

Public Service *Commission at a Glance*

An Overview of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin



The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) is an independent agency and is responsible for regulating over 1,100 Wisconsin public utilities which provide electric, heat, telephone, and water and sewer services to households and businesses throughout the state. The PSC's mission is to ensure that safe, sufficient, and reasonably priced utility services are provided to all of Wisconsin's customers.

Wisconsin utilities must obtain PSC approval before instituting new rates, issuing stocks or bonds, or undertaking major construction projects such as power plants, water wells and transmission lines. Areas that the PSC does not have jurisdiction over include fuel oil, propane, coal, gasoline and cable, cell phone and Internet providers.

The Commission makes decisions on hundreds of cases each year. When a utility submits an application, the PSC works diligently to review the need, alternatives and costs of the project and how the project will impact the citizens and businesses of the state. The Commission has the authority to approve, deny or modify any application and relies on agency staff and experts, environmental activists, consumer groups, utilities and the public to provide the information necessary to make decisions for each case.

PSC Organization

PSC is composed of three Commissioners appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Wisconsin State Senate for staggered, six-year terms. The Governor also appoints one of the Commissioners as the Chairperson. The PSC operates under a streamlined management structure and is or-

ganized along industry and administrative lines into four divisions and two offices.

Office of the Commissioner

The Office of the Commissioner consists of three Commissioners, their Executive Assistants and support staff, the Secretary to the Commission, Legislative and Public Affairs staff, and the Commission's Administrative Law Judge. Under the direction of the Chairperson, the Commissioners' Office has oversight of all PSC related activities.

Gas and Energy Division

The Gas and Energy Division is responsible for all aspects of regulating electric and natural gas utilities. PSC approval is required for utilities to change rates, build power plants or construct major transmission lines. The division looks at need, alternatives, costs and impacts for all construction cases and reviews finances, corporate structure and affiliated interests in rate cases. The division provides the Commission with information it needs to make decisions regarding construction and rate cases.

Division of Water, Compliance and Consumer Affairs

The Division of Water, Compliance and Consumer Affairs is responsible for regulating water and sewer public utilities in Wisconsin. The division offers assistance to all of the state's utilities for compliance with the statutes, code, record keeping requirements, and the development of consumer affairs policies. The division also coordinates consumer information and resolution of consumer complaints.

Telecommunications Division

The Telecommunications Division is responsible for regulating Wisconsin's telecommunications providers. The PSC promotes competition in the state's telecommunications market in order to ensure access to modern and affordable service. The division oversees price regulation, earnings and rate levels, service quality, tariffs and contracts, deployment of telecommunication infrastructure, and universal service programs.

Division of Administrative Services

The Division of Administrative Services provides the agency with human resources, management, information technology, and business management services.

Office of General Counsel

The Office of General Counsel consists of the Commission's attorneys. This office provides all legal services to the agency.

How to Get Involved

The public is encouraged to provide input and ask questions about any case before the Commission. There are several ways that the public can get involved. Each case is assigned an identification number and all documents associated with the case are available on the PSC's website at: <http://psc.wi.gov/>. If you know the case number, enter it into the boxes on the homepage and click "Go." If you do not know the identification number, you can search for any case by using the Electronic Regulatory Filing System or Case Management System on the website.

Each case is also assigned a docket coordinator who is responsible for compiling all the records for the case and setting up public meetings and hearings. If you have questions about a specific case, you can contact the docket coordinator at any time throughout the review process.

The public is also invited to participate in a more formal manner during the comment periods of each case. The public can provide input through the Public Comments section on the PSC's website, by mailing the Commission or by attending public hearings. Testimony provided during the comment periods is included in the case record and will be reviewed as the Commission prepares to make a decision.

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