

Maryland Office of People's Counsel Guidelines for Participation in PSC Public Hearings

The Office of People's Counsel is an independent state agency responsible for representing the interests of all residential customers of regulated utilities in Maryland. We have prepared the following general guidelines for individuals or organizations who are interested in making comments at a Public Service Commission (PSC) public hearing. You may access all official documents in a particular case at www.psc.state.md.us.

1. The Commission holds public hearings, generally in the evening, to allow utility customers and other interested persons an opportunity to provide comments on a pending case. The PSC must hold public hearings for rate cases and CPCN cases (Construction of Transmission Lines and Generating Facilities).

2. The utility must publish notice of the date, time and place of the public hearing in the service area. Generally, the notice will be in a local newspaper of general circulation. You may also find notices on the utility, PSC and OPC websites.

3. A PSC Public Utility Law Judge (PULJ) or Commissioner will conduct the public hearing. The PULJ or Commissioner is seated at the front of the room, and will introduce the case and parties present. A court reporter also will be there to make a written record of the public comments. Utility representatives and other parties will often be available to either explain the case or answer questions.

4. Frequently there will be a sign-up sheet for those members of the public who wish to make a comment for the record. Individuals will be called in the order in which they signed in. The PULJ or Commissioner may limit the time for statements, or may ask commentators to focus comments on the subject of the case.

5. TIPS for Participation in a Public Hearing:

- Come early and sign the sign-up sheet (if you wish to testify)
- Prepare your comments ahead of time – you may read a written statement or submit them into the record to the Commission.
- Focus your comments on the issues raised by the case. Do not use the public hearings to discuss individual billing or other problems which are not the subject of the hearing.
- If you have a specific example related to the case, briefly describe the situation (for example, water quality).
- Speak slowly and clearly, and spell your name for the record.

6. If you cannot attend the public hearing, you can submit written comments to the PSC, with the case name and number, in advance of the hearing by the deadline in the public notice.

7. While public comments are not “evidence” in the case, they can be considered by the PSC in coming to a decision.

FILING OF WRITTEN DOCUMENTS WITH THE PSC:

You should submit any Petition or written comments to:

Terry J. Romine, Executive Secretary
Public Service Commission of Maryland
6 St. Paul Street, 16th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Contact Numbers: 410-767-8068
1-800-492-0474
1-800-735-2258 (TTY/Voice)
Website: www.psc.state.md.us
Sign up on the E-file system