New York State Public Service Commission
Renewable Portfolio Standard
Common Terms and Phrases
Case 03-E-0188

Acid Rain
Rain mixed with sulfuric, nitric and other acids that arise from emissions released during the burning of fossil fuels.

Biomass
Solid fuel derived from living materials (wood, vegetation, etc.) or gaseous fuel derived from the decomposition of such material.

Capacity (electric)
The maximum power that a machine such as an electrical generator or systems such as a transmission line can safely produce or handle.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP)
Generally, the dual use of steam, heat, or resultant energy for an industrial, commercial or manufacturing plant or process and for the generation of electricity.

Energy-Efficient
Electrical devices which produce the same amount of benefit using less electrical energy.

Energy Sources
Energy sources are fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas); nuclear; and, renewables (solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, hydro, others).

Environmental Disclosure
The New York State program that shows the mix of fuels used to generate the electricity purchased and the resulting air emissions. A label containing the fuel mix and air emissions is sent to all electricity customers twice a year.

Fossil Fuels
Fuels formed thousands of years ago from decayed plants and animals. Oil, coal, and natural gas are fossil fuels.

Fuel Cell
A device capable of generating electrical current by converting the chemical energy of a fuel directly into electrical current.

Geothermal
Heat generated by natural reservoirs in the earth's interior, i.e., geysers, molten rock and steam spouts.

Green Power
Popularly referred to as power produced from renewable sources that are sustainable.

Hydropower
Power obtained from the movement of masses of water.

Independent System Operator (ISO)
An organization that monitors the reliability of the power system and coordinates the supply of electricity around New York State.

Kilowatt (kW)
One thousand Watts; the power requirement of ten 100 W light bulbs.

Kilowatt-Hour (kWh)
A unit of energy equal to one kW applied for one hour; running a one kW hair dryer for one hour would use one kWh of electrical energy.

Mega-Watt Hour (MW)
One million watts or one thousand kilowatts. Generally, one mega-watt will power 1,000 homes.

Municipal Solid Waste
Non-liquid, combustible and non-combustible refuse produced by a variety of commercial and residential activities.

New York State Public Service Commission
A five-member board with the authority to implement provisions of the Public Service Law related to electric, natural gas, steam, telephone, cable and water services.

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
A public benefit corporation that provides energy-related technical and financial assistance for the purpose of promoting energy efficiency, renewables and economic development.

Nuclear Fuel
Energy derived from atomic nuclear processes during fission or fusion.

Photovoltaic Energy
Energy produced by the use of semi-conductors or other devices that convert solar radiation into electricity.

Portfolio
In this context, portfolio refers to the list or inventory of the fuel mix or sources used in supplying electricity.

Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS)
A mandate requiring that renewable energy provide a certain percentage of total energy consumption.

Renewable Resource
A sustainable energy source that provides an alternative to oil, natural gas or coal for the generation of electricity.

Solar Energy

Electricity generated by conversion of sunlight, either directly through the use of photovoltaic panels, or indirectly through solar-thermal processes.

Sustainable Energy Source

Sustainable energy source refers to a fuel source like wind, solar, or waterpower that is naturally replenished, or a fuel supply so large that it can not be depleted.

Watt

The measurement of power, commonly used to define the rate of electricity consumption of an appliance.

Watt-hour (Wh)

A measurement of power with respect to time (energy). One-watt hour is equal to one watt being used for a period of one hour.

Wind Energy

Force present in wind motion that can be used to produce electricity.