



Public Service Dept. Utility Consumer Complaint Audit

House Energy and Digital Infrastructure Committee Presentation

January 7, 2026

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Objective #1: Assess How the Public Service Department Ensured Consumer Utility Complaints Were Addressed

Objective #2: Assess If and How the Public Service Department Measured Performance of For the Complaint Handling Process

Report of the Vermont State Auditor



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Consumer Complaints Were Generally Addressed Within Expected Timeframes but Performance Measurement Had Flaws

December 29, 2025

Rpt. No. 25-05



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Local News

State auditor says public service department does a good job handling utility consumer complaints

Vermont Public | By [Howard Weiss-Tisman](#)

Published December 30, 2025 at 4:59 PM EST



HIGHLIGHTS


- The Department's Consumer Affairs and Public Information Division (CAPI). CAPI staff help consumers resolve conflicts with their utility, educate consumers about the rights they have under utility regulations, and facilitate communication between consumers and their utility providers.
- Between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024, CAPI staff investigated nearly 3,000 consumer complaints.
- CAPI's complaint handling program generally resulted in utility actions that addressed consumers' issues within the expected timeframe of 30 days. In almost all the 45 complaints reviewed, utilities took action to address the consumers' issues after being contacted by CAPI staff.
- CAPI can establish clearer expectations for how staff should handle complaints. For example, there was not an expected timeframe for when staff should contact a utility after receiving a complaint. In most of the complaints, staff did this within a day but in five of the 45 complaints we reviewed staff waited more than a week.

HIGHLIGHTS, CONT.

- The lack of comprehensive procedures also led to inconsistencies and errors with complaint data. Of the 45 complaints we reviewed, 17 (38 percent) did not have an accurate resolution and/or resolution date. This hinders CAPI's ability to identify complaint trends and systemic issues with utilities, which impacts its efforts to advocate for policies that protect consumer interests and educate consumers about utility issues.
- Public Service reported three performance measures related to the complaint process but used a flawed methodology to calculate these measures. This caused Public Service to over-report results about the complaint program's performance. (See following two slides)

Data Reported by PSD to the Legislature in the Annual Programmatic Performance Measure Budget Report

← Performance Data



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Performance Data

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Showing data for Department of Public Service

Select a program

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Programs DisplayedMeasures Displayed

Entities, Programs and Measures	Reporting Period	Polarity	Most Recent Value	Target Value	Most Recent Year	Change Since Previous Year
Consumer Affairs And Public Information						
Number of consumer complaints resolved within 30 days	SFY	Higher is Better	1,392		2024	▲ 6.58%
Number of instances that CAPI assisted utilities with a question about regulatory procedure	SFY	Higher is Better	48		2024	▲ 2.13%
Number of consumer complaints processed	SFY	Lower is Better	1,465		2024	▲ 0.96%

Our Calculation of the Same Two Measures

Exhibit 4: Public Service Over-Reported Performance Measure Results in Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024^a

<u>Number of complaints processed</u>			<u>Number of Complaints Resolved Within 30 Days</u>				
	# Reported by Public Service	# Calculated by SAO	# over- reported		# Reported by Public Service	# Calculated by SAO	# over- reported
FY2023	1,451	830	621 (75%)	FY2023	1,306	705	601 (85%)
FY2024	1,465	909	556 (61%)	FY2024	1,392	858	534 (62%)

Public Service Did Not Comply with Requirements Related to CPG Complaints

[Act 130 \(2016\)](#) established various requirements for Public Service related to handling and reporting complaints related to CPGs. One of those requirements was that the Public Service Commissioner make recommendations for a process to monitor CPG compliance [in order to](#) reduce the need for individual complaints. In the first annual report,⁷ Public Service noted that it had recently begun managing the CPG complaint process and had limited data and information about monitoring CPG regulations. The only recommendation Public Service noted was that “if such an ongoing regulatory or monitoring process is to be created that it be properly resourced.” Public Service staff said they could not recall any communication about the CPG complaint process since that [report, and](#) stated that there is currently no process to proactively ensure companies comply with the terms and conditions of CPGs.