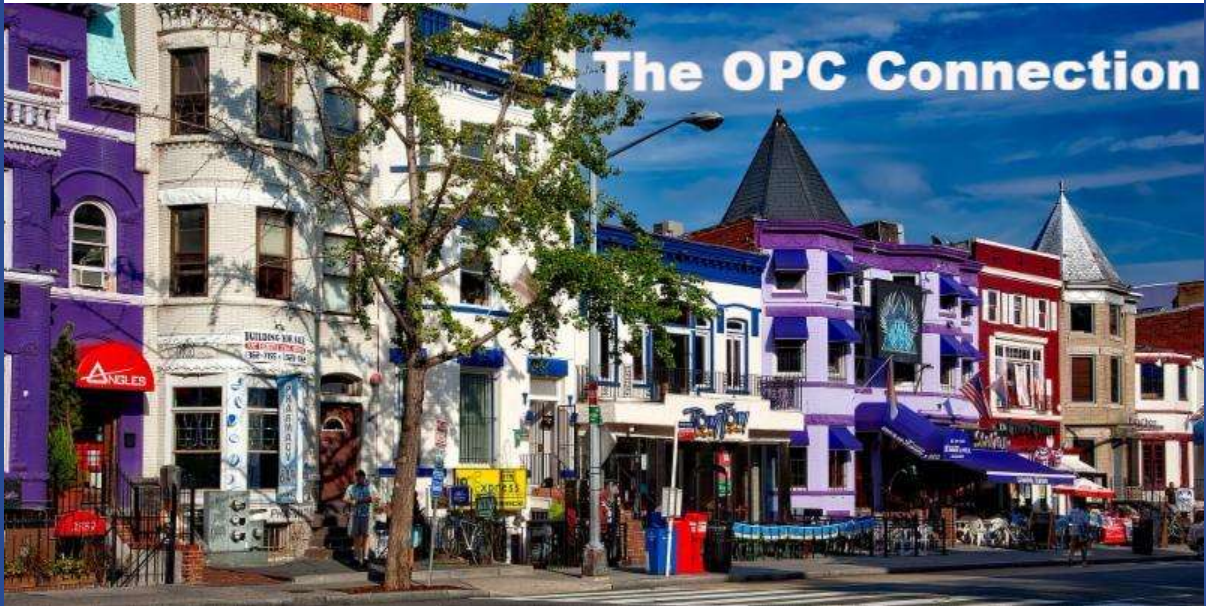




Office of the People's Counsel

ADVOCACY | EDUCATION | PROTECTION



May 2024

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

Don't Be Shocked!

As the summer months approach, it is a good time to remind consumers that we also are approaching a significant annual peak for energy usage. This fact has become increasingly noticeable due



to climate change. Throughout the southwestern states temperatures in May have already begun to top 100 degrees.

In the DC region, we have not yet experienced extreme temperatures, but multiple weather [forecasts](#) are predicting a particularly hot and humid summer for the Mid-Atlantic region, including the District. I want to share how you can prepare now for the dog days ahead and avoid possible life-threatening complications from weather events that are now harming other states. You can avoid sticker shock by closely checking your billing statement each month. Summer weather may lead to big increases in electric consumption, which is to be expected, but a sudden rapid spike in your bill might also indicate a problem with your air conditioning system. It is recommended that you have a professional check your system each year and perform basic preventive maintenance.

Tip: Check that your bill is not “estimated” and reflects an actual meter reading.

Perform many of the same energy checks that you would perform in the winter around your home by looking for air leaks and sealing cracks around windows and doors. Use blinds and window coverings to limit sun exposure which heats your home, placing additional strain on your cooling system.

Tip: Contact the [DC Sustainable Energy Utility](#) to ask about energy-saving programs for single-family, multi-family, and commercial buildings.

Prepare for possible short-term outages. Keep on hand bottled water, an emergency supply of your medications, backup batteries for your cellphone or radio, and a key contacts list shared with your friends and neighbors.

Tip: Don't forget about your pets, they too need to be protected from extreme temps. Provide them with ample shade and a supply of fresh water.

Most importantly, your home needs your vigilance to operate efficiently, safely, and comfortably for all who dwell within. If you have questions, know that OPC is here to help! Email info@opc-dc.gov or call us at (202) 727-3071. Also, see the How to Read Your Bill pages @ opc-dc.gov.

OPC Helping to Lead with Lead

Staying informed about initiatives that affect our homes and communities is vital, including programs like DC Water's Lead Service Line Replacement Project. OPC wants you to know that our Water Services Division is here to provide guidance on accessing important information about lead pipe replacement.



The Lead Free DC program, initiated by DC Water in 2019, aims to eliminate lead service lines throughout the city. By the end of 2023, more than 5,000 lines had been replaced with safer copper alternatives. To determine if your property is affected, DC Water has developed an interactive lead map, which can be accessed at dcwater.com.

The program offers residents several lead line replacement options. One option is the Lead Pipe Replacement Assistance Program (LPRAP). This collaborative effort between DC Water and the District Department of Energy and Environment provides financial assistance to property owners where their private-side pipes are lead but the public property pipes are not. To determine your eligibility and apply to LPRAP, visit doee.dc.gov/lead.

Another option is the Block By Block program, which offers free replacements on private property in areas where DC Water has scheduled public space replacements or repairs. Additionally, the Voluntary Full Replacement Program allows homeowners to schedule their own replacements, although it's important to note that costs are not covered by DC Water under this option.

As the Lead Service Line Replacement Project progresses, OPC continues to monitor developments closely. However, residents are encouraged to take an active role by reaching out to DC Water directly with any questions or feedback. Email lead@dcwater.com.

Also, visit DC Water's website [here](#) for comprehensive information and updates about the project.

ICYMI: We're Noting Utility Notes

In case you missed it, OPC recently created “Utility Notes” to provide consumers with news you can use on energy and utility issues. We want you to feel confident in making decisions about utility providers and the service you receive, and to be on top of topics like climate change and environmental justice. In short, simple videos we also share information to support your participation at public hearings before the Public Service Commission or the DC Council when legislation or rate increase applications are under consideration.



For example, [watch this video](#) highlighting OPC’s advocacy role on climate and the environmental issues that affect utility service decisions.

Each month we aim to provide you with the latest insights into interesting items and their impact on you and your community. If

there is an issue you would like for OPC to highlight in Utility Notes, drop us a note at info@opc-dc.gov, then be sure to follow our social media and visit opc-dc.gov to stay informed.



Employee Spotlight: Michael Smalls is Working to Make a Difference

In August 2023, OPC welcomed Michael Smalls as Chief of Operations. His core responsibilities include ensuring

that OPC has the resources and services to effectively and efficiently do its work of advocating, educating, and protecting DC consumers. As COO, you have to be prepared to provide support, understand systems, and resolve issues swiftly for the benefit of constituents and staff. And OPC colleagues say Michael has been up to the challenges.

The native New Yorker is a proud graduate of Howard University and the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Law. Before coming to OPC, Michael served DC residents at some of the District's key agencies such as the Department of Employment Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

When Michael is not working, he enjoys exercising and running six days a week. He is also a foodie and appreciates fine dining with his wife and family; and enjoys a cigar on occasion.

Our COO says his passion for helping people motivates him to continue working to bring positive change and make a difference in DC communities. Michael Smalls is making a difference at OPC.

OPC is Working with the Working Groups

This month in our continuing series, "Working Groups at the PSC," we focus on the Utility Discount Program Education Working Group. This Working Group creates a Consumer Education Program that keeps consumers up to date on available bill payment assistance programs. Eligible residents will be identified for these programs through the Department of Energy and Environment's Utility Discount Program/UDP, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program/LIHEAP, and the Income Maintenance Administration.



OPC is Advocating for Consumers in the Following Cases:

Formal Case No. 1176: Pepco's Application for Approval to Increase Rates through the Implementation of a Multiyear Rate Plan. On April 22, OPC submitted its Surrebuttal Testimony in this matter, also referred to as the "Climate Ready Pathway," for Pepco's electric distribution service.

**Formal Case No. 1154: The Washington Gas Light Company
Application for Approval of PROJECTpipes2 Plan**

On May 6, OPC filed a Motion for Status requesting the PSC to give an update on this matter.

OPC In Your Neighborhood!

OPC welcomes opportunities to speak at your Advisory Neighborhood Commission, civic association, community group activity, or meeting, either 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. Scheduled appearances are below.

Electric Vehicle Grand Prix and
Department of Public Works Truck Touch
RFK Stadium, Lot 8
2400 East Capitol Street SE
Saturday, June 1
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

32nd Annual Glover Park Day
Glover Park
3600 Calvert Street NW
Saturday, June 1
10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Annual Senior Community Health, Wellness, and Resource Fair
UDC Student Center
4200 Connecticut Avenue NW
Wednesday, June 19
10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Franklin Arms Tenants Association, Inc. Meeting
1511 Franklin Street NE

Thursday, June 27
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Photo Gallery



Staff from OPC's Litigation, Consumer, and Water Services Divisions attend the conference of the National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition. It's billed as the nation's leading annual meeting of energy assistance leaders, who gather for training and education opportunities, share common challenges and solutions, and celebrate successes in helping consumers meet their energy needs.



OPC's Linda Jefferson, Valca Valentine, Doxie McCoy, and Jean Gross-Bethel attend a "sneaker ball" community gathering.

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 X/tweet us [@DCOPC](https://twitter.com/DCOPC).

OPC Connection Editorial Team:

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

Contributors:

Sandra Mattavous-Frye, Karen Sistrunk, Laurence Daniels,
Antaeus Hayes, Linda Jefferson,
Jason Cumberbatch, Cheryl Morse, Claire Shibelski

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

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