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# **Partnership Between National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners Energy Regulatory Partnership Program**

**and**

## **The National Commission for Energy State Regulation of Ukraine**

### **Ninth Partnership Activity**





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# OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



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# PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



The Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia was established by the US Congress in 1913 as an independent District Government agency to regulate the electric, natural gas and telephone companies serving the District.



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# PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN



First appointed by Mayor Adrian Fenty, Betty Ann Kane began her term as a Commissioner in March 2007, and she was appointed the Chairman of the PSC in March 2009. Mayor Fenty reappointed her in 2011. Chairman Kane has over 30 years of service to the District Government in elected and appointed positions such as elected member of the DC Board of Education in the mid 1973 and three terms on the DC Council from 1978 to 1990. Her DC Council service included chairing the Public Services and Cable Television Committee, with legislative, budgetary and oversight responsibility for the PSC, Office of the Peoples Counsel, and Office of Cable Television.

Chairman Kane has also been a government relations advisor. She wrote a telecommunications and cable television guidebook for the National League of Cities. Chairman Kane also served as a Trustee and Executive Director of the DC Retirement Board, and led the transformation of the Board from an investment agency managing \$3.2 billion in pension funds to a full-service retirement and investment agency.

Chairman Betty Ann Kane currently serves as chairman of the Telecommunications Committee of the Mid-Atlantic Conference of Regulatory Commissioners, is a member of the Telecommunications Committee of NARUC and has been appointed by the FCC to the Joint Conference on Advanced Telecommunication Service and the North American Numbering Council. Chairman Kane is a graduate of Middlebury College and has a Masters Degree in English from Yale University. She is a 40-year resident of the District of Columbia. She and her husband, attorney Noel W. Kane, have two grown children.





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# **PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION COMMISSIONER**



Joanne Doddy Fort was nominated by Mayor Gray and confirmed as Commissioner by the Council effective October 3, 2012 for a term ending June 30, 2016.

Joanne Doddy Fort is an experienced attorney who has practiced law in the District of Columbia for more than three decades and has served as a corporate officer in the private sector. Commissioner Fort has an extensive background in the fields of utility regulation, administrative law and ethics. Before joining the PSC, Commissioner Fort served as Vice President and General Counsel of Urban Service Systems Corporation, a waste management and transportation company. Prior to joining the company, she was a partner in three local law firms where, among other matters, she litigated cases before the PSC -- first on behalf of the Staff of the PSC and later on behalf of the Office of the People's Counsel. The D.C. Court of Appeals appointed Commissioner Fort to the Board on Professional Responsibility, the Commission on Admissions and the Access to Justice Commission. Mayor Barry appointed her to a term on the Real Estate Commission for the District of Columbia.

Raised in the District of Columbia, Commissioner Fort has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from Bryn Mawr College and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. She has taught and lectured on professional responsibility at Howard University Law School and the College of Law at American University. Commissioner Fort has served on a variety of nonprofit boards. She is a member of the District of Columbia Bar.

**Joanne Doddy  
Fort  
Commissioner**





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## OUR JOB AT THE COMMISSION



### Natural Gas



### Customer Service



### Electricity



### Pay Telephones



### Telecommunications





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# MISSION STATEMENT



- The mission of the District of Columbia Public Service Commission is to serve the public interest by ensuring that financially healthy electric, natural gas and telecommunications companies provide safe, reliable and quality utility services at reasonable rates for District of Columbia residential, business and government customers.
- We do this by:
  - Motivating customer– and results–oriented employees;
  - Protecting consumers to ensure public safety, reliability, and quality services;
  - Regulating monopoly services to ensure their rates are just and reasonable;
  - Fostering fair and open competition among service providers;
  - Conserving natural resources and preserving environmental quality;
  - Resolving disputes among consumers and service providers; and
  - Educating consumers and informing the public.



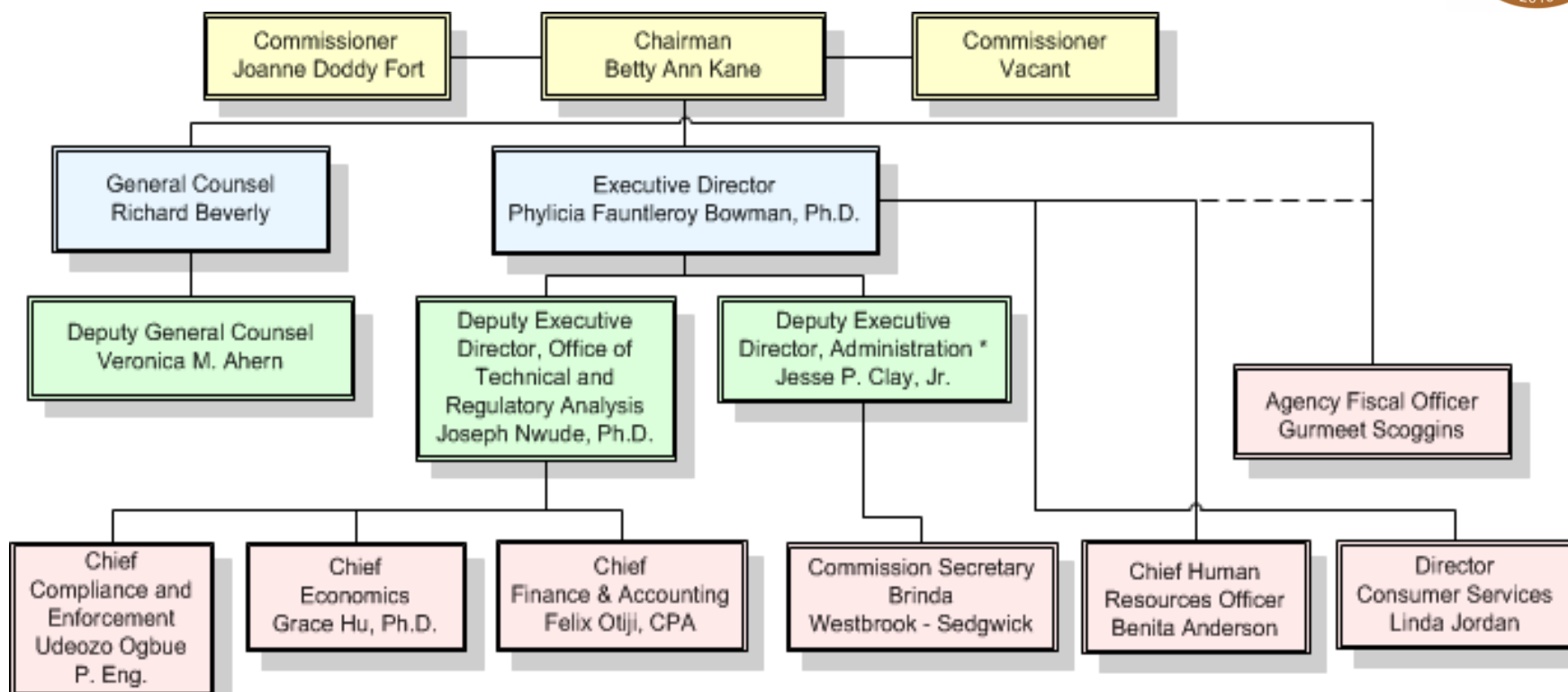
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# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



\*Staff includes the Chief Information Technology Officer





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## THE COMMISSION IS LIKE A COURT



- The Commissioners are like judges.
- All staff involved in formal cases are advisors to the Commissioners.
  - (Commissioners' staff, the Offices of the General Counsel (OGC), Executive Director, and Technical and Regulatory Analysis (OTRA) are all advisors to the Commissioners.
  - In some cases, the Office of Consumer Services (OCS) staff also serve as advisors.)
- The Administrative staff are like the Clerk of the Court.
  - (The Office of the Commission Secretary and the Administrative Offices [Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director for Administration, Human Resources, and Information Technology]).
- OCS provides mediation services to consumers and businesses re complaints re utility service providers and pay telephone service providers and OGC staff serve as hearing officers when formal hearings are requested.
- OCS manages a pay telephone program.
- OTRA manages the natural gas pipeline safety program.



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# Commission



**Privately-  
Owned Utility  
Companies**

e.g., Pepco, Verizon, and WGL

***Public – Utility  
Customers***

**Office of the People's  
Counsel (OPC) –  
Consumer Advocate**

Representing residential ratepayers

**Government  
Intervenors – e.g.,**

DC Govt. including D.C. Energy  
Office, and Federal Govt.

**Private  
Intervenors – e.g.,**

Apartment & Office Building  
Association (AOBA), Competitive  
Suppliers/Providers



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# THE COMMISSION'S REGULATORY JURISDICTION



- Electric
  - Pepco has a monopoly over the distribution of electricity to consumers.
  - Alternative Electric Generation and Transmission Suppliers - AES supply the generation and interstate transmission of electricity to Pepco's distribution system.
- Natural Gas
  - Washington Gas Light has a monopoly over the distribution of natural gas to consumers.
  - Alternative Commodity Gas Suppliers - AGS supply the natural gas that flows through Washington Gas Light's pipes and mains.
- Local Telephone
  - Verizon, DC
  - Competitive local telephone providers called Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECs)



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## THE COMMISSION'S OFFICE OF CONSUMER SERVICES



- OCS serves as the public relations arm for the Commission and is responsible for the day-to-day activities of three programs:
  - mediation of consumer complaints re utility service providers;
  - registration of applications to install new pay telephones and mediation of complaints re proposed and existing pay telephones; and
  - an outreach program that includes, publication, distribution, and presentation of information to help consumers make informed choices.



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# MEDIATING CONSUMER COMPLAINTS



- The Commission can mediate consumer complaints.
- However, if the complaint is not resolved informally, the Commission, through OCS, conducts an independent investigation and will arrange an informal hearing, if necessary. OPC can attend the informal hearing as an observer or as the lawyer for the consumer at the hearing.
- If the complaint is not resolved at this stage, the consumer can request, in writing, a formal hearing. OCS will have the formal hearing request docketed by the Commission Secretary and a Commission attorney will serve as the hearing officer. OPC can attend the formal hearing as an observer or as the lawyer for the consumer.
- The Commission engages a court reporter to provide an official transcript of the hearing. The hearing officer will subsequently render a decision in an order.





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## MEDIATING CONSUMER COMPLAINTS



- If a complaint is not resolved at the formal hearing stage, either party can appeal the Hearing Officer's decision to the full Commission.
- Another Commission attorney will then serve as an advisor to the Commissioners. The Commission will issue its decision in an order.
- If a party is not satisfied with the Commission's decision, it can appeal the decision to the D.C. Court of Appeals.



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## **COMMISSION'S OPERATING BUDGET ASSESSMENTS**



- The Commission assesses the 3 utility companies(Pepco, Verizon, and Washington Gas) , alternative electric and natural gas suppliers, and Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECs) who are serving the District for its annual operating budget.
- In March of each year, the Commission conducts an annual survey to obtain the revenues of electric, natural gas, and telephone utility companies and alternative electric and natural gas suppliers and Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECs) serving the District for the previous calendar year.
- Other companies' shares of the Commission's budget are based on their shares of total utility industry revenue in the District, minus the aggregate amount of the first-year CLECs' payments



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## FORMAL CASE ASSESSMENTS



- The Commission assesses the utility companies (Pepco, Verizon DC, and Washington Gas Light) for the cost of formal proceedings.
- Rate Cases – The Commission can assess no more than one-quarter of one percent of the jurisdictional value of the utility company, per case.
- Non-Rate Cases – The Commission can assess no more than one twentieth of one percent of the jurisdictional value of the utility company for the calendar year.