



## STATE OF CONNECTICUT

# NEWS RELEASE

Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Elin Swanson Katz

Elin.Katz@ct.gov

(860) 827-2910

### **OCC Will Participate in PURA Investigation into Gas Scheduling Practices in Response to Environmental Defense Fund Report**

**NEW BRITAIN, Conn. (Oct. 17, 2017)** Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz confirmed today that the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC), the state's statutory advocate for utility customers, plans to participate actively in the investigation (Docket No. 17-10-31) opened by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) into allegations of market power abuse by Eversource (operator of The Connecticut Light and Power Company and Yankee Gas (Yankee)) and Avangrid (operator of the United Illuminating Company, Southern Connecticut Gas (SCG), and Connecticut Natural Gas (CNG)).

The PURA investigation was initiated in response to a recent report, conducted by various university researchers working with the Environmental Defense Fund, which alleges that the local gas distribution companies run by Eversource and Avangrid (Yankee, CNG, and SCG) engaged in gas scheduling practices that deliberately manipulated the market to create shortage conditions that raised energy prices.

Consumer Counsel Katz stated, "These are serious allegations that need to be thoroughly investigated, and I am appreciative that PURA responded promptly by opening this investigation. We actively track the natural gas market and work with fellow state agencies, our utility companies, and other stakeholders to ensure that energy markets work in a fair and transparent manner. While we are generally confident that our markets function as intended, claims of this magnitude must be thoroughly investigated to ensure consumer confidence in the bills they pay. The Office of Consumer Counsel will provide an independent voice and perspective in this investigation as active participants in this docket. I hope for a swift resolution of the concerns raised in this report as we head into the winter months ahead, so that consumers are assured that they are not paying exorbitant energy prices."

At this point, the schedule for comments and hearings has not been set by PURA.

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