



How to Testify at Local Public Hearings

When public utility issues affect you directly, you may have an opportunity to get involved. One of the best ways to make your voice heard is to testify at local public hearings.

Get informed

A public hearing is held by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to inform consumers about utility issues, such as proposed rate increases. Find out if your community is hosting a public hearing by contacting the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) at 1-877-742-5622 (toll free).

For rate cases, the PUCO must have at least one public hearing located within the utility's service area. Hearings must also be held in cities with a population of at least 100,000. In most other cases, the PUCO may hold public hearings, depending largely on the level of public interest. If you would like to request a hearing in your community, please contact the PUCO at 1-800-686-PUCO (7826).

Share your opinion

You can share your views with the utility company, the PUCO and the OCC by testifying at the hearing.

Public speaking practice makes perfect

The idea of public speaking makes almost everyone nervous. One way to combat this stage fright is to make certain that you are prepared for the hearing:

- Create a speech or notecards beforehand in order to present an organized statement.
- Practice your testimony in front of friends.
- Keep your speech short and to the point.

Once you are prepared, the actual testimony will be relatively easy.

Time to testify

As you enter the hearing room, sign your name on a roster. The hearing examiner will call your name

when it is your turn to speak. You will then be asked to recite an oath, voice your opinion and potentially answer questions asked by the PUCO, OCC or the utility. Your words will become a permanent part of the case record and the PUCO will be able to consider your statement before reaching a decision.

The contents of your testimony are up to you. You may want to explain the effects of a rate increase, focus on a specific complaint or support the position of an individual who testified previously.

Through testimony, you will be able to reach the appropriate decision-makers and make them understand how their actions will affect your life.

Other ways to get involved

- Organize a local consumer group.
- Start a petition drive and file the petition at the PUCO.
- Encourage others to testify.
- Contact your legislator.
- Inform the local news media about the importance of attending the local hearing.
- Write a letter to the editor of local newspapers.
- Discuss your opinion by calling a local talk radio program.
- Talk to your local elected officials and ask them to pass resolutions and file them at the PUCO.
- Write letters to the PUCO commissioners at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, 180 E. Broad St., Columbus, Ohio, 43215. Include the company name and case number and ask that the letter be docketed in the case file.

PUCO Chairman: Alan R. Schriber

PUCO Commissioners: Paul A. Centolella, Ronda H. Fergus, Valerie A. Lemmie and Cheryl Roberto.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

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