



How Does the Utilities Commission Make its Decisions?

The Commission is required to make decisions that are fair to customers and also fair to the utilities that we regulate, and our decisions must be based on evidence and the law. Commissioners cannot have private conversations about a pending case with the utility or other parties. All of the testimony is posted on our website except confidential trade secret information. It usually takes several months after the public witness hearings and the expert witness hearings before the Commission issues its decision.

Who We Are and What We Do

The Utilities Commission regulates investor-owned companies that provide these services:

- Electricity
- Natural Gas
- Water
- Wastewater Treatment
- Telephone
- Ferry Transportation
- Household Goods Moving

The Governor appoints the Commissioners, who must also be approved by the General Assembly. Commissioners are prohibited from having a personal stake in the decisions they make, and they cannot hold any other job or run a business while they serve as Commissioners.

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UTILITIES COMMISSION**
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NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

*How to Provide
Public Witness
Testimony*

Why Does the Commission Hold Public Witness Hearings?

The Utilities Commission decides whether investor-owned utilities may increase their prices and whether new utility facilities may be built. Decisions are based on the evidence and the law.

Customer witness hearings allow the public to present evidence on how decisions on rates and proposed facilities might impact customers and their communities. Hearings are also used to identify utility customer service issues. We try to schedule public witness hearings in various locations within the State and conduct them in the evening hours when most people are able to come.

The Commission also holds expert witness hearings where the utility's and other intervenors' experts must testify and be available for questions. Those hearings are held in Raleigh.

If You Want to Testify

Public witnesses should sign up to testify; a sign-up sheet should be available when you enter the courtroom. When you are called to testify, you will be asked to state your name and address, and to take an oath or attest that your statement will be true. We do not allow signs, placards, skits or other forms of demonstration in the courtroom.

The best testimony is brief, to the point, and provides new information.

When many people want to speak, we may limit each person to five minutes or less. Testimony is limited to the case before the Commission for which the hearing is being held. A court reporter will record your statement. Later, a written transcript of the hearing will be posted on our website under the docket number that we have assigned to the proceeding. After you make your statement, an attorney or any of the Commissioners may ask you questions. Remember, this is a legal proceeding, not a town hall or protest meeting.

The Public Staff Intervenes on Behalf of the Consuming Public

The Public Staff-North Carolina Utilities Commission is a separate agency that represents you, the consuming public, in all matters before the Utilities Commission. A Public Staff attorney will be at the hearing and can answer your questions before and after the hearing.

The Public Staff has 80 employees, mostly accountants, engineers, and attorneys. They audit and investigate utility requests for price increases and major facilities. They are not employees of the Commission.

In addition, the Consumer Services division of the Public Staff mediates certain billing and service disputes that customers have with their utilities. You can reach them toll-free at 866-380-9816.

If You Would Rather Not Testify

You can write us a letter, or fill out the webform at: <https://www.ncuc.net/contactus.html>