

Electricity Terms



Market Structure

Deregulation separated the monopoly utilities into three distinct businesses:

Generators - produce electricity at a power plant (deregulated)

Transmission and Distribution (T&D) - system of high-voltage lines, transformers, and switches – also called the “TDSP”. Distribution is how the electricity is disbursed to meet the consumers’ electrical load (regulated)

Retail Suppliers (REPs) - buys and resells electricity in the wholesale market, allowing a competitive market for the customer (deregulated)

Glossary of Terms

Demand - The amount of electricity used at any given instant or averaged over a designated period of time. Demand is usually in measured in kilowatts or Megawatts. The Peak Demand is the highest 15 or 30 minute recorded demand period over 12-months.

Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) -A private industry group that monitors electric energy supply in the state.

Heat Rate - The conversion factor of fuel used in a generation plant to create a megawatt of power. A heat rate product fixes this conversion factor but allows the price of the fuel to fluctuate.

Kilowatt (kW) - A unit for measuring electrical energy. One kilowatt is 1,000 watts and equal to 3,413 BTUs. A kilowatt-hour equals one kilowatt of electrical power taken from an electrical circuit steadily for one hour.

Kilowatt Hour (kWh) - Represents the use of 1,000 watts of electricity for one full hour. It is equivalent to ten 100 watt light bulbs burned simultaneously and continuously for one hour.

Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) - The state agency that regulates electric service. Under Electric Choice, the PUCT will regulate the delivery of electricity and enforce customer protections.

Renewable Energy - Electricity that is made from "environmentally friendly" fuel resources, such as wind, water, biomass or solar. Sometimes referred to as "green" energy.

Slamming - Switching electric service without a customer's approval.

Usage - This is the amount of electricity you used during the billing period listed in kilowatt-hours. This will be listed on your electric bill as kWh used.

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