**Section 551.70 General Procedures for Applicants**

a) *An applicant that seeks to serve residential or small commercial customers within a geographic area that is smaller than a gas utility's service area shall demonstrate that the designation of this smaller area does not violate any part of Section 19-115 of the Act* [220 ILCS 5/19-115]. *An applicant may state in its application for certification any limitations that will be imposed on the number of residential or small commercial customers or maximum load to be served* [220 ILCS 5/19-110(d)] and certify that *it will not deny service to a residential or small commercial customer or group of customers nor establish any differences as to prices, terms, conditions, services, products, facilities, or in any other respect, whereby such denial or differences are based upon race, gender or income nor deny service to a residential or small commercial customer or group of customers based on locality nor establish any unreasonable difference as to prices, terms, conditions, services, products, or facilities as between localities.* [220 ILCS 5/19-115(e)]

b) The applicant shall certify that it will *comply with the following requirements with respect to the marketing, offering and provision of products or services* to residential and small commercial customers:

1) *Any marketing materials that make statements concerning prices, terms and conditions of service shall contain information that adequately discloses the prices, terms and conditions of the products or services* that the alternative gas supplier is offering or selling to the residential or small commercial customer.

2) *Before any residential or small commercial customer is switched from another supplier, the alternative gas supplier shall give the customer written information that adequately discloses, in plain language, the prices, terms and conditions of the products and services being offered and* *sold* *to the customer*.

3) *The alternative gas supplier shall provide to the residential customer accurate, timely, and itemized billing statements that describe the products and services provided to the customer and their prices and that specify the gas consumption amount and any service charges and taxes; and an additional statement, at least annually, that adequately discloses the average monthly prices, and the terms and conditions, of the products and services sold to the residential customer.*

4) *The alternative gas supplier shall provide refunds of any deposits with interest within 30 days after the date that the residential or small commercial customer changes gas suppliers or discontinues service if the customer has satisfied all of its outstanding financial obligations to the alternative gas supplier at an interest rate set by the Commission which shall be the same as that required of gas utilities.*

5) *The alternative gas supplier shall provide timely refunds of any undisputed overpayments upon oral or written request of the residential or small commercial customer.* [220 ILCS 5/19-115(f)]

6) The alternative gas supplier shall file with the Commission and maintain procedures addressing the manner in which any disputed amount for which a residential or small commercial customer is billed may be resolved, stating that while the dispute is pending, the customer shall pay the undisputed portion of the bill or an amount equal to last year's bill at the same location for the same period, normalized for weather, whichever is greater. Any disputed amount in excess of last year's bill for the same address adjusted for weather shall not be included in the amount that must be paid by the due date. The alternative gas supplier is required to inform its customers how to contact the Commission's Consumer Services Division to pursue an unresolved dispute. The alternative gas supplier's billing statements shall include a toll-free number and other means by which a customer may contact it with inquiries or complaints.

7) *The alternative gas supplier shall inform its residential and small commercial customers how to contact the Commission to obtain consumer education materials provided pursuant to Section 19-125* *of the Act*. [220 ILCS 5/19-125(b)]

(Source: Amended at 28 Ill. Reg. 833, effective January 1, 2004)