

Now isn't the Time to Unplug Retail-Electric Competition

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Unfortunately, "*Unplugging dereg?*" (Crain's, April 13) by Steve Daniels was long in casting doubt over competitive electricity markets and short in telling how successful customer choice and competition have been in Illinois.

In fact, the numbers demonstrate that Illinois' competitive retail-electricity market is one of the most successful in the country: Thirty-eight alternative retail electric suppliers are licensed to provide service to medium to large commercial customers and industrial customers, and eight are licensed to offer service to residential and small commercial customers; and 90% of schools, local governmental agencies and commercial, retail and industrial customers take service from someone other than their local electric utility. The number of customer's purchasing power from alternative retail electric suppliers has quadrupled since October 2006 and continues to grow every day (over 56,000) with more than 50% of the kilowatt hours consumed in Illinois being sold by alternative suppliers.

These statistics are not surprising given the benefits of competitive electricity markets, which include empowering customers to make electric purchasing decisions that best meet their objectives and risk-tolerance levels, and customers' ability to take advantage of favorable market pricing, such as the significant reduction in electric prices that we have witnessed over the past six months.

Now is the time to support policies that encourage and expand development of competition for all customers, including residential and small-commercial. Now is not the time to turn back the clock on competitive electricity markets.

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