



## **FY 2015 PERFORMANCE PLAN**

### **Office of the People's Counsel**

#### **MISSION**

The mission of the Office of the People's Counsel ("OPC" or "Office") is to advocate for the provision of safe and reliable quality utility service and equitable treatment at rates that are just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory; assist individual consumers in disputes with utility providers; provide technical assistance, education and outreach to consumers and ratepayers, community groups, associations and the Consumer Utility Board; and provide legislative analysis and information to the Council of the District of Columbia on matters relating to utilities. The Office's mission further includes consideration of the District's economy and promotion of the environmental sustainability of the District. Specifically, OPC's mission includes:

- Advocating on behalf of D.C. consumers in adjudicatory and regulatory proceedings before the D.C. Public Service Commission, federal agencies and courts;
- Representing D.C. consumers in individual disputes involving gas, electric and telephone companies providing residential service in the District of Columbia;
- Educating consumers about on-going and emerging utility issues;
- Collaborating and forming alliances with D.C. agencies and other stakeholders involved in the utility regulatory process;
- Informing and advising D.C. policy makers, including the Executive Office of the Mayor and the D.C. Council, of emerging utility issues affecting their constituents;
- Advising the D.C. Council on the need for legislative action to address consumer-based utility issues;
- Serving as a statutory member on the Sustainable Energy Utility Advisory Board to assist in the development of a city-wide sustainable energy policy; and
- Providing consultative services and technical assistance to utility consumers to facilitate their participation in utility proceedings and to ensure that their interests are adequately represented in these proceedings.

#### **SUMMARY OF SERVICES**

OPC is a party to all utility-related proceedings before the D.C. Public Service Commission and represents the interests of D.C. ratepayers before local and federal regulatory agencies and courts.

The Office assists individual consumers in disputes with utility companies about billing or services and provides consumer education and outreach to community groups and associations on emerging issues impacting the quality, reliability and affordability of their utility services and associated environmental issues. The Office provides technical assistance to consumers, the Consumer Utility Board (CUB), as well as other D.C. community groups.

OPC also provides legislative analysis for, assistance to and testimony before the D.C. Council on utility matters.



## PERFORMANCE PLAN DIVISIONS<sup>1</sup>

- Office of the People's Counsel
- Agency Management
- Agency Financial Operations

## AGENCY WORKLOAD MEASURES

Measure	FY2012 Actual	FY2013 Actual	FY2014 YTD <sup>2</sup>
Number of consumer inquiries	1,789	986	540
Number of consumer complaints	2,031	1,717	1,639
Number of cases litigated before the Public Service Commission	42	72	64

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<sup>1</sup> The OPC is an independent agency. For the purposes of the FY15 Performance Plan, OPC elected to organize the Plan at the agency level instead of by budget division. In addition, the OPC budget divisions do not match the functional divisions of the agency, which are: Directorate Division, Litigation Services Division, Consumer Services Division and the Operations Division

<sup>2</sup> This data is accurate as of July 25, 2014



## *Office of the People's Counsel*<sup>3</sup>

### **SUMMARY OF SERVICES**

The Office of the People's Counsel provides consumer advocacy for utility consumers in the District so that they can receive quality utility service and equitable treatment at rates that are just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory.

### **OBJECTIVE 1: Ensure effective advocacy on behalf of consumers and ratepayers of natural gas, electric and telephone service in the District.**

#### **INITIATIVE 1.1: Advocate for utility consumer benefits and protections in the Pepco/Exelon Merger proceeding.**

In FY15, OPC will aggressively work to ensure that the PHI/Exelon merger application provides consumer benefits and is otherwise consistent with the public interest, by advocating positions that ensure that consumers receive safe, adequate and reliable electric service at just and reasonable rates, and maintain adequate consumer protections and a regulatory scheme that supports energy efficiency and renewable resources.

**Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

#### **INITIATIVE 1.2: Advocate for stronger regulatory oversight of competitive energy supplier services.**

In FY 15, OPC will actively pursue implementation of a compliance program to ensure consumers are provided clear, concise, and accurate information concerning the products offered to consumers by competitive energy supplier, Starion Energy. OPC will also vigorously pursue, through litigation, implementation of stronger consumer protection enforcement mechanisms regarding competitive energy suppliers operating in D.C. to address consumer concerns regarding solicitation, marketing and billing practices.

**Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

#### **INITIATIVE 1.3: Advocate for cost-effective implementation of natural gas pipeline replacement.**

OPC will aggressively advocate for reliable gas utility service for consumers at affordable rates by litigating its position that Washington Gas must maintain its distribution gas pipeline system without imposing an additional customer surcharge.

**Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

#### **INITIATIVE 1.4: Advocate for enhanced reliability of Pepco's electric distribution system and efficient company operations.**

OPC will conduct comprehensive analysis of the D.C. Public Service Commission-ordered independent audit of the reliability of Pepco's electric distribution network executive compensation, capital structure, and customer service practices, and advocate for specific

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improvements to the reliability of Pepco's distribution network, decreased response times to network outages, and enhancement of consumer communication during outages. **Completion date: September 30, 2015.**

**INITIATIVE 1.5: Advocate for stronger D.C. SEU energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.**

As a member of the D.C. Sustainable Energy Utility Advisory Board, OPC will advocate for the development of more effective energy efficiency and renewable energy programs and evaluation methods that benefit consumers in terms of reduced energy usage and lower energy costs, and advocate for greater SEU consumer outreach and SEU performance benchmarks. **Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

**INITIATIVE 1.6: Expand advocacy at the regional and federal levels.**

OPC will expand its advocacy at the federal level by participating in sustainable energy proceedings before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and PJM Interconnection on the issues impacting service quality and energy costs of D.C. consumers, including demand response in the wholesale capacity markets, transmission planning in compliance with FERC Order 1000, the integration of intermittent resources in the regional transmission grid, and EPA's proposed standards for carbon emissions from existing power plants, Rule 111(d).

**Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

**INITIATIVE 1.7: Advocate for enhanced sustainable energy initiatives.**

OPC, through its Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Section (EES), will advocate for cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities by providing active comprehensive analysis and comment on the District's draft Comprehensive Energy Plan and the D.C. Public Service Commission's proposed rules pertaining to the Community Renewables Energy Act. **Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

**OBJECTIVE 2: Provide community education outreach and technical assistance to District ratepayers and consumers on matters relating to utilities.**

**INITIATIVE 2.1: Continue education and outreach programs to limited and Non-English speaking residents.**

To further the agency's mission in providing consumer education and outreach to all D.C. residents, in FY 2015, OPC will produce a video with speakers in Amharic, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese, which will describe OPC's mission and services and instruct clients how to obtain assistance from OPC.

**Completion Date: September 30, 2015**

**INITIATIVE 2.2: Develop and conduct consumer education program on potential impacts of utility merger on energy consumers.**

OPC will conduct at least three informational briefings to community and other District leaders to educate and solicit concerns of residents about the proposed merger of Pepco and



Excelon and its potential impact on the quality, reliability and cost of utility services provided to D.C. consumers. **Completion date: September 30, 2015.**

**INITIATIVE 2.3: Develop and conduct consumer education conference on energy sustainability, including energy efficiency and renewable energy.**

In furtherance of the Mayor's environmental sustainability goals, OPC will develop and coordinate a large-scale, forward-looking consumer education conference in Spring 2015, to educate District consumers about emerging energy sustainability issues and developments and available programs in the District, including energy efficiency and renewable energy. **Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

**INITIATIVE 2.4: Develop Consumer Awareness Program to facilitate expedient deployment of underground power lines.**

OPC will develop an education plan for District energy consumers to provide them with comprehensive and neighborhood-specific information on the timing, notice and precise locations of power line undergrounding construction, and utility and government contacts for assistance when needed. **Completion date: September 30, 2015.**

**INITIATIVE 2.5: Develop Competitive Energy Supplier Regulatory Compliance Education Program.**

OPC will implement a communications and education plan for competitive energy Suppliers operating in the District to educate them on the District's utility regulatory process and the role of OPC compliance requirements for utilities and related consumer protection rules applicable to these energy suppliers.

**Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

**OBJECTIVE 3: Provide assistance to individual consumers regarding their billing and service complaints against the utilities.**

**INITIATIVE 3.1: Conduct city-wide Utility101 workshops to enhance consumer's knowledge about utility service bills, surcharges, taxes and fees.**

In FY 2015, OPC will conduct a series of "Utility 101 Workshops," for the purpose of educating consumers on how to read their utility bill line items, calculate kilowatt and therm costs and use simple energy efficiency measures to help reduce energy consumption and costs. The workshops will also empower utility consumers to make informed and educated decisions about their energy usage and supplier choices as the result of deregulation. **Competition date: September 30, 2015.**

**OBJECTIVE 4: Enhance operational efficiency to improve customer service and reduce costs.**

**INITIATIVE 4.1: Develop and implement office reorganization to enhance operational efficiency.**

OPC is in the process of conducting an internal review of agency mission, functions, and operations, and in FY 15, will implement a reorganization plan to better align the agency's



functions and positions in order to enhance the operation of the agency for the ultimate purpose of achieving the objectives of its statutory mission. **Completion date: September 30, 2015.**

**INITIATIVE 4.2: Enhance agency operations through installation of advanced telecommunications system.**

In an effort to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations, in FY 15, OPC will install a new telephone system in new office space that will give the OPC staff additional capabilities such as advanced teleconferencing. **Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

**INITIATIVE 4.3: Enhance agency operations through acquisition and preparation of new office space.**

In an effort to accommodate the expansion of agency staff and to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations, in FY 15, OPC will acquire and renovate new office space including painting, constructing individual offices and meeting rooms, and installation of carpeting . **Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

**INITIATIVE 4.4: Enhance agency operations through upgrade of computer systems.**

In FY14, OPC conducted a system audit of its computer system. The audit recommended that the Office upgrade its computer systems. In FY 15, OPC will purchase and install new computers and monitors. The new computer system will eliminate various bottlenecks and develop advanced technologies that will enhance efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations. **Completion Date: September 30, 2015.**

**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – Office of the People’s Counsel**

Measure	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Target	FY 2014 YTD <sup>4</sup>	FY 2015 Projection	FY 2016 Projection	FY 2017 Projection
Number of consumer education and outreach meetings/encounters attended	160	175	206	175	175	175
Percentage of consumer complaints closed	94%	90%	83%	90%	90%	90%
Number of limited and non-English speaking persons served by the agency	2,100	2,100	1,048	2,400	2,450	2,450

<sup>4</sup> This data is accurate as of July 25, 2014