**Competitive Electricity Providers (CEPs)**

The Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has seen an increase in the number of inquiries about Competitive Electricity Providers (CEPs) in recent months, as consumers seek ways to reduce their electricity supply costs. Consumers may choose from a number of CEPs that serve the Maine market as an alternative to Standard Offer service. CEPs are licensed by the PUC and subject to certain PUC rules, but their prices are not regulated.

Natural gas costs have decreased in recent months, which means the cost of generating electricity has decreased. These lower prices are now reflected in the rates of some CEPs.

Consumers considering enrolling with a CEP should carefully consider possible costs and benefits of the CEP and ensure they understand the Terms of Service before enrolling. The PUC offers the following information to consumers considering switching to a CEP for their electricity supply so that they can make informed choices.

* Purchasing electricity from a CEP may save you money, but only if the CEP’s price is lower than the Standard Offer price over the term of the CEP contract. The Standard Offer price is determined by competitive procurement administered by the PUC and changes annually for residential customers on January first each year (for CMP and Versant Power customers), with changes typically announced a month or more in advance. Find the current [Standard Offer price here](https://www.maine.gov/mpuc/regulated-utilities/electricity/standard-offer-rates).  CEP prices may be fixed or variable and for various length terms.
* Residential customers may begin, return to, or leave standard offer service at any time.  In certain circumstances non-residential customers may be charged an opt-out fee for leaving standard offer.
* Some CEPs charge an early termination fee if you switch to another supplier (including Standard Offer) before the term expires. Make sure you know whether there is a fee and what it is before enrolling.
* It is very important to read and understand the Terms of Service before signing a contract.This includes price and termination fee information, the length of your contract, and the CEP’s method (e.g., e-mail, phone, mail, etc.) of communicating with you about renewal, rate changes and other matters. You may want to mark your calendar as a reminder of when your current rate will end or your contract is up for renewal, as communications sometimes get lost or mistaken for junk mail.
* CEPs are subject to limited oversight by the PUC, which has consumer protection rules. CEPs are required to provide you with their Terms of Service before enrolling you and you may opt out of any agreement within five calendar days from the provision of the Terms of Service document. CEPs must notify you of an automatic renewal or any switch to a variable rate at the end of a fixed term. Finally, CEPs are required to obtain a customer’s authorization prior to enrollment. The PUC does not regulate rates charged by CEPs.
* CEPs market their electricity supply services to consumers in a variety of ways, including advertising on television and social media, direct mailing, and door-to-door sales and consumers should be careful when making their choice about their electricity supply. CMP and Versant employees do not conduct marketing on behalf of CEPs.
* Consumers should never feel pressured to enroll with a CEP. If a representative comes to your door, do not feel obligated to make a quick decision or let a salesperson into your home. If you feel uncomfortable with a sales representative, contact the CEP directly instead.
* If you enroll with a CEP and later change your mind, you have the right to rescind your decision within five calendar days. Making a record of when you called to rescind your choice may be useful if questions arise later.
* The [Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)](https://www.maine.gov/meopa/electricity/electricity-supply) has information on selecting a CEP, a list of CEP price offerings and a calculator to estimate savings.
* The PUC has a full list of [licensed retail electricity suppliers](https://www.maine.gov/mpuc/regulated-utilities/electricity/maine-retail-electricity-suppliers).
* If you have a complaint about a CEP, the PUC’s Consumer Assistance Division may be able to help. You may file a complaint [online](https://www.maine.gov/mpuc/consumer-assistance/file-complaint) or by calling 1-800-452-4699.