



Public Service Board State of Vermont

About the Public Service Board

The Public Service Board's Responsibilities

The Public Service Board is a three member, quasi-judicial board that supervises the rates, quality of service, and overall financial management of Vermont's public utilities: electric, gas, telecommunications and private water companies. The board also supervises cable television companies, although federal law preempts most authority to regulate cable rates or programming. The board also reviews the environmental and economic impacts of proposals to purchase energy supply or build new energy facilities; monitors the safety of hydroelectric dams; evaluates the financial aspects of nuclear plant decommissioning and radioactive waste storage; reviews rates paid to independent power producers; and oversees the statewide Energy Efficiency Utility.

The Public Service Board's Process

The regulatory process the Board administers often requires public hearings, evidentiary hearings, and other forms of inquiry and investigation to ensure that high-quality service is provided by the utilities at rates that are just and reasonable for both the customer and the utility. To that end, we investigate issues ranging from existing or proposed rates to the siting of utility plant. These inquiries may be the subject of informal investigations or formal hearings in which the Board Members or individual hearing officers sit in a quasi-judicial capacity. Hearings before us are open to the public and are transcribed by a court reporter. After the hearings are held, the Board renders a decision which is written into an order. Our orders are available for public review in the office of the Clerk of the Board and also are posted to this web site. In most instances, our orders are appealable to the Vermont Supreme Court.

Consumer Assistance

We encourage you to contact the consumer advocates at the [Vermont Department of Public Service](#) (802-828-2811) should you have questions about utility regulation in Vermont. In addition, if you need to report a service-quality problem or a billing dispute involving a Vermont utility, we encourage you to use the Department's special consumer hotline at 1-800-622-4496. As the advocate for the public, the Vermont Department of Public Service is a separate agency from the Vermont Public Service Board. The Department's consumer advocacy staff is available to assist consumers with informally resolving disputes with Vermont utilities. The Board does not become involved in resolving consumer disputes until a formal complaint is filed as a contested case proceeding. Once that happens, we act as a court that hears evidence and renders an order of judgment that decides the dispute. The Board typically will refer a consumer complaint to the Department for informal resolution, before we will convene a formal complaint proceeding.

Please be aware that neither the Department nor the Board provides direct financial assistance for bill payment.