

# **Utility Consumer Advocates**

**North Carolina Utilities Commission - Public Staff**  
**Christopher J. Ayers - Executive Director**

# What is the Public Staff?

- Represents the using and consuming public in North Carolina Utilities Commission proceedings
  - Not the general public
  - Economic regulator and advocate
- Seventy-nine staff members
  - Energy and Economics
  - Water/sewer/communications/transportation
  - Accounting
  - Legal
  - Consumer Services

# Key Functions

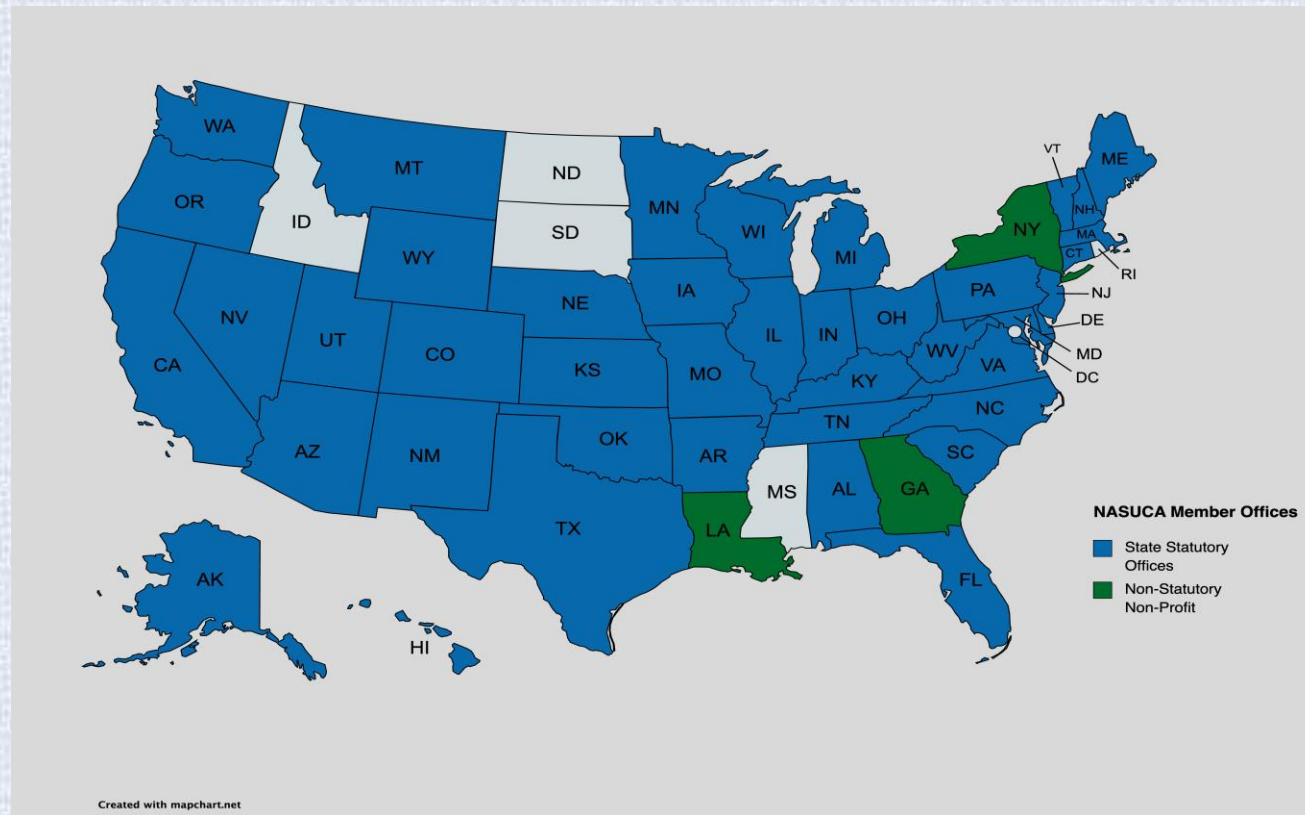
- Investigate petitions and other filings before NCUC
  - Present testimony and recommendations to NCUC on behalf of utility customers
- Investigate customer complaints
- Assist legislature regarding proposed legislation and constituent service
- Work with state agencies, counties, and municipalities on regulated utility matters
- Undertake studies, investigations, and stakeholder processes as requested by NCUC

# National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA)

- Established in 1979
- Association of consumer advocates
  - 57 member offices in 44 states and the District of Columbia, Barbados, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica
- Designated by law to represent the interests of utility consumers
  - Operates independent of state regulatory commission
  - Representation before state and federal regulators
  - Right to appeal state regulatory decisions



# NASUCA Offices



# Authorizing Statutes

- Authorizing statutes vary from state to state
  - All utility customers
  - Residential customers only
  - Residential and commercial customers
  - Small businesses (PA)
  - Low-income customers
- Subject matter of representation varies from state to state
  - Rates/service/environmental issues
  - Electric/natural gas/telecommunication/water/other

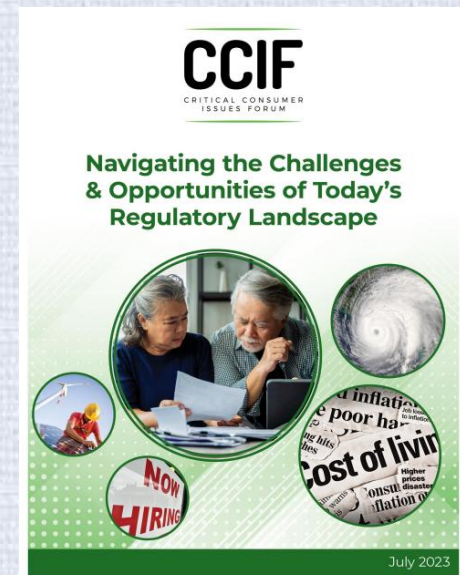


# Consumer Advocates: Investigations

- Investigations range from full-scale audits to scrutiny of select issues
  - Scale of investigation dependent on various factors
    - Size of staff
    - Composition of staff (engineers, lawyers, accountants, etc)
    - Statutory authorization
    - Ability to utilize consultants
  - Scope of investigation tracks back to authorizing statute
    - What is the best outcome for consumers?
    - What is in the public interest?
    - Reasonable and prudent
    - Cost of service

# Consumer Advocates: Collaboration

- National, regional, and state meetings and boards
  - National Association of Regulated Utility Commissioners (NARUC)
  - North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC)
  - National Council on Electricity Policy
  - Critical Consumer Issues Forum
  - Financial Research Institute
- Stakeholder meetings
  - Legislative
  - Regulatory
  - Community





# Consumer Advocates: Resource

- Customers
  - Education and information
  - Mediation with utility
  - Connect to bill assistance
- Policy makers
  - Legislatures
  - Governors
- General public



**ENERGY STATEMENT**  
www.pge.com/MyEnergy

Account No: 1234567890-1  
Statement Date: 09/07/2019  
Due Date: 09/28/2019

**Service For:**  
SPARKY JOULE  
12345 ENERGY CT

**Your Account Summary**

Amount Due on Previous Statement	\$91.57
Payments Received Since Last Statement	-41.57
Previous Unpaid Balance	\$0.00
Current PG&E Electric Delivery Charges	\$55.86
Silicon Valley Clean Energy Electric Generation Charges	\$32.48
<b>Total Amount Due by 09/28/2019</b>	<b>\$88.14</b>

**Questions about your bill?**  
Monday-Friday 7 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Saturday 8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Phone: 1-800-745-5000  
www.pge.com/MyEnergy

**Ways To Pay**  
www.pge.com/ways topay

**Monthly Billing History**

Bar chart showing monthly billing history from 2018 to 2019. The Y-axis represents the amount due, ranging from \$0 to \$200. The X-axis represents the months. The chart shows a general upward trend in billing amounts over the period.

**Important Messages**  
The Electric Rate Assistance (ERA) Program provides a monthly discount on electric bills for income-qualified households of three or more persons. To see if you qualify, please call 1-800-PGE-5000 or apply online at www.pge.com/era.  
El Programa FERA ofrece ahorros mensuales sólo en los factores de electricidad a hogares de ingresos económicos bajos y medianos con tres o más personas. Para determinar si califica, por favor llame al 1-800-PGE-5000 o puede aplicar a través de nuestra página web: www.pge.com/era.

Please return this portion with your payment, the envelope or paper clip. Do not fold. Thank you.

**PG&E** Account Number: 123456789-1 Due Date: 09/28/2019 Total Amount Due: \$88.14 Amount Enclosed: \$

# Hot Topics for Consumer Advocates

- Safe and reliable utility service at a reasonable cost
- Utility rates and continuously rising costs
  - Constant upward pressure on rates
  - Affordability
- Energy transition
  - Technology
  - Least cost planning
- Load growth
  - Data centers/AI
  - Economic development



# Hot Topics for Consumer Advocates

- Alternative rate-making mechanisms
- Infrastructure dollars (IIJA, IRA, CHIPS)
- Electric vehicles
  - Pace of adoption and buildout
  - Equitable allocation of costs
- Reliability and resiliency
  - Weather events
- Did I mention rates?



**Thank you!**