

About OPUC

History

The Office of Public Utility Counsel (OPUC) was created in 1983 in response to legislative and consumer group concerns that residential and small business ratepayers were not being adequately represented in the utility proceedings that ultimately affected them. Residential and small business ratepayers generally did not have entities that represented their interests before the Public Utility Commission of Texas and were individually unable to afford the cost of presenting full legal cases before the Commission. OPUC was created by the Texas Legislature to provide balance to the regulatory process.

Compact with Texans

The Office of Public Utility Counsel is committed to providing high-quality representation for consumers of electric and telecommunications services. Our representation is primarily focused on residential and small commercial customers as a class, in proceedings at the state and federal level that affect the rates and services of Texas consumers.

Our goal is to be an advocate for consumers and to represent their interests in a variety of legal and regulatory proceedings. We are accessible to consumers through direct contact and through our website.

Other Helpful State Agencies

Public Utility Commission of Texas
P.O. Box 13326
Austin, TX 78711-3326
Customer Complaint Hotline
Toll-free: 1-888-782-8477
customer@puc.state.tx.us
www.puc.state.tx.us

Texas Office of the Attorney General
P.O. Box 12548
Austin, Texas 78711-2548
Consumer Protection Hotline
1-800-621-0508
Fax: (512) 463-2063
www.oag.state.tx.us

Texas Commission on
Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, TX 78711-3087
Environmental Complaint Hotline:
1-888-777-3186
complaint@tceq.state.tx.us
www.tceq.state.tx.us

Railroad Commission of Texas
P.O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
Commission Helpline:
1-877-228-5740 (option 5)
Fax: (512) 463-7962
www.rrc.state.tx.us



OPUC

Texas Office of Public Utility Counsel



1701 N. Congress Avenue
P.O. Box 12397
Austin, TX 78711-2397
Phone: 512-936-7500
Toll-free 1-877-839-0363
Fax: 512-936-7525
www.opc.state.tx.us
customer@opc.state.tx.us



OPUC – Office of Public Utility Counsel

A Consumer Advocate

The Public Utility Regulatory Act (PURA) charges OPUC with representing residential and small business consumers in proceedings affecting electric and telecommunications rates and services. OPUC represents these consumers at the Public Utility Commission (PUC), as well as in both state and federal courts, at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Following are the types of activities in which OPUC regularly participates:

Contested Cases and Appeals

In contested cases and appeals, OPUC provides expert testimony and legal representation, benefitting residential and small commercial customer classes and promote their interests. On average, our office's advocacy results in approximately \$200 million in savings for Texas ratepayers.

Rulemakings and Projects

In rulemakings and projects, OPUC also provides legal and technical comments and proposals to benefit and promote its consumers' interests.

ERCOT and Texas RE

OPUC is an active participant at the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), which is the Independent System Operator (ISO) for 75 percent of the Texas electric grid, and ERCOT committees and working groups. OPUC likewise participates at the Texas Reliability Entity (Texas RE), which is responsible for ensuring compliance with the North American Reliability Corporation (NERC) reliability standards within the geographic boundaries of the ERCOT region. OPUC's Public Counsel is a member of both the ERCOT and Texas RE Board of Directors.

Outreach

OPUC proactively seeks to bring value to its representation of residential and small business consumers by pursuing a variety of outreach opportunities to dialogue with customers about their specific needs and concerns including issues pertaining to choosing a retail electric provider, energy efficiency, weatherization, new technologies, and low-income assistance programs.

A Consumer Resource

Website

OPUC's website provides useful information and resources related to residential and small commercial

electric and telephone utilities in a clear, concise, and user-friendly format.

With so much happening in the world of electricity and telecommunications, it's important to stay informed on the issues impacting you, your family, and your business. We strive to provide the most up-to-date information available in order to inform, assist, and protect Texans with regards to the electric and telecommunications industries. Our website offers consumers an opportunity to subscribe, via email, to Consumer Alerts, Media Alerts, our agency's newsletter, and social media.

Complaint Resolution

OPUC generally provides information and assistance and directs individuals to the appropriate agency or entity when necessary.

Although the PUC is the regulating state agency responsible for handling utility complaints, OPUC strives to resolve customer complaints when appropriate, by relying on relationships built among our agency, utilities, retail electric providers, and other state and federal agencies.

At OPUC, some complaints can be resolved without initiating a PUC complaint. OPUC strives to resolve customer issues in as little as 5 days.