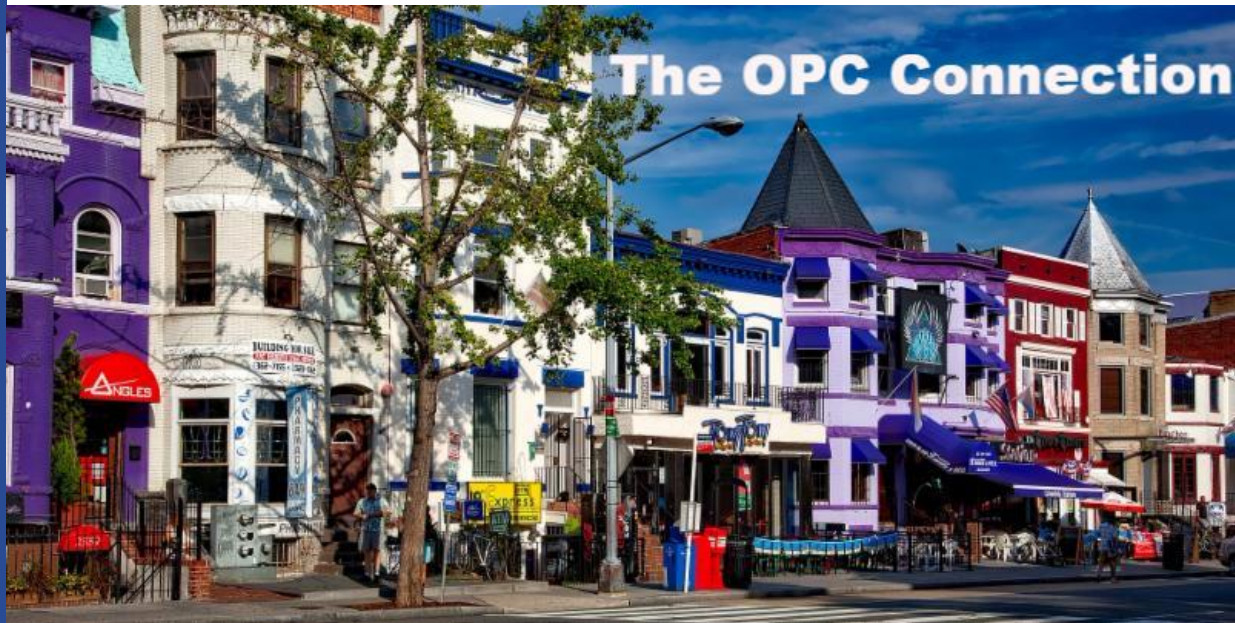




Office of the People's Counsel

ADVOCACY | EDUCATION | PROTECTION



**November 2023**

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

**Gratitude and Appreciation**

Thanksgiving is behind us, and I hope you shared good times, good food, and fellowship with family and friends. No doubt you expressed gratitude for all that you are thankful for. But allow me to not be limited by the calendar to express gratitude.



I am grateful that OPC's committed and talented employees are my boots on the ground, daily upholding our commitment to ensuring that District consumers have safe, reliable, affordable, and equitable utility services.

A few weeks ago, I hosted "OPC Staff Appreciation Day." Since the pandemic forced us to forgo many gatherings, it was high time

for us to "go outside" and celebrate our successes that have benefited DC consumers.

Here is just one example. Recently, we received this note from So Others Might Eat (SOME):

*"A few weeks ago, we reached out to OPC needing help with a very high gas bill. Within less than a few weeks of opening a ticket with you all, SOME received a significant credit that corrected our outstanding balance with Washington Gas. Thank you for your support with this potentially very expensive situation."*

In this instance, George Gilbert, Jr. was the OPC Consumer Outreach Specialist who labored to get the charitable organization a gas bill credit of **\$152,000!** But the list of dedicated OPC staff is long. However, we do not produce victories for consumers alone.

I also am grateful for the partnerships with diverse stakeholders and community groups with whom OPC works on numerous critical projects and issues. These alliances include the Greater Washington Urban League, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, civic associations in all eight wards, the Washington Interfaith Network, DC Environmental Network, and Climate Action. And there's the Utility Consumer Advocacy Network or UCAN, which I created three years ago to provide OPC with grassroots feedback from the community.

As we move toward other holiday observances, let's remember that many of our neighbors are not as fortunate as we are. I've encouraged all OPC staff to participate in the 2023 [DC One Fund](#), the DC government employee giving campaign. I urge everyone who is able to give to a charity of your choice so that a family or individual may benefit from your kindness.

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**The gang's all here for Staff Appreciation Day!**



A job well done by the Staff Appreciation Day Committee! From left, Cecilia Jones-Walker, Phillip Harmon, Cherry Belle, People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye, Tamika Dodson, and Rakisha Philson. Not pictured: Quaneisha Glover. Scroll down for more photos of the day.

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## Keeping Consumers Up

# to Date on Pepco's Proposal to Raise Your Rates



On July 28, 2023, the Public Service Commission directed Pepco to file a traditional application requesting to increase rates covering a one-year test period. The utility filed that application on October 16, requesting a \$108.2 million increase. OPC has closely reviewed the filing and requested additional information from Pepco.

There are now three components to [Formal Case No. 1176](#) – the traditional one-year case, the multiyear rate plan, and a review of a pilot multiyear rate plan. Rest assured, OPC is aggressively advocating for consumers on all three fronts to ensure that you are protected from unnecessary and excessive rate increases. While these matters can be technical, OPC attorneys have the expertise to break it all down and determine how your household might be affected.

Consumers who want to voice their opinion on this case can submit comments [here](#), or email: [PSC-CommissionSecretary@dc.gov](mailto:PSC-CommissionSecretary@dc.gov). Reference: Formal Case No. 1176. You also can contact OPC at (202) 727-3071 or [info@opc-dc.gov](mailto:info@opc-dc.gov) for more information or technical assistance with written comments.

## The Water Connection



### ACT NOW: Protect Your Home Against Cold Weather Water Damage

As temperatures drop, OPC warns residents to take steps today to protect your home. Water damage is costly and may not be covered by standard home insurance policies.

Nearly 24 percent of reported homeowners' insurance losses in 2021 were due to water damage and conditions escalated by freezing weather. You may want to contact a certified plumber to inspect for risks.

Below are 10 tips for winterizing your home:

- Weatherproof windows and doors with caulking and weatherstripping.
- Inspect the attic and roof for possible repairs to prevent drafts and leaks.
- Clear and clean gutters to direct rainwater and snow away from your roof.
- Check the chimney for any buildup and to ensure fireplace safety.
- Insulate exposed outdoor pipes and unheated areas of the home.
- Drain and remove hoses from exterior faucets and protect them with insulated covers.
- During periods of extremely cold weather, allow a constant drip of water from faucets that connect to exposed pipes.
- Locate your main shutoff valve. In the unfortunate event that a leak occurs, the ability to quickly shut off your water will help you avoid further damage.
- Service your HVAC system to confirm the heating system is in working condition.
- Planning an extended trip? Set your thermostat to remain above 55 degrees prior to heading out.

For more information, check out [DC Water's tips](#) for protecting your pipes and find more winter weatherization recommendations.

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## **OPC is Advocating for DC Water Consumers on Multiple Fronts**

- OPC is reviewing environmental justice legislation introduced by Ward 5 Councilmember Zachary Parker that could potentially expand OPC's consumer advocacy in neighborhoods like Ivy City where residents say they have long been burdened with industrial air pollution and

environmental injustices.

- OPC recently submitted comments to the Consumer Product Safety Commission concerning the potential regulation of products containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. PFAS are man-made and are referred to as "forever chemicals." OPC's comments focus on the impacts that loosely regulated PFAS production and use have on water system operators and wastewater management. Failure to curtail PFAS in consumer products could add significant costs to water authorities like DC Water and their ratepayers, as additional environmental regulations on PFAS are implemented in the coming years.
- OPC staff attended the annual meeting of the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates in Charlotte, NC. The meeting was an opportunity for OPC attorneys to discuss pressing issues impacting the District with consumer advocates from across the nation and learn best practices being deployed in other states. OPC staff also toured the Electric Power Research Institute and asked its technical staff for recommendations to help ensure a smooth transition to cleaner energy in the District.

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## OPC Connecting at the PSC



**PUBLIC SERVICE  
COMMISSION**

### **OPC is Advocating for Consumers in the Following Cases:**

#### **Formal Case No. 1176: Pepco's Application to Implement a Multiyear Rate Plan**

On October 30, OPC filed a Motion for Enlargement of Time. Pepco has filed a voluminous document and OPC is concerned that there is insufficient time for parties to examine it.

On November 13, OPC filed a Petition for Review. This Petition alerted the PSC of OPC's filing at the DC Court of Appeals of

Order No. 21903 which granted Pepco's request for an Updated Procedural Schedule. OPC also filed a Motion for a Limited Stay of the Procedural Schedule Adopted in Order No. 21902 Pending Appeal of Order Nos. 21886 and 21903.

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

On October 31, OPC filed Phase Two of the Second Performance Incentive Mechanism Working Group Report. This report looks at different metrics with a multiyear rate plan. They include emissions performance, peak demand reduction, and performance tracking metrics,

On November 13, OPC filed Comments Regarding Atrium Economics' Final Audit Report of Pepco's Bill Stabilization Adjustment.

### **EPRAD2023: Pepco's Compliance Filing for Rider of the Residential Aid Discount Surcharge -**

### **Formal Case No. 1120, The Investigation into the Structure and Application of Assistance for Low-Income Customers**

On November 13, OPC filed Comments in Response to the Notice of Proposed Tariffs for Rider of the Residential Aid Discount Surcharge. OPC is concerned that Pepco's accounting for low - income customers might be under-accounted and might not reflect an accurate tariff.

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## **OPC In Your Neighborhood!**

OPC welcomes opportunities to speak at your Advisory Neighborhood Commission, civic association, community group activity, or meeting onsite or virtually. We can give updates on utility issues, and trends, and highlight how we serve DC consumers. Call (202) 727-3071 if your group would like our staff to make an onsite or virtual presentation.

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## **Photo Gallery**



At Staff Appreciation Day, these employees received votes from coworkers to win fun "Superlative Awards," in categories such as Office Mom, Green Thumb, Fountain of Information, Mary Poppins, and Office Trendsetter.



At Staff Appreciation Day, the People's Counsel gave all staff certificates and all divisions a plaque for dedicated service, including the Technical Division above.





OPC's DC One Fund Coordinator Tamika Dodson, far left, organized our kickoff with presentations by representatives of charities. Secretary of the District Kimberly Bassett, 3<sup>rd</sup> from right, stopped by to cheer us on.



OPC Hispanic Coordinator Silvia Garrick, far right, at the “Charla de Mantenimiento del Hogar para hispanohablantes” (home maintenance workshop), at the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) on Columbia Road NW.



OPC Consumer Outreach Specialists Valca Valentine and Jean Gross-Bethel surround Veronica Ingram, an At-Large Member on the Ward 4 Mini-Commission on Aging, at their meeting, where OPC distributes information on how seniors can save energy and money on utilities.

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OPC Public Information Officer Doxie McCoy had some help from a little Spiderman at the Community Walk for Wellness & Substance Abuse Prevention sponsored by Bridging Resources in Communities in Ward 7.

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### **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](mailto:info@opc-dc.gov) or tweet/X us [@DCOPC](https://twitter.com/DCOPC).

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