



## STATE OF CONNECTICUT

# NEWS RELEASE

Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Legislators Applaud Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz's Selection of Attorney Bill Kowalski As First Municipal Electric Consumer Advocate**

**NEW BRITAIN, Conn. (December 4, 2017)** -- Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz today announced that she has selected Bill Kowalski, Esq., of Durham, Connecticut, as the first Municipal Electric Consumer Advocate for customers of the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative (CMEEC). This position was created pursuant to Public Act No. 17-73, *An Act Concerning Municipal Electric Utility Cooperatives and Establishing a Municipal Electric Consumer Advocate*, championed by State Senator Heather Somers (R-Groton) and other legislators. The legislation calls upon Consumer Counsel Katz to choose the Connecticut Municipal Consumer Advocate, who will then operate independently on behalf of CMEEC consumers.

Consumer Counsel Katz praised Kowalski's expertise with financial matters and his background in advocacy when announcing his appointment, stating, "Attorney Kowalski served as an attorney at the Office of Consumer Counsel early in his career, before joining the Law Department at Aetna. At Aetna, he served in many high-level positions, most recently serving as Executive Director and Senior Counsel to the National Accounts segment. The CMEEC Consumer Advocate will need to really understand the very complex financial matters involved in utility matters to effectively represent customers, so I am pleased that this is one of Bill's strengths."

Katz also noted that Attorney Kowalski had a reputation as a zealous and effective advocate during his years at the Office of Consumer Counsel. Kowalski, who retired from Aetna in March, also continued his work in advocacy and utility law while at the company, working pro bono to assist low-income consumers on a variety of utility-related issues. "He's got the mindset and experience to be a great advocate for CMEEC consumers," Katz said.

Attorney Kowalski, in accepting the position, stated, "I appreciate this unique opportunity to return to consumer advocacy. Early in my career, I held several public sector positions,

including over 3 years as a utility ratepayer advocate within the Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel. I look forward to using that experience, in addition to my 25 years in corporate legal practice and government affairs, to further the needs of CMEEC consumers.”

“I am thrilled to stand here today and help introduce the first independent Municipal Electric Consumer Advocate for CMEEC consumers,” said Sen. Somers. “Our communities deserve transparency and accountability, and in a day-in-age when every penny counts – I am glad that we have an advocate like Attorney Kowalski to stand up for our consumers. I want to thank Consumer Counsel Elin Katz for her diligent work on helping in his appointment. I also want to extend a thank you to my fellow legislators who worked diligently on this legislation to make sure that ratepayers know exactly how their hard-earned payments are being spent and to make sure we have an advocate who is overseeing this organization. This is an important step toward making sure that ratepayers get the most basic protections and transparency concerning CMEEC.”

Public Act No. 17-73 also requires CMEEC to conduct a five year forensic examination and look back to examine and account for its financial operations. The forensic examination will be administered by a certified forensic auditor and include a review of all revenue and expenditures. CMEEC will be required to post on its website and provide participants the results of the forensic examination, CMEEC will also be required to provide a copy of the report to the General Assembly’s Energy and Technology Committee.

Attorney Kowalski will officially start his work as the Municipal Consumer Advocate for CMEEC consumers on January 1, 2018, although he is already meeting with members of the legislature and CMEEC officials to gather information on the issues.

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*The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) is the State of Connecticut’s advocate for consumers on issues relating to electricity, natural gas, water, and telecommunications. For more information, visit [www.ct.gov/occ](http://www.ct.gov/occ).*