

COLUMBIA GAS OF KENTUCKY, INC.
RESPONSE TO STAFF'S SECOND REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
DATED FEBRUARY 12, 2021

1. Refer to Columbia Kentucky's response to Commission Staff's First Request for Information (Staff's First Request), Item 1(a). Explain each basis for Columbia Kentucky's assertion that its online tool to provide gas cost comparison information to customers is "a more effective means of providing timely gas cost comparison information, over and above [the quarterly bill inserts] required by the Commission's Order in Case No. 2017-00115"

Response: The 6-7 week lead time required to produce bill inserts results in Choice supplier price information being outdated when received by customers. Providing a link to the price comparison chart on the Commission's website -- <https://psc.ky.gov/home/columbiachoice> -- provides consumers with the most up-to-date price information. Once the customer selects a supplier price, the online tool can be used to compare that price to Columbia's gas supply cost.

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2. Refer to Columbia Kentucky's response to Staff's First Request, Item 1(d).
 - a. Confirm that in Step 4 the customer must manually click a link to each individual marketer's website, navigate through each website's various menus to discover price offers, then enter marketers' prices one a time to discover how each marketer compares to Columbia Kentucky's and to other marketers.
 - b. State whether any guidance is given as to the most appropriate Mcf usage to enter to achieve a valid comparison. If not, state how a customer would calculate the difference in annual gas cost charges based on his or her own usage or based on a typical customer's usage.

Response:

- a. Customers do not need to click on each marketer's website link to obtain a price. In Step 3, on the Customer Choice page under the heading, "How to enroll" Columbia provides a link to the Commission's supplier price comparison page --

<https://psc.ky.gov/home/columbiachoice> -- so that customers can easily compare marketer prices.

- b. Customers may obtain their consumption data by reviewing the 13-month consumption history shown on their monthly bill, by logging into their account on Columbia's website, or by calling Columbia's Customer Care Center.

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3. Refer to Columbia Kentucky's response to Staff's First Request, Item 3(b).
 - a. State whether Columbia Kentucky considered additions to the previous survey questions based on its education efforts since 2017.
 - b. State whether the Matrix Group believes the 2012 survey questions to be adequate to evaluate whether Columbia Kentucky and participating marketers have implemented effective ways to further educate customers regarding availability of the CHOICE program, features of the program, their own status as participants in the program and which marketer is serving them, how they can determine if they are saving money as participants in the program, and how to evaluate comparative price information in the context of the program.
 - c. Explain why Columbia Kentucky does not intend to add survey questions regarding customers' knowledge of Columbia Kentucky's online tool to provide gas cost comparison information to customers.

d. Explain whether Columbia Kentucky utilized any customer satisfaction survey when it launched its online tool to provide gas cost comparison information to customers

Response:

a. b. and c. Columbia initially believed it should utilize the same survey questions as the previous survey because the questions were provided by the Commission. For consistency, it is reasonable to use the same survey questions in order to determine if customer perceptions have changed from the baseline data gathered in the previous survey.

In consultation with The Matrix Group, Columbia has amended its intended survey format to include additional assessments of customer knowledge and awareness. Please see the revised survey format in Attachment A hereto. There are two forms of Attachment A and the questions are the same. The first form is for residential customers and the second for commercial and small volume industrial customers. Columbia respectfully requests the Commission's approval of the survey questions by March 24, 2021 so that it will be able to meet the timetable established by the Commission's Order in Case No. 2017-00115 for the survey to be conducted before Columbia's next filing for approval of the Choice program extension no later than September 30, 2021.

d. NiSource utilized information obtained from customer focus groups and user testing in the redesign phase of its customer websites that included the gas cost comparison

tools between 2016 and 2019. The details are not available to determine if these tools were specifically surveyed.

LIST SOURCE WILL BE PRECODED BASED ON URL

MX21004
Columbia Gas Customer Choice Survey
Residential Version

This survey is being conducted on behalf of the Public Service Commission and Columbia Gas. This is an anonymous survey to help understand how customers feel about the Customer Choice Program. Your responses will remain confidential throughout the survey.

Please have the person in your household who is responsible for making decisions regarding the cost of natural gas complete this survey.

The Customer Choice program offers you the option to purchase natural gas from a supplier other than Columbia Gas. If you choose to purchase your gas from a different supplier, the prices charged are set by a competitive market, meaning there is no guarantee that you'll save money, but suppliers may offer special pricing and incentives. You still receive service and billing from Columbia Gas with the Choice program.

1. Are you aware of the Customer Choice Program?

Yes >>> **GO TO Q2** No >>> **GO TO Q9**

2. Are you a current participant in the Columbia Gas of Kentucky Customer Choice Program?

Yes >>> **GO TO Q2A** No >>> **GO TO Q8**

Don't Know >> **GO TO Q9**

2A. How long have you been a Choice customer? _____

3. Thinking back to when you first enrolled in the Choice Program, why did you originally decide to participate?

To get a longer fixed term price

To save money

Other _____

4. What is the greatest benefit you receive from participating in the Customer Choice Program?
INDICATE ALL THAT APPLY

Getting a fixed rate that is the same each month

Saving money

Having a choice of energy suppliers

Other _____

5. Have you saved money by participating in the Choice Program?

- Yes >>> **GO TO Q 5A & B**
- No >>> **GO TO Q5C**
- Unsure/Don't know >>> **GO TO Q5C**

5A. How do you know you have saved money?

- Lower monthly bills
- Comparing my bill to that of others
- Lower price per unit
- Other - SPECIFY

5B. In the course of a year how much do you think you have saved? \$ _____

5C. Why do you continue to participate in the Choice Program?

- I hope to save money.
- My contract with the gas supplier
- I like having a long-term fixed price
- It is easier to remain in the program than to switch back to Columbia
- I like having the option to choose my gas supplier
- Other- SPECIFY: _____

6. If your monthly gas bills were not lower as a result of the Choice Program, how likely is it that you would switch back to Columbia Gas?

- Very Likely
- Somewhat Likely
- Not Very Likely
- Not At All Likely
- Don't Know/Not Sure
- It Depends: _____

7. How satisfied are you with your participation in the Customer Choice Program?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not very satisfied >> **GO TO Q7A**
- Not at all satisfied >> **GO TO Q7A**

7A. Why are you not satisfied: _____

>>> **GO TO Q9**

8. Have you ever been a participant in the Columbia Gas of Kentucky Customer Choice Program?

- Yes >>> **GO TO Q 8A & 8B**
- No >>> **GO TO Q8C**

8A. How long were you a Choice customer? _____

8B. Why are you no longer participating in the Choice Program?

- I was not saving money
- I had problems with my gas supplier.
- Other _____

>>> **GO TO Q9**

8C. What has kept you from participating in the Customer Choice Program?

- It is too much trouble to switch
- I don't believe I would save money
- I don't understand the program
- Satisfied with current plan with Columbia Gas
- Not interested
- Haven't looked into the program
- Other: _____

9. How important is it to have the ability to choose from whom you buy your gas supply, whether you save money or not?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important
- Don't Know

10. Are you aware that your gas supplier and the price you are paying appear on your monthly bill?

- Yes
- No

11. Are you aware that there is a Choice Calculator tool on Columbia Gas' website that allows customers to calculate potential cost savings with the CHOICE program?

- Yes
- No

12. Are you aware that you can compare Columbia's Gas cost to the gas cost of gas suppliers in the Customer Choice Program on the Public Service Commission's website?
[www.psc.state.ky.us.Home/ColumbiaChoice](http://www.psc.state.ky.us/Home/ColumbiaChoice)

- Yes
- No

13. Do you feel there is sufficient information available to make an informed decision regarding your choice of gas supplier?

- Yes
- No >> **GO TO 13A**

13A. What additional information would be helpful? _____

The following questions are for classification purposes only.

14. In what county do you live? _____

15. Do you own or rent your home?

- Own
- Rent

16. Into which of the following age categories do you fall?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to answer

17. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

- One Four
 Two Five or more
 Three

18. What was the last grade of school you had the opportunity to complete?

- Less than high school College Graduate
 High school graduate Graduate School
 Some college/ technical school Prefer not to answer

19. Your gender:

- Male Female

20. Do you have access to the Internet?

- Yes No

If you are interested in learning more about the Customer Choice Program, please visit:

www.columbiagasky.com or call 800-432-9345

**That concludes our questions.
Thank you so much for your cooperation.**

LIST SOURCE WILL BE PRECODED BASED ON URL

MX21004
Columbia Gas Customer Choice Survey
Commercial Version

This survey is being conducted on behalf of the Public Service Commission and Columbia Gas. The Public Service Commission has asked Columbia Gas to conduct an anonymous survey to gain an understanding of how customers feel about the Customer Choice Program. Your responses will remain confidential throughout the survey.

Please have the person in your business or facility who is responsible for making decisions regarding the cost of natural gas complete this survey.

The Customer Choice program offers you the option to purchase natural gas from a supplier other than Columbia Gas. If you choose to purchase your gas from a different supplier, the prices charged are set by a competitive market, meaning there is no guarantee that you'll save money, but suppliers may offer special pricing and incentives. You still receive service and billing from Columbia Gas with the Choice program.

1. Are you aware of the Customer Choice Program?

Yes >>> **GO TO Q2** No >>> **GO TO Q9**

2. Are you a current participant in the Columbia Gas of Kentucky Customer Choice Program?

Yes >>> **GO TO Q2A** No >>> **GO TO Q8**

Don't Know >>> **GO TO Q9**

2A. How long have you been a Choice customer? _____

3. Thinking back to when you first enrolled in the Choice Program, why did you originally decide to participate?

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To save money

Other _____

4. What is the greatest benefit you receive from participating in the Customer Choice Program?
INDICATE ALL THAT APPLY

Getting a fixed rate that is the same each month

Saving money

Having a choice of energy suppliers

Other _____

5. Have you saved money by participating in the Choice Program?

- Yes >>> **GO TO Q 5A & B**
- No >>> **GO TO Q5C**
- Unsure/Don't know >>> **GO TO Q5C**

5A. How do you know you have saved money?

- Lower monthly bills
- Comparing my bill to that of others
- Lower price per unit
- Other - SPECIFY

5B. In the course of a year how much do you think you have saved? \$_____

5C. Why do you continue to participate in the Choice Program?

- I hope to save money.
- My contract with the gas supplier
- I like having a long-term fixed price
- It is easier to remain in the program than to switch back to Columbia
- I like having the option to choose my gas supplier
- Other- SPECIFY: _____

6. If your monthly gas bills were not lower as a result of the Choice Program, how likely is it that you would switch back to Columbia Gas?

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- Very satisfied
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- Not very satisfied >> **GO TO Q7A**
- Not at all satisfied >> **GO TO Q7A**

7A. Why are you not satisfied: _____

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- Yes >>> **GO TO Q 8A & 8B**
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8A. For how long were you a Choice customer? _____

8B. Why are you no longer participating in the Choice Program?

- I was not saving money
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- Other _____

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8C. What has kept you from participating in the Customer Choice Program?

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- Yes
- No

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- Yes
- No

12. Are you aware that you can compare Columbia's Gas price to the gas price of gas suppliers in the Customer Choice Program on the Public Service Commission's website?
[www.psc.state.ky.us.Home/ColumbiaChoice](http://www.psc.state.ky.us/Home/ColumbiaChoice)

- Yes
- No

13. Do you feel there is sufficient information available to make an informed decision regarding your choice of gas supplier?

- Yes
- No >> **GO TO 13A**

13A. What additional information would be helpful? _____

Finally, for classification purposes only. . .

14. How many people are employed at your location?

- 1-9
- 10-49
- 50-99
- 100-499
- 500 or more

If you are interested in learning more about the Customer Choice Program, please visit:

www.columbiagasky.com or call 800-432-9345

**That concludes our questions.
Thank you so much for your time and cooperation.**

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4. Refer to Columbia Kentucky's response to Staff's First Request, Item 3(c). Confirm that the online survey will utilize the same questions as the telephone survey.

Response: The survey questions will be the same.

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DATED FEBRUARY 12, 2021

5. Refer to Columbia Kentucky's response to Staff's First Request, Item 3(d). State whether Columbia Kentucky is aware of any customer survey performed by a CHOICE marketer.

Response: Columbia is aware of one marketer that conducts customer experience surveying. A copy of the sample survey was included in the Customer Choice Status Report. The Status Report was also included as Attachment A to Staff's First Data Request Question No. 2.

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INFORMATION DATED FEBRUARY 12, 2021**

6. Refer to Columbia Kentucky's response to Staff's First Request, Item 4.
 - a. Provide the cost to develop the online tool to provide gas cost comparison information to customers.
 - b. State whether quarterly updates to Columbia Kentucky's gas cost are performed by consultants.
 - c. Explain why Columbia Kentucky does not track costs associated with the CHOICE program's education activities.

Response:

- a. The gas cost comparison tool was created during a large scale project aimed at redesigning the customer websites of all Nisource companies. The redesign initiative began in 2016 and concluded in 2019. The creation of the Choice calculator, and the addition of a link to the Commission's gas cost comparison site, were a part of the overall project. There was not an item-by-item breakdown of cost.

b. No

c. Columbia utilizes existing communication channels, including its customer newsletter, monthly bills, and social media to inform customers about its CHOICE Program. A Communication piece may contain information on more than one topic, therefore independent costs for a specific topic are not available.