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naturalgas-electric.com

June 7, 2008

PUCO

Chief of Docketing
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Docketing Division, 13th Floor
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

RE: Natural Gas Governmental Aggregation Opt-Out Notice to Eligible Customers in Stark County – Columbia Gas of Ohio Service Territory (Case Number 04-1185-GA-GAG).

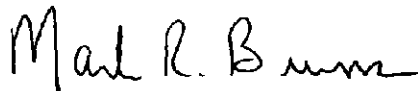
Enclosed please find an original and ten copies of the opt-out notice being sent to eligible customers in the Stark County natural gas aggregation program, who reside in the Columbia Gas of Ohio service territory.

The mailing is currently scheduled to begin June 18, 2008 and the opt-out period is currently scheduled to end on or about July 11, 2008.

Independent Energy Consultants, Inc. is providing aggregation consulting services to Stark County and is filing this application on their behalf.

If you have any additional needs or questions, please call me at 330 995-2675 or email me at mburns@naturalgas-electric.com

Sincerely,



Mark R. Burns
President

Enclosures

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Technician SM Date Processed 6/10/08



[First] [Middle] [Last]
[Mail Address1]
[Mail City], [Mail State] [Mail Zip]

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
From Stark County & Direct Energy Regarding
your Natural Gas Commodity Service.

June 18, 2008

Premise Address: [Premise Address]
Account Number <Account Number>

Dear [First] [Last]:

Stark County selects Direct Energy as its preferred natural gas supplier.
The Program offers an initial rate of \$1.397 per Ccf, a senior citizen discount, and a carbon neutral product!

We are pleased to announce that Stark County has selected Direct Energy as its preferred natural gas supplier for the county's Natural Gas Aggregation program.¹ Under this arrangement, Direct Energy will provide an initial rate of \$1.397 per Ccf for your August 2008 billing cycle. The aggregation program runs through your July 2010 bill cycle.

Through Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program, eligible citizens³ will receive a initial rate of \$1.397 per Ccf, starting with your August 2008 natural gas usage, which is reflected on your August 2008 bill. After the initial term, which will end with your July 2010 bill cycle, the County is required to provide all eligible residents and businesses in the community with the opportunity to join the Aggregation program or to "Opt-Out" of the program without penalty.

You will be **automatically enrolled** in Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program unless you choose **NOT** to participate by "Opting-Out" by July 11, 2008. The eligibility requirements for this exclusive offer are outlined below.² If you do **NOT** wish to participate in this program, you must "Opt-Out" by using the instructions on the reverse side of this letter.

Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program is a Smart Choice:

- **It's Easy to Participate.** You don't have to do anything to enroll. All eligible citizens will be **automatically enrolled** in the program unless you choose to "Opt-Out." Your local utility will continue to send your monthly gas bill and you will continue to remit one payment to the local utility for their charges and Direct Energy's charges. Also, your local utility will still provide service for any emergency or maintenance issues.
- **Your First Month's Rate Has Been Set.** Stark County has ensured that you will receive a natural gas commodity rate of \$1.397 per Ccf for your gas supply through your August 2008 billing cycle. After your August 2008 billing cycle, the rate may be variable from month-to-month unless a stable rate is selected by Stark County. Service will run through your July 2010 billing cycle. You may also select Direct Energy's

¹ By affirmative vote of Stark County Board of Commissioners, on August 12, 2004 passed a resolution which proposed the aggregation of natural gas customers. The voters approved a ballot issue on November 2, 2004 for Stark County to act as an Aggregator (purchasing agent) and enter into an agreement with a natural gas supplier or other natural gas aggregator on behalf of all of the residents of Stark County for the supply of natural gas, such aggregation to occur automatically except where any resident elects to Opt-Out, all in accordance with Ohio law. As part of being a Government Aggregator, Stark County is certified by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and operates under the Rules for Competitive Retail Natural Gas Service, pursuant to Chapter 4901:1-26-04 of the Ohio Revised Code ("ORC").

² Direct Energy's rate excludes the utility charges and taxes.

³ Service is subject to enrollment processing timelines as determined by your local utility and Direct Energy Terms and Conditions of Service. To be eligible to participate in the Natural Gas Aggregation Program, you must have a residence or business located in Stark County, be eligible to receive natural gas from Columbia Gas of Ohio, meet Ohio non-mercantile requirements, be current with your natural gas payments, and not be enrolled in the PIPP program. If you believe you received this letter in error, please contact Direct Energy's call center immediately to ensure that you are not automatically enrolled in Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program.

optional Carbon Neutral Gas Program as part of your energy service. Please see below for the rate and more information about this great program.

- **Exclusive Offer for Senior Citizens.** Stark County has negotiated a discount of \$0.010 per Ccf off the commodity rate for Senior Citizens 65 and older who are the primary owners of their residence. This special rate is available to eligible seniors by calling Direct Energy at 1-866-760-6040.
- **Reduce your Carbon Emissions Footprint.** If you are interested in off-setting the carbon dioxide emissions from your service location's natural gas usage, you can do so by enrolling into Direct Energy's Carbon Neutral Gas Program. If you enroll, you will pay the rate of \$1.947 per Ccf for your gas supply through your August 2008 billing cycle for this optional benefit. After your August 2008 billing cycle, the rate per Ccf may be variable from month-to-month unless a stable rate is established by Stark County. For details about this Program, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions enclosed with this mailing. You may also call Direct Energy's Customer Service Department at 1-866-760-6040 for more details and to enroll in this optional program.

Again, you will be **automatically enrolled** in Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program unless you choose **NOT** to participate by "Opting-Out". If you do **NOT** wish to participate in this program, you must "Opt-Out" by calling Direct Energy Customer Care team at 1-866-760-6040 or completing the "Opt-Out" Election Form below and returning it to Direct Energy by July 11, 2008. The "Opt-Out" Election Form must be returned at least 21 days from the post-mark date of this letter. If you "Opt-Out" of the aggregation program, your natural gas service will continue to be distributed by your local utility.

You will find additional details of the Natural Gas Aggregation Program in the Frequently Asked Questions & Terms and Conditions within this mailer. Please read them carefully. If you have additional questions about this offer, please contact Direct Energy's Customer Care team at 1-866-760-6040, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST (contact center hours subject to change without notice). You may also visit our web site at www.directenergy.com.

Respectfully,

Stark County and Direct Energy

Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Opt-Out Election Form

☐ I elect NOT to participate in Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program with Direct Energy.

Account Holder's Name: (Print) _____ Date: _____

Dominion East Ohio Account Number: < Account Number >

Service Address: _____

City: _____ State: OH Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: (_____) _____ -- _____

Account Holder's Signature: _____

This form must be **postmarked no later than 21 days from the postmark date on the notification letter** for your opt out to be effective.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: By returning this signed form, I affirmatively elect NOT to participate in Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program. By electing not to participate, I understand from the accompanying materials that I will forego the benefits of this program. I understand that if I choose to "Opt-Out" of Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program, I must complete this form and mail it to Direct Energy or call Direct Energy at 1-866-760-6040, to Opt-Out no later than 21 days from postmark on the notification letter accompanying this form. This form must be postmarked by the given date on this letter to be effective. If this form is not postmarked by this date or I do not call by the specified date, I understand that I will be automatically enrolled in the Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program. I assume all responsibility to send the "Opt-Out" Election Form or to call Direct Energy. To Opt-Out by mail, please return the election form to: Direct Energy Stark County Aggregation PMB #51 7385 North State Route 3 Westerville, Ohio 43082

**Direct Energy's Natural Gas Rate Stark County's Aggregation Program
Residential and Commercial Terms and Conditions of Agreement
And Appointment of Limited Agent
To: Direct Energy Services, LLC ("Direct Energy")**

Term of Agreement. Subject to Direct Energy's acceptance of this Agreement and acceptance by my Natural Gas Utility ("NGU"), I hereby appoint Direct Energy as my exclusive limited agent and supplier for natural gas service. My service under this Agreement will begin on my meter reading date as determined by the NGU tariff and will continue through the July 2010 billing cycle ("Initial Term"). If my service is not accepted by the NGU for my August 2008 billing cycle, then my service will begin on the next applicable meter reading date once accepted. The Initial Term will be reduced for each month that I am not receiving service after the August 2008 billing cycle period. I will receive the rate applicable to participants of the Stark County's (Governmental Aggregator) Aggregation Program through my July 2010 billing cycle. My NGU will continue to deliver my natural gas, and provide billing and other services.

Pricing, Billing and Payment Terms. Under this Agreement, I will continue to pay distribution and transportation costs to my NGU. My initial rate for the period starting with my August 2008 billing cycle will be \$1.397 per Ccf, excluding applicable taxes and utility charges. If I have enrolled in the Carbon Neutral Gas Program, I will pay, for the period starting with my August 2008 billing cycle, the initial rate of \$1.947 per Ccf, excluding applicable taxes and utility charges. (See Environmental Initiatives: Carbon Neutral Gas Program for more information.) After the August 2008 billing cycle, I will receive a Variable Rate unless the Governmental Aggregator sets a Stable Rate under its Program. If a variable rate is selected by the Governmental Aggregator, the Variable Rate will vary from month-to-month and will equal the sum of the following (i) \$1.70 per Ccf (or \$2.25 per Ccf if I have agreed to participate in Direct Energy's Carbon Neutral Gas Program) plus (ii) the NYMEX Henry Hub Monthly Natural Gas contract rate for the applicable delivery month upon termination of trading converted from mmBtu to MCF. If the Governmental Aggregator selects a Stable Rate, it shall determine the duration of such Stable Rate.

The NYMEX is the commodity exchange on which Natural Gas Futures contracts are traded and is the foundation from which natural gas transactions are rated within the United States and its market rates are available from various publications including the Wall Street Journal and various internet sites. If a variable rate is selected in year two of this program, I may obtain my monthly rate by calling a Direct Energy customer service representative at 1-888-566-9988. Direct Energy's rates are exclusive of all applicable state and local taxes and NGU charges. My NGU will send me a single monthly bill that will include my NGU's charges and Direct Energy's charges and I will continue to pay my bill in accordance with the NGU's billing and payment policies. In the event that I fail to pay my bill or fail to meet any agreed-upon payment arrangement, Direct Energy may terminate this Agreement after providing me with fourteen (14) days written notice or I may be returned to utility service by the NGU. Such termination will not relieve me of my payment obligations to Direct Energy for service to the date of such termination. I have the right to request without charge up to 24 months of payment history for services rendered by Direct Energy.

Senior Citizen Discount. Seniors may receive a rate that is \$0.010 per Ccf lower than the rate stated in the Pricing, Billing and Payment Terms section of this Agreement. In order to receive the Senior Citizen Discount of \$0.010 per Ccf, I must call Direct Energy's Customer Service Contact Center at 1-888-566-9988, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST, and Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST (contact center hours subject to change without notice) to validate my status as a Senior Citizen and primary owner of the residence to receive retail natural gas service from Direct Energy. To confirm my status as a Senior Citizen for the purpose of this program, I must validate that I am at least 65 years old at the time of the call. Such discount will only be applied prospectively, and may take one or more billing cycles before it appears on my bill. Direct Energy is not liable for any lost savings due to my not requesting this discount in a timely fashion, or due to any delay between my request and it actually appearing on my bill.

Environmental Initiatives: Carbon Neutral Gas Program. If I have enrolled in the Carbon Neutral Gas Program (the "Program"), Direct Energy will administer the Program as a part of this Agreement. For each calendar year, Direct Energy will purchase and retire instruments with underlying greenhouse gas emission offsets in a carbon equivalent amount sufficient to match the carbon emissions produced by my service location's use of natural gas. These offsets will be associated with projects located worldwide that reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions. Direct Energy may take up to three months after the close of the calendar year to make up any deficiency in needed amounts. Direct Energy reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to change this program and the environmental initiatives it supports.

Termination. My Agreement will terminate automatically without penalty if any of the following occurs: (a) The requested service location is not served by the incumbent natural gas company; (b) I move outside the incumbent natural gas company's service area, to an area not served by Direct Energy, or to an area outside the Governmental Aggregator; or (c) Direct Energy or the Governmental Aggregator returns my sales service to the NGU, provided Direct Energy is permitted to terminate under the terms and conditions of this Agreement. If I move within the Governmental Aggregator and wish to continue taking service from Direct Energy under this Agreement I must contact

Direct Energy with my new service location account information in a timely fashion to transfer my service. I understand that processing the move will be subject to utility transaction processing timelines. Further, I understand that I am responsible for any switching fees imposed by my NGU. I understand that I have the right to terminate this Agreement without penalty in the event: (a) I relocate; or (b) this Agreement allows Direct Energy or the Governmental Aggregator such a right for reasons other than customer nonpayment.

Cancellation. My NGU will send me a written notice confirming my decision to enroll with Direct Energy. I understand that I may rescind my enrollment without penalty within seven (7) business days of the postmark on the NGU's confirmation letter by calling or writing to my NGU. I understand that I also have the right to cancel this Agreement after seven (7) business days without penalty or early termination fee by contacting Direct Energy verbally at 1-888-566-9988 or in writing at the address provided in the Direct Energy Contact Information section below. Such cancellation will not relieve me of my payment obligations to Direct Energy for service to the date of cancellation. If I intend to cancel this Agreement after the 7-day rescission period I agree to contact Direct Energy at 1-888-566-9988 prior to initiating cancellation.

Switching. If I change my Natural Gas Supplier, my NGU may apply a switching fee. If I return to my NGU after switching to a competitive supplier, I may be charged a rate other than the incumbent NGU's regulated commodity rate.

Assignment. This Agreement can be transferred or assigned by Direct Energy to another supplier upon 30 days written notice.

Privacy of Customer Information. Other than for operation, maintenance, assignment and transfer of my account, or collection purposes, my NGU account number shall not be released without my affirmative written or electronic authorization or pursuant to PUCO or court order. Other than for credit checking and credit reporting, my social security number (if given) shall not be disclosed without my affirmative written consent or pursuant to a court order.

Renewal. If applicable, upon completion of the Initial Term this Agreement may be renewed by the Governmental Aggregator. If this occurs, I will be notified of the renewal, receive a written notice of any proposed changes in the terms and conditions of this Agreement and have the ability to Opt-Out of this Agreement. If the Governmental Aggregator does not renew this Agreement, this Agreement shall terminate at the end of its term.

Warranty. This Agreement as written makes up my entire Agreement with Direct Energy. Direct Energy makes no representations or warranties other than those expressly set forth in these Terms and Conditions, and Direct Energy expressly disclaims all other warranties, express or implied, including merchantability and fitness for a particular use.

Force Majeure. Direct Energy will make commercially reasonable efforts to provide gas service, but does not guarantee a continuous supply of natural gas. Certain causes and events out of the control of Direct Energy ("Force Majeure Events") may result in interruptions in service. Direct Energy will not be liable for any such interruptions caused by a Force Majeure Event. Direct Energy does not transmit or distribute natural gas. Therefore, I agree that Direct Energy is not and shall not be liable for damages caused by Force Majeure Events, including acts of God, acts of any governmental authority, accidents, strikes, labor disputes or problems, required maintenance work, inability to access the local distribution utility system, non-performance by the NGU including but not limited to a facility outage on its gas distribution lines, changes in laws, rules, or regulations of any governmental authority (including but not limited to the PUCO), or any cause beyond Direct Energy's control.

The remedy in any claim or suit by me against Direct Energy will be limited to direct actual damages. By entering into this Agreement, I waive any right to any other remedy. In no event will either Direct Energy or I be liable for consequential, incidental, or punitive damages. These limitations apply without regard to the cause of any liability or damages. There are no third-party beneficiaries to this Agreement.

Direct Energy Contact Information. If I have a question about or disagree with the natural gas commodity portion of my bill, I may call Direct Energy's Customer Service Contact Center at 1-888-566-9988, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST and Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00pm EST (contact center hours subject to change without notice). I may also write to Direct Energy at: PMB #51; 7385 North State Route 3; Westerville, OH 43082. The address for the Governmental Aggregator is County Office Building 110 Central Plaza Suite 240 South Canton, Ohio 44702.

Dispute Resolution. If your complaint is not resolved after you have called Direct Energy, or for general utility information, residential and business customers may contact the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio for assistance at 1-800-686-7826 (toll free) or for TTY at 1-800-686-1570 (toll free) from 8:00am to 5:00pm weekdays, or at www.puco.ohio.gov. Residential customers may also contact the Ohio Consumers' Counsel for assistance with complaints and utility issues at 1-877-742-5622 (toll free) from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays, or at www.pickocc.org. Residential customers may also contact the Ohio Consumers' Counsel for assistance with complaints and utility issues at 1-877-742-5622 (toll free) from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays, or at www.pickocc.org.

**STARK COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS**



**County
Office Building**
110 Central Plaza S. Suite 240
Canton, Ohio 44702-2202

Dear Stark County Resident or Small Commercial Business Owner:

This letter details the current information concerning the Stark County Natural Gas Aggregation Program for customers in the Columbia Gas of Ohio service territory. I hope the thoughtful reading of these details will answer the basic questions that most customers are asking.

Direct Energy won a recent competitive bidding process and will become our new natural gas supplier. Our current Opt-Out natural gas program with Volunteer Energy Services will come to an end after your July 2008 bill cycle. Our new offer with Direct Energy will have several features that we hope you will find attractive.

1. We will now have the flexibility to select a variable rate that changes every month if we believe that is in your best interest. We will also be able to lock-in a fixed-rate for any period of time if and when we believe market conditions are favorable.

The formula that we negotiated with Direct Energy for setting your rate is lower than that of our previous program and is shown in the accompanying terms and conditions. Due to a dramatic run-up in natural gas rates, we have decided only to set the first month's rate at this time. We expect to set a fixed rate prior to the winter heating season when you use the majority of your natural gas; by then rates will have hopefully declined. We have always said there are no guarantees of savings with these programs, but we do believe in the power of bulk buying and believe our program provides another valuable option for our residents as they try to manage their energy costs.

2. We have negotiated an agreement that allows you to leave free of charge at any time for any reason.
3. Finally, as a way of saying thank you for your business, Direct Energy is offering a discount for any senior participating in our natural gas aggregation program, and an option for anyone to offset their greenhouse gas emissions by allowing Direct Energy to purchase and retire carbon offsets.

Included with this letter is an opt-out notification from Direct Energy, please review it carefully. There are basically three choices:

1. If you have been in the Stark County Natural Gas Aggregation Program and you want to remain in the program, you do not need to do anything. Your continued participation is automatic.
2. If you have been in the Stark County Natural Gas Aggregation Program and you no longer want to be included in the program, you will need to return the opt-out postcard to Direct Energy or call their toll free number.
3. If you have received an opt-out notice from Direct Energy and are not currently in the Stark County Natural Gas Aggregation Program and desire to be included, you need not do anything. You will automatically be enrolled unless you return the opt-out postcard to Direct Energy or call their toll free number.

I hope this letter has been helpful as you make your decision about your natural gas service. **If you have any questions, please contact Direct Energy's call center personnel toll free at 1-866-760-6040.** They are available, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST (contact center hours are subject to change without notice).

Sincerely,

Stark County Commissioners

Direct Energy
Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Natural Gas Aggregation?

Under governmental aggregation, Stark County acted on behalf of its natural gas consumers to select a natural gas supplier who, through the power of volume buying, is able to secure long-term supplies of natural gas at competitive rates. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("PUCO") has taken steps to ensure that Ohio's competitive natural gas environment is consumer-friendly. Voters in Stark County approved this aggregation program and Stark County passed an ordinance adopting this Natural Gas Aggregation program. Stark County has selected Direct Energy as its preferred natural gas supplier to serve its residents and small businesses beginning with the August 2008 billing cycle. Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program is effective through the July 2010 billing cycle.

How do I enroll?

You don't have to do anything to enroll. All eligible customers will be **automatically included** in the program unless you choose to "Opt-Out." If you do not respond to this letter, the utility will complete the enrollment process. Once the utility completes your enrollment, it will mail you an enrollment confirmation notice to inform you that your gas supply will be provided by Direct Energy. However, if you do not want to enroll in the program you have 21 days to opt-out from the post mark date of the Direct Energy letter.

When will this program start?

The aggregation program for Stark County will begin as early as your August 2008 billing cycle and will continue through your July 2010 billing cycle. If your enrollment request is not received or accepted by the local gas utility for your August 2008 billing cycle, then your service will begin on the next applicable meter reading date.

What is my rate?

Stark County has ensured that you will receive an initial natural gas commodity rate of \$1.397 per Ccf¹ for your gas supply through the August 2008 billing cycle. If you enroll in Direct Energy's optional Carbon Neutral Gas Program (see below for more information about this great program), you will pay an initial rate of \$1.947 per Ccf¹ for this benefit starting with your August 2008 billing cycle. After your August 2008 billing cycle, the rate per Ccf may be variable from month-to-month, unless a stable rate is established by Stark County. There is no enrollment fee to join the basic gas program or the Carbon Neutral Gas Program.

Do you have Budget Billing available?

Yes. If you are interested in receiving budget billing please contact your local gas utility to sign up for this billing plan. If you are currently on budget billing with the local utility, you can continue this billing plan even if you enroll in Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program.

Are there Cancellation Fees if I Cancel Early?

No. In addition, to your ability to opt-out of the program, Direct Energy also offers you the ability to cancel at any time without any cancellation fees.

Where do I Send Payment?

The local gas utility will continue to send your bill, and you will continue to remit one payment to the local gas utility. Direct Energy's supply charges will appear as a line item on the bill you receive from your local gas utility. Your service reliability and billing will remain the same.

What are the Additional Benefits?

You will be serviced by Direct Energy, part of the Centrica group of companies and one of the largest providers of non-utility retail energy services in North America. Across North America, Direct Energy now supports approximately 5 million customer relationships.

Who do I Contact if I have additional questions?

If you have any additional questions about this offer, please contact Direct Energy Customer Care team at 1-866-760-6040, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST (contact center hours subject to change without notice). You may also visit our web site at www.directenergy.com.

¹ Direct Energy's rate excludes the utility charges and taxes.

Direct Energy
Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program
Frequently Asked Questions

Carbon Neutral Gas Program Frequently Asked Questions

How does your Carbon Neutral Gas Program work?

Customers purchasing natural gas supply from Direct Energy have the option to make their personal natural gas consumption carbon neutral. This means Direct Energy will, for each calendar year, purchase and retire carbon offsets sufficient to match the carbon emissions produced by your use of natural gas.

Does this mean I will be getting a different kind of natural gas?

No. Your natural gas is the same natural gas commodity whether or not you enroll in the Carbon Neutral Gas Program.

What does it mean to be "carbon neutral"?

Going "carbon neutral" allows you to take responsibility for the greenhouse gas emissions you create when you are cooking at home, for example, or heating your home or business with natural gas. Carbon neutral refers to a neutral (or "net zero") release of carbon dioxide emissions by balancing the amount of carbon dioxide you have emitted with an equivalent amount of carbon dioxide that has been reduced or removed under an offset project.

What is a carbon equivalent?

Many chemical compounds found in the Earth's atmosphere act as "greenhouse gases." While carbon dioxide gas (CO₂) is considered the most common chemical compound contributing to the "greenhouse effect", other compounds also contribute to this effect. The various amounts of these other gases are converted and measured in what is called "carbon equivalent" amounts so that there is a single, common reference for the emission offsets that are purchased.

What does "greenhouse effect" mean?

"Global warming," or climate change, can occur as more greenhouse gases cause more heat to be trapped in the Earth's lower atmosphere. Human activities can contribute to climate change by causing changes in the amounts of greenhouse gases in earth's atmosphere. Climate models from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicate that global concentrations of these gases have been rising steadily over the past 100 years, especially since the 1950's. According to the EPA, in the U.S., greenhouse gas emissions stem mainly from energy generation and the combustion of fossil fuels.

What are greenhouse gas emission offsets?

A greenhouse gas emission offset is an offset or credit usually generated by a project that has reduced or removed greenhouse gases emitted during a certain time period. Offsets may be issued and tracked through a central authority, or they may also be purchased directly from project owners. Also, offsets are not created until after the reduction or removal of the harmful gas has occurred. The projects, which may be located worldwide, include agricultural methane, biomass, energy efficiency and fuel switching, methane capture from landfills and coal mines, and renewable energy projects. For example, many landfills emit methane, a greenhouse gas. Many project owners are taking the extra step of capturing that methane and using it to generate electricity. If left untreated in open landfills, this landfill gas is released into the atmosphere, creating an environmental liability. However, its recovery and management significantly reduces such GHG emissions and also presents an opportunity to use the landfill gas productively as a unique energy resource. Project owners are then eligible for offsets for the decreased emissions.

Where is the geographical scope of the offset projects?

Offset projects may be located anywhere in the world; these businesses, organizations or projects are not limited to your regional or local area. Greenhouse gases mix well in the atmosphere and are not limited by geographic boundaries and hence, travel around the planet very quickly. The impact of an emission reduction in another part of the world is exactly the same as the impact of an emission reduction locally.

Why should I go "carbon neutral" if I don't have to?

To make a personal contribution to reduce the impact of climate change, everyone should consider taking account of their personal carbon emissions and make continued efforts to reduce them wherever possible. It is difficult to eliminate all carbon emissions no matter how hard we try. But, going "carbon neutral" is a practical way to do something about your personal carbon emissions. Many businesses and individuals are choosing to go carbon neutral. In addition, many companies are offering customers the chance to purchase carbon neutral products, including airline flights, taxi rides, flowers and carpeting.

¹ Direct Energy's rate excludes the utility charges and taxes.

Direct Energy
Stark County's Natural Gas Aggregation Program
Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know that my money is really going toward the offset of my natural gas use?

We have engaged an independent accounting firm to confirm and provide assurance, on an annual basis, that our purchases match the amount of carbon dioxide we calculated that you emitted through your use of natural gas during that time.

How do you calculate my natural gas carbon emissions?

We calculate that our customers will emit an average of 115.63 lbs. of carbon dioxide per MCF from the natural gas they consume at home. Along with tracking your actual consumption of natural gas, we use this standard to help determine the volume of instruments to purchase.

Where can I find more information on going carbon neutral?

There are several websites to visit for more information, which are unaffiliated with Direct Energy:

www.climatecare.org

www.terrapass.com

www.nature.org

www.epa.gov

¹ Direct Energy's rate excludes the utility charges and taxes.