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Hunterdon County Towns Looking to Reduce Electricity Rates for Residents

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Officials in the Borough of Califon and Town of Clinton are in the process of pursuing a way to reduce electrical costs for their residents through a Government Energy Aggregation (GEA) program. The towns will be among 50 other municipalities throughout the state who have adopted similar successful programs in recent years.

The program, created in 2012 by the N.J. Board of Public Utilities and the Division of Rate Counsel, is designed to help people take advantage of energy deregulation and cut energy costs. "Aggregation" refers to customers who form a group to purchase energy.

In 2017, seven towns throughout Warren and Sussex County joined together for a very successful program which began in March, and in October, Green and Frelinghuysen Townships joined the same group. There is no cost to municipalities to offer this program, and the municipalities do not receive compensation. "This is an option we are providing to our residents to save some money. I really do not understand why other municipalities are not participating.", said Stanhope Mayor Rosemarie Maio.

Currently, Califon and the Town of Clinton have agreed to team up on the process, and three other municipalities in Hunterdon County are already in discussions about joining as well. Califon has taken the lead in establishing the Hunterdon program, and Mayor Charles Daniel stated, "Giving our residents an opportunity to reduce costs is a no brainer. Why wouldn't we do this?"

The program does not change any services currently provided by JCP&L. Meter readings, billing, emergency services, etc., remain the responsibility of the utility company. The rate for the supply of the electric is what is lowered, and residents see the reduction directly on their JCP&L bill. Additionally, the program offers consumer protections that residents may not be able to get on their own such as no fees and penalties, and they don't have to worry about the fine print that comes along with individual third-party supply contracts.

An extensive residential outreach program will be held once an auction is completed and the new rates can be announced. Residents will have time to hear about the program and make their decision about whether to participate at the reduced rate or not. All information about the program will be posted on the municipalities' websites and at www.njaggregation.us/haec.