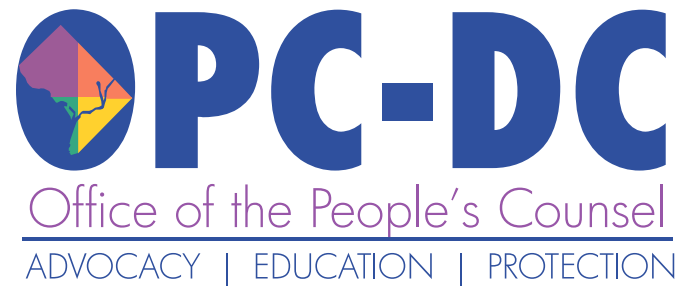




PREPARING TODAY FOR A BETTER ENERGY FUTURE



PREPARING TODAY FOR A BETTER ENERGY FUTURE

2021-2022 PROGRESS REPORT

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Dear Fellow Washingtonians,

As Mayor of Washington, DC, I am pleased to join the Office of the People’s Counsel (OPC) in presenting its 2021-2022 Progress Report: **“Preparing Today for a Better Energy Future.”**

This report covers a particularly challenging time for Washington, DC residents, businesses, public institutions, and government alike. The impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, along with global economic pressures, continue to create obstacles within our country’s and the District’s energy sectors and water services. However, under the leadership of People’s Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye and her entire team, OPC has risen to ever-evolving challenges and worked with the District government to alleviate the impacts of climate change on District residents. Likewise, partnerships between OPC and our District agencies protected electric, natural gas, water, and telecommunications ratepayers and helped to avoid disruption to their services.

We are particularly proud of my Administration’s STAY DC program – set up with federal recovery funds – that provided rental and utility assistance to Washingtonians in need during the pandemic. The initial allocation to the District was \$352 million, and because Washington, DC was the first jurisdiction in the nation to fully utilize this funding, an additional \$39.9 million was allocated. This program was vital to help our residents stay in their homes and keep their utilities on, and the District was a national leader in getting these funds where they needed to be. I am grateful that OPC was there to assist with outreach to consumers, answer their calls, and connect them with the STAY DC application process – thus allowing residents to take full advantage of these funds. This collective work supported and strengthened families, their communities, and in turn, our local economy ensuring a fair shot and exemplifying our great resilience.

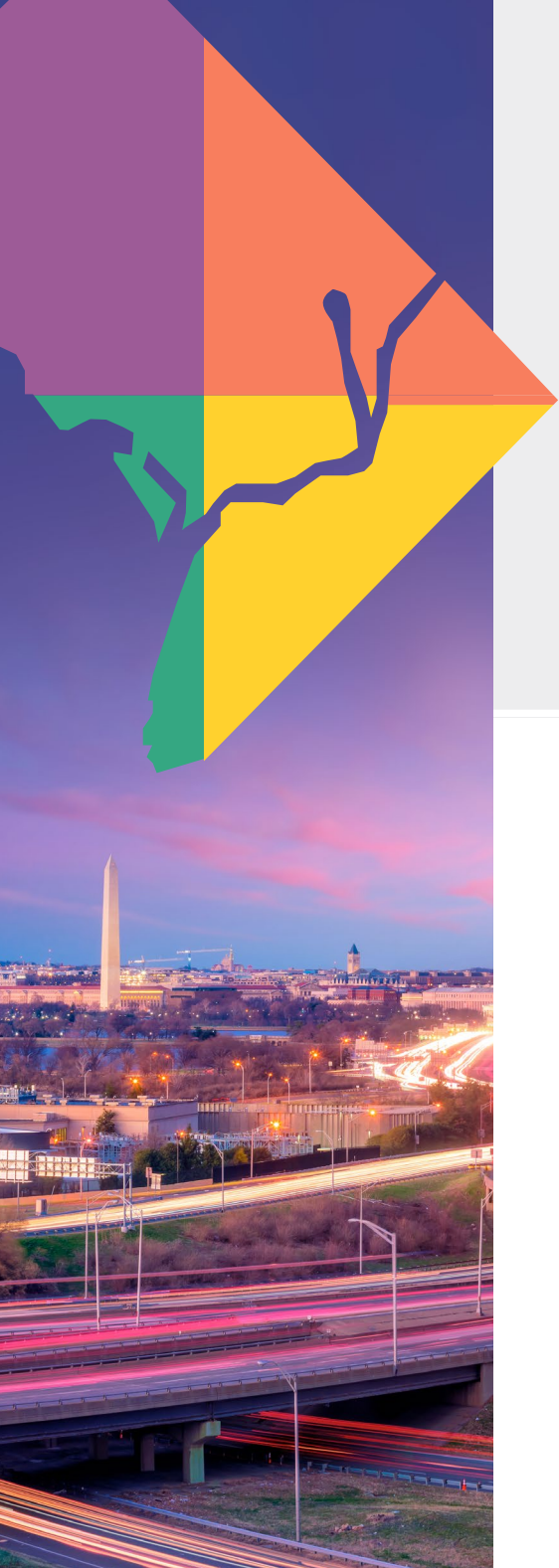
In 2023, OPC has been charged with continuing to apply our critical climate goals to all its litigation and outreach activities in pursuit of ambitious targets. Together, we are addressing the realities of aging infrastructures for natural gas, electricity, and water, while accommodating a growing city that demands new technologies like solar energy sources and electric vehicle charging. Honoring our climate objectives by 2032 will be no small feat – but we cannot, and will not, falter. The evidence that climate action cannot wait is clearer with each passing day.

Clean water, clean energy, clean transportation, and economic stability all make Washington, DC the greatest city in the world. I look forward to the continuing partnership with the Office of the People’s Counsel in ensuring the delivery of safe, reliable, and environmentally sustainable utility services to all Washingtonians as we grow and thrive. Let’s keep moving DC forward, together!

Sincerely,

MURIEL BOWSER
Mayor

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District of Columbia Utility Consumers,

I am honored to present the 2021-2022 Progress Report of the Office of the People’s Counsel: **“Preparing Today for a Better Energy Future.”** The report details OPC’s advocacy, education, and protection of District utility consumers who are withstanding the transition to a healthier environment alongside the lingering after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation, and life-changing global events.



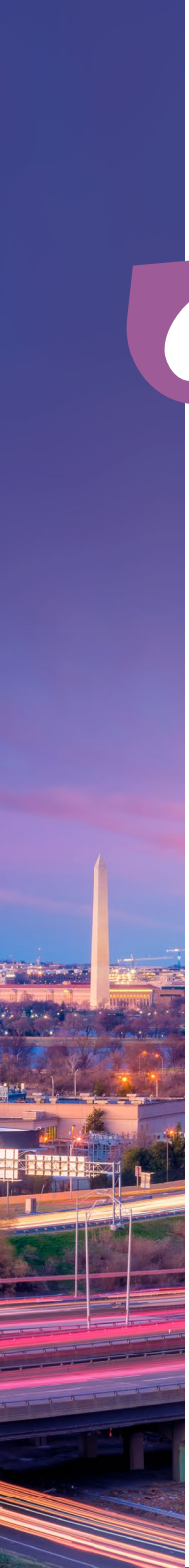
In this report, we discuss OPC’s successful efforts to educate and provide District consumers with access to resources and financial assistance programs to help them recover from the pandemic, ensure access to life-sustaining electric, natural gas, and water services, avert disconnections, and understand the impact of climate change on their everyday lives so they can play a role in finding solutions.

OPC’s work has taken a proactive approach to address racial equity in our legal advocacy, community outreach, and communications to the District’s diverse communities and populations. Our Community Conversation on Climate Change and Environmental Injustice in October 2021 underscored how communities of color are more likely to suffer the effects of climate change. OPC’s Water Services Division sponsored a webinar that asked consumers to “Imagine a Day Without Water,” as part of a national observance

to raise awareness about pressing water concerns such as flooding due to climate change. OPC has developed effective collaborations with community and government partners such as the Office of Cable Television, DC Radio, and through initiatives like Solar For All and #Here2HelpDC to support our shared constituents.

The Office has remained active on the national regulatory front and heightened our presence at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on issues that impact consumers at the local level financially and encouraged the inclusion of renewable energy in the supply mix. OPC’s focus on FERC issues is important because 70% of consumers’ bills are related to energy generation, a market-driven rate set at the federal level. We believe consumers must have a voice at the table when these decisions are made.

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“**OPC will focus on ensuring that DC’s energy future is one that meets the District’s 2032 climate goals.**”

The transition to a cleaner and safer environment is a global endeavor. District officials and stakeholders are examining critical issues around how to power our future. “Electrification and decarbonization” are terms frequently used. Electrification involves a transition from reliance on natural gas energy to the use of “clean” electric energy sources. Decarbonization is reducing the greenhouse gas emitted into our air. The pivotal question facing policymakers is how much and how soon? A very different electric utility future is inevitable and OPC is working to provide consumers with an active voice in the conversations. OPC will focus on ensuring that DC’s energy future is one that meets the District’s 2032 climate goals to reduce greenhouse gasses, and provides equitable access to reliable and affordable utility services and clean energy technologies.

OPC produced a study on Energy Affordability and an Equity Assessment of Electrification Incentives in the District of Columbia. The analysis is critical to informing policy and programs governing solar deployment, microgrids, electric vehicle charging, and electrification of mass transit that must come to the front burner to address climate change and environmental sustainability. We also filed a petition before the Public Service after receiving numerous complaints regarding interconnection problems that were impeding community solar deployment. The Attorney General’s Office joined us in the filing.

Utility infrastructure upgrades are becoming more pressing. They must be designed to support new advanced technologies. OPC will remain diligent and continue to conduct a thorough analysis of all proposed capital investments and aggressively advocate for fair and just Pepco and Washington Gas rate increases. Four years ago OPC became the statutory advocate for DC Water customers. Our Water Services Division (WSD) saw an exponential increase in consumer calls for assistance during fiscal years 2021 and 2022. Many consumers contacted the office following the lifting of the moratorium on water service disconnections. Fortunately, WSD has been able to connect consumers with relief to keep their water flowing.

Local telephone consumers have experienced Verizon’s abandonment of traditional landlines in its march toward fully digital and cellular-only

service. OPC fully understands that communications services are a lifeline, particularly for seniors, and we are committed to ensuring that consumers remain connected to affordable options.

In November 2021, I was honored to receive the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates “Robert F. Manifold Lifetime Service Award,” given to “individuals who have demonstrated the highest level of dedication to public service over their career.” I accepted the award and acknowledged the hard work and commitment of my staff to fulfilling OPC’s mission to advocate, educate, and protect DC utility consumers.

OPC has kept our constituents abreast of these developments through numerous communications vehicles, including the new opc-dc.gov website, the OPC Radio Connect Podcast, and our monthly OPC Connection Newsletter. As we move forward in 2023, the Office of the People’s Counsel is “Preparing Today for a Better Energy Future,” so that the next generations can thrive as we travel the road ahead.

Sincerely,

SANDRA MATTAVOUS-FRYE
People’s Counsel

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ABOUT OPC

The Office of the People’s Counsel is an independent agency of the District of Columbia government. By law, the Office **advocates for consumers of natural gas, electricity, telephone, and water services.**

The Office also represents the interests of District utility ratepayers before the DC Public Service Commission (PSC), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), Federal Communications Commission (FCC), other utility regulatory bodies, and the courts. The Office is authorized to investigate the operation and valuation of utility companies independent of any regulatory proceeding. OPC’s mandate is to advocate for the provision of quality utility service at rates that are just, reasonable, and non-discriminatory; to assist individual consumers in disputes with utility companies about billing or services; and to provide technical assistance and consumer education to lay advocates and community groups. OPC also promotes climate change solutions through legal and legislative advocacy, education, and empowerment of consumers in all eight wards. OPC works to ensure the District meets its ambitious goals of reducing carbon emissions and pollution in a just, equitable, affordable, and resilient manner.

In Preparing Today for a Better Energy Future, OPC pursues its mission to benefit consumers in all eight wards, as well as the betterment of the economy of the District of Columbia, the conservation of natural resources, and the preservation of environmental quality and climate.



Established by the United States Congress.

1926

The Office was eliminated by Congress in a federal reorganization.

1952

Concern in the early 1970s about rapidly rising electric rates resulted in Congress reestablishing the Office. OPC became an independent agency of the District of Columbia government in 1975.

1975

2018

Concern about rising water bills resulted in the passage of a new law in 2018 establishing OPC as the advocate for DC Water ratepayers.

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OUTREACH

Outreach Meetings & Activities
across Consumer, Water, Litigation,
and Technical Services Divisions;
Solar Section; External Affairs

Fiscal Year 2021 1,422

Fiscal Year 2022 1,632

Consumer Inquiries
about Support
Programs, Financial
Assistance & Services

Fiscal Year 2021 1,258

Fiscal Year 2022 3,626

Non- and Limited-English
Speaking Persons Served

Fiscal Year 2021 850

Fiscal Year 2022 3,228

CONSUMER SERVICES DIVISION WORKING TO KEEP CONSUMERS CONNECTED

In the midst of two and half years of the COVID-19 pandemic, OPC’s Consumer Services Division (CSD) staff continued to navigate through challenging times to serve utility consumers in the District of Columbia.



Consumer outreach specialists worked seamlessly from their homes and in the office during the pandemic. Residents with concerns or problems with their utility services were always able to reach OPC for assistance.

CSD handled 2,528 complaints during fiscal years 2021 and 2022. The significant rise in consumers seeking OPC’s assistance is attributed to households struggling to survive the lingering economic fallout from the pandemic. Consumer specialists continue to work with residents in case management by negotiating with Pepco, Washington Gas, and Verizon Washington on behalf of utility customers. Specialists closed 97% of their cases in both FY 21 and FY 22.

The division expanded its partnerships with key DC government agencies to fulfill its mandate to help residents to stay connected to utility services. A stronger relationship among OPC, the District Department of Energy and Environment and the Department of Aging and Community Aging Living ensured we could connect the dots to get clients’ energy applications completed and make social services available to households, particularly for vulnerable families and individuals.

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TESTIMONIAL

Housing Opportunities Unlimited has collaborated with the Office of the People’s Counsel to conduct monthly educational workshops for former residents of Northwest One, Temple Courts, and Golden Rule Center in Ward 6, and Park Morton in Ward 1, under the New Communities Initiative. OPC Consumer Outreach Specialist Denise Blackson has educated them on how to better manage energy usage throughout their homes and what energy-efficient products to purchase to decrease their energy bills. Residents also have learned how to read their electric bill and who to contact if they want an energy audit done in their homes. The workshops have been beneficial for residents who once resided in a public housing property but now live in units where they are responsible for paying their utilities. We are grateful to have this partnership with OPC.

- LASHONE N. DAVIS, MSW
HOU Program Administrator



CONSUMER SERVICES DIVISION (CONTINUED)

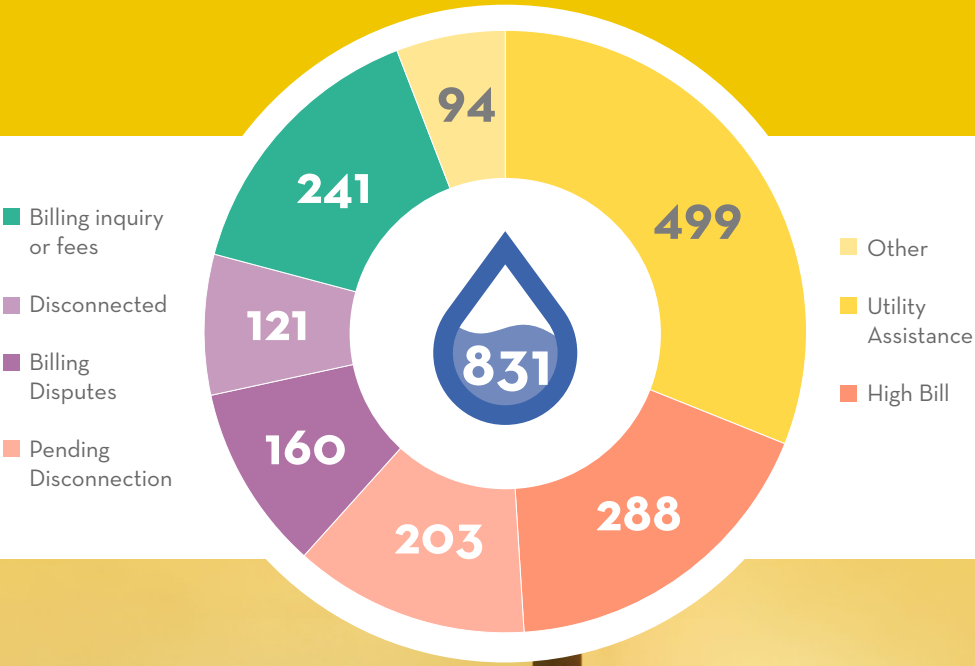
The Consumer Services Division hosted three COVID-19 virtual social services networking meetings. The sessions enabled government, nonprofit, community organizations, and utilities to share best practices in brainstorming for ways to work together for the benefit of shared clients.

CSD staff participated in 400 virtual and in-person outreach events and activities. The pandemic did not slow down the division’s presence in the community, up close and personal, even if it was via Zoom, ensuring residents knew how OPC could help keep life-saving utilities operating. And when it was safer to go outside, we jumped at chances to meet again with consumers in person. Outreach activities included informational tables at the Metropolitan Police National Night Out for crime prevention and “Park(ing) Day,” a global event that promotes green spaces and community conversation.

As the OPC Consumer Services Division works collaboratively to make District households whole, we are “Preparing Today for a Better Energy Future” for Washingtonians in all eight wards.

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WSD CASES FOR FY 21 & FY 22



WATER SERVICES DIVISION WORKING TO KEEP THE WATER FLOWING

Four years after becoming the statutory advocate for DC Water consumers, OPC’s Water Services Division (WSD) continues its zealous outreach and highly effective case management. In the fiscal year 2022, WSD handled a record 831 cases, a 71% increase over the 486 cases FY 21.

The rise in consumers needing OPC’s assistance is attributed to households struggling to survive the lingering economic fallout from COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, WSD consumer specialists succeeded in maintaining a high closure rate of 80% for both FY 21 and FY 22. The pandemic did not slow down the division’s presence in community settings, ensuring residents knew how OPC could help keep life-saving water running. WSD participated in 126 outreach events for FY 21 and FY 22.

In April 2021, WSD hosted a webinar for the public, “How to Prepare for Flooding,” which featured partnering agencies sharing critical information to protect their homes and businesses. WSD also participated in a national observance, “Imagine a Day Without Water.” The division hosted a webinar highlighting scenarios under which disconnections, high bills, water main breaks, and climate change could impact the flow of water. In interviews on the street, consumers responded to the question: “How would you live on a day without water?” See the videos on OPC’s YouTube Page.

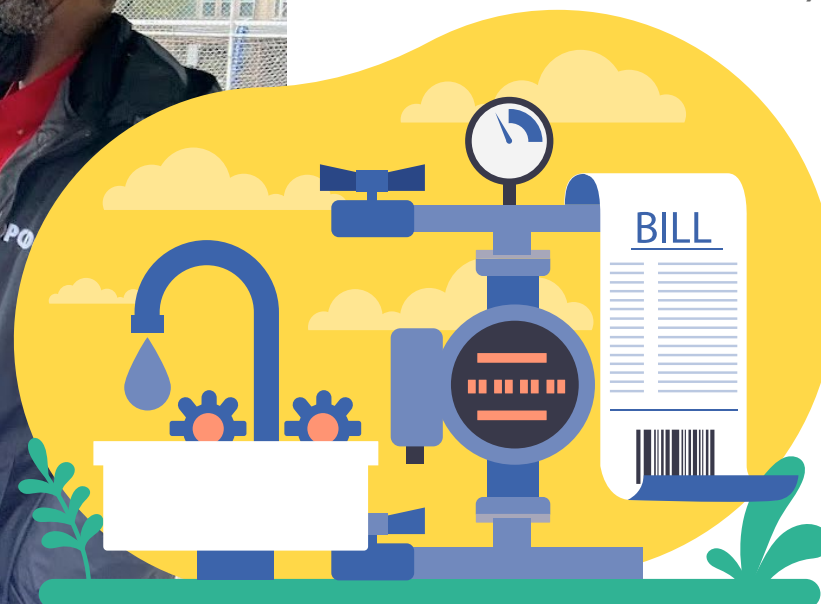
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TESTIMONIAL

“I recently contacted the DC Office of the People’s Counsel for help with paying my utilities. I was assisted by Tracey Butler, and I simply had to let you know how pleased I was with her excellent customer service! From the moment that she contacted me, Ms. Butler was professional, courteous, empathetic, and very helpful. She took time to listen and allowed me to fully explain my unfortunate circumstances...Facing financial problems can be quite challenging, and my search for assistance has not always been the most pleasant experience. However, Ms. Butler’s compassion, understanding and diligence were very much appreciated...I am grateful for the invaluable service that the OPC-DC provides to the community.”

- TAMARA
Ward 7 Resident



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TIMELINE

OPC GETS A WIN FOR CONSUMERS SEEKING SOLAR

During fiscal year 2021—At several meetings, OPC and District Department of Energy & Environment discuss a range of issues related to how Pepco is not adhering to rules governing Community Renewable Energy Facilities (CREFs). The CREF program is especially important for low-income consumers who may not be able to put solar panels on their roof to reduce their electric bills.

MARCH 23, 2022

March 23, 2022--OPC and the DC government file a joint complaint & petition before the DC Public Service Commission seeking a formal investigation into Pepco's CREF practices, alleging Pepco mishandled the program designed to help residents go solar, including failing to provide them promised energy bill credits.

TIMELINE CONTINUES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE



LITIGATION SERVICES DIVISION
WORKING ON BEHALF OF DC UTILITY RATEPAYERS

Highly skilled attorneys in OPC's Litigation Services Division (LSD) engage in various legal activities on the District and federal levels on behalf of DC utility ratepayers.

LSD has maintained an intense pace before the Public Service Commission (PSC), challenging excessive rate increase requests by Pepco and Washington Gas. Before and during the pandemic, OPC continued thorough analysis of rate case applications and aggressive advocacy that positively influenced the present and future direction of utility services. Examples of legal achievements follow.

During FY21 and 22, OPC litigated a Pepco rate case that would change the way electric rates are set, and two cost recovery proposals: how to pay for costs associated with the cleanup of pollution in the Anacostia River resulting from the old Pepco Benning Road generating station in Northeast; and cost recovery for energy efficiency programs for small businesses.

The PSC approved Pepco's new multi-year rate making plan on a trial basis and approved the two cost recovery projects. However, OPC sought reconsideration because both would harm consumers. The Commission denied OPC's request for reconsideration and OPC then appealed the decision to the DC Court of Appeals. Fortunately, the Court ruled in OPC's favor, agreeing that there was a longstanding agreement in place to prohibit Pepco from billing ratepayers for these Benning Road costs. The Court also agreed with OPC that Pepco did not meet the legal requirements imposed by the DC Council in implementing certain energy efficiency programs. The Court required the Commission to reconsider its decision on the two matters. These are significant wins OPC has achieved for consumers.

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- JUNE 30, 2022

Commission issues order granting the petition, finding that Pepco’s “process is less than clear about whether CREF accounts have been properly credited as Pepco claims” and expressed a need for an audit into CREF accounting practices.
- OCTOBER 25, 2022

The Commission moves forward a comprehensive evaluation of policies, processes, procedures, and internal controls on metering and billing for community renewable energy facilities.
- NOVEMBER 17, 2022

Commission states it will convene a legislative-style hearing on CREF matters.

OUTCOME

The Commission granting OPC’s petition and establishing parameters for an audit is a victory for consumers because it means there is a focused proceeding that will pave the way for a transparent and quick resolution of long-standing issues and ensuring the accuracy of community solar credits. OPC hopes this investigation will enhance the deployment of community solar to help the District meet its clean energy and climate goals.

TESTIMONIAL

OPC fights unduly burdensome interconnection fees clearing the way for consumers to install solar on their homes and contribute to the District’s clean energy and climate goals. Eager to join the clean energy movement and lower their electric bills, the Kinnaird family signed up for a residential solar system that would connect to Pepco’s electric grid. The Ward 4 residents anticipated that the system would receive permission to connect to the grid without fees due to the size of their system. Many neighbors with similar systems didn’t have to pay fees. However, Pepco wanted the Kinnairds to pay over \$5,000 to connect. Because informal negotiations with Pepco were unsuccessful, the Kinnairds reached out to OPC for help. OPC assisted the Kinnairds with their formal complaint with the Public Service Commissions in January 2022. To the Kinnairds’ relief, Pepco ultimately gave the green light to connect without any costs to the family. They expressed gratitude for OPC’s advocacy:

“We are absolutely thrilled to finally reach the end of this journey. We are grateful for OPC’s support and guidance through this process.”

- WARD 4 RESIDENTS

Another victory OPC secured for consumers involved PJM, the regional grid operator that helps to get electricity to DC homes and businesses. Members of PJM approved a proposal to enhance the reliability of the electric grid and increase opportunities for the integration of renewable energy. The proposal, developed by OPC and other stakeholders, focuses on “black start facilities,” which generate resources that can help jump-start the grid if there is a widespread power outage or blackout.

The plan guarantees a number of black start facilities coming online, ensuring that life-sustaining electric service can be quickly restored. OPC ensured that the number and location of black start facilities would balance the costs and the benefits for consumers. Employing a reliability-focused approach to address the most extreme cases of potential restoration times eliminated the need for costly infrastructure upgrades while still enhancing grid reliability. Additionally, while black start facilities are traditionally natural gas or other thermal generation units, the approved plan opens the door to renewable energy resources like wind and solar. This change will help the District meet its clean energy goals while potentially lowering costs and enhancing reliability for DC residents and businesses.

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LEGISLATION

OPC testifies at DC Council hearings and works with Council offices to craft legislation that benefits utility consumers and promotes climate change solutions.

CleanEnergy DC Omnibus Technical Amendment Temporary Amendment Act of 2021.

Changes timeframe for allowing community renewable energy facilities (CREFs) to update their subscriber lists monthly instead of quarterly. The once-per-quarter limit created issues for the Solar for All program, as well as a number of solar developers. As a result, the waiting period meant that subscribers experienced delays in seeing solar benefits on their bill.

Climate Commitment Act of 2021

Requires the District to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 60% below 2006 levels by 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. Requires the District government to reduce emissions from its operations to net-zero five years earlier, by 2040. Requires the city to stop buying fossil fuel-burning space- and water-heating systems and vehicles in most cases beginning in 2025 and 2026, respectively. Requires DOEE to report annually on the District’s progress toward emissions reduction commitments. OPC testified in support of the legislation and made recommendations that strengthened the legislation to consider the impact on racial equity and local ecosystems.

Flood Resilience Amendment Act of 2022

Authorizes the Department of Energy and Environment to issue rules establishing flood hazard areas and to require flood insurance as a condition of occupancy for new or substantially improved buildings in flood hazard areas. Due to climate change, the District will face increased flooding risks. OPC testified on the legislation.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADVOCACY

Climate change is a global challenge. Coupled with the impact of environmental injustice plaguing disadvantaged and minority communities it requires immediate action.

OPC is dedicated to supporting the District’s aggressive climate change goals in a cost-effective and equitable manner. In 2020, People’s Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye created a climate change section that is actively involved in all District and federal proceedings impacting the District’s environment and climate. During fiscal years 21 and 22, OPC’s climate advocacy at the Public Service Commission included: (1) providing detailed analysis of utility climate change plans; (2) chairing a sub-committee tasked with developing an analytical framework to evaluate the climate impact of utility proposals; and (3) submitting an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of Pepco’s proposed energy efficiency and demand response programs. The People’s Counsel believes consumer buy-in is a critical component for success. Therefore, OPC ensures that everyday consumers are included in the conversations to help them understand their role in combatting climate change. On October 16, 2021, OPC hosted its first community climate change forum: “The Price You Pay; Straight Talk: A Community Conversation About Climate Change and Environmental Injustice.” Four hundred individuals participated over Zoom, Facebook Live, and Twitter. The forum brought together national environmental justice and climate advocates, government staff, clean energy professionals, and community members online and in person at the Busboys and Poets Restaurant’s Anacostia location. A second community conversation on climate change is planned in the coming months.

OPC will continue to coordinate and build partnerships with local and federal government agencies, private sector organizations, and environmental and climate change lay advocates.

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FOSTERING RACIAL EQUITY

OPC is working to advance the District’s racial equity goals in numerous ways. Addressing racial and socioeconomic inequities are fundamental elements of all OPC advocacy and educational campaigns. A racially equitable District in its broadest and most aspirational terms would create an environment where access to benefits and opportunities are not defined by race or economic standing.

Racial equity for utility consumers has many branches. These include workforce development, environmental justice, leveling grossly uneven energy burdens, affordability, access, and health-related issues. OPC has been in the vanguard of efforts to ensure that the least protected are not overlooked. Our policies provide cost-saving benefits to all consumers.

However, for consumers at the lower end of the income bracket, many of whom are Black and other people of color, a 20% reduction in their utility bills may mean food on the table or life-saving medicine.

Moreover, we must ensure that racial minorities, underserved, and disadvantaged neighborhoods that are already overburdened by noxious pollutants are not the last to receive the benefits of clean air technologies that reduce asthma and other respiratory diseases. Issues to address:

AFFORDABILITY

Utility rate affordability is an essential issue for the District’s racial minorities. OPC targets outreach on decisions affecting affordability to minority communities and Black media to bring consumers into the conversation. Racial equity requires consumers of color to be meaningfully heard in these proceedings.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

OPC’s work to help meet the District’s climate change goals is driven by seeking environmental justice. Without meaningful policy changes, racial minorities will bear the worst effects of climate change. OPC is working to make those changes before local and federal bodies that regulate utilities.

ACCESS TO PROGRAM BENEFITS

OPC works to ensure that residents in all eight wards benefit from programs that reduce their utility bills so that they do not have to choose between paying utility bills and necessities like food and medicine. OPC’s multifaceted work to prevent utility disconnections during the pandemic helped prevent further exacerbation of the District’s income disparities.



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FOSTERING RACIAL EQUITY

(CONTINUED)

OPC completed two studies that speak to equity and affordability. Key recommendations are listed here.



We could draw the conclusion that race and income should be a factor in policy decisions (even though the study does not clearly state such).

The Energy Affordability Study shows that a majority of low- to moderate-income households in the District are Black/non-Hispanic residences; are about three-quarters of SNAP (food stamps) eligible households; and just over one-half of the moderate-income households. Hispanic households are about 10% of each program eligibility group. Asian households are only about 3% of LMI households.



REPORT
LINK

Equity Assessment of Electrification Incentives in the District of Columbia

- 1 Ensure community input in governmental decisions on electrification programs
- 2 Prioritize electrification investment in neighborhoods most affected by environmental injustice, and severe weather conditions such as flooding and air pollution
- 3 Ensure electrification programs, such as electric vehicle deployment, do not increase the energy burden (increase utility bills) for vulnerable communities.



REPORT
LINK

Energy Affordability Study

- 1 Provides detailed information about low- to moderate-income household demographics, energy burden, and shelter burden
- 2 Analyzes and compares the funding, program design, and program performance elements of District of Columbia energy assistance programs with those in other jurisdictions

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COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

OPC RADIO CONNECT PODCAST STILL AIRING STRONG

In February 2020, OPC launched “OPC Radio Connect,” a podcast hosted by People’s Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye, to present information on a variety of utility and energy-related issues and how they relate to the daily lives of DC consumers.

Initially recorded and broadcast from the studios of DC Radio at the Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment, the segments featured experts and OPC staff discussing topics such as climate change, consumer rights, and solar power.

The COVID-19 DC government stay-at-home order sent podcast production into hiatus. However, recorded segments continued to air. As OPC offices reopened, production resumed in a pop-up studio at the agency in early 2021. OPC Radio Connect continues to air with new and previously recorded segments on weekdays, from 7 to 7:30 am on DCRadio.gov, DC Radio 96.3 HD4, and on-demand on popular podcast apps, including Apple and iHeart Radio. The podcast is just one tool OPC uses to communicate with consumers. Others include the monthly OPC Connection Newsletter, the new opc-dc.gov website, educational flyers, brochures, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

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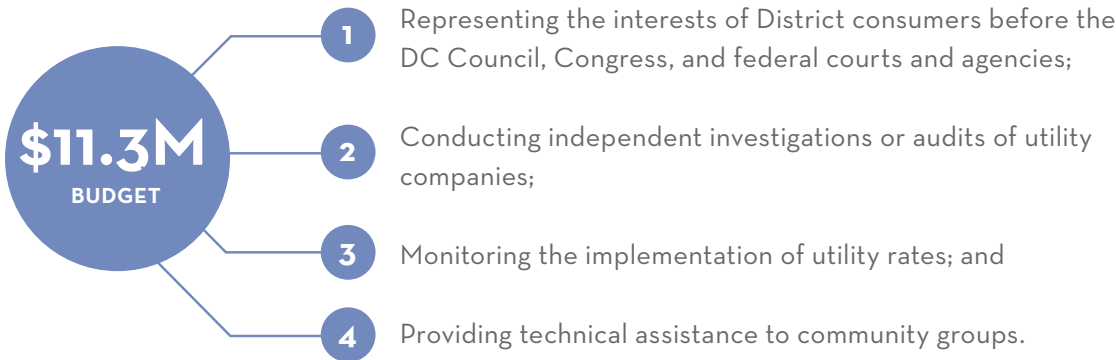
AGENCY FUNDING

Funding for the Office of the People’s Counsel is provided through two sources:

- 1) APPROPRIATED BUDGET
- 2) ASSESSMENT FUNDS

APPROPRIATED BUDGET

OPC’s FY21 appropriated budget was \$9.4 million, and for FY22 it was \$11.3 million. Appropriated funds are also used to support such additional activities as:



All funds are paid by DC utility ratepayers. The appropriated budget provides for administrative and general operating expenses for OPC (rent, salaries, equipment) and is authorized by the District of Columbia in the government budget review process.

By law, these funds must be reimbursed to the District by the three regulated utility companies and the alternative energy and telecommunications providers according to an established formula, outlined in the Public Utility Reimbursement Fee Act, DC Code §34-912(b)(1).

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“*OPC continues to advocate to ensure utility service is reliable and rates are just and reasonable. The agency has saved DC ratepayers multi-millions of dollars. As a result, the District’s utility rates are among the lowest in the region. Delivering rate case savings is what we do!*”

AGENCY FUNDING
(CONTINUED)

ASSESSMENT FUNDS

Assessment funds are used to pay the costs of litigation and investigations. OPC assesses the affected utility, and the utility can recover those costs directly from consumers through rate increase cases.

To fully participate in complex litigation before the Public Service Commission and the courts, the People’s Counsel is authorized to retain the professional services of expert attorneys and expert technical consultants such as economists, accountants, and engineers, as needed, to effectively represent DC utility consumers. The affected utility company is required to pay a special franchise tax to cover the costs of regulatory litigation by OPC. In turn, the law recognizes that the utility may include these costs, as well as its own litigation-related expenses, as operating expenses that can be recovered from consumers through rate increase requests. OPC must adhere to monetary limits in imposing assessments on the utilities. In a rate case, the Office is permitted to assess the utilities no more than a total of one-quarter of one percent of a company’s net investments in plant operations, which is referred to as “rate base.” With respect to all other cases or investigations (those involving the setting of rates), OPC is permitted to assess one-twentieth of one percent (5 cents on \$100) on a company’s rate base during a calendar year. By law, unused money is returned to the utility.

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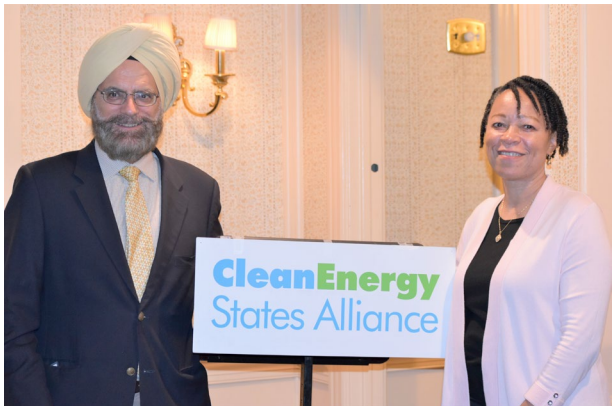
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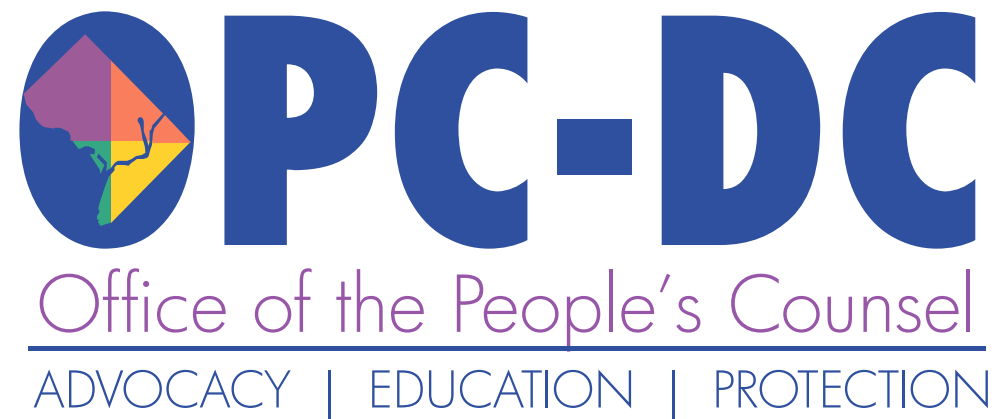
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2021-2022 PROGRESS REPORT