

Natural Gas Deregulation

Deregulation is the process of lessening the amount of government restrictions and oversight applied to private companies. The natural gas industry has been gradually deregulated over the past ten years.

As was the case with other industries that have been deregulated, natural gas deregulation has resulted in competition which helps lower the cost of natural gas and increase customer choices.

Before deregulation, utilities charged their customers for all the necessary steps to get the natural gas from the gas well to the customer's home or business. This included purchasing the natural gas, delivering it to the customer, measuring the customer's use, providing emergency service, and billing the customer.

One effect of deregulation has been that customers may now choose to purchase only part of the full line of services that are offered by the utility. This ability to choose is called ***unbundling***. The complete package of services has been unbundled so that a customer can choose to separate the gas purchasing transaction from the delivery -- or transport -- transaction.

[Energy Choice](#), or allowing customers to purchase natural gas from a supplier other than the utility that delivers the natural gas, has created competition by allowing many companies the right to sell natural gas.

Over the past ten years, only customers using large amounts of natural gas could take advantage of customer choice. In 2000, Dominion East Ohio opened the [Energy Choice](#) program to all eligible customers in our service territory.