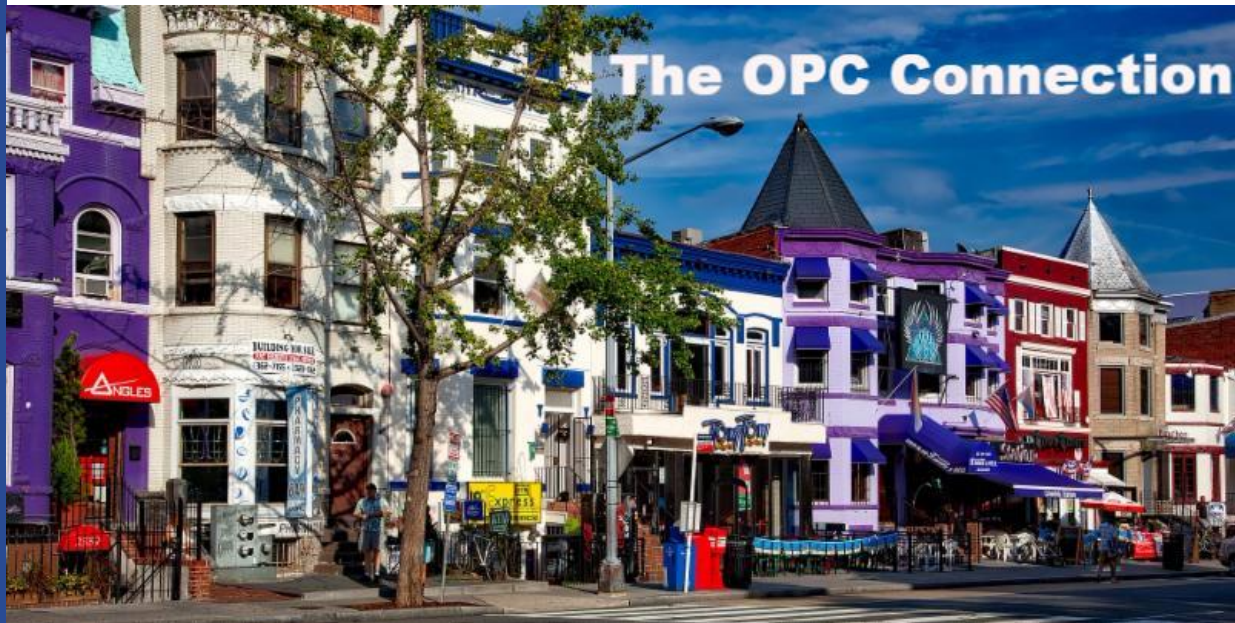




Office of the People's Counsel

ADVOCACY | EDUCATION | PROTECTION



June 2023

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

Solar In Your Community

As People's Counsel, I have long championed using emerging technology like solar generated electricity as a vehicle to deliver real benefits to

consumers, particularly low-to-moderate income consumers who can least afford the five-figure investment to build a stand-alone solar system.



To meet the solar needs of diverse consumers, the District Department of Energy & Environment introduced the [Solar For All](#) program with the goal of bringing free solar energy to 100,000 DC consumers and to reduce their energy bills by 50% over 15 years. On Friday, June 16, I was honored to speak at a ribbon cutting for one of the program's latest success stories, a 256-kwh installation

on the grounds of Sargent Memorial Presbyterian Church in Northeast. This new solar canopy on stilts shades a parking area and will bring the benefits of “free” electricity to more than 70 nearby homes. Each income qualified household will receive solar energy credits on their electric bill, saving them \$500 annually for the life of the solar system.

I commend Pamela Nelson, OPC's Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Outreach Specialist whose duties include working with faith-based and nonprofit organizations on projects like Sargent's. Church leaders credit Ms. Nelson for standing by them over three years as they navigated the application process, the search for financing and construction resources, and now, to completion.

For too long, access to solar was out of reach for most consumers. But energy equity is critical. Therefore, my continuing mission is to create and support initiatives that expand access to consumers in all eight wards. With community partners, we can do it!

For more on the Sargent Memorial ribbon cutting, see this OPC [video](#) on the ribbon cutting and this news [article](#).

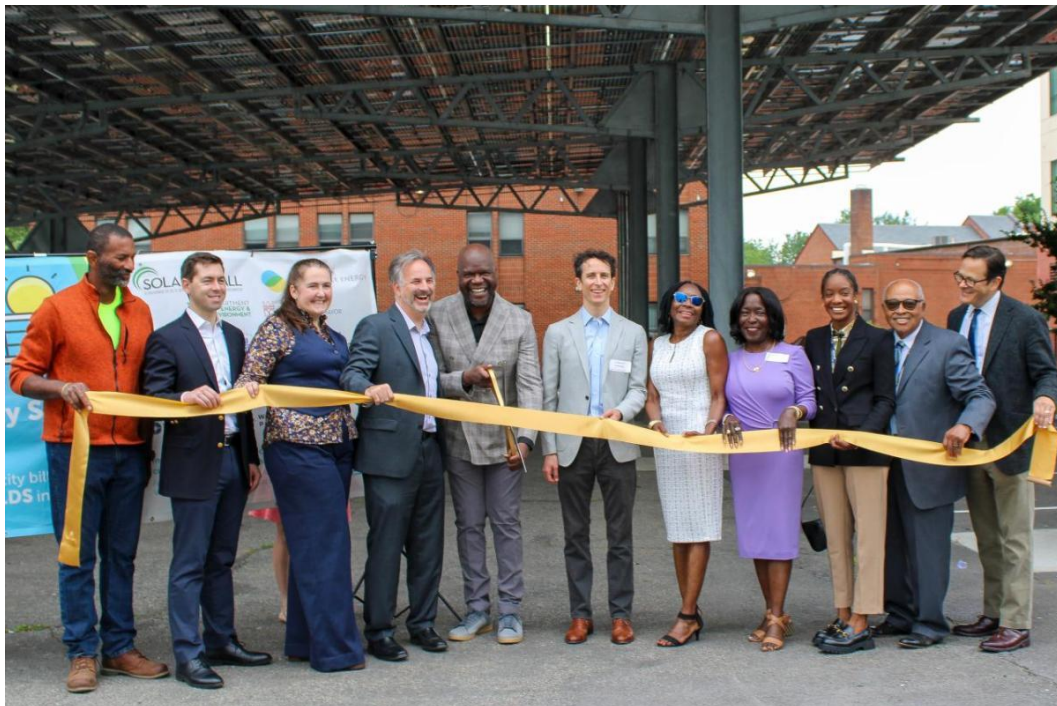


Photo credit: Groundswell

Be Prepared! Pepco Rates Rising

Effective June 1, Pepco's rates



increased for all customers using Standard Offer Service (SOS). The change on your bill should begin to be reflected at the close of the June billing period. The increase of about 14% is the result of the higher costs of the energy used to produce electricity. OPC estimates bills will go up about

\$12 per month for the average residential customer. This increase is not related to the rate hike now before the Public Service Commission. The PSC does not regulate SOS costs. See our [advice](#) on what you can do to prepare for higher bills in the months ahead.

**On another important Pepco matter, click [here](#) to read about a big victory OPC won for the utility's ratepayers earlier this week.*

District Addressing Environmental Injustice Through Air Quality Study



DC residents have advocated for improved environmental and climate conditions for all who live and work here for decades. Some longtime residents may remember the fight over the Benning Road powerplant that spewed pollutants over the River Terrace community and into the Anacostia River tributary for years until it was finally closed.

Environmental injustice, the disproportionate impact of environmental damage on specific communities, often low-income and communities of color, was a key issue in both of OPC's community [conversations](#) on climate change, most recently "Our Planet, Our Future: [Youth Climate Summit](#)," on April 29.

Now, the Department of Energy & Environment has announced it will conduct a pilot study to pinpoint specific communities and specific neighborhood blocks where air pollution exceeds safety standards. According to the [American Cancer Society](#), outdoor air pollution has been linked to multiple respiratory ailments including asthma, and to several types of [cancer](#).

DOEE has engaged [Aclima](#) a climate research company that uses [sensors](#) mounted in electric-powered vehicles to take readings on streets to develop data that accurately maps air quality. Currently, there are only five stationary air quality monitors throughout the District.



Water Currents

OPC is Advocating for DC Water Consumers on Multiple Fronts

OPC's Water Services Division wants you to know about the following developments that may affect your DC Water bill:

- OPC provided comments to the Environmental Protection Agency on the EPA's regulation of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) [chemicals](#) under the federal Superfund law and the potential impact on DC Water consumers. OPC is working to ensure DC Water ratepayers do not have to pay for site remediation where potentially PFAS-laden municipal waste has been sent. The Superfund law is designed to hold chemical manufacturers and polluters accountable – and not burden municipal water treatment systems.
- DC Water will be rolling out a new consumer bill dispute form. OPC has requested the water authority include the link to the new form on the front of its website. OPC has also requested DC Water include a disclaimer alerting customers that each month of faulty billing should be appealed separately, rather than trying to appeal multiple months on a single form.
- The DC Council will be considering two bills addressing the removal of lead water lines throughout the city, setting a 2030 deadline, and instituting assistance programs for residents. OPC will be providing guidance on the proposed measures.
- The DC Court of Appeals has ruled water consumers seeking to challenge a bill must first go through an administrative hearing with DC Water before seeking a court hearing. Bills must be disputed before a DC Water administrative hearing officer, and then an unfavorable decision can be appealed to the court, once the administrative steps are exhausted.



Employee Spotlight:

Elizabeth Beltran is "Stepping Up" to Advocate for DC Consumers

Assistant People's Counsel Elizabeth Beltran landed in OPC's Litigation Services Division almost two years ago. She is primarily focused on Washington Gas rate cases but also assists Pepco consumers with solar

interconnection issues.

Elizabeth was born in Baltimore and raised in Prince George's County, Idaho, and the San Francisco Bay area. She says her children motivated her to be successful, and motherhood at a young age taught her to keep fighting to pursue her purpose and ensure her children had a comfortable life. Elizabeth received her undergraduate degree at the University of California Berkeley and graduated from George Washington Law School.

Elizabeth moved back to the east coast nine years ago and has been in the District for three years now. She takes pride in her family's DC roots. For example, her paternal grandfather was a Capitol Police officer, and her maternal grandfather was a printsmen at the old *Washington Star* newspaper which published for over 100 years before shutting down in 1981.

Elizabeth enjoys cooking, camping, hiking, and running. She likes to engage in local activism such as protests against housing evictions, and she volunteered with the Poor People's Campaign during the pandemic. Elizabeth was a track and field coach for six years and has danced professionally with ballet, samba, and salsa troupes. She's certainly "stepped" up to serve DC consumers.

OPC Working for You in Working Groups at the PSC

Continuing with our series, *Working Groups at the Public Service Commission*, this month we look at the

Houses of Worship (HOW) Working Group. This Working Group



was formed to help the Commission determine if a small Pepco bill credit for certain HOW and nonprofit customers was beneficial, cost effective, and could be turned into a permanent program.

After careful consideration, the Working Group asked the PSC to continue the program for an additional 18 months, from July 1, 2023, through December 31, 2024. The PSC has accepted this recommendation and has asked the Working Group to reconvene no later than June 24, 2024, to review the enrollment numbers in the program and gauge its success.

OPC Connecting at the PSC



OPC is Advocating for Consumers in the Following Cases:

Formal Case No. 1130: Investigation into Modernizing the Energy Delivery System for Increased Sustainability
Formal Case No. 1155: Pepco's Application for Approval of its Transportation Electrification Program

On May 17, OPC filed a Response to the questions raised at a Technical Conference held on May 2. The questions involved Pepco's approved Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Program.

Formal Case No. 1169: Washington Gas Light Company's Application for Authority to Increase Existing Rates and Charges

On May 19, OPC filed Surrebuttal Testimony in the above matter. Additional testimony was filed on May 24, 26, and June 5. On June 9, OPC filed a Response to WGL's Motion for Clarification of Treatment of Surrebuttal Testimony.

Formal Case No. 1017: The Development and Designation of

Standard Offer Service

On June 5, OPC filed Comments on Potential Revisions to the Terms Required for the Renewable Power Purchase Agreement. OPC is strongly in favor of the Renewable Portfolio Standard.

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

On June 5, OPC filed comments on Atrium Economics Preliminary Audit Report on Pepco's Bill Stabilization Adjustment. OPC requested the findings of the audit report be reviewed and asked the PSC to give monthly progress reports on the recommendations of the report.

Formal Case No. 1142: The Merger Application of AltaGas Ltd. and WGL Holdings, Inc.

On June 5, OPC filed comments to WGL's Notice of Compliance to Merger Commitment No. 73. OPC asked the PSC to address some of the inconsistencies in WGL's leak reports, OPC also requested a working group be formed to address these issues.

Formal Case No. 1175: Washington Gas Light Company's Application for Approval of PROJECTpipes 3 Plan

On June 16, OPC filed initial comments in this matter.

The Consumer Connection

Capturing Feedback from the Community on Twitter





Erin Palmer  @ErinPalmerDC

The @DCOPC attended one of our recent ANC meetings to talk about their work, including their advocacy on behalf of residents re DC Water. DC Water wasn't always within their jurisdiction. That happened via legislation resulting from the work of former ANC 4D06 Cmsr Amy Hemingway.



Erin Palmer  @ErinPalmerDC · Jun 8

ANCs can make big important changes that make DC residents' lives better. You may not always see it, but it's there. And I'm grateful!

   6  207 



DC People's Counsel @DCOPC · Jun 8

@DCOPC values the partnerships with ANCs. Thanks for having us! #OPCeducates #OPCadvocates

 1   2  53 



Erin Palmer  @ErinPalmerDC · Jun 8

Absolutely our pleasure! Thanks for all you do!

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 directly if you would like links to attend any of the meetings we'll be visiting virtually.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Federal City Alumnae Chapter
Community Day
Saturday, July 15
11:00 am - 3:00 pm
Southeast Tennis and Learning Center
701 Mississippi Avenue SE

Department of Disability Services Provider Fair
Wednesday, July 19
10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Walter E. Washington Convention Center
801 Mount Vernon Place NW

Councilmember Trayon White & Councilmember
Robert White in Ward 8 Housing Townhall
Saturday, July 22
10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Union Temple Baptist Church
1225 W Street SE

The DC Center for the LGBT Community Meeting
Friday, July 28
12:00 pm - 2:30 pm
Virtual

Photo Gallery



Attendees at the Mayor's Senior Fest are anxious to pick up OPC's "purple power" bags filled with information about how OPC can help utility consumers.



OPC's Cheryl Morse, in the center, joined Councilmember Janeese Lewis George's (not pictured) "Ward 4 Cares Day" visit to the Sixteenth Street Heights neighborhood, where city agencies checked in to see how they can assist neighbors.



People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye, Deputy People's Counsel Karen Sistrunk, Director of Litigation Laurence Daniels, and Assistant People's Counsel Kintéshia Scott are among energy professionals at a luncheon with law students on diversity in energy fields hosted by Attorney Adrienne Clair.



OPC's Jean Gross-Bethel (far right) with seniors at Terrific, Inc.'s Annual Pride Celebration who, along with all the fun, got information about programs to save money on utility bills and prevent disconnections.



Members of the OPC Utility Consumer Advocacy Network and OPC staff dial in for their quarterly meeting to discuss issues facing DC residents, including a big jump in people seeking help to keep their water from being shut off.

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).

OPC Connection Editorial Team:

Doxie McCoy, Phillip Harmon, Quaneisha Glover, Chawndise Battle, Dwayne Houston, Thaddeus Johnson, Valca Valentine

Contributors:

Sandra Mattavous-Frye, Karen Sistrunk, Laurence Daniels, Stephen Dudek, Adam Carlesco, Jean Gross-Bethel, Pamela Nelson, Knia Tanner

The Office of the People's Counsel, 655 15th Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005 | Tel: (202) 727-3071 | Fax: (202) 727-1014 |
TTY-TTD: (202) 727-2876
www.opc-dc.gov | info@opc-dc.gov

STAY CONNECTED



Office of the People's Counsel | 655 15th Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005

[Unsubscribe info@opc-dc.gov](mailto:info@opc-dc.gov)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data
Notice](#)

Sent by info@opc-dc.gov powered by



Try email marketing for free today!