (Pa. P.U.C. entered Feb. 14, 2013)(hereinafter “*End State Order*”).

effective than economic regulation in controlling generation costs.¹¹ The Commonwealth Court has repeatedly recognized that the Competition Act embodies the General Assembly's policy judgment that retail competition, rather than traditional regulation of generation prices, should govern Pennsylvania's electricity market.¹² Accordingly, Pennsylvania appellate courts have likewise recognized that restrictions on competition must be evaluated against the statutory framework adopted by the General Assembly—not by a free-standing assessment of whether particular competitive market outcomes are desirable.¹³

The Commission's own precedent further confirms that evidence of customers paying above the PTC, standing alone, is insufficient to justify restrictions on competitive shopping absent substantial evidence of resulting harm and the absence of reasonable alternatives.¹⁴ FE PA has attempted to distinguish that decision by asserting that this record contains additional evidence regarding customer terminations, complaints, uncollectible expense, and related issues.¹⁵ RESA addressed those evidentiary assertions extensively in its Main Brief,¹⁶ and Town Energy likewise explains why the record does

¹¹ *Petition of PECO Energy Company for Approval of Its Default Service Program for the Period From June 1, 2025 Through May 31, 2029*, Docket No. P-2024-3046008, Opinion and Order at 8-9 (Pa. P.U.C. entered Nov. 7, 2024)(hereinafter “*PECO DSP VI Order*”).

¹² *CAUSE-PA Order* at 1101-04.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Petition of PPL Electric Utilities Corp. for Approval of Its Default Service Plan for the Period June 1, 2021 Through May 31, 2025*, Docket No. P-2020-3019356, Opinion and Order at 95-98 (Pa. P.U.C. entered Dec. 17, 2020)(hereafter “*PPL DSP V Order*”); *PECO DSP VI Order* at 78-81.

¹⁵ FE Initial Brief at 47-53.

¹⁶ RESA Main Brief at 31-63.

not establish the causal connection FE PA claims.¹⁷ RESA incorporates those arguments here and does not repeat them.

The point for purposes of this Reply is narrower, but fundamental. The supporting parties identify a market outcome they believe warrants Commission intervention. The Competition Act, however, asks a different question: whether Pennsylvania continues to maintain a workable and competitive retail market.¹⁸ As reflected in Appendix A, from the Commission's earliest implementation of the Competition Act, its response to concerns about the operation of Pennsylvania's competitive retail market has been to improve customer information, standardize disclosures, refine default service design, remove barriers to meaningful competition, and otherwise strengthen the conditions necessary for competition to function—not to regulate competitive prices or restrict competitive participation. Again, and importantly, over nearly three decades, the Commission has consistently adhered to that approach.¹⁹ Only where a separate statutory

¹⁷ Town Square/WGL Main Brief at 13-40.

¹⁸ 66 Pa.C.S. §§2802(14), 2804, 2806(a).

¹⁹ *See, e.g., Customer Information Disclosure for Electricity Providers*, Docket No. L-00970126, Final Rulemaking Order at 4-5, 11-12 (Pa. P.U.C. entered **Apr. 30, 1998**); *Rulemaking Re Electric Distribution Companies' Obligation to Serve Retail Customers at the Conclusion of the Transition Period Pursuant to 66 Pa.C.S. § 2807(e)(2)*, Docket No. L-00040169, Final Rulemaking Order at 5-7, 33-34 (Pa. P.U.C. entered **May 10, 2007**); *Implementation of Act 129 of October 15, 2008; Default Service and Retail Electric Markets*, Docket No. L-2009-2095604, Final Rulemaking Order at 8, 15 (Pa. P.U.C. adopted **Sept. 22, 2011**); *End State Order* at 10-15 (Pa. P.U.C. entered **Feb. 15, 2013**); *Standards for Changing a Customer's Electricity Generation Supplier*, Docket No. L-2014-2409383, Final-Omitted Rulemaking Order at 2-3 (Pa. P.U.C. adopted **May 22, 2014**); and, *PECO DSP VI Order* at 8-9.

objective, namely universal service, required a different result has the Commission approved broad restrictions on customer shopping. Mr. Lacey's testimony reflects that same approach. While acknowledging that no competitive market is perfect, he identified less restrictive measures that would strengthen the operation of Pennsylvania's retail market rather than diminish it.²⁰ FE PA's proposals move in precisely the opposite direction.

Accordingly, proposals that rest upon the premise that above-PTC pricing, standing alone, demonstrates that Pennsylvania's competitive market is no longer functioning cannot be reconciled with either the Competition Act or the Commission's longstanding implementation of that statute. The Commission should therefore reject:²¹

- the proposed restructuring of the Purchase of Receivables ("POR") program;
- the proposed elimination of the Customer Referral Program ("CRP");
- the proposed automatic return of EGS customers to default service upon EGS contract expiration; and
- the proposed quarterly affirmative consent requirement for continued service under month-to-month variable-priced contracts.

²⁰ RESA Main Brief at 3-4, 28-63.

²¹ RESA also opposes adoption of proposals, such as the reallocation of Network Integration Transmission Service ("NITS") and Capacity Proxy Price ("CPP"), which shift additional wholesale market risks onto customers now borne by sophisticated wholesale default service suppliers as detailed more fully in its Main Brief at 12-26. While not directly tied to concerns about above-PTC priced competitive supply, these proposals are driven by a desire to lower the PTC which negatively impacts their market reflectiveness and the ability of EGSs to price competitive offers.

B. Customer Choice Is Meaningful Only If Customers Have A Robust Competitive Marketplace From Which To Choose

FE PA, OCA, and CAUSE-PA repeatedly respond to RESA's competitive market concerns with the same basic proposition: customers remain free to shop. RESA does not dispute that they are not proposing outright restrictions on the technical ability of a customer to shop.²² The flaw in their argument is not factual but legal. As discussed above, the Competition Act requires the Commission to evaluate whether Pennsylvania continues to maintain the competitive retail marketplace envisioned by the General Assembly—not merely whether customers remain legally capable of enrolling with an EGS.²³

The supporting parties' principal briefs largely end the inquiry once they conclude that customers remain legally free to enroll with an EGS. But the continued existence of an enrollment opportunity is not the statutory test. Neither the Competition Act, Commission precedent, nor Pennsylvania appellate decisions suggest that the Commission's inquiry ends once it determines that customers have not been affirmatively prohibited from shopping. To the contrary, the Commission has repeatedly recognized that preserving customer choice requires more than simply allowing customers to enroll with an EGS. It also requires maintaining the regulatory framework that allows customers to make informed choices within a robust competitive marketplace.²⁴

²² FE Initial Brief at 47-53; OCA Main Brief at 36-45; CAUSE-PA Main Brief at 18-29.

²³ 66 Pa. C.S. §§ 2802(12)-(14), 2804(6), 2806(a), 2811. *See also CAUSE-PA Order* at 1101("The overarching goal of the Act is competition through deregulation of the energy supply industry..."); *Retail Energy Supply Ass'n v. Pa. PUC*, 185 A.3d 1206, 1228 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2018) (hereinafter "*RESA Order*")

²⁴ *See End State Order* at 10-15 (recognizing the Commission's continuing responsibility to foster a competitive retail market and identifying measures to strengthen, rather than diminish, customer participation and supplier competition);

The Joint Proponents' new customer consent proposals reflect a fundamentally different premise.²⁵ Under the Commission's existing regulations, a customer affirmatively chooses competitive supply at enrollment, that decision is verified, the customer receives Commission-prescribed disclosures and rescission rights, and the customer is subsequently provided contract expiration and other notices before any renewal occurs.²⁶ The Joint Proponents nevertheless contend that, because some customers ultimately paid more than the PTC, the Commission may no longer rely on the continuing legal effect of the customer's original affirmative enrollment decision and should instead require the customer to take a second affirmative action before remaining with the EGS.²⁷ But that premise simply repackages the same flawed assumption addressed in Section II.A—that above-PTC pricing, standing alone, demonstrates a defect in Pennsylvania's competitive retail market. RESA addressed the Commission's longstanding framework governing customer choice extensively in its Main Brief and incorporates those arguments herein by reference.²⁸ The Joint Proponents never explain why the Commission's existing customer choice framework²⁹ should be fundamentally

PECO DSP VI Order at 21-23 (modifications inconsistent with the existing competitive market framework constitute restrictions on competition and require a demonstrated harm and no reasonable alternative); RESA Main Brief at 46-49.

²⁵ FE Initial Brief at 47-49; OCA Main Brief at 36-40; CAUSE-PA Main Brief at 20-23.

²⁶ 52 Pa. Code §§ 54.4, 54.5, 54.10; 52 Pa. Code §§ 111.7, 111.10; RESA Main Brief at 46-49.

²⁷ FE Initial Brief at 47-49; OCA Main Brief at 36-40; CAUSE-PA Main Brief at 20-23.

²⁸ RESA Main Brief at 46-55.

²⁹ 52 Pa. Code §§ 54.5, 54.10, 111.7, 111.10.

altered rather than refined. Nor do they identify any effort to evaluate whether targeted revisions to that framework could address their stated concerns.³⁰

Appendix A collects representative examples of the Commission's longstanding efforts to strengthen customer protections and continuously improve Pennsylvania's competitive retail market. Over nearly three decades of implementing the Competition Act, the Commission has repeatedly examined questions regarding customer protection, marketing practices, contract terms, variable pricing, supplier conduct, customer understanding, and opportunities to improve the operation of Pennsylvania's competitive retail market.³¹ Throughout that evolution, the Commission consistently responded by refining the rules governing market participants and preserving the competitive market by refining the framework within which customers make choices. It strengthened disclosure requirements, revised marketing rules, enhanced customer notices, imposed civil penalties, and revoked supplier licenses where warranted. The significance of that history is not that every problem has been eliminated. Rather, it demonstrates how the

³⁰ FE Initial Brief at 47-53; OCA Main Brief at 36-45; CAUSE-PA Main Brief at 20-24.

³¹ *See generally* Appendix A; *Rulemaking to Amend the Provisions of 52 Pa. Code § 54.5 Regarding Disclosure Statements for Residential and Small Business Customers and to Add § 54.10 Regarding the Provision of Notices of Contract Expiration or Changes in Terms for Residential and Small Business Customers*, Docket No. L-2014-2409385, Final-Omitted Rulemaking Order (entered Apr. 3, 2014); *Rulemaking to Amend the Provisions of 52 Pa. Code Chapter 111 to Add and Amend Regulations Governing Standards and Billing Practices for Electric Generation Suppliers*, Docket No. L-2015-2508421, Final Rulemaking Order (entered June 15, 2017); *Rulemaking to Amend the Provisions of 52 Pa. Code Chapter 54 to Add and Amend Provisions Regarding the Licensing of Electric Generation Suppliers*, Docket No. L-2017-2628991, Final Rulemaking Order (entered Feb. 27, 2020).

Commission has historically exercised its authority—by regulating market participants and improving the framework within which customers make choices, not by making it more difficult for customers who have already chosen competitive supply to remain in that market.

The Commission's current consideration of Duquesne Light Company's ("DLC") proposed CAP enrollment process confirms that this regulatory philosophy continues today. In the pending DLC universal service proceeding, the Commission withheld approval of a proposal that would have automatically returned certain Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program ("LIHEAP") recipients receiving competitive supply to default service through automatic CAP enrollment.³² The Commission expressed concern over automatically moving customers with existing EGS contracts to default service without affirmative consent and directed Duquesne to explain how such consent would be obtained before approving the proposal.³³

Chairman DeFrank's contemporaneous Statement was even more direct. Although supportive of efforts to improve access to CAP, he did not support the proposed opt-out enrollment process and expressed particular concern about moving customers with existing EGS contracts to default service without ensuring they were informed about what was happening first. He stated that informed consent "should always be a condition of enrollment," especially where the customer has existing contractual obligations to an EGS, and voted to defer approval pending additional information.³⁴

³² *Petition of Duquesne Light Company for Approval of Its Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan*, Docket No. M-2025-3058944, Interim Opinion and Order (entered June 5, 2026), at 9-12. ("DLC CAP Order")

³³ *Id.* at 10.

³⁴ *Petition of Duquesne Light Company for Approval of Its Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan*, Docket No. M-2025-3058944, Statement of Chairman DeFrank at 1-2.

This proceeding illustrates the Commission's longstanding regulatory approach. Even where another statutory objective – universal service – is implicated, the Commission did not presume that automatically disrupting an existing competitive supply relationship was the appropriate means of protecting customers. Instead, it required additional explanation, considered alternatives, and withheld approval pending further review. As discussed below in Section II.C, the Commission's balancing of competition and universal service has likewise developed over many years through careful consideration of competing statutory objectives—not by assuming that the existence of a policy concern automatically justifies restricting competition.

That careful approach stands in marked contrast to the Joint Proponents' position here. They simply assume that because some customers ultimately paid more than the PTC, all customers who previously chose competitive supply should now bear the burden of repeatedly reaffirming that decision, regardless of the pricing outcome. Yet they never explain why the Commission's existing customer choice framework should be fundamentally altered rather than refined, nor why less restrictive changes to that framework would be inadequate. They do not evaluate whether targeted revisions to the Commission's disclosure requirements, contract renewal notices, or other existing customer protections could address their stated concerns before fundamentally changing the legal effect of a customer's original enrollment decision. Nor do they explain why those existing customer-protection mechanisms, developed and refined through decades of Commission proceedings, are inadequate to address the concerns they identify here. Instead, they proceed directly to the most restrictive alternative by requiring a second affirmative customer action to preserve a choice the customer has already made.

Unlike the DLC proceeding, nothing has occurred here to alter the customer's existing contractual relationship other than the ordinary expiration of a contract governed by the Commission's existing renewal regulations. FE PA's proposed return to default service is not limited to customers enrolling in CAP, receiving subsidized benefits, or

otherwise participating in a universal service program.³⁵ Nor is it limited to customers whose EGS renewal price exceeds the PTC.³⁶ The proposal instead operates categorically. FE PA confirmed that a residential customer would be returned to default service at the end of the fixed contract term absent a new affirmative choice even where the EGS renewal price is below the applicable PTC.³⁷ The same result would apply to a customer who had selected a 100% renewable supply product,³⁸ and FE PA—not the customer’s EGS—would itself process the return to default service if the supplier did not provide the required attestation of affirmative consent.³⁹

That is precisely the proposal the supporting parties defend by observing that customers remain free to shop again. OCA states that residential customers may remain with their EGS “simply by affirmatively responding to the required notices,” and that “[t]he only customers returned to default service are those who do nothing.”⁴⁰ CAUSE-PA likewise argues that consumers will retain direct market access because they can affirmatively choose to remain with an EGS, while customers who do not act will “literally ‘default’ to default service.”⁴¹ But customer silence does not nullify the customer's original affirmative decision to receive competitive supply. Under the Commission's existing regulations, that affirmative choice remains effective unless and

³⁵ FE PA Petition at paragraph 57, FE Initial Brief at 47-49.

³⁶ RESA Exhibit FL-3 (FE Response to RESA Set 1, No 14) (confirming return to default service “regardless of whether the renewal price is above or below the applicable price-to-compare”).

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ FE St. No. 1 at 20-24; RESA St. No. 1 at 25-26.

³⁹ See RESA Exh. FL-4 (FE PA Response to RESA Interrogatory Set I, No. 16).

⁴⁰ OCA Main Brief at 38–40.

⁴¹ CAUSE-PA Main Brief at 21-23; CAUSE-PA St. No. 1R at 24.

until the customer elects otherwise after receiving the Commission-prescribed notices.⁴² The Joint Proponents ask the Commission to fundamentally alter that framework by requiring customers to recreate the legal effect of an affirmative decision they have already knowingly made.

Mr. Lacey's testimony addressed the very questions the Competition Act requires the Commission to consider.⁴³ Consistent with nearly three decades of Commission practice, he did not propose fewer customer protections. Rather, he offered numerous opportunities to strengthen Pennsylvania's competitive market while better protecting customers without fundamentally altering the existing customer choice framework. Proposal by proposal, he explained how FE PA's requested changes increase barriers to effective competition, shift wholesale market risks to customers, increase supplier costs, restrict competitive programs, enhance the structural advantages already enjoyed by default service, and otherwise move Pennsylvania farther away from the competitive market structure the General Assembly envisioned. RESA addressed those proposal-specific competitive harms extensively in its Main Brief and incorporates that discussion here by reference.⁴⁴ The cumulative effect of those proposals reinforces—not replaces—RESA's proposal-specific analysis.

Nor may the Commission end its analysis there. As the Commonwealth Court explained in *DCIDA*, the Commission must implement the statutory framework enacted by the General Assembly, not substitute a different policy judgment.⁴⁵ Accordingly, the

⁴² 52 Pa. Code § 54.10(3)(i)-(ii) (the renewal regulation); 52 Pa. Code § 54.5(g)(1)-(2) (required contract disclosure regarding renewal notices); 52 Pa. Code § 111.7 (affirmative authorization/verification); RESA St No. 1 at 14-18; and RESA St. No. 1R at 12-18.

⁴³ RESA St. No. 1 at 4-15, 50-68; RESA St. No. 1R at 3-33.

⁴⁴ RESA Main Brief at 13-63.

⁴⁵ *DCIDA* at 1133-35.

Commission remains bound to implement the Competition Act as enacted by the General Assembly, including determining whether the proposed restrictions are authorized by, and consistent with, the competitive market framework the General Assembly adopted.

Thus, the Commission should reject the Joint Proponents' suggestion that the continued ability to technically enroll with an EGS, standing alone, satisfies the Competition Act. The relevant question is whether the challenged proposals preserve the competitive market framework the General Assembly established and the Commission has spent nearly three decades implementing. If the Commission ultimately determines that its existing customer choice framework warrants revision, that determination should follow the same deliberate consideration and balancing of competing interests that produced the existing framework—not the unsupported premise in a standalone default service proceeding that above-PTC pricing alone renders the Commission's existing customer-protection framework inadequate. As Appendix A demonstrates, the Commission has historically strengthened consumer protections by improving the operation of that market—not by making continued participation in it more difficult. The proposals here represent a marked departure from that longstanding approach.

C. The Competition Act Already Reflects the General Assembly's Balance Between Competition and Consumer Protection

The foregoing discussion does not suggest that the Commission may never approve restrictions affecting Pennsylvania's competitive retail market. The Commission has concluded that reasonably tailored limitations on competition may be warranted to advance separate statutory objectives established by the General Assembly, most notably universal service. The question here is whether the proponents have identified a comparable statutory objective authorizing the restrictions proposed in this proceeding. They have not.

CAUSE-PA, FE PA, and OCA each ask the Commission to impose additional restrictions on Pennsylvania's competitive market because current affordability concerns justify broad new restrictions on Pennsylvania's competitive market on the ground that

competition is no longer producing results they find acceptable.⁴⁶ That argument overlooks an important feature of the Competition Act. Affordability was not a policy concern discovered after restructuring.⁴⁷ It was one of the principal reasons the General Assembly enacted the Competition Act. The Legislature determined that competition—not continued regulation of generation prices—would provide the long-term discipline necessary to achieve lower prices, innovation, and customer choice.⁴⁸

That does not mean competition is absolute. The Competition Act itself recognizes that competition exists alongside other important statutory objectives, including universal service, consumer protection, default service, and market remediation.⁴⁹ Indeed, Commission and appellate precedent demonstrate that there are circumstances in which those competing statutory objectives may justify limitations on competition. The CAP decisions illustrate the limited circumstances in which the Commission and the Commonwealth Court have permitted competition to yield to another express statutory objective. In the early PECO CAP litigation, the Commonwealth Court recognized that competition could yield to the Competition Act's universal-service objectives, but required substantial reasons grounded in the record for the particular restriction and consideration of whether a reasonable alternative would accomplish the statutory objective.⁵⁰ Later, in the PPL CAP-SOP litigation, the Commission adopted a narrowly tailored shopping program designed to preserve competitive choice while protecting the administration and funding of Pennsylvania's universal service program,⁵¹ and the

⁴⁶ FE Initial Brief at 1-13, 40-53; OCA Main Brief at 32-45; CAUSE-PA Main Brief at 8-29.

⁴⁷ 66 Pa. C.S. §2802(12), (14); *See also* RESA Main Brief at 1-12.

⁴⁸ 66 Pa. C.S. §2802(12), (14).

⁴⁹ *See* 66 Pa. C.S. §§2802, 2804, 2806, 2811.

⁵⁰ *CAUSE-PA* Order at 1103-04 .

⁵¹ *PPL DSP V Order* at 94-112.

Commonwealth Court affirmed that approach.⁵² When experience later demonstrated that the CAP-SOP itself had not adequately protected those statutory universal service objectives, the Commission in *PPL DSP V* approved ending CAP shopping while customers remained enrolled in CAP.⁵³ Throughout that progression, however, the Commission acted to implement a distinct statutory universal service mandate—not to recalibrate the Legislature's competitive market based upon generalized concerns regarding affordability.

Here, by contrast, the proponents identify no separate statutory program whose administration is impaired by ordinary retail competitive shopping. Nor have they demonstrated, as the Commission and Commonwealth Court required in the CAP cases, that the requested restrictions are necessary because no reasonable alternative exists.⁵⁴

The supporting parties identify affordability as the competing policy objective.⁵⁵ But affordability is not a competing statutory directive that arose outside the Competition Act; it was one of the principal reasons the General Assembly adopted retail competition in the first place. Rather than identifying a separate legislative mandate requiring competition to yield, the supporting parties ask the Commission to revisit the Legislature's chosen means of achieving affordability. Their proposed solution is to make default service seemingly more attractive while simultaneously shifting additional wholesale market risks onto shopping customers and imposing additional regulatory burdens on customers who choose competitive generation. That is fundamentally

⁵² *RESA* Order at 789-94.

⁵³ *PPL DSP V* Order at 102-114.

⁵⁴ *CAUSE-PA* Order at 1103-04; *PPL DSP V* Order at 95-98; *See also* *RESA* Main Brief at 28-63.

⁵⁵ *FE* Initial Brief at 1-13, 40-53; *OCA* Main Brief at 32-45; *CAUSE-PA* Main Brief at 8-29.

different from carrying out a legislative directive such as the universal service policies at issue in the CAP cases.

The Commonwealth Court explained in *DCIDA* that the Commission must faithfully implement the specific statutory framework enacted by the General Assembly and may not invoke its general public utility authority to disregard or alter another statutory directive.⁵⁶ Thus, neither Section 1501's requirement that jurisdictional utility service be adequate, efficient, safe, and reasonable, nor Section 1301's requirement that public utility rates be just and reasonable, authorizes the Commission to displace the Competition Act's specific treatment of electric generation. The Competition Act does not direct the Commission to determine a substantively "correct" generation price through traditional cost-of-service ratemaking. Instead, it requires the default service provider to obtain Commission approval of a procurement plan structured around competitive procurement, a prudent mix of contracts, adequate and reliable service, and least cost to customers over time; the resulting procurement costs are then recovered through the default-service rate mechanism.⁵⁷ The Commission's oversight of that statutory process does not authorize it to regulate EGS prices indirectly by treating the resulting default-service rate as the benchmark against which competitive generation prices must be judged or by restricting competition whenever customers pay more than the PTC.

The question is whether the proponents have identified a statutory objective comparable to the universal service mandate at issue in the CAP cases that authorizes the restrictions proposed here. They have not.

⁵⁶ *DCIDA* at 1133-36.

⁵⁷ *Implementation of Act 129 of October 15, 2008; Default Service and Retail Electric Markets*, Docket No. L-2009-2095604, Final Rulemaking Order at 3-5, 18-20 (Pa. P.U.C. entered Oct. 4, 2011).

They have not identified such a statutory objective, nor have they demonstrated why the proposed restrictions are necessary in light of the less restrictive alternatives identified in the record. Instead, they largely dismissed the competitive market impacts of FE PA's proposals on the ground that customers remain free to shop.⁵⁸ That response neither answers RESA's proposal-specific concerns nor establishes why the General Assembly's competitive framework should give way in this proceeding.

The record therefore presents a very different circumstance from the CAP cases. There, the Commission identified a separate statutory objective—universal service—and concluded that limited restrictions on shopping were necessary to carry out that legislative directive.⁵⁹ Here, by contrast, the proponents ask the Commission to recalibrate the Legislature's chosen means of achieving affordability itself. That is not the implementation of the Competition Act; it is an invitation to rewrite the statutory balance the General Assembly already struck.⁶⁰ The Commission should decline that invitation and reject the proposed restructuring of the POR program, the elimination of the CRP, the proposed automatic return to default service, and the proposed quarterly affirmative consent requirements as inconsistent with both the statutory balance struck by the General Assembly and the Commission's longstanding implementation of the Competition Act.

⁵⁸ FE Initial Brief at 47-53, OCA Main Brief at 36-45; CAUSE-PA Main Brief at 18-29.

⁵⁹ *CAUSE-PA Order* at 1103-04; *RESA Order* at 789-94.

⁶⁰ *See* 66 Pa. C.S. §§2802, 2804, 2806, 2811.

III. CONCLUSION

The Joint Petition asks the Commission to depart from nearly three decades of successful implementation of the Competition Act by treating evidence that some shopping customers paid more than the PTC as justification for restricting Pennsylvania's competitive retail electricity market. Neither the Competition Act, Commission precedent, nor Pennsylvania appellate precedent supports that result.

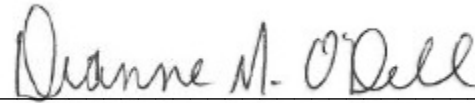
The General Assembly determined that competition—not continued regulation of generation prices—would promote affordability, innovation, and customer choice. Consistent with that legislative judgment, the Commission has historically responded to concerns regarding the operation of Pennsylvania's retail electricity market by strengthening the conditions necessary for effective competition while protecting consumers. Where the Commission has approved limitations on competition, it has done so only to implement separate statutory mandates expressly established by the General Assembly. No comparable legislative directive exists here.

For the reasons set forth in RESA's Main Brief, this Reply Brief, the testimony of Mr. Lacey, and the record as a whole, the Commission should reject the Joint Petition in its entirety and deny each of the proposal-specific changes challenged by RESA, specifically the proposals to:

- restructure the Purchase of Receivables (“POR”) program;
- eliminate the Customer Referral Program (“CRP”);
- automatically return electric generation supplier (“EGS”) customers to default service upon contract expiration;
- require quarterly affirmative customer consent for continued service under month-to-month variable-priced contracts; and,
- shift additional wholesale market risks onto customers which are now borne by sophisticated wholesale default service suppliers.

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APPENDIX A

Selected Proceedings Reflecting Commission Implementation of Competition Act

Year	Issue	Commission Response	Citation
1998	Implementing customer choice under the Competition Act	Adopted customer information and disclosure requirements to facilitate informed customer choice and comparison of competitive offers.	Customer Information Disclosure for Electricity Providers, Docket No. L-00970126 (Apr. 30, 1998).
2006	Significant increases in default service prices	Approved a competitive retail aggregation program utilizing an EGS to provide default generation.	Petition of Direct Energy Services, LLC, Docket No. P-00062205 (Apr. 20, 2006).
2007	Expiration of generation rate caps	Adopted a market-based default service procurement framework following the transition to competitive generation pricing.	Rulemaking Re Electric Distribution Companies' Obligation to Serve Retail Customers at the Conclusion of the Transition Period, Docket No. L-00040169 (May 10, 2007).
2009	Removing barriers to effective retail competition	Directed retail market enhancements, including POR, customer information improvements, billing and data access enhancements, customer education, and related market infrastructure.	PPL Electric Utilities Corp. Retail Markets Proceeding, Docket No. M-2009-2104271 (Aug. 11, 2009).
2011	Implementing Act 129 default service requirements	Clarified that default service is governed by competitive procurement, prudent mix, reliability, and least cost over time.	Implementation of Act 129 of October 15, 2008; Default Service and Retail Electric Markets, Docket No. L-2009-2095604 (Oct 4, 2011).
2013	Evaluating how to improve Pennsylvania's competitive retail market	Evaluated supplier participation, barriers to competition, customer information, default service design, and established a framework for retail market enhancements and other tools to incent competitive market participation by suppliers and customers	Investigation of Pennsylvania's Retail Electricity Market: End State of Default Service, Docket No. I-2011-2237952 (Feb. 15, 2013).
2014	Polar Vortex; customer concerns regarding variable-priced products	Strengthened customer disclosures and expedited supplier switching while preserving competitive customer choice.	Standards for Changing a Customer's Electricity Generation Supplier (Variable Rate Rulemaking / Final-Omitted Rulemaking), Docket Nos. L-2014-2409385 & L-2014-2409383 (2014).
2018–20	Universal service impacts of CAP shopping	Adopted and later modified CAP shopping to implement statutory universal service objectives.	PPL DSP IV, Docket No. P-2016-2537348 (June 21, 2018); Retail Energy Supply Ass'n v. Pa. PUC, 185 A.3d 1206 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2018); PPL DSP V, Docket No. P-2020-3019356 (Dec. 17, 2020).
2020–24	Proposals to automatically return customers to default service following expiration of competitive products	Declined to automatically return customers to default service and preserved the EGS-customer relationship absent sufficient justification.	PPL DSP V, Docket No. P-2020-3019356 (Dec. 17, 2020); PECO DSP VI, Docket No. P-2024-3046008 (Nov. 7, 2024).