



## What To Expect at a PSC Public Hearing

Thank you for your interest in the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin's (PSC) public comment process. The PSC is the state agency responsible for the regulation of public utilities in Wisconsin including electric, natural gas, and water utilities. Utilities must receive PSC approval before undertaking new construction projects or setting new rates.

The public comment process is the way that you can let the Commission know your opinion on a case before it. Only one comment may be submitted per person during a comment period. You may choose to provide input in the form of a written comment or a verbal comment at a public hearing.

### **Before the Public Hearing**

Before a public hearing is held, the PSC will publish a Notice of Hearing, which lists your options to participate in the case. The Notice of Hearing provides:

- The time and location for the in-person public hearing, if one is being held.
- The Zoom link to participate at the hearing virtually.
- The YouTube link to observe the live stream and later a recording of the hearing.
- The link to the PSC's Public Comment Webpage to submit a comment electronically.
- Links to case documents and case schedule, including the public comment deadline.

Come to the hearing prepared to testify. To assist in your preparation, you can review the documents filed in the case at the website provided in the Notice of Hearing. In addition, PSC Staff and an Applicant representative will be at the hearing if you are seeking additional information to make an informed comment.

### **At the Public Hearing**

**Who You Will See** – There will be several people from PSC who play important roles at the public hearing:

- **Administrative Law Judge (ALJ):** The ALJ is responsible for ensuring the hearing is conducted in a fair and orderly way and everyone has a chance to voice their opinions. The ALJ will be sitting at the table in the front of the room and will call on people to comment during the hearing.
- **PSC Staff:** There will be multiple PSC staff attending the public hearing to help you participate. PSC staff typically have a table set up at the entrance of the room. PSC Staff can answer your questions about the case.
- **Court Reporter:** A court reporter attends the public hearing to ensure your comments are recorded accurately for the official record. The court reporter sits at the front of the room near the ALJ.

Website: [psc.wi.gov](http://psc.wi.gov)  
Phone: (608) 266-5481  
General toll-free: (888) 816-3831

Mailing Address  
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
P.O. Box 7854  
Madison, WI 53707

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- **Commissioners:** Commissioners may attend the public hearings and will sit at a table at the front of the room. Although commissioners are present, the law prohibits them from having one-on-one conversations with attendees about the case. If commissioners are not present at the hearing, please be assured that commissioners review all public comments received into the record, whether they are recorded by the court reporter at the public hearing or submitted online or by U.S. mail.

**What to Expect When Waiting to Speak** – At the table near the entrance, PSC staff will have appearance slips that you will fill out if you are interested in speaking. Appearance slips will be available beginning 30 minutes before the public hearing is scheduled to start. Please return your appearance slip to PSC staff. Staff will hand the appearance slips to the ALJ as they are submitted.

You are not required to speak if you attend a public hearing; you can merely observe. If you don't want to speak or need to leave before it's your turn to speak, you may use the appearance slip to write out a comment and leave it with PSC Staff.

The ALJ calls on people to comment in the order that appearance slips were submitted. The ALJ will not accept requests to skip others in line; if you must leave early, you can submit your comment electronically or leave the comment in written form with PSC staff. When there are people waiting to comment both in the hearing room and on Zoom, the ALJ will switch between calling on people at the in-person public hearing and people on Zoom to comment.

**How to Testify** – When the ALJ calls your name, you will come up to the front of the room and sit at the table in the chair next to the ALJ. The ALJ will 'swear you in' by asking you to raise your right hand and either swear or affirm that the statement you will be making is truthful. The ALJ will then ask you to state your name and make your comment.

You may bring notes to read from when making your comment. When making your comment, be sure to speak clearly and slowly into the microphone so your comments can be heard by the audience and accurately recorded by the court reporter. Keep your comments concise and to the point. The ALJ may put a 2-5 minute limit on comments.

Here are some tips on effective public comment:

- Identify yourself and your relation to the docket. (Are you a customer of the affected utility? Do you live in the project area?)
- Be specific about your concern. (If you are concerned about environmental effects, who or what would be harmed if the environmental effects occur, and in what way? If you are concerned about a financial impact, how will the financial impact affect you?)

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- Explain the basis for your opinion and knowledge. (Personal experience or observation? Have you done research, and if so, what did you research? Do you have education or training in the subject on which you are commenting?)
- Propose an alternative. (If you do not like a planned construction site, propose a modification to the planned site that would reduce or eliminate the impact you are concerned about. If you do not like a perceived environmental impact, propose a way to reduce or eliminate the impact you are concerned about.)

**Public Hearing Etiquette** – Please be respectful of the other attendees at the public hearing by following these guidelines:

- Be silent when another person is making a comment. Silence your phone.
- Take phone calls and conversations outside of the hearing room.
- Please do not clap, cheer, or boo during the public hearing to avoid intimidating other attendees and to ensure the court reporter can hear the person testifying.
- Leave banners or signs outside of the hearing room.
- Take photos and recordings without disrupting the process.

#### **After the Hearing**

When the hearing ends and the written comment deadline passes, the ALJ will review the comments and add them to the official record. Comments will not be accepted into the record if they are received after the deadline. The Commissioners can only use evidence on the record as a basis for their decision. The record includes public comments, expert witness testimony, and precise specifications about the case.

The Commissioners individually review the record before they deliberate at an open meeting. Open meetings, held in Madison, are for the public to observe these deliberations. The public may not participate or comment during the open meeting. You can also watch the open meetings on the PSC's YouTube page.

**More Information** – If you would like more information about submitting written comments instead of testifying or more information about the PSC's public participation process, please visit: <https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/CommissionActions/PublicParticipation.aspx>.

**Questions** – If you have questions about the PSC process or public hearings, please visit the PSC website at [psc.wi.gov](https://psc.wi.gov). Questions about a specific proceeding can be directed to the Case Coordinator listed on the Notice of Hearing or in the docket on the PSC's website.