



# The OPC CONNECTION

April, 2016

## A Note from Your People's Counsel

Around this time every year, I am called to testify at a performance oversight hearing before the D.C. Council Committee on Business, Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. I welcome the opportunity to talk about the trends occurring in the utility industry, the challenges utility consumers have faced during the last fiscal year, and how the Office of the People's Counsel has addressed the trends and challenges.



At OPC's agency oversight hearing on March 7, the status of the Pepco-Exelon merger application was a central focus for Committee Chairman Vincent Orange and other Councilmembers. My testimony emphasized that in every decision OPC has made, protecting the public interest has been and always will be paramount. I will always put ratepayers first-with or without the merger-or in the event of any immediate or future rate increase requests.

The hearing also proved an excellent forum to discuss OPC's efforts to improve outreach to our growing population of senior consumers. The recognition our language access program has received also was worthy of mention. Read on to learn what we're doing to ensure that every consumer benefits from OPC services, no matter what their language or culture.

Let me note to readers, as I told Councilmembers, despite what may have been the most challenging year in our history, the Office of the People's Counsel has exceeded expectations in furtherance of its mandate to advocate, educate, and protect consumers. I am confident that we are well positioned to handle the coming challenges of an evolving utility landscape. You can read my full testimony [here](#).

# An Update on the Pepco and Exelon



## Merger

In April 2014, Pepco Holdings, Inc. (PHI) and Exelon announced they had reached an agreement to merge the two companies. Shortly thereafter, the companies submitted an application for merger approval with the District of Columbia Public Service Commission.

After two years of proceedings and negotiations by numerous parties, including the Office of the People's Counsel, on March 23, the Commission approved the merger, finding that it was in the public interest. As a result, residential consumers will receive a one-time rate credit of approximately \$57 dollars, rate increase protection (although much less than what OPC bargained for), a commitment from Pepco to meet higher reliability standards than those set by the Commission, job training and employment opportunities, and a number of environmental sustainability commitments.

By way of background, in February 2016, the Commission denied a settlement agreement that had been negotiated by Mayor Muriel Bowser, OPC, the Department of Energy and Environment, the Office of the Attorney General, DC Water, the Apartment and Office Building Association, as well as Pepco and Exelon. Instead, the Commission proposed an alternative set of terms that the Commission found would meet the public interest standard. Several parties, including OPC, opposed the Commission's alternative settlement agreement. Specifically, OPC found that the alternative settlement lacked sufficient residential consumer benefits. Nonetheless, in its March 23 decision, the Commission approved a modified version of its alternative agreement. It also rejected three proposals PHI and Exelon had offered in response to the Commission's alternative settlement agreement.

At this time, OPC is carefully reviewing the Commission's order that approved the merger to determine next steps and whether it will request the Commission reconsider its decision. Irrespective of our course of action, OPC will continue to rigorously advocate on behalf of District consumers for quality utility service that is affordable, reliable and environmentally sustainable.

With the warm weather approaching, the moratorium on disconnections has been lifted. If your Pepco or WGL services have been disconnected, or you have received a disconnection notice, please contact OPC for assistance.

Call our Consumer Services Division at (202) 727-3071.



## **OPC Honored for Language Access Programs**

OPC's Language Access Program has won high marks for advocating for the city's multicultural and multilingual communities. Over the last year, OPC engaged with more than 2,500 limited-and-non-English-speaking (LEP/NEP) District residents at almost 50 outreach events. Whether working to resolve a utility service or billing dispute, translating materials or presenting energy efficiency workshops, OPC outreach specialists keep all communities, regardless of their ability to speak English, informed, educated and empowered.

In 2015 during Women's History Month, Mayor Muriel Bowser honored our own Silvia Garrick, Consumer Outreach Specialist/Hispanic-Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Outreach Coordinator, for her commitment to ensuring that LEP/NEP District residents have access to all OPC programs and services offered to utility consumers.

Pictured, People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye recently joined Garrick and other outreach specialists in presenting energy efficiency tips with the Mayor's

## Who Supplies Your Power?

Pepco customers, check the "Summary of Charges" section of your bill. If there is a company other than "SOS Provider Pepco" in the "New electric supply charges" section and you did not contract with a Third Party Supplier (TPS), please contact OPC immediately.



**Your electric bill - Jan 2015**  
for the period **December 9, 2014 to January 15, 2015**








**PEPCO CUSTOMER**

**Account number:** 5012 3456 789  
**Your service address:** 123 MAIN ST NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20009  
**Bill Issue date:** Jan 19, 2015

**Summary of your charges**

Balance from your last bill	\$48.89
Your payment(s) - thank you	\$48.89-
Balance forward as of Jan 19, 2015	\$0.00
New electric distribution charges - Pepco	\$19.98
<b>TPS Company Name</b>	<b>\$41.99</b>
<b>Total amount due by Feb 9, 2015</b>	<b>\$61.97</b>

**After Feb 09, 2015, a Late Payment Charge of \$0.83 will be added, increasing the amount due to \$62.80.**

Visit [pepco.com/dctariffs](http://pepco.com/dctariffs) and click "DC Terms and Conditions" for information on how payments are applied to balances from Pepco and any competitive supplier.

We've upgraded to a new customer information system. You now have a new account number and features on your bill have changed. For more information, visit [pepco.com/accountfaq](http://pepco.com/accountfaq).

Your bill this month may reflect a longer billing period than usual due to our recent customer information system upgrade. Next month's billing period will return to normal.

Your smart electric meter is read wirelessly. Visit My Account at [pepco.com](http://pepco.com) to view your daily and hourly energy usage.

**How to contact us**

Customer Service (Mon-Fri, 7am - 8 pm)	202-833-7500
Hearing Impaired (TTY)	202-872-2369
¿Problemas con la factura?	202-872-4641
Electric emergencies & outages (24 hours)	1-877-737-2662

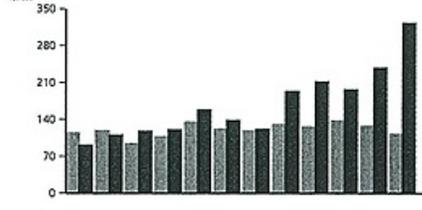
Visit [pepco.com](http://pepco.com) for service, billing and correspondence information.

Pepco is regulated by - DC Public Service Commission, [dcpsc.org](http://dcpsc.org)  
1333 H St NW, Washington DC 20005, 202-626-5100

Consumer Advocate - Office of People's Counsel, [opc-dc.gov](http://opc-dc.gov)  
1133 Fifteenth St NW, Washington DC 20005, 202-727-3071

**Your monthly Electricity use in kWh**

Daily temperature averages: Jan 2014: 32° F Jan 2015: 40° F



Year: 1314 1314 1314 1314 1314 1314 1314 1314 1314 1314 1314 1415  
Month: Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan

If you are moving or discontinuing service, please contact Pepco at least three days in advance.

Information regarding rate schedules and how to verify the accuracy of your bill will be mailed upon request.

**Additional messages may be on the last page of your bill.**

Please tear on the dotted line below. Invoice Number: 200000009944 Page 1 of 3

**TPS Company Name** supply charges

**Service number** 0501 2345 6789 7001 7838 16

Your electricity is supplied by **TPS**. If you have any questions about your electric supply charges, call **TPS** at 1-888-444-9452.

Billing period: Dec 9, 2014 to Jan 15, 2015 (38 days)

Type of service: Residential-R

Electricity Used: 323 kWh

Generation & Transmission 323 KWH @ \$ 0.12999

**TPS** electric supply charges

**Amount(\$)**

41.99

**TPS Company Name** Supply

**Summary**

Balance from your last bill	\$30.81
Payment Jan 04	\$30.81-
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>\$30.81-</b>
Total Current Charges	\$41.99
<b>TPS</b> electric supply charges	<b>\$41.99</b>
<b>Total amount due by Feb 9, 2015</b>	<b>\$41.99</b>

# Fiber Optic vs. FiOS: What's the Difference?



The world of telecommunications continues to evolve at the speed of light. Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) service is a new technology to deliver voice telephone, internet, and television services to consumers. While increased service performance is exciting, many of the terms being used to describe FTTH can be confusing to traditional telephone service customers. One key example is the difference between Fiber Optic and Verizon's FiOS service packages.

The term "Fiber Optic" refers solely to the cables containing tiny strands of glass about the width of a human hair. These glass "fibers" carry digital light signals at significantly higher bandwidth or speeds than traditional copper lines, and therefore offer faster service for customers.

In contrast, the term "FiOS" refers to the Verizon specific collection of services packaged and provided over Fiber Optic cable lines. Verizon FiOS packaging may include a bundle of services such as telephone, internet access, and broadcast television.

Consumers should understand that, while Fiber Optic cables are required to use FiOS-Verizon's entertainment package, consumers are NOT required to sign up (contract with Verizon) for the "FiOS bundle" in order to have Fiber Optic service in their homes. Currently, no other service providers offer their products over Fiber Optic lines in the District of Columbia. If you occupy an older home, you most likely need to have Fiber Optic cables installed before receiving certain upgraded services.

It is also important to note that consumers do not need to switch to Fiber Optic service in their homes. If you are pleased with your current landline telephone service, you may keep it. If you have been told that you can no longer use your old copper wire service, please contact the Office of the People's Counsel.

## WGL Files 2016 Rate Increase Request

On February 26, 2016, Washington Gas Light Company filed a request for rate increase of \$17.4 million to recover costs associated with delivering natural gas service.

If granted in full:

- The proposed increase in rates for the average heating & cooling residential customer (using 811 therms annually) would be approximately \$8 per month.
- For the average heating & cooling consumer living in individually metered apartment buildings (using 64 therms annually) the increase would average about \$1.80 per month.
- Consumers living in group metered apartment buildings (with a combined annual gas usage of 2700 therms) would pay about \$5.55 more per month.

The Public Service Commission held a pre-hearing conference on the application on March 23.

At this time, the parties are in the process of establishing a procedural schedule and determining which issues should be examined by the Commission. OPC will inform consumers about the details of the case after we have completed our initial review of WGL's application and will let you know how you may participate in the case.

## OPC Photo Gallery



OPC's Denise Blackson educates consumers about energy efficient light bulbs



OPC Director of Litigation Laurence Daniels addresses residents at the Ward 8 Democrats meeting on March 18th



People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Fry presents to Latino residents

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