



**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**1333 H Street, N.W., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, West Tower**  
**Washington, D.C. 20005**  
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[www.dcpsc.org](http://www.dcpsc.org)

## **Rate Case Process in the District of Columbia**

### **Overview**

Before a utility company can change its rates, it must file a request for a rate increase with the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia. The Commission then starts a process to determine whether any change in rates is just and reasonable. Because of their impact on District consumers' pocketbooks, rate applications generate a lot of interest. However, most consumers are not familiar with the rate case process and do not understand how they can become involved. The following information will help consumers to understand the rate case process in the District of Columbia.

### **Process**

1. The utility files an application to change its rates. The application will contain testimony, exhibits and other documents required by District regulations. Commission staff reviews the application to ensure it is complete.
2. The Commission publishes a Notice on its website and in the District of Columbia Register. The Notice tells of the rate application's existence and the effect of the utility company's rate request on its consumers' bills. It shows the current and proposed rates for each type of customer. The Notice also provides instructions on where the public can obtain a copy of the rate application and how to intervene in the rate proceeding. It also sets a deadline to file intervention petitions and the date for the proceeding's pre-hearing conference.
3. The Commission reviews the petitions to intervene and issues Orders granting or denying the requests. It is not necessary for an individual consumer to file a petition to intervene. The Commission makes a special effort to be sure that consumers' views are heard and are a part of the record (see below). Further, the D.C. Office of the People's Counsel will intervene in the proceeding to represent D.C. consumers.
4. The Commission directs the utility company, the intervenors, and the Office of the People's Counsel to meet and develop a list of proposed issues to be considered in the proceeding and a procedural schedule. The parties then submit a list of issues on which they all agree. If there are issues on which all parties do not agree, each party will submit a list of non-consensus issues for the Commission to consider.

5. The Commission convenes a pre-hearing conference where the Commissioners question the parties about their consensus list. The parties also argue for the inclusion of any non-consensus issues.
6. The Commission issues a pre-hearing conference order, which designates the issues in the case and sets a procedural schedule.
7. The utility company files supplemental testimony in accordance with the designated issues. The Office of the People's Counsel and the interveners file their testimony and the parties begin the discovery process. This means that the parties ask each other questions that support or attack their testimony.
8. The Commission conducts community hearings, which give the public an opportunity to voice their concerns about the utility company's rate application.
9. The Commission conducts a formal evidentiary hearing, which allows the parties to cross-examine expert witnesses and allows the Commissioners to ask questions of the witnesses.
10. The parties submit post-hearing briefs supporting their positions on the proceeding. The parties then file reply briefs addressing any concerns raised in the initial post-hearing brief.
11. The Commission closes the record.
12. Within 90 days of closing the record, the Commissioners review the testimony, exhibits, briefs, and public comments and issue a decision through an "Opinion and Order."
13. Any party may, within 30 days of the date of the final Order, file a motion for reconsideration with the Commission explaining why it feels the Commission's decision is erroneous or unlawful.
14. The Commission has 30 days to respond to the motion to reconsider. Failure by the Commission to act within that period shall be considered a denial of the application.
15. If any party is not satisfied after the Commission completes its review of their motion to reconsider, the party may appeal the Commission's decision to the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.

## How Can District Consumers Become Involved?

There are several ways District consumers can participate in the utility rate case process:

**By Letter:** Send the Commission a letter stating your opinion on the utility company's rate request to the following address:

Commission Secretary  
Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia  
1333 H Street, N.W., 2nd Floor, West Tower  
Washington, DC 20005

**Through Our Website:** Go to [www.dcpSC.org](http://www.dcpSC.org) and send the Commission an email stating your opinion on the utility company's rate request by clicking on the "Contact Us" link in the upper right corner of the Commission's home page.

**Testify at a Community Hearing:** The Commission publishes a Notice of Community Hearings on its website and in the District of Columbia Register. The Notice provides the time and place of the community hearings and instructions on how District consumers and community groups may register to testify.