

For Immediate Release from the Bedford Town Board and Bedford 2020:

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**A New Community Energy Choice
That's Better for Your Budget and the Climate**

Community Choice Aggregation, a pioneering new energy program intended to lower costs and increase the use of renewable energy is being piloted in Westchester County starting late this fall.

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) is a municipal or countywide energy procurement model that enables communities to put out for bid the total demand for electricity and natural gas of participating homes and small businesses and purchase energy on their behalf. Aggregating consumers on a large scale creates the market clout necessary to negotiate lower rates with private suppliers. Sustainable Westchester has been authorized by the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) to implement the first CCA program in the state in Westchester County.

Twenty Westchester municipalities, including the Town of Bedford, have already signed-on to participate in the CCA program. Together, these towns and villages represent 43% of Westchester County homes and likely a similar proportion of Westchester County businesses. It is anticipated that additional municipalities will sign-on to the program over the next few days.

The New York State Public Service Commission selected Westchester County as the first and only region in the state to pilot Community Choice Aggregation and named Sustainable Westchester, a local non-profit organization, to lead and manage the project.

At the Bedford Town Board meeting tonight, key next steps in the CCA process will be reviewed. These include:

- In early November, a Request for Proposals will be sent on behalf of participating CCA municipalities to Energy Procurement Companies (ESCO's) that have been pre-qualified by Sustainable Westchester.
- The bidding process is anticipated to take 2 weeks. Upon receipt of a compliant and favorable bid, the participating municipalities and Sustainable Westchester will sign a contractual agreement with the selected provider.
- Service with the new provider will begin in the early 2016 between mid-January and March 1.

Residents and small business owners in CCA municipalities do not need to take any action to participate in the program. Once the service begins, the new ESCO will become their default provider. However, power transmission, customer service and billing will still be handled by the utility company -- either NYSEG or Con Edison.

CCA represents the first time customers have had the opportunity to express their personal choice in terms of where and how their power is sourced. Unlike some of the current ESCO programs in the market today, CCA is a totally transparent program and customers can opt-out or opt-in at any time without financial penalty.

Customers will have the opportunity to exercise their choice to opt-up to a 100% renewable energy option as part of the CCA program.

The choice to opt-up or opt-out can be taken on the CCA web site or via regular mail once the program contract has been signed.

The Westchester CCA project has the potential to significantly impact our local environmental and climate goals. According to Mary Beth Kass, Co-President of Bedford 2020 and Bedford Town Board member, "The Town of Bedford has proven itself to be a leader in developing creative ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. CCA is a significant step toward achieving the goal of a substantial transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy in Bedford and all of Westchester County."

For more information about Community Choice Aggregation, email Midge.Iorio@Bedford2020.org.

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