## **Commission Establishes Undergrounding Project Consumer Education Task Force**

In its November 12, 2014 Order approving the Potomac Electric Power Company ("Pepco") and the District Department of Transportation's ("DDOT") proposed undergrounding projects for 2015 thru 2017, the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia ("PSC" or "Commission") created an Undergrounding Project Consumer Education Task Force ("UPCE Task Force"). The purpose of the UPCE Task Force is to monitor Pepco and DDOT's performance as it relates to adhering to consumer education and outreach provisions outlined in Pepco and DDOT's joint undergrounding education/communications plan. The UPCE Task Force will be comprised of Pepco, DDOT, OPC, AOBA, D.C. Climate Action, ANC Commissioners, Commission staff, residents from affected wards in the District as well as any other governmental or non-governmental entity representing specific customer interests that wants to participate; the PSC has suggested that the Office of the City Administrator serve as chair.

Among other things, the Commission's Order encourages the UPCE Task Force to review Pepco/DDOT's education and outreach materials, consider how community complaints will be handled, develop a Fact Sheet, make recommendations regarding ways to improve the undergrounding process to be used by participating members, consider alternative ways to educate consumers on the implementation of the undergrounding project throughout its life, and recommend improvements. The UPCE Task Force must meet monthly for the first six months of the undergrounding initiative and submit monthly reports with the PSC during that period detailing any issues, problems, concerns, or recommendations made by the group. The UPCE Task Force will meet quarterly thereafter.

In addition to the UPCE Task Force, the Commission also approved Pepco/DDOT's proposed Communications Coordination Committee ("CCC")—which will be comprised of representatives from the District, the Commission, OPC, Pepco, DDOT, and an Undergrounding Task Force community member. Both the UPCE and CCC will meet regularly to ensure that education and outreach are timely, informative, accurate, and consistent. As currently proposed, the CCC members will share messages and materials from their various organizations to ensure clarity and consistency of the information being delivered. However, in light of the Commission's establishment of the UPCE Task Force, Pepco is now questioning the necessity and efficacy of the CCC and is proposing that it be eliminated. OPC believes both groups could bring value to the communications/outreach process.

Pursuant to the Commission's Order, the inaugural meeting of the UPCE Task Force must take place no later than January 12, 2015.