



Westchester Power Talks Energy Service Companies (ESCO) *What to Watch For...*



About ESCOs (Energy Service Companies)

The New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) opened the State's electric and natural gas industries to competition in the late '90s. Changes in both of these markets have provided an opportunity for consumers to choose their supplier of electricity and/or natural gas. *[NYS Public Service Commission: "Energy Choices - The Facts From The PSC"]*

A Common ESCO Practice: What Is "Slamming"?

Many consumers reported being "slammed" by an ESCO, that is, being switched to an ESCO without their authorization. ESCO representatives, which may include telemarketers and door-to-door salespersons, sometimes claim to be working for the local utility. They offer special deals, and ask to verify the customer's account number. Armed with the account number, the ESCO then notifies the local utility that the customer has authorized the switch. *[Westchester County Consumer Protection Department]*

ESCO's: Sometimes Complicated & Confusing Contracts

Many consumers report that they are faced with lengthy and complicated contracts and then variable rates. Initially an advantageous rate and then a step up shortly thereafter. Contracts often lock you into long or multi-year commitments and cancellation comes with penalty fees

ESCO's: Customer Service Sometimes Spotty

Many consumers report that contacting their ESCO's, receiving return calls or having someone spend the time needed to explain adequately the information is often spotty and sometimes frustrating

There are good ESCOs, yet also some who practice slamming and other misleading practices.

You can avoid these problems by participating in your municipal program, **Westchester Power** that can protect you against these predatory practices. We are a local nonprofit, the program is both vetted and approved by your local government, and there are no fees, penalties or contracts. You can opt-out at any time and we will ALWAYS spend as much time as you need answering your questions. **Communication from Westchester Power will include your municipal seal, often (but not always) a message from your elected official or your community sustainability committee.**

Still unclear or have questions you can call our offices at 914. 242.4725.

www.sustainablewestchesterpower.org/wp

(914) 242-4725

