

## RETAIL ELECTRIC PROVIDER (REP) COMPARISON SHEET

	Current REP	Product A	Product B	Product C
1. Name of Retail Electric Provider (REP)				
2. Your typical monthly usage (kWh)				
3. Rate per kWh (current or proposed)				
4. Bill amount (kWh usage x rate)				
5. Rate type (fixed, variable, indexed)				
6. Contract term, if applicable? (i.e. 3 month, 6 month, 12 month)				
7. If rate is fixed or indexed, is there an early termination fee? Amount?				
8. Deposit required? Amount?				
9. Minimum usage fee? Amount?				
a. If yes, what kWh threshold triggers it? (i.e. 500, 650, 800, 1000)				
10. Score on REP Complaint Scorecard? REP Complaints statistics?				
9. Other important information?				

### **Questions to ask before Switching Retail Electric Providers (REPs)**

1. Do I have a contract with my current REP? If so, what is the contract expiration date, and will I have to pay an early termination fee (ETF) or cancellation fee?
2. What will I pay per kilowatt hour (kWh) of electricity based on 1,000 kWh of average household monthly usage?
3. Does this kWh rate include everything, or will I pay a monthly charge if I use more/less electricity during a billing period (or, minimum usage fee), transmission & distribution utility (TDU) charges, fuel charges or other monthly recurring fees?
4. Will I have to pay a deposit if I select this REP, and if so, how much?
5. Will I have a contract with the new REP, and if so, for how long? Is there a penalty, ETF, if I break the contract?

### **How to Shop for a REP**

1. Go to [www.PowertoChoose.org](http://www.PowertoChoose.org) or call toll-free, 1-866-797-4839.
2. On the website, select “**Go Directly to Offers**,” and enter your zip code.
3. When you enter your zip code, you will see “**Available Offers**” for your area.
4. In the right hand column, “**List of Electric Offers**,” you will see all available REPs offering service in your area and a variety of products and plans for you to choose. Generally, the REPs are listed from lowest price to highest. Variable plans are often lowest and listed first, but the rate may change after the first month.
5. In the left hand column, “**Search Criteria**,” you can narrow your search by selecting from one of several drop-down menus: Rate Type; Renewable Content; and REP Company. You may also enter a range of prices you are willing to pay for electricity in the “Price (cents per kWh):” area. You have the option to enter in preferred “Contract Term (months)” ranging from 0 months up to 36 months, or anything in between. Click the “Submit” button when you have finalized your search.
6. Review the “**Terms of Service**,” “**Electricity Facts Label**,” and any applicable “**Special Terms**” for each REP you search.
7. Review Customer Complaint Statistics through the “**REP Complaint Scorecard**” and “**REP Complaint Summary**.”
8. When you have decided upon a new REP, click on “**Sign Up**” to be taken to the REP’s website to sign-up for their product.

### **Definitions**

**Contract Term** – the length of the contract you choose to sign up for with your REP. Contract term lengths include month-to-month or monthly ranges from three months to three years. Contracts with three month terms, or longer, might include an early termination fee if you cancel before the contract end date.

**Cramming** – the illegal adding of charges to a customer’s electric bill without the customer’s approval.

**Early Termination/Cancellation Fee (ETF)** – a charge by some REPs, up to \$250, to customers ending their electric contract early.

**Electric Choice/Competitive Electric Market** – beginning in Texas in 2002, allows customers in certain areas to choose their REP.

**Electric Cooperative** – a customer-owned electric utility that distributes electricity to its members, having the option to “opt-in” to the electric choice market.

**Electricity Facts Label (EFL)** – the “nutrition label” for your REP product or plan providing the customer with standardized information on the REP’s company, contract terms, pricing, fees, and renewable energy percentage, allowing customers to compare between different REPs and their various offers.

**Kilowatt Hour (kWh)** – unit of measurement, appearing on customers’ bills, that shows how much power is expended during one hour of time.

**Minimum Usage Fee** – a charge by some REPs, up to \$12.95/month, to consumers using less than 500, 800 or 1,000 kWh per month.

**Municipally-Owned Utility** – a non-profit utility owned and operated by the city it serves, having the option to “opt-in” to the electric choice market.

**Office of Public Utility Counsel (OPUC)** – state agency that represents residential and small commercial ratepayers of electric and telephone utilities.

**PowertoChoose (PTC) website** – the official Electric Choice website operated by the PUC where you can shop for REPs.

**Public Utility Commission (PUC)** – state agency charged with regulating electric and telephone utilities.

**Retail Electric Provider (REP)** – the electricity billing company, in an electric choice area, that sells electricity to its customers, PUC-certified to operate in Texas.

**REP Complaint Scorecard** – PUC-compiled customer complaint information converted into graphical scoring system.

**REP Complaint Summary** – PUC summary of total number and types of complaints received by customers for last 6 months.

**Rate Types** – three include: fixed – rate generally stays the same through the contract term; variable – rate may go up/down each month according to the pricing method chosen by the REP; indexed – rate is tied to a specific pricing formula disclosed by the REP.

**Renewable Energy Content** – electricity purchased by the REP from renewable sources including wind, water, biomass or solar.

**Terms of Service** – the contract between the REP and the customer outlining fees, length of contract service, and other information.

**TDU Service Area** – the transmission and distribution utility (TDU) that transmits and delivers electricity to a customer’s home, repairs and maintains the wires and poles, and restores electric power outages.

**Sign Up** – the option listed on the PTC website for a customer to exit PTC and go to the REP’s website to sign-up for service.

**Slamming** – the illegal switching of electric service by a REP without a customer’s approval.

**Special Terms** – terms advertised by certain REPs relating to a specific product which may include airline miles, gift cards, etc.

**Your Rights as a Customer (YRAC)** – a document required of REPs to be given to customers informing them of rights, including service cancellation, billing issues, disconnection/termination and disputes.