



KNOW YOUR FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Matthew M. Carter II, Commissioner

CONSUMER OUTREACH

INTRODUCTION

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) is aptly named because it not only regulates many of the utility businesses that provide essential public services, but also because the agency itself provides important services to the public. The PSC not only responds to customer complaints, it ensures that the public has a voice in utility regulation. The PSC administers a number of important consumer assistance programs that benefit low-income Floridians, and disseminates important consumer information.

The PSC places great importance on involvement by members of the public in decisions that affect both themselves and the companies that provide vital services. Public involvement may take several forms, from simply receiving news releases or other information, to appearances at public meetings or formal participation in utility rate cases.

The PSC has updated and expanded its Web site (www.floridapsc.com) to offer consumers current information about telecommunications, water, natural gas, and energy. A variety of brochures on utility regulation, conservation, and PSC programs are available from our home page, or may be obtained by calling our consumer line at **1-800-342-3552**. The Web site includes PSC press releases, recently published reports, weekly summary of Commission orders, report of new dockets opened, and current and previous Agenda Conference schedules and recommendations. The PSC also provides audio and, in some cases, video access to its Agenda Conference meetings and many hearings.

The Commission handles consumer complaints through our agency's complaint-handling process. We have information designed to help consumers understand how to resolve an issue or complaint they may have with their electric, natural gas, telephone, or water company. If you have a complaint, the Bureau of Complaints will conduct a full investigation of your complaint and notify you in writing or by telephone of the decision, the reasons for the decision, and the action you may take. Twenty-four hour on-line complaint forms are available on our home page at www.floridapsc.com.

LINK-UP AND LIFELINE

In addition to handling consumer complaints, the Commission has a natural responsibility to inform and to educate consumers about the changing regulatory environment and about beneficial programs available to them. For example, the Commission has partnered with state agencies, local governments, and social service agencies to promote two important programs, **Link-Up Florida** and **Lifeline Assistance**. **Link-Up** reduces initial telephone service hook-up charges by 50 percent, up to a maximum reduction of \$30. The **Lifeline** program can provide as much as a \$13.50 monthly credit on a qualified residential customer's monthly phone bill. Both Commissioners and staff of the PSC have attended many meetings and made presentations across the state to

consumer groups and grassroots organizations that assist consumers who might be eligible for the Link-Up and Lifeline programs.

LIBRARY OUTREACH PROGRAM

We're also reaching out to public libraries across the state with our annual **Library Outreach Program**. We continue to provide more than 280 public libraries and branches across the state with brochures and publications that help consumers navigate their telephone bills, learn how to conserve energy and water, and find information when they need it. Every public library we have contacted is now participating in the PSC's **Library Outreach Program**. Through an ongoing survey, we've found that the libraries are using the information and that the brochures have been helpful to the library patrons. Library administrators have responded favorably to partnering with the PSC on future projects.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

In an effort to get the word out about energy and water conservation to school students, we have also been a participant in the **Jiminy Cricket Environmental Challenge Program**, an educational partnership with many state agencies and businesses and the Walt Disney World Company. The program is designed especially for fifth graders, and we're providing **Conserve Your World** booklets to help students know how they might better conserve Florida's natural resources. The PSC is listed in the Jiminy Cricket's Environmental Challenge **Get Back to Nature** brochure, and we're committed to working with the Walt Disney World staff to provide energy conservation educational materials to the schools and students involved in this worthwhile program. The Commission is also working with the Department of Environmental Protection and the National Energy Foundation to provide information to teachers wanting to teach conservation in the classroom. We have produced two conservation education plays, **Turn It On; Turn It Off**, and **Water Wiser**, that have been produced in Leon County schools and are being made available to interested elementary and middle school teachers wanting to teach students how to conserve.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Since my appointment to the Commission, I have worked diligently to provide helpful information to consumers and to make sure their ongoing concerns are addressed. I hope you will help us help you by providing us with additional ideas on how to better serve you. If you need more consumer information, would like general information about the agency's various programs, or want to have a staff member speak to your organization about the Link-Up and Lifeline programs or about energy and water conservation, please call the PSC at **1-800-342-3552** and/or visit the PSC's Web site at www.floridapsc.com. You may also contact the PSC by writing to the **Division of Regulatory Compliance and Consumer Assistance at 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850**, or by faxing your inquiry to **1-800-511-0809**. In addition, you may contact the PSC E-mail at: contact@psc.state.fl.us.