

## **Options for participation in a case at the PUC**

If you are interested in participating in a case at the Public Utilities Commission, you have several options regarding your involvement. This explanation is intended to help you decide your level of participation. For additional information on completing each option, please visit our website and review the “PUC Information” tab. Those options are detailed below. Also, you are always welcome to call the Office of the Public Advocate at 624-3687 to discuss these options in greater detail.

- 1) **Filing a public comment** – Public comment is welcome in any case taking place at the Commission. Written comments are included in the case file and considered by the Hearing Examiners and Commissioners prior to issuing their ruling in a case. However, facts included in these comments cannot be included in the ruling as they are not provided as sworn testimony. You can submit your public comment to the Commission online using the Commission’s Case Management System (CMS), which can be found at the Commission’s website: <http://www.maine.gov/mpuc/online/index.shtml> In order to submit your comment, you will need to know the docket number of the case before the Commission.
- 2) **Speaking at a public witness hearing** – In a small number of cases, the Commission will hold a public witness hearing in order to allow customers of a utility the opportunity to comment on the case. If such a hearing is scheduled, you may hear about it from the utility. Also, a notice of the hearing is required to be published in a state-wide newspaper seven days prior to the event. At the hearing, individuals have the choice to provide testimony under oath or not. However, statements made that are not under oath will not become as evidence in the record, and therefore cannot be considered in the final ruling. The Hearing Examiner will administer an oath to those wishing to have their statements admitted as evidence in the case and considered by the Commission in its final case ruling.
- 3) **Joining the case notification list** – If a case is of interest and you would like to be informed about developments in the case as it progresses, you can join the case notification list (which is part of the CMS system). This system sends an email alert each time a new document is added to the case file. This includes all orders made by the Commission staff, data-request questions asked by case participants, written transcripts of case conferences, and more. Joining the case-notification list will enable you to follow the case as it progresses. However, because joining the notification list is not the same as becoming an official participant (i.e., a “party”) in the case, you will not be able to appeal a decision made by the Commission..
- 4) **Becoming an active party** – This level of participation is the most active and the most beneficial to someone who has a significant interest in the outcome of a case. To be an official participant (i.e., a “party”) in the case, you will need to file a petition to intervene at the Commission, using the docket number of the case. Once you are admitted as a “party” to the case, you will receive an email notifying you of any new materials that are added to the case file. Active parties can submit data requests to the other parties in the case and can ask questions at hearings or technical conferences as well. As an active party, you can also submit testimony and evidence in the case. Being a party in the case will also enable you to ask the Commission to reconsider its decision, or to file an appeal with the Law Court.