



## **Introducing OCC's Intern Thomas Petschauer!**

Second-year UCONN law student Tom Petschauer has been interning at the OCC since last year, and both OCC staff and Connecticut ratepayers are benefitting from his hard work on behalf of our state's utility customers.

Tom is a 2009 graduate of the University of Vermont with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies, and a minor in Business Administration. Tom spent several months studying in Iceland while an undergrad at UVM, and as he describes it, that experience was invaluable: "I had the opportunity to live with an Icelandic family while taking courses at the local university which were brought to life by numerous site visits to hydro, trash-to-energy, and geothermal electricity generation stations that were guided by Icelandic public officials and plant engineers."

Tom started his career as an Associate Environmental Coordinator for a utility company. He holds professional certifications in 40 Hour OSHA HAZWOPER (Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response) and is a licensed Asbestos Consultant Inspector in Connecticut. After working for the utility company for several years, Tom made the life-changing decision to study law.

Tom explains what sparked his interest in utility law: "It is hard for me to pinpoint an ah-ha moment. However, one fundamental concept stands out as having attracted me to the energy industry. I knew that I wanted to specialize in an industry where it was possible to contribute to meaningful improvement in the quality of life of as many people as possible. In addition, the immense scale of our dependence on reliable power coupled with the commensurate impact that demand has had on the environment and consumers was an apparent dilemma that piqued my interest from an environmental as well as an economic perspective. Once I had developed that



focus, it was a natural progression for me to appreciate and wish to study the law that public utilities operate by.”

At OCC, Tom spends 2 days a week assisting OCC’s legal staff with research on a variety of current utility issues that OCC is advocating in docket work and through the court system. He attends docket and court hearings and has represented OCC at teleconferences with the National Association of Utility Consumer Advocates. His writing and research have contributed to OCC’s website, a policy manual for employees, and a PowerPoint presentation for the public.

When he’s not hitting the law books, Tom spends his free time visiting family and friends from Hartford through the NYC metro area; debating current events and energy and environmental policy with unsuspecting family members and friends; and enjoying the outdoors to the greatest extent possible – either riding one of two bicycles or walking throughout Hartford and the surrounding countryside, canoeing, or snowboarding.

