



**2012 AARP SURVEY OF
PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS
AGES 50+ ON ELECTRIC UTILITIES**

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Research & Strategic Analysis
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AARP's Pennsylvania State Office, in response to its commitment to ensure affordable electric rates and consumer protections for all residents, commissioned this telephone survey to explore the views of 50+ residents on their electric utilities. The survey specifically explores the experiences of 50+ Pennsylvania residents with their electric utility service and their opinions regarding the way they are currently required to choose their electric service and how utility companies should be allowed to market their services to consumers.

This telephone survey of Pennsylvania residents ages 50+ was fielded March 26 to April 1, 2012. A total of 800 interviews were completed yielding a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The annotated survey begins on page 8.

Survey-In-Brief

- ❖ **Three-quarters of Pennsylvania residents age 50+ are concerned about the rising costs of electricity in their homes, and the majority believes their elected officials are not doing enough to lower these costs.**
 - ✓ 46 percent say they are extremely or very concerned about the costs of their electricity going up; and another 29 percent say they are somewhat concerned.
 - ✓ 58 percent say their state elected officials are not doing enough to lower the costs of their electricity bills, while only 18 percent say elected officials are doing enough to lower these costs.

- ❖ **Pennsylvania residents age 50+ are aware that state law allows them to choose their electricity provider and most understand the process for switching providers.**
 - ✓ 93 percent know that Pennsylvania state law allows residents to choose their electricity provider from companies that offer service in their area.
 - ✓ 37 percent, of respondents who are aware that they can switch electricity providers, say they understand the process for switching very well and another 35% say they understand the process somewhat well. 25 percent say they do not understand the process for switching very well (14%) or at all (11%).
 - ✓ 23 percent of all respondents say they have switched their electricity provider in the last 12 months; while 75 percent have not switched providers.
 - ✓ Of those respondents who have not switched their electricity provider, 28 percent say they have considered switching.

- ❖ **Many Pennsylvania residents age 50+ have been contacted by electricity providers to try to get them to switch their electric company and most of these residents have been contacted by mail.**
 - ✓ 66 percent have been contacted by electricity providers, in the last 12 months, about switching their providers.
 - ✓ 74 percent, of respondents who have been contacted by electricity providers, say they have been contacted by mail, 38 percent by telephone, four percent by email and five percent by door to door solicitations.
 - ✓ 56 percent of all respondents believe that electricity providers should *not* be allowed to sell their services door to door and another 30 percent say these providers should be allowed to sell their services door to door *but* with restrictions.

❖ **The majority of Pennsylvania residents age 50+ opposes the proposal before the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to change the “standard plan” and the change to state law allowing electric and gas companies to increase rates annually to pay for infrastructure improvements.**

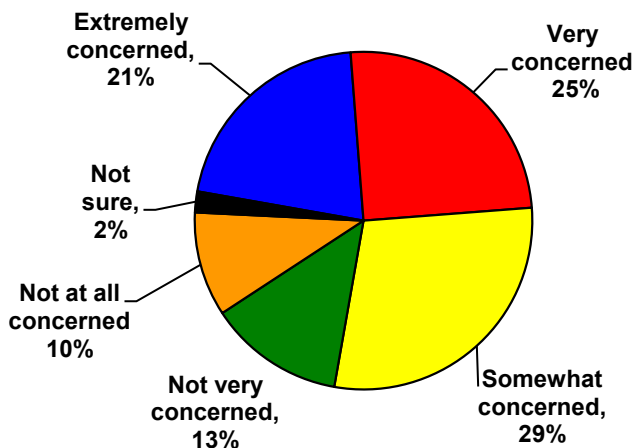
- ✓ 75 percent say it is extremely or very important that electricity providers that are required to offer service in certain areas continue to provide a “standard plan” at the lowest reasonable cost.
- ✓ 63 percent say they oppose (strongly or somewhat) the proposal before the PUC that would alter the “standard plan” and potentially result in higher electricity rates for customers who have not chosen a new electricity provider.
- ✓ 64 percent oppose (strongly or somewhat) allowing electric and gas utilities to automatically increase rates every year to pay for infrastructure improvements and maintenance.
- ✓ 42 percent say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office in Pennsylvania who commits to strengthening consumer protections with regard to electric service.

Detailed Findings

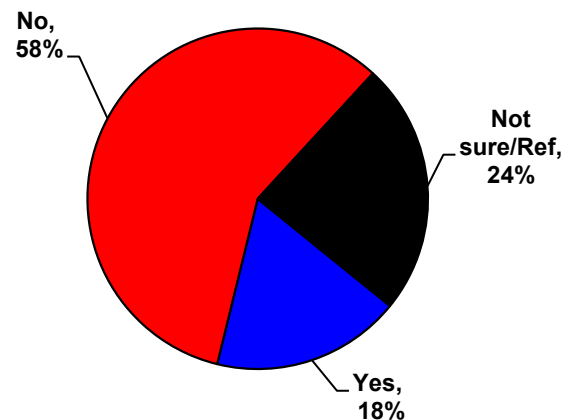
Over two in five 50+ residents in Pennsylvania are extremely or very concerned about the costs of their electricity going up and more than half believe their elected officials are not doing enough to lower the costs of electricity.

- ✓ 37 percent say their electricity bill has gone up in the last 12 months and 42 percent say it has stayed the same.

**Concern about Electricity Costs
(n=800)**



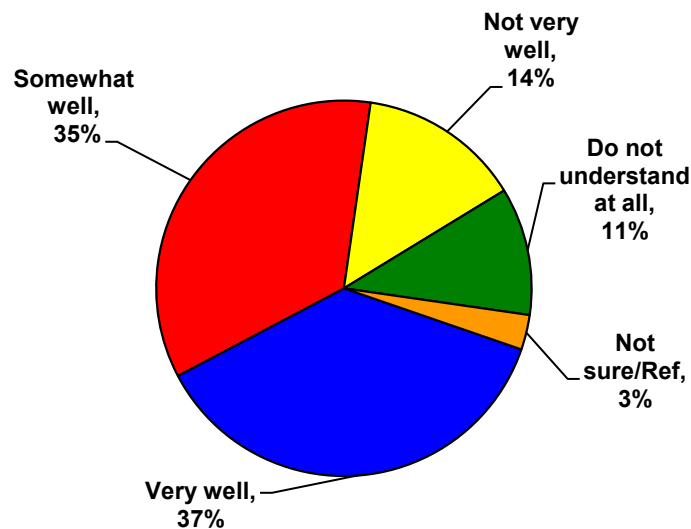
**Opinion on Whether Elected Officials Are Doing
Enough to Lower Electricity Rates
(n=800)**



Over seven in ten 50+ residents in Pennsylvania say they understand the process for changing their electricity provider very or somewhat well. Only about a quarter says they do not understand the process very well or at all.

- ✓ 93 percent say they know that Pennsylvania state law allows residents to choose their electricity provider from companies that are willing to offer service in their area.
- ✓ 23 percent say they have switched their electricity provider in the last 12 months and 75 percent have not switched.
- ✓ Of those respondents who have not switched their electricity provider, 28 percent say they have considered switching providers.

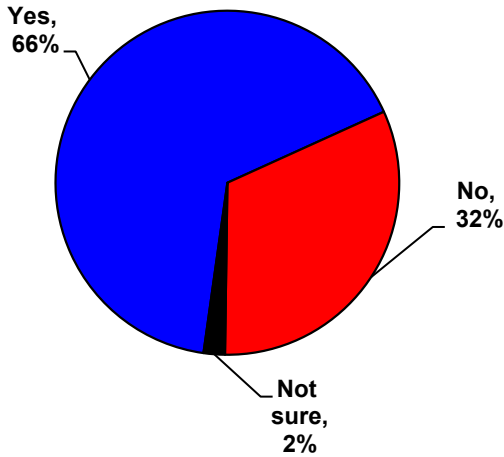
Understanding of the Process for Switching Electricity Providers (n=800)



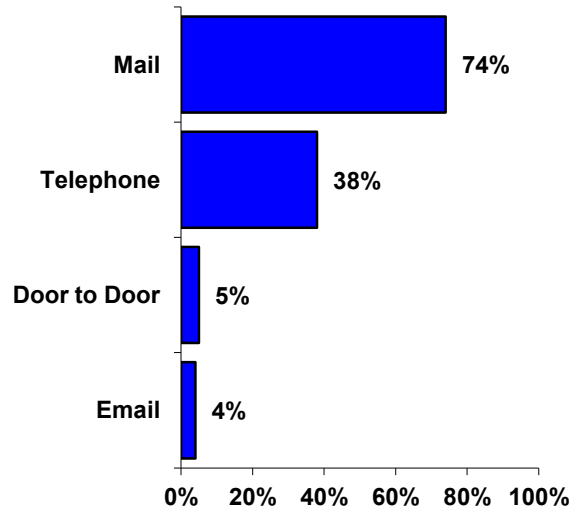
Two-thirds of 50+ residents in Pennsylvania say they have been contacted by electricity providers to try to get them to switch their electric company and most have been contacted by mail.

- ✓ 56 percent believe that electricity providers should not be allowed to sell their services door to door.
- ✓ 30 percent believe electricity providers should be allowed to sell their services door to door but with restrictions such as the hours they may go to a potential customer's home.
- ✓ 9 percent believe providers should be allowed to go door to door with no restrictions.

**Contact by Electricity Providers
(n=800)**

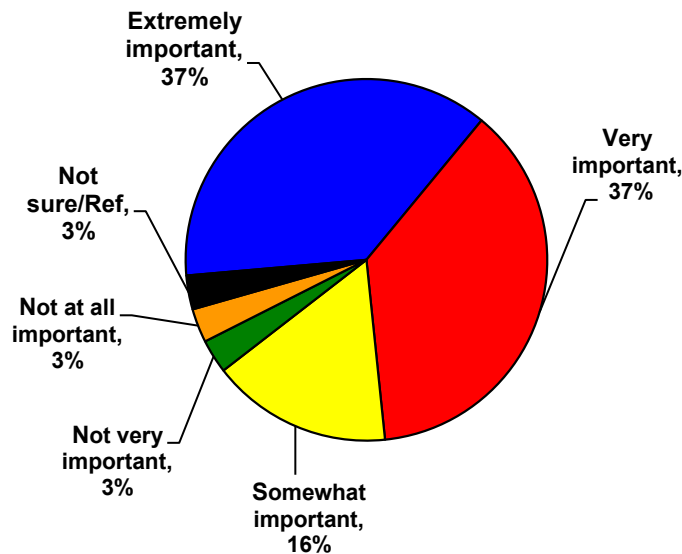


**Method of Contact by Electricity Providers
(n=800)**



Three-quarters of 50+ residents in Pennsylvania say it is extremely or very important that electricity providers that are required to offer service in certain areas continue to offer the “standard plan” at the lowest reasonable cost.

Importance of Continuing to Offer a “Standard Plan”* (n=800)

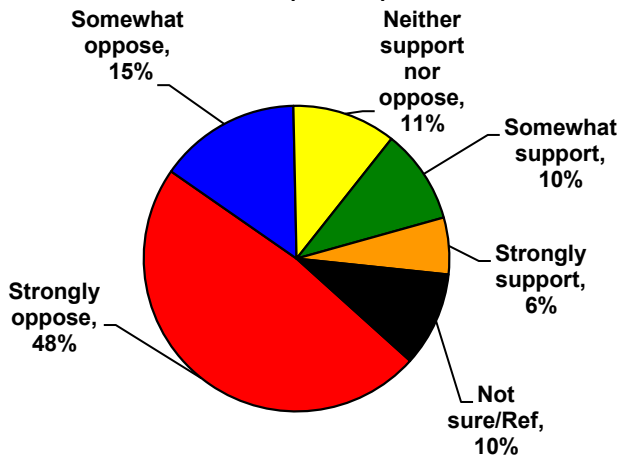


*Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

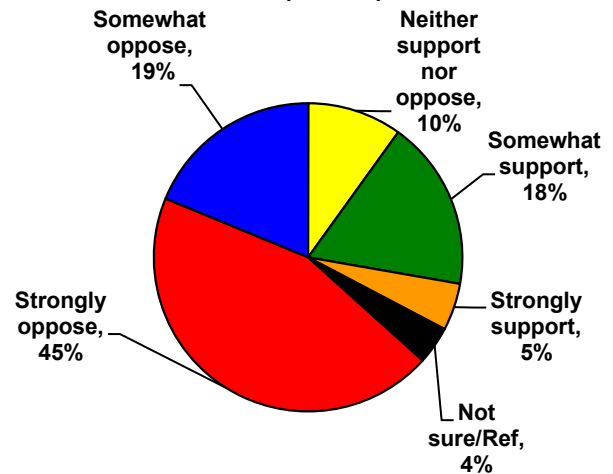
The majority of 50+ residents in Pennsylvania opposes the proposal before the Public Utility Commission to change the “standard plan” and the change to state law allowing electric and gas companies to automatically increase rates every year.

- ✓ About two-thirds oppose the proposal that would change the “standard plan” and potentially result in higher electricity rates for customers who have not chosen a new electric provider.
- ✓ About two-thirds also oppose allowing electric and gas utilities to automatically increase rates every year to pay for infrastructure improvements and maintenance.

Opposition and Support for the Proposal to Change the “Standard Plan”
(n=800)



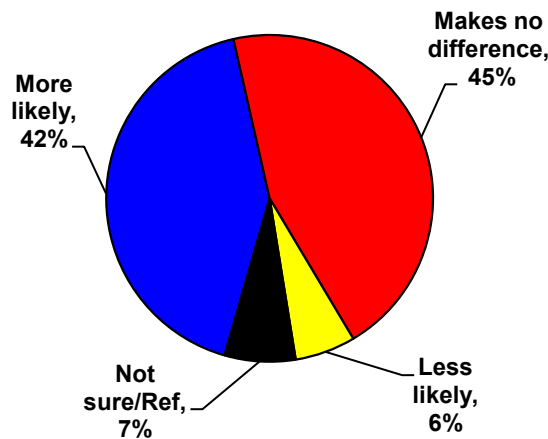
Opposition and Support for Annual Automatic Rate Increases*
(n=800)



*Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

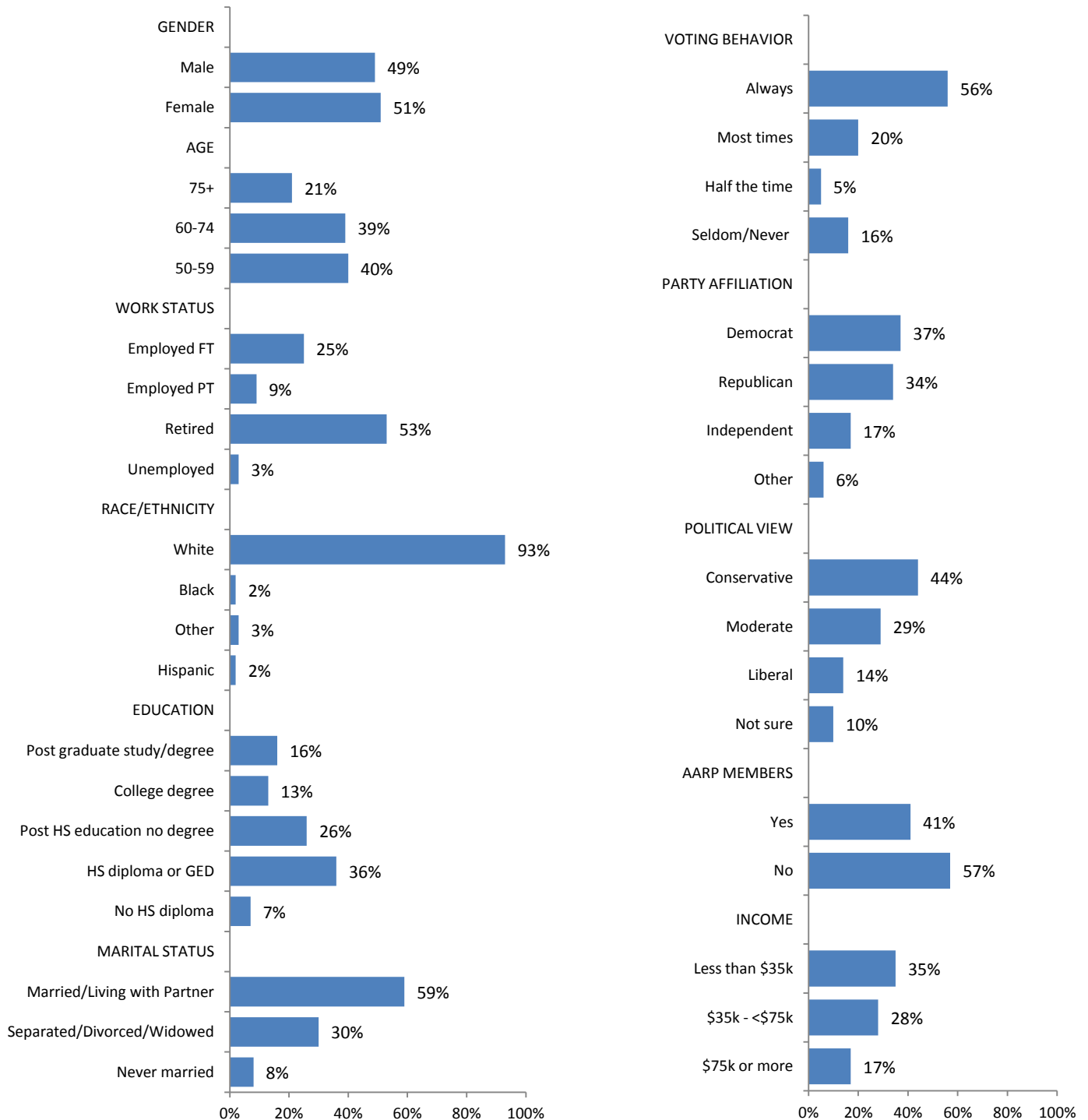
More than two in five 50+ residents in Pennsylvania say that they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who commits to strengthening consumer protections for electric utility customers and only six percent say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supports this.

Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate Who Commits to Strengthening Consumer Protections
(n=800)



Demographic Profile of Respondents

- ✓ About two in five survey respondents are ages 50-59 or 60-74, and about one in five are ages 75 or older. Most respondents are married or living with a partner. The majority is retired and about a quarter is employed full-time. The majority has a high school or post high school education but no college degree. The majority has an annual household income of less than \$75,000. Over a third are Democrats or Republicans and less than one in five are Independents. The majority votes always or most of the time. The majority identifies themselves as conservatives, about three in ten say they are moderate in their political views, and about one in seven say they are liberal. Over two in five are AARP members.



Full Methodology

The AARP Pennsylvania Electric Utilities Survey was conducted through telephone interviews with a sample of 800 respondents ages 50 and older drawn at random from the state of Pennsylvania. The interviews were conducted in English by Precision Opinion from March 26 to April 1, 2012. The results from the study were weighted by age and gender. The margin of error for the complete set of data is $\pm 3.5\%$.

The telephone sample was provided by Marketing Systems Group according to Precision Opinion specifications. Sample was drawn using standard list-assisted random digit dialing or Weighted (Type B) (RDD) methodology. The RDD sample was released for interviewing in replicates which are representative subsamples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. It also ensures that the geographic distribution of numbers called is appropriate. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents.

Respondents were screened to insure that they were residents of Pennsylvania and age 50 or older.

The questionnaire was developed by AARP staff. In order to improve the quality of the data, the questionnaire was pretested with a small number of respondents. The pretest interviews were monitored by Precision Opinion and AARP staff.

The response rate for this study was 39 percent and was calculated using AAPOR's response rate 3 method. The cooperation rate was 92 percent as calculated using AAPOR's cooperation rate 3 method.¹

¹ Calculated using AAPOR's Outcome Rate Calculator Version 2.1, May 2003

2012 Pennsylvania Electric Utilities Survey
(Survey Sample: 50+ General Population in Pennsylvania)
(N=800, sampling error = ±3.5%)

INTRODUCTION/SCREENER

Hello, this is _____ calling from Precision Research, Inc., a national opinion research firm. We are not telemarketers and are not trying to sell you anything. We would like to find out your opinions on your electricity service. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. All your responses will be kept entirely confidential.

S1. We are interested in the opinions of people within certain age groups. Are you at least 50 years of age?

- 100% Yes [**SKIP to S4**]
- 0% No [**GO TO S2**]
- 0% Refused [**THANK AND TERMINATE**]

S2. Is there another member of your household who is at least 50 years of age?

- 100% Yes [**GO TO S3**]
- 0% No [**THANK AND TERMINATE**]

S3. May I speak with that person?

- 100% Yes, new person on the line [**REPEAT INTRODUCTION AND GO TO S4**]
- 0% No [**THANK AND TERMINATE**]

S4. Are you a resident of Pennsylvania?

- 100% Yes [**GO TO S5**]
- 0% No [**THANK AND TERMINATE**]

S5. What is the name of the electric company that you buy your electricity from? [**DO NOT READ THE LIST BELOW. THE LIST IS JUST FOR CODING PURPOSES. IF THE RESPONDENT GIVES A COMPANY THAT IS NOT ON THE LIST BELOW THEN THANK THEM AND TERMINATE THE INTERVIEW. ALL OF THE COMPANIES LISTED IN BOLD ARE THE LARGEST ELECTRICITY PROVIDERS IN THE STATE AND PROBABLY THE ONES THAT WILL BE MOST OFTEN MENTIONED.**]

1%	01	Ambit Energy
<.5%	02	Amerigreen Energy
<.5%	03	Blue Star Energy
0%	04	Champion Energy Services
<.5%	05	Clean Currents
0%	06	Clearview Electric
0%	07	Commerce Energy Inc.
1%	08	Con Ed Solutions
<.5%	09	Constellation Energy
<.5%	10	Direct Energy
2%	11	Dominion Energy
10%	12	Duquesne Light
<.5%	13	Energetix Inc.
0%	14	The Energy Cooperative
5%	15	First Energy
<.5%	16	Gateway Energy Services Corporation
1%	17	IGS Energy
5%	18	Met Ed
<.5%	19	Mxenergy
<.5%	20	North American Power
<.5%	21	Palmco Power, PA, LLC
7%	22	Peco Energy
16%	23	Penelec
5%	24	Penn Power
1%	25	Pike County Light & Power
<.5%	26	Planet Energy
22%	27	PPL
<.5%	28	Public Power, LLC
0%	29	Reliant Energy
0%	30	Respond Power, LLC
<.5%	31	Spark Energy, L.P.
0%	32	Sperian Energy Corp.
<.5%	33	Stream Energy Pennsylvania, LLC
<.5%	34	Superior Plus Energy Services, Inc.
<.5%	35	TriEagle Energy
1%	36	UGI
1%	37	Verde Energy USA, Inc.
0%	38	Viridian Energy
<.5%	39	Washington Gas Energy Services
20%	40	West Penn Power
0%		Other company [THANK AND TERMINATE]
0%		Not sure [DO NOT READ] [THANK AND TERMINATE]
0%		Refused [DO NOT READ] [THANK AND TERMINATE]

Main Questionnaire

Q1. How concerned are you about the costs of your electricity going up? Are you extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned?

- 21% Extremely concerned
- 25% Very concerned
- 29% Somewhat concerned
- 13% Not very concerned
- 10% Not at all concerned
- 2% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 0% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q2. In the past 12 months, has your electricity bill....[READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS A, B, AND C]?

- 15% Gone down
- 37% Gone up
- 42% Stayed the same
- 7% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 0% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q3. Do you believe your state elected officials are doing enough to lower the cost of your electricity bill?

- 18% Yes
- 58% No
- 23% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 1% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q4. Did you know that Pennsylvania state law now allows you to choose your electricity provider from companies that are willing to offer electric service in your area?

- 93% Yes [GO TO QUESTION 5]
- 6% No [GO TO QUESTION 6]
- 1% Not sure [DO NOT READ] [GO TO QUESTION 6]
- 0% Refused [DO NOT READ] [GO TO QUESTION 6]

Q5. How well do you understand the process for changing your electricity provider? Do you understand the process very well, somewhat well, not very well or do you not understand the process at all? (n = 745 Respondents who know that state law allows them to choose their electric company)

- 37% Very well
- 35% Somewhat well
- 14% Not very well
- 11% Do not understand it at all
- 3% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- <.5% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q6. In the past 12 months, since March 2011, have any electricity providers contacted you about switching from your current electricity provider?

- 66% Yes [**GO TO QUESTION 7**]
- 32% No [**GO TO QUESTION 8**]
- 2% Not sure [DO NOT READ] [**GO TO QUESTION 8**]
- 0% Refused [DO NOT READ] [**GO TO QUESTION 8**]

Q7. How have these electricity providers contacted you? Did they contact you by telephone, mail, email, or did they come to your home? [ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES] (n = 532 Respondents who have been contacted by electricity providers about switching their service.)

- 38% Telephone
- 74% Mail
- 4% Email
- 5% Came to my home
- 1% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 0% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q8. In the past 12 months, since March 2011, have you switched your electricity provider?

- 23% Yes [**GO TO QUESTION 10**]
- 75% No [**GO TO QUESTION 9**]
- 2% Not sure [DO NOT READ] [**GO TO QUESTION 9**]
- 0% Refused [DO NOT READ] [**GO TO QUESTION 9**]

Q9. In the past 12 months, since March 2011, have you considered switching your electricity provider? (n = 615 Respondents who have not switched their electricity provider or are not sure or did not answer question 8)

- 28% Yes
- 69% No
- 4% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- <.5% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q10. Currently, electricity providers are allowed to sell their services door to door. Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion regarding electricity providers that sell their services door to door? [**READ AND RANDOMIZE STATEMENTS A, B, AND C**]

- 56% Electricity providers should not be allowed to sell their services door to door at all
- 9% Electricity providers should be allowed to sell their services door to door with no restrictions
- 30% Electricity providers should be allowed to sell their services door to door with restrictions such as the hours that they go to a potential customer's home
- 4% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- <.5% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q11. **[READ SLOWLY]** In most areas of Pennsylvania there are several electricity providers that residential customers can choose from. Customers may also continue to get electric service from the provider that in the past was the only electricity provider and is still required to offer service in their area; and the law requires that these providers offer a “standard plan” at the lowest reasonable cost. The electric rates charged under the “standard plan” cannot be increased more than once every three months. How important is it to you that those electricity providers that are required to offer service in certain areas continue to provide a “standard plan” at the lowest reasonable cost? Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

- 37% Extremely important
- 37% Very important
- 16% Somewhat important
- 3% Not very important
- 3% Not at all important
- 3% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- <.5% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q12. A proposal has been made by the Public Utility Commission that would significantly change the “standard plan” offered by providers that are required to serve an area and could result in increased electric rates for customers who have not chosen a new electricity provider. How strongly do you support or oppose this proposal that would alter the current “standard plan” and could result in increased electricity rates for customers who have not chosen a new electricity provider? Do you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose?

- 6% Strongly support
- 10% Somewhat support
- 11% Neither support nor oppose
- 15% Somewhat oppose
- 48% Strongly oppose
- 10% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 1% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q13. A new law in Pennsylvania allows electricity and gas utilities to automatically increase rates every year in order to pay for infrastructure improvements and maintenance like pipes and utility poles. How strongly do you support or oppose allowing electric and gas utilities to automatically increase rates every year to pay for infrastructure improvements and maintenance? Do you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose?

- 5% Strongly support
- 18% Somewhat support
- 10% Neither support nor oppose
- 19% Somewhat oppose
- 45% Strongly oppose
- 3% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 1% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q14. If a candidate for state office in Pennsylvania commits to strengthening consumer protections with regard to electric service, would you be more likely to vote for the candidate, less likely, or would it make no difference?

- 42% More likely
- 45% Make no difference
- 6% Less likely
- 6% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 1% Refused [DO NOT READ]

Demographics

The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

D1. RECORD RESPONDENT'S GENDER. ASK ONLY IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY:

“To ensure it is recorded accurately, could you please state your gender?”

- 49% Male
- 51% Female

D2. What is your age as of your last birthday? [RECORD IN YEARS]

- 40% 50 – 59
- 39% 60 – 74
- 21% 75+
- 0% Not Sure
- 0% Refused

D3. What is your current marital status? Are you.....[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?

- 57% Married
- 2% Not married, living with your partner or significant other
- 1% Separated
- 10% Divorced
- 19% Widowed
- 8% Or are you currently single and never married
- 1% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 2% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D4. IF D3 = 1 ASK: “Are you or your spouse currently a member of A-A-R-P?” **IF D3 =2 ASK:** “Are you or your partner currently a member of AARP?” OTHERWISE ASK “Are you currently a member of AARP?”

- 41% Yes
- 57% No
- 1% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 1% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D5. What is the highest level of education that you completed? **[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]**

- 7% 0 to 12th grade, but with no diploma
- 36% High school graduate or equivalent
- 13% Post high school education, but with no degree
- 13% 2 year degree
- 13% 4 year degree
- 5% Post graduate study, but with no degree
- 11% Graduate or professional degree
- 1% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 1% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D6. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? **[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]**

- 5% Self-employed full-time
- 2% Self-employed part-time
- 20% Employed full-time
- 9% Employed part-time
- 53% Retired and not working at all
- 3% Unemployed and looking for work
- 6% Or are you not in the labor force for other reasons
- 1% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 2% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D7. Do you own or rent your primary residence?

- 87% Own
- 11% Rent
- 1% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 2% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D8. What type of home is your primary residence?

- 81% Single family home
- 2% Mobile home
- 4% Town home or duplex
- 5% Apartment
- 2% Condominium or coop
- 3% Something else
- 2% Not sure [DO NOT READ]

D9. Thinking about who lives in your household, do you currently....**[INSERT AND READ ITEMS A THROUGH C BELOW]**?

a. **Have any children under age 18 living with you**

- 8% Yes
- 90% No
- <.5% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 2% Refused [DO NOT READ]

b. Have any children over age 18 living with you

- 18% Yes
- 80% No
- <.5% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 2% Refused [DO NOT READ]

c. Have any children away at college

- 8% Yes
- 90% No
- 1% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 2% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D10. Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?

- 2% Yes
- 96% No
- 1% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 2% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D11. Which of the following best describes your race? **[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?**

- 93% White or Caucasian
- 2% Black or African American
- 1% Native American or Alaskan Native
- <.5% Asian
- <.5% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- 1% Or are you some other race? [Please specify: _____]
- 1% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 2% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D12. Thinking about your state elections for Pennsylvania Governor and Legislators in the last 10 years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior? Would you say you vote always, most of the time, about half of the time, seldom, or would you say you never vote?

- 56% Always
- 20% Most of the time
- 5% About half of the time
- 6% Seldom
- 11% Never
- 2% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 1% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D13. Do you consider yourself to be a[READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS A THROUGH C BELOW, THEN INSERT "SOMETHING ELSE" AT THE END]

- 37% Democrat
- 34% Republican
- 17% Independent
- 6% Something else
- 3% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 4% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D14. In general, would you describe your political views as very conservative, somewhat conservative, moderate, somewhat liberal, or very liberal?

- 16% Very conservative
- 28% Somewhat conservative
- 29% Moderate
- 9% Somewhat liberal
- 6% Very liberal
- 10% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 3% Refused [DO NOT READ]

D15. What is your 5-digit zip code? _____ (100%)

D16. We realize income is a private matter and so rather than ask you anything specific about your income, I'd like to ask you to please stop me when I get to the category that includes your household's income before taxes in 2011. Was it....[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?

- 4% Less than \$10,000
- 14% \$10,000 to less than \$20,000
- 17% \$20,000 to less than \$35,000
- 13% \$35,000 to less than \$50,000
- 7% \$50,000 to less than \$60,000
- 8% \$60,000 to less than \$75,000
- 8% \$75,000 to less than \$100,000
- 4% \$100,000 to less than \$125,000
- 1% \$125,000 to less than \$150,000
- 1% \$150,000 to less than \$200,000
- 2% \$200,000 or more
- 4% Not sure [DO NOT READ]
- 18% Refused [DO NOT READ]

That was our last question for tonight/today. Thanks you very much for taking the time to help us out. Have a great day/night!

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a membership that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 35.1 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to news source for AARP's millions of members and Americans 50+; AARP VIVA, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The views expressed herein are for information, debate, and discussion, and do not necessarily represent official policies of AARP

State Research brings the right knowledge at the right time to our state and national partners in support of their efforts to improve the lives of people age 50+. State Research consultants provide strategic insights and actionable research to attain measurable state and national outcomes. The views expressed herein are for information, debate, and discussion, and do not necessarily represent official policies of AARP.

AARP staff from the Pennsylvania State Office and State Research contributed to the design, implementation and reporting of this study. Special thanks go to AARP staff including Ray Landis, Manager of State Advocacy, in Pennsylvania; Rachelle Cummins, Cassandra Cantave, Angela Houghton, and Darlene Matthews, State Research; Janee Briesemeister, State and National Group; and Michael Schuster, Office of General Counsel. Please contact Joanne Binette at 202-434-6303 for more information regarding this survey.



Research and Strategic Analysis

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