



Florida Public Service Commission

Consumer Bulletin

Braulio L. Baez, Chairman

An Overview of the Florida Public Service Commission

Many Floridians may be aware that there is a state agency that regulates public utilities including electric, natural gas, telephone, water, and wastewater. However, some consumers may not know who that agency is or what it does. The following narrative provides a general overview about the agency that performs this function in Florida, the Public Service Commission (PSC).

What Does the PSC Do and What Are Its Main Objectives?

The PSC has the responsibility to set utility rates that are fair, reasonable, and affordable for Florida's consumers. In addition, state law requires the PSC to set rates that allow regulated utilities and their shareholders the opportunity to earn a reasonable return on their investments. This, in turn, allows regulated utilities to provide safe, adequate, and reliable service to their customers. Therefore, the PSC must balance the needs of consumers with the needs of regulated utilities and their shareholders.

The PSC's main objectives are to:

- ◆ Protect consumers from unreasonable rates and terms of service;
- ◆ Encourage maximum efficiency in utility company operations and management;
- ◆ Ensure public safety and help the public deal with regulated companies;
- ◆ Establish regulatory standards and apply them in a fair and consistent manner; and
- ◆ Facilitate the provision of safe utility services at levels of quality and reliability that comply with established industry standards and practices.

What Types of Utilities Are Regulated by the PSC?

The PSC has rate and service authority over the following types of utilities:

- ◆ 5 investor-owned (privately owned) electric utilities
- ◆ 7 investor-owned (privately owned) natural gas utilities
- ◆ More than 1,200 privately owned water/wastewater systems in 36 jurisdictional counties (to determine if you live in a jurisdictional county, please check our Web site)
- ◆ 10 incumbent local telephone companies

The PSC has service authority over the following types of utilities:

- ◆ More than 400 competitive local telephone companies
- ◆ More than 600 long distance telephone companies
- ◆ More than 400 pay telephone providers

The PSC also has limited jurisdiction over the following types of utilities:

- ◆ 18 rural electric cooperatives
- ◆ 33 municipally owned electric utilities
- ◆ 27 municipally owned natural gas utilities

Other notable areas subject to PSC regulation include the following:

- ◆ Safety oversight of all types of electric utilities
- ◆ Telecommunications relay service
- ◆ Unauthorized change of your telephone company (slamming)
- ◆ Unauthorized charges on your telephone bill (cramming)
- ◆ Prepaid phone cards
- ◆ Number portability (changing telephone service providers without having to change telephone numbers)

What Types of Services Are Not Regulated by the PSC?

The PSC does **not** regulate any of the following services:

- ◆ Wireless (cellular) telephone service
- ◆ Cable television service
- ◆ Internet service
- ◆ Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)
- ◆ Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) deployment
- ◆ Water and wastewater services through municipally owned and county-owned utilities

If you would like to obtain a more comprehensive list of services to find out whether or not they are regulated by the PSC, you may visit the following link on the PSC's Web site: http://www.psc.state.fl.us/consumers/When_to_call_the_PSC.pdf.

How to Contact the PSC

The PSC has staff that will assist if you are unable to resolve a problem with a utility company under its jurisdiction. If you have a problem regarding your utility service, billing, or rates, please contact your utility company first and give it adequate time to correct the problem. Then, if you still need help or your concerns have not been resolved to your satisfaction, contact the PSC's Division of Regulatory Compliance and Consumer Assistance toll-free at **1-800-342-3552**, or by E-mail at contact@psc.state.fl.us. In addition, the PSC's Web site is located at www.floridapsc.com and offers information on a wide range of utility topics. Please feel free to visit this Web site to review our many brochures and reports about the industries that we regulate.

Braulio L. Baez is the Chairman of the Florida Public Service Commission. The PSC sets the rates regulated utility companies charge for natural gas, electric and telephone service within the state. In 36 counties, it sets the price you pay for the water you drink, if your water company is privately owned.