



News

Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders
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Burlington County Freeholder Mary Ann O'Brien Announces Cost-Saving Energy Aggregation Program to Launch Fall 2016

Reduced Electricity Rates to Save Participating Residents a Total \$2.8 Million

Freeholder Mary Ann O'Brien announced today that the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholder's cost-saving Energy Aggregation Program will go into effect this September, with participating residents expected to see savings in their October electric bills.

"This Energy Aggregation Program allows Burlington County to make a 'bulk purchase' of energy supply at a rate that is guaranteed to be lower than what residents are currently paying to their electric company," explained Freeholder O'Brien. "We can then offer that lower rate to our residents in participating municipalities. This will help to decrease the ever growing cost of utilities, an issue particularly important to those on a fixed income."

The Freeholder Board hosted a competitive auction on Tuesday, June 14th to determine the program's new fixed rate.

"I am pleased to announce that this process has enabled us to obtain real savings for our residents," O'Brien stated. "Customers of Jersey Central Power and Light (JCP&L) will recognize a savings of at least 20% over their current rate, with customers of PSE&G recognizing a savings of at least 5% and Atlantic City Electric (ACE) customers seeing a savings of at least 13%; for an average of more than 12% in savings over 14 months."

"Combined, this means a total savings for residents of more than \$2.8 million." O'Brien added.

"One of the great things about this program is that, by law, it must offer our residents the lowest available rate," O'Brien continued. "This means that if at any time the default utility rate were to fall below the rate we received at auction, participating residents would receive that lower rate. That way, the savings are guaranteed."

"Now that our aggregate rate has been determined residents in participating towns will receive the lower rate, or they may 'opt out' of the program to either their current utility rate or to a third party provider," O'Brien explained. "In that way, this plan not only lowers costs but also expands consumer choice by offering residents a third option not currently available to them."

The Burlington County Bridge Commission will partner with the Freeholders to execute the energy aggregation program, providing technical and professional support and services.

This program was made available to all municipalities in Burlington County. Ultimately Burlington City, Cinnaminson, Florence, Lumberton, Moorestown, Palmyra, Southampton, Riverside, Woodland, and Wrightstown all chose to participate in this first round of the program. Those municipalities that have not chosen to participate in this initial launch will have an opportunity to do so in subsequent rounds of the program.

“This program is part of our long standing effort to fight for lower utility costs on behalf of our residents, a fight in which we have had many successes,” Freeholder O’Brien noted. “For example, many will remember our public battle to stop New Jersey American Water from increasing water rates by 20 percent in 23 of our municipalities. We gathered more than 11,000 signatures from residents, and confronted the BPU through the mail and in person. When the smoke had cleared, their bid for a \$95 million per year rate increase had been cut to less than a third of that amount.”

“This year, we have spoken out strongly against a proposal by New Jersey Natural Gas to increase their customer’s rates by a staggering 24%, and will continue to do so.” O’Brien added.

“As we begin to implement this cost saving energy aggregation program, we will continue to reach out to our residents to ensure that they fully understand this opportunity and to answer any questions that they may have. Residents in participating municipalities can expect to receive information from us through newsletters, town hall meetings, and much more,” O’Brien concluded. “But the bottom line is that this is a real and exciting chance to put money back where it belongs, in the pockets of hard working Burlington County residents.”

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