

September 2022

A Note from Your People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye

From Energy Savings to Green Jobs: Why the Inflation Reduction Act Matters to DC Utility Consumers

After tough debates in Congress, the Inflation Reduction Act recently became law. Among other things, the IRA addresses climate change by supporting clean energy measures, lowering energy costs, and supporting small businesses. The provisions should assist the District in reaching its ambitious climate goals, including greening and reducing the cost of clean energy. The IRA provides several benefits for residents and small businesses. For example, there are incentives directed at increasing the use of solar and energy efficient appliances.



The IRA should help create more DC green jobs by offering clean energy

employers tax credits. Small businesses can look forward to receiving tax credits for solar and the purchase of commercial vehicles that use clean energy. Buyers in the market for a new or used car should note there are substantial discounts to purchase electric vehicles. Landlords and tenants residing in affordable housing can look forward to financial assistance for upgrades that make dwellings more energy efficient and more prepared for extreme weather. Combined, these incentives should also reduce pollution, help clean the air, and reduce respiratory illnesses such as asthma.

The White House has released fact sheets outlining how the IRA will benefit the District and states. You can find the fact sheet for the District [here](#). The DC Sustainable Energy Utility also has a breakdown @ [DCSEU.com](#).

OPC encourages consumers to look into the possible ways that they can benefit from the Inflation Reduction Act.

OPC Reminds Consumers to Act Now to Weather the Storm

As the remnants of Hurricane Ian approach the DMV, Pepco has alerted OPC of their preparations to protect customers and quickly restore service as necessary. High winds and heavy rain are expected over a three-day period that may result in downed trees and power line damage. The company shares the tips below to help you prepare.

To report an outage or downed wire, call **1-877-737-2662** or report and track through Pepco's mobile app or our website at [pepco.com/Storm](#).

Customers can text “Out” to **48710** to report their outage.

Always stay away from any storm damaged electrical equipment, especially downed power lines and tree limbs that may come into contact with lines.

Customers who need electricity for critical medical equipment should be prepared to relocate to a facility with power in case there is a an outage.

Have a supply of bottled water and easy-to-prepare, non-perishable foods available.

Charge cell phones and other mobile devices in advance.

Check on elderly neighbors and relatives.

More tips and the latest outage forecasts are available at [pepco.com/Storm](#)

Buyer Beware of "Low Startup Rates" Packing a

Big Surprise

OPC has recently received consumer complaints about high prices for fixed-rate third-party supplier electricity plans. According to the complaints, the third-party suppliers -or TPSs- offer a promotional or teaser rate that lasts for a few months but later shoots up to a much higher rate for a fixed term. This is a recurring issue, however, OPC has noticed a spike in related consumer complaints.



In one case, a consumer was offered an introductory rate of \$69 that turned into a fixed rate of \$279. Fortunately, the consumer was able to get out of the contract.

OPC reminds consumers to keep the following in mind when choosing a TPS:

- Attractive introductory rates may only be available for a few billing cycles. Later, you could be obligated to purchase energy from the same supplier at a much higher rate.
- Always read the fine print.
- Do your research. Compare rates among energy suppliers and know your historical usage that's reflected on your utility bills to determine whether a fixed plan will produce savings or additional costs.

For more information about choosing energy suppliers, see: OPC's [Guide](#) to Third Party Suppliers. If you have a concern about a bait and switch incident, call OPC to talk with a consumer complaint specialist at (202) 727-3071.

The Water Connection:

Autumn Will Usher in New Water Rates

Water rates are going up! The DC Water Board has approved a rate increase that will go into effect on October 1, 2022, the start of the new fiscal year. The average water and sewer bill will increase about \$5 a month.



There will be a small decrease of 26¢ a month in the Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge or CRIAC fee that covers the costs of keeping DC's waterways clean. However, consumers will see a substantial boost in the CRIAC rate a year from now

If you are behind on your DC Water bill, contact OPC's Water Services Division ASAP to see if we can help you keep the water running and refer you to bill payment assistance. To learn more about the rate approval process, visit this DC Water [link](#).



The Solar Connection

DOEE Partners with Organizations to Install Solar Panels for DC Residents

The DC Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) is partnering with local organizations to install solar on single-family homes and develop community solar projects for renters. Through a partnership with the DC Sustainable Energy Utility and Grid Alternatives Mid-Atlantic, DOEE can help DC residents save up to \$500 annually on their electric bills. The Solar for All program is designed to provide the benefits of solar energy to 100,000 low-to-moderate income families living in the District.

Consumers can apply to have solar systems installed directly on their roof. Residents living in apartments, condominiums or multi-family buildings can go solar through the District's community solar program.

Consumers who pay their own electricity bill and meet the following income guidelines could qualify for free solar benefits.

<i>Persons in household</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Income threshold</i>	<i>\$79,700</i>	<i>\$91,100</i>	<i>\$102,500</i>	<i>\$113,850</i>	<i>\$125,250</i>	<i>\$136,650</i>	<i>\$148,050</i>	<i>\$159,400</i>	<i>\$170,800</i>	<i>\$182,200</i>

For more information about Solar for All, contact the DOEE Solar for All hotline at (202) 299-5271, solarforall@dc.gov, or visit doee.dc.gov/solarforall.

**This article was provided by DOEE.*

OPC Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month!

Language access and serving non-English proficient consumers is a part of OPC's mission.

OPC-DC
Office of the People's Counsel
ADVOCACY | EDUCATION | PROTECTION

La Defensora del Consumidor, Sandra Mattavous-Frye
y
La Oficina de la Defensoría del Consumidor del Distrito de Columbia

Celebra el Mes de la Herencia Hispana

Reconoce a la Oficina de Asuntos Latinos de la Alcaldesa y a todos sus socios por el apoyo que ofrecen a los consumidores hispanos/latinos.

Director Ejecutivo Interino de MOLA, Eduardo Perdomo

Coordinadora del área Hispana de OPC, Silvia Garrick

La Oficina de la Defensoría del Consumidor, los puede ayudar con las quejas de servicios públicos, eficiencia energética, energía solar, estafas y desconexiones.

Deje que OPC lo ayude a organizar planes de pago y lo remita a los programas de ayuda y pagar las facturas de servicios públicos vencidas.

¡Contacte a OPC Ahora!

P: (202) 727-3071
F: (202) 727-1014
Twitter: @DCOPC
Facebook: DCPeoplesCounsel

TTY/TDD: (202) 727-2876
E: info@opc-dc.gov
Instagram: @DCOPC

La Defensora del Consumidor, Sandra Mattavous-Frye

OPC-DC
Office of the People's Counsel
ADVOCACY | EDUCATION | PROTECTION

People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye
&
The Office of the People's Counsel for the District of Columbia

Celebrate HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Recognize the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs & All Partners who Support Hispanic/Latino Consumers

MOLA Interim Executive Director Eduardo Perdomo

OPC Hispanic Coordinator Silvia Garrick

The Office of the People's Counsel can help with utility service complaints, energy efficiency, solar, scams, and disconnections.

Let OPC help you arrange payment plans and refer you to programs to help pay past due utility bills.

Contact OPC Now!

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People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye

OPC Radio Connect to Highlight the Work of A Homegrown Environmental Leader

A new installment of the **OPC Radio Connect Podcast** will hit the airways soon. People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye is the host and features the people and the trends shaping the utility landscape now and in the future. OPC Radio Connect can be heard weekdays from 7 to 7:30 am on DC Radio 96.3 HD 4, @ [DCRadio.gov](https://www.dcradio.gov), and on-demand wherever you listen to your podcasts.



In the latest segment, the People's Counsel interviews Ward 7 resident, Dennis Chestnut, a grassroots environmental activist. Sarah Kogel-Smucker, OPC's Environmental and Climate Attorney, also joins the show. Pictured above, they discuss how climate change is affecting DC communities and what we all can do to address the negative impact of climate change. Be on the lookout for the air date on OPC's social media. It also will be posted on OPC's new website along with previous shows you should check out [here](#) now!

The Partner Connection

Get to Know an OPC Partner



Katrina Y. Coates is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker with over 25 years of experience in the human services field. Most recently, the native Washingtonian served as the Chief Program Officer at the Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative (E/BFSC). Katrina enjoys helping others and frequently refers to her contribution to the field as "her ministry."

Katrina has worked in various public service settings, including the DC Department of Human Services and Health Services for Children with Special Needs. In her most recent role with E/BFSC, Katrina worked tirelessly to partner with OPC staff to help families in Wards

5 and 6 who needed emergency utility assistance, among other support.

"During the pandemic we made every effort to remain in contact with our constituents by phone, email, and as it became safe, in person. Throughout this time we relied on OPC to help us inform consumers of their rights and assist in making payment plans with the utilities." She adds: once arrangements were made, E/BFSC contributed financially toward initial payments; and also referred constituents to OPC for advocacy, including helping to resolve concerns about high bills.

Katrina aspires to positively impact the lives of those with whom she comes in contact. OPC appreciates that she carries this admirable goal as we partner to serve mutual constituents.

OPC Connecting at the PSC



**PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION**

OPC is Advocating for Consumers in the Following Cases:

Formal Case No. 1154: Application of Washington Gas Light Company for

Approval of PROJECTpipes2 Plan

On August 15, 2022, OPC filed Comments on WGL's Advanced Leak Detection Pilot Final Report and Advanced Leak Detection Phase 2 Plan.

Formal Case No. 1156: Pepco's Application for Authority to Implement a Multiyear Rate Plan for Electric Distribution Service

On September 6, OPC filed a Motion to Dismiss Pepco's Request for Approval to Establish a Regulatory Asset.

RM48-2022-01: 15 DCMR Chapter 48 – Microgrid

On September 7, OPC filed Reply Comments.

Formal Case 1172: Consideration of Federal Funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

On September 14, OPC filed a Motion to Modify Reporting Requirements Under Order No. 21176 to Include Information Related to the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

OPC In Your Neighborhood!

OPC looks forward to seeing you in-person. We welcome the opportunity to speak at your Advisory Neighborhood Commission, civic association or community group meeting onsite or virtually. We can give updates on utility issues, trends, and outline how we serve. Call (202) 727-3071 if your group would like our staff to make a presentation onsite or "Zoom in." Contact the organizations listed below if you would like links to attend the meetings we'll be visiting virtually.

Ward 4 CARE Day
Thursday, October 6, 2022
4:00 am - 7:00 pm
Petworth Recreation Center, 801 Taylor Street NW

Bethel Christian Fellowship
Thursday, October 6
5:00 am - 6:30 pm
2220 Martin Luther King, Jr Avenue SE

ANC 7C Meeting
Thursday, October 13,
7:00 am - 8:00 pm
Virtual

ANC 7B Meeting
Thursday, October 20
6:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Virtual

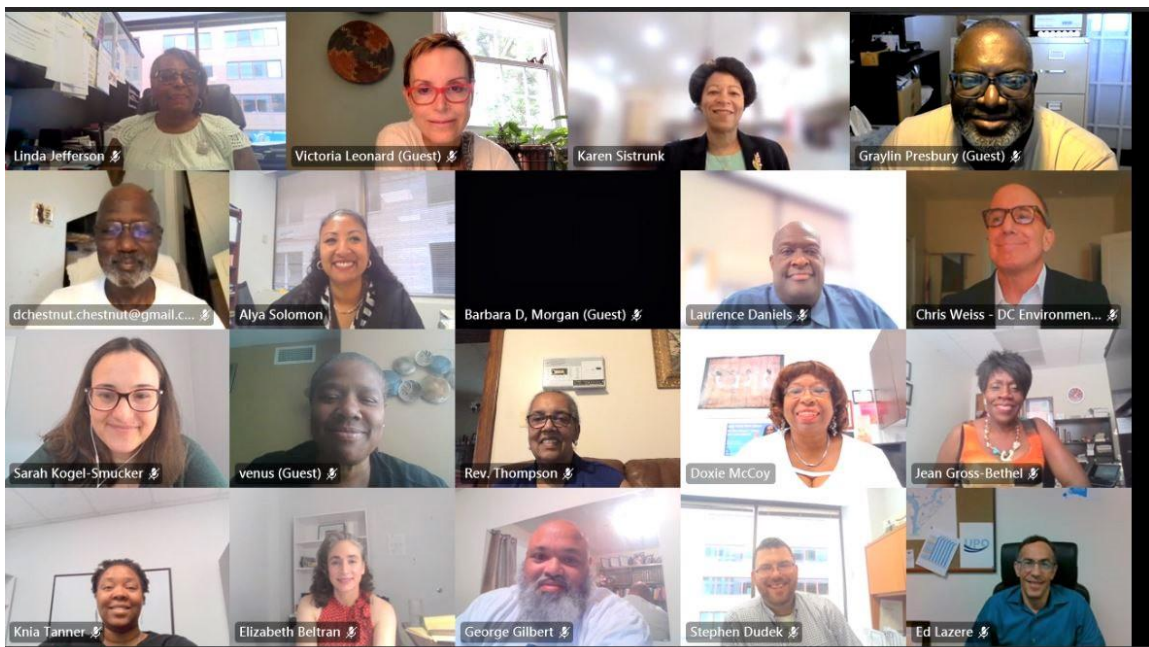
Photo Gallery



Deputy People's Counsel Karen Sistrunk, People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye, and OPC staff join the fun and games at PARK(ing) Day at 14th & U Streets NW, where they also introduced OPC services to passers-by. The annual global observance promotes open space and community conversation.



OPC's Hispanic Coordinator Silvia Garrick with a participant at the Eliot-Hine Middle School back to school block party.



OPC staff and members of the Utility Consumer Advocacy Network (UCAN) exchange information on the latest issues DC residents and small businesses are facing.



OPC's Cheryl Morse with Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George at CARE Day at Riggs-Lasalle Recreation Center. The Councilmember hosts CARE Days to bring government services to Ward 4 neighborhoods.



OPC's Denise Blackson greets a consumer at a community meeting in Southeast.

Connect With OPC!

Do you have feedback or an idea for an article that could be featured in an upcoming edition of the OPC Connection? We want to hear from you! Just drop our editorial team an email @ info@opc-dc.gov or tweet us [@DCOPC](https://twitter.com/DCOPC).

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