NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY

Department of
Public Service

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www.dps.ny.gov

August 21, 2015

Dear Community Leader:

The New York State Public Service Commission is sponsoring a series of regional information sessions and public statement hearings regarding two proceedings currently before the Commission. The first proceeding is an examination of low income programs offered by the major electric and gas utilities in New York State. The second concerns a Joint Petition submitted by Time Warner Cable and Charter Communications seeking Commission approval to merge into a new entity called New Charter. Attached are fact sheets which provide information on both of these efforts as well as how to obtain the Staff Low Income Report and the Time Warner/Charter Communications Petition.

The Commission will hold public statement hearings to solicit comments from stakeholders on these two proceedings. These hearings are open to the public and will have two parts: an information session, consisting of presentations by Commission staff, and a formal public statement hearing where the public is invited to participate and comment on the proceeding. Information received at the public statement hearings will be transcribed and will be included in the case record. The public comments will be considered by the Commission in deciding these cases.

I would appreciate your assistance informing your constituents about the public meetings and encouraging them to provide comments. It is the Commission's intent to facilitate and encourage active and meaningful participation throughout all of its proceedings. We hope you will consider joining us at one of these meetings.

Sincerely,

Michael Corso
Consumer Advocate
and Director,
Office of Consumer Services

TWC-Charter Proceeding (15-M-0388) - The dates and locations of the meetings:

Date	Location	Time
Thursday, September 17	Bethlehem Town Hall Auditorium 445 Delaware Avenue Delmar, NY	Information Session – 6 pm Public Statement Hearing – 7 pm
Monday, September 21	Borough of Manhattan Community College Lecture Hall N451 199 Chamber Street New York, NY	Information Session – 2 pm Public Statement Hearing – 3 pm Information Session – 6 pm Public Statement Hearing – 7 pm
Thursday, September 24	Amherst Municipal Building Council Chambers, 2nd Floor 5583 Main Street Williamsville, NY	Information Session – 2 pm Public Statement Hearing – 3 pm Information Session – 6 pm Public Statement Hearing – 7 pm

Low Income Proceeding (14-M-0565) - The dates and locations of the meetings:

Date	Location	Time
Thursday, September 10	Crandall Library Christine L. McDonald Community Room 251 Glen Street Glens Falls, NY	Information Session – 2 pm Public Statement Hearing – 3 pm Information Session – 5 pm Public Statement Hearing – 6 pm
Thursday, September 24	Poughkeepsie Town Hall 1 Overocker Road Poughkeepsie, NY	Information Session – 2 pm Public Statement Hearing – 3 pm Information Session – 6 pm Public Statement Hearing – 7 pm
Thursday, October 1	Buffalo Central Library 1 Lafayette Square Buffalo, NY	Information Session – 2 pm Public Statement Hearing – 3 pm Information Session – 6 pm Public Statement Hearing – 7 pm
Tuesday, October 13	NYSDPS 4th Floor Boardroom 90 Church Street New York, NY	Information Session – 2 pm Public Statement Hearing – 3 pm Information Session – 6 pm Public Statement Hearing – 7 pm

The enclosed fact sheets provide detailed information on how to participate in the public statement hearings and available options to submit comments on the proceedings. Additional information can be found at the Department's www.dps.ny.gov web site.

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Factsheet and Notice of Public Hearing

Energy Affordability for Low-Income Utility Customers
Case 14-M-0565

The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) has a history of protecting access to service for those who may face financial difficulties, and has approved low income affordability programs for every major gas and electric utility throughout New York. More than $128 million has been authorized annually for ratepayer-funded low income assistance programs, and more than one million energy consumers participate in those programs.

Through the Low Income Proceeding, the Commission is evaluating the effectiveness of current low income program designs, to identify improvements. The Commission directed Staff, in consultation with interested parties, to conduct an investigation of utility low income programs, to identify best practices, and develop a set of recommendations for how best to optimize the implementation of utility low income programs, for party comment. The Commission's goal is to provide stronger, more aggressive and comprehensive low income programs for those customers who most need rate assistance.

On June 1, 2015, Staff filed a Report on the results of its examination, including a Straw Proposal for a new statewide approach to low-income programs that addresses design and implementation elements including eligibility, enrollment processes, benefit structures, rate discount levels, treatment of participant arrears, reconnection fees, budgeting, and cost recovery.

Some highlights of the Straw Proposal include the following:

- Automatic enrollment for all utility HEAP recipients
- Discount amounts set to achieve a 6% energy burden for the average participant
- A funding limit equal to the amount recovered by annual charges of $20 per customer (electric), or $35 per customer (gas), collected from all customers
- Further study of arrearage forgiveness programs, and
- Prohibition of charging reconnection fees

The Staff Low Income Report may be obtained from the Commission's website, www.dps.ny.gov by entering the Low Income Proceeding case number (14-M-0565) into the Search field on the homepage.

Public Involvement

The Commission strongly believes that obtaining public input regarding energy affordability is critical to developing a rational and balanced approach to meet the needs of the vulnerable customers. Stakeholders such as consumers, government agencies and officials, public interest and consumer advocate groups and industry representatives are invited to review and comment on Staff's Report and Straw Proposal.

The Commission will hold a series of hearings across the state where all those wishing to comment on the Staff Report and Straw Proposal will have an opportunity to make a statement on the record. The hearings are as followings:

Date	Location	Time
Thursday, September 10	Crandall Library Christine L. McDonald Community Room 251 Glen Street Glens Falls, NY	Information Session – 2 pm Public Statement Hearing – 3 pm Information Session – 5 pm Public Statement Hearing – 6 pm
Thursday, September 24	Poughkeepsie Town Hall 1 Overocker Road Poughkeepsie, NY	Information Session – 2 pm Public Statement Hearing – 3 pm Information Session – 6 pm Public Statement Hearing – 7 pm
Thursday, October 1	Buffalo Central Library 1 Lafayette Square Buffalo, NY	Information Session – 2 pm Public Statement Hearing – 3 pm Information Session – 6 pm Public Statement Hearing – 7 pm
Tuesday, October 13	NYSDPS 4th Floor Boardroom 90 Church Street New York, NY	Information Session – 2 pm Public Statement Hearing – 3 pm Information Session – 6 pm Public Statement Hearing – 7 pm

Additional Methods for Commenting on the Case

- **Via the Internet or In Writing:** Submit comments electronically to Kathleen H. Burgess, Secretary, at secretary@dps.ny.gov or by mail or delivery to Secretary Burgess at the Department of Public Service, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223-1350. Comments may also be entered directly into the case by locating the case via the home page of the Commission's website, *www.dps.ny.gov,* by clicking on "Search," and entering 14-M-0565 in the "Search by Case Number" field. After clicking to open the case, enter comments in the "Post Comments" section located at the top of the page.

- **Toll-Free Opinion Line**: Individuals may choose to submit comments by calling the Commission's toll-free Opinion Line at 1-800-335-2120. This line is set up to receive in-state calls 24-hours a day. Callers should press "1" to leave comments about "Case 14-M-0565 Low Income Proceeding".

All comments will become part of the record considered by the Commission. Comments will be accepted at any point while this proceeding is pending, but are requested by October 16, 2015 to ensure full consideration.

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Factsheet and Notice of Public Hearing

Proposed Merger of Charter Communications, Inc. and Time Warner Cable Inc. (Case 15-M-0388)

On July 2, 2015, Charter Communications, Inc. (Charter) and Time Warner Cable Inc. (Time Warner) filed a joint petition with the New York State Public Service Commission (Commission). The Joint Petition is seeking Commission approval to transfer certain Time Warner telephone and cable systems, franchises and assets to Charter.

Under the proposed transaction, Charter and Time Warner will merge into a company identified as New Charter. If this merger occurs, New Charter will own and/or manage systems serving approximately 19.4 million broadband customers, 17.3 million video customers, and 9.4 million voice customers across 41 states. Charter will acquire, and intends to retain, all of Time Warner's existing assets in New York State.

The petitioners assert that New York consumers will benefit from the merger because of the introduction of Charter's all-digital platforms to Time Warner's customers, additional service offerings and faster broadband.

Information Sessions and Public Statement Hearings

The Commission is seeking public comment on Time Warner's and Charter's petition to merge. Interested members of the public are invited to attend a series of public statement hearings and provide comments before an Administrative Law Judge. The hearings will be preceded by an information session, during which staff from the New York State Department of Public Service (DPS) will provide an overview of the procedures for review of the petition. A summary of the proposed merger will also be presented. The presentations will be followed by an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions about the proposed merger.

It is not necessary to be present at the start of the hearings, or make an appointment in advance, or present written material in order to speak at the hearings. All comments given at the hearings will be transcribed and become part of the Commission's formal record. The hearings will remain open until everyone wishing to speak has been heard or other reasonable arrangements have been made.

Disabled persons requiring special accommodations should contact the DPS's Human Resources Management Office at (518) 474-2520 as soon as possible. TDD users may request a sign language interpreter by placing a call through the New York Relay Service at 711 to reach the Human Resource number. Individuals with difficulty understanding or reading English are encouraged to call the Commission at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this factsheet.

Please join us at the following locations:

Date: **September 17, 2015**

Location: **Bethlehem Town Hall Auditorium**
445 Delaware Avenue
Delmar, NY

Times: **6:00 pm information session**
7:00 pm hearing begins

Date: **September 21, 2015**

Location: **Borough of Manhattan Community College**
Lecture Hall N451
199 Chamber Street
New York, NY

Times: **2:00 pm information session**
3:00 pm hearing begins

6:00 pm information session
7:00 pm hearing begins

Date: **September 24, 2015**

Location: **Amherst Municipal Building**
Council Chambers, 2nd Floor
5583 Main Street
Williamsville, NY

Times: **2:00 pm information session**
3:00 pm hearing begins

6:00 pm information session
7:00 pm hearing begins

Additional Methods for Commenting on the Case

- **Via the Internet or In Writing:** Submit comments electronically to Kathleen H. Burgess, Secretary, at secretary@dps.ny.gov or by mail or delivery to Secretary Burgess at the Department of Public Service, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223-1350. Comments may also be entered directly into the case by locating the case via the home page of the Commission's website, *www.dps.ny.gov*, by clicking on "Search," and entering 15-M-0388 in the "Search by Case Number" field. After clicking to open the case, enter comments in the "Post Comments" section located at the top of the page.

- **Toll-Free Opinion Line**: Individuals may choose to submit comments by calling the Commission's toll-free Opinion Line at 1-800-335-2120. This line is set up to receive in-state calls 24-hours a day. Callers should press "1" to leave comments about "Case 15-M-0388 Joint Petition of Charter Communications, Inc. and Time Warner Cable". Comments received via the Opinion Line are not transcribed, but a summary is provided to the Commission for their consideration.

All comments will become part of the record considered by the Commission. Comments will be accepted at any point while this proceeding is pending, but are requested by September 16, 2015 to ensure full consideration.