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OCC NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of the Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel

Table of Contents

July 2026

Message from the Consumer Counsel

OCC's Summer 2026 newsletter comes as Connecticut is finally enjoying some weather relief after a long stretch of high heat, followed by powerful July 4th storms and then extremely poor air quality due to Canadian wildfire smoke. This extreme weather taxes our electrical infrastructure and energy markets.

Against this backdrop, monthly electric bills remain top of mind for customers. With recent decreases in the supply and public benefits portion of electric bills, as well as progress on federally regulated transmission rates, electric distribution company delivery services are currently the biggest portion of costs on the electric bill. And yet Eversource customers (eighty percent of Connecticut's residents) feel financial uncertainty after Eversource filed an application with its regulator on July 14th for the largest rate increase in state history. Rest assured, my team and I will ensure Eversource's rate request is thoroughly vetted and is not a vehicle for enriching company executives and shareholders at the expense of consumers.

There have also been some significant developments related to our work in the regulated water sector. Due to PURA's approval of the change of control of Aquarion Water Company from Eversource to the Regional Water Authority, which created the Aquarion Water Authority, OCC will no longer be the statutory advocate for customers in the state's largest water service territory. For decades the OCC team has fought to improve customer service and keep rates low while promoting public health and establishing important ratepayer protections. Our attention is focused on the state's now largest investor-owned regulated water company, Connecticut Water Company, which filed a rate increase application in May.

Whether helping customers understand changes to electric bills, advocating for expanded consumer protections before the Connecticut General Assembly or navigating multiple major rate cases now underway, my team and I at the Office of Consumer Counsel remain focused on our mission: ensuring ratepayers receive reliable, regulated utility services at the lowest reasonable cost.

This edition highlights several important developments affecting ratepayers, including updates on important legislation, recent court decisions and ongoing advocacy before state and federal regulators. Thank you for your continued interest in our work. I encourage you to stay informed, participate in upcoming proceedings and reach out if we can be of any assistance.

Best,

Claire Coleman

Claire E. Coleman,
Consumer Counsel

Consumer Information Corner

Electric Bill Changes:
Public Benefits Charges Decrease Effective May 1, 2026

- On average, Eversource customers saw an overall reduction in total electric bills of roughly 15 percent, while UI customers saw reductions in the range of approximately 13.8 percent. These percentages may vary depending on usage and customer-specific factors.
- Eversource customers saw the combined components in the Public Benefits charge change from approximately 4 cents per kilowatt hour to a credit of about 1.5 cents per kilowatt hour.
- For United Illuminating customers, the combined components in the Public Benefits charge changed from approximately 4 cents per kilowatt hour to a credit of about 1.3 cent per kilowatt hour.
- This means that you should have seen a negative rate on your bill for this bill component, which is actually a credit, not a charge.

What is the Rate Adjustment Mechanism (RAM)?

The **RAM** is an annual reconciliation process overseen by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) that adjusts certain rates to reflect actual costs incurred by the utilities, as well as forecasted costs for the upcoming year.

What bill components are impacted by the RAM?

The RAM reflects changes across six bill components adjusted through the annual RAM: Non-Bypassable Federally Mandated Congestion Charge (NBFMCC), Transmission Adjustment Clause (TAC), Systems Benefit Charge (SBC), Competitive Transition Assessment (CTA), Electric System Improvements Tracker (ESI), and Revenue Decoupling Mechanism (RDM).

The NBFMCC and SBC are part of the Public Benefits Category, while the CTA, RDM and ESI are part of the Local Delivery Category, and the TAC is part of the Transmission Category on electric bills. You can find out more about these bill components on OCC's website here: **Electricity**.

Electric Bill Changes:

Supply Rates Decreased for Eversource and United Illuminating Customers, Effective July 2026 – Individual Bill Impacts Depend on Usage

EVERSOURCE CUSTOMERS:

The supply portion of electric bills for residential customers of Eversource paying the Standard Service Supply rate decreased to **11.58 ¢ per kWh** on July 1, 2026, as filed on May 15, 2026 and approved by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) on May 20, 2026.

The July 1, 2026 supply rate change decreased the bill of an average residential customer using 700 kWh/month by approximately $7 a month. For a customer using an average of 800 kWh/month, during the high cooling summer months, the supply rate decreased the bill by approximately $8.50 a month. The change in Eversource's Standard Service supply rate is roughly an 8% decrease.

UNITED ILLUMINATING CUSTOMERS:

The supply portion of electric bills for customers of United Illuminating (UI) paying the Standard Service Supply rate decreased on July 1, 2026 to **11.95 ¢ per kWh**, as filed on May 15, 2026 and approved by PURA on May 20, 2026.

The July 1, 2026 supply rate change decreased the bill of an average residential customer using 600 kWh/month by approximately $10.50 a month. For a customer using an average of 700 kWh/month, during the high cooling summer months, the supply rate decreased the bill by approximately $12 a month. Residential customers in UI territory historically have lower usage than Eversource territory. The change in UI's Standard Service supply rate is roughly a 13% decrease.

These rate decreases are often offset by the fact that energy consumption increases roughly 35% during summer months due to increased cooling system and air conditioning use on high heat days. The Office of Consumer Counsel urges consumers to continue to make every effort to reduce bills through energy conservation and efficiency measures.

This summer's supply rate reflects higher prices than previous summers due to the war with Iran and the colder 2025-26 winter, which causes suppliers to increase their risk premiums.

New Standard Service Rates Effective July 2026

EVERSOURCE: 11.58 ¢ per kWh
UNITED ILLUMINATING: 11.95 ¢ per kWh

For more information on reducing your usage and on opportunities for energy efficiency and clean energy improvements, as well as third party supplier offerings, please visit EnergizeCT.com.

2026 Legislative Session Highlights

Several proposals, passed by the legislature and signed into law, will shape Connecticut's energy landscape, strengthen consumer protections and guide the Office of Consumer Counsel's work in the coming years. From implementing the next generation of distributed energy programs to expanding protections for utility customers, many of these legislative directives are either pending before PURA or awaiting implementation, where OCC will continue the work of advocating for Connecticut ratepayers.

Modernizing CT's Distributed Energy Resource Programs

One of the session's most significant energy bills, Public Act 26-127, establishes the framework for Connecticut's next generation of distributed energy resource (DER) programs. The legislation directs PURA to develop successor programs for residential and non-residential solar, replaces the Shared Clean Energy Facility program with a new Community Solar Program, and incorporates new opportunities to pair solar with battery storage.

PURA has opened a proceeding to establish the tariffs, procurement structures, and consumer protections that will govern these programs beginning in 2028. OCC will participate throughout these proceedings to advocate for cost-effective program design, equitable access, and strong consumer protections while ensuring the programs provide value to all ratepayers.

The act also creates a residential battery pilot program and directs additional planning efforts related to grid resilience and future distributed energy deployment.

Studying Natural Gas Demand Charges

Special Act 26-4 directs a study of whether certain commercial and agricultural natural gas customers with intermittent peak demand are subject to demand charges that do not fairly reflect their use of the natural gas system. If the study identifies inequities, DEEP will recommend potential changes to the General Assembly.

While the act does not change customer rates, its findings could inform future PURA proceedings examining natural gas rate design, where OCC will participate on behalf of Connecticut ratepayers.

Protecting Renters from Unfair Utility Billing

Public Act 26-113 codifies the Connecticut Supreme Court's decision prohibiting landlords from billing tenants for utilities that are not separately metered. Beginning October 1, 2026, rental agreements may not require tenants to pay for utility service unless the utilities delivered to that dwelling unit are measured by a dedicated meter serving only that unit.

The legislation provides important clarity for both landlords and tenants while ensuring customers are billed only for utility usage that can be accurately measured and verified.

Strengthening Consumer Protections for Solar Customers

Public Act 26-16 expands Connecticut's consumer protections for homeowners purchasing residential solar and battery storage systems. The law establishes new standards for door-to-door solar sales that include required identification, limits on solicitation hours, and the development of a consumer education handbook with input from OCC and other stakeholders.

The legislation also creates new protections for homeowners selling properties with financed or leased solar systems by requiring companies to provide payoff statements and transfer documentation within seven days of a written request. Additional enforcement tools, including civil penalties and Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act remedies, were established to strengthen oversight of the residential solar marketplace.

OCC Key Issues

Key Rate Proceedings Before PURA

In addition to several ongoing proceedings that serve as annual program reviews, investigations, and change of control proceedings, OCC is working hard on behalf of regulated water and electric customers with several rate cases currently underway before PURA.

CONNECTICUT WATER RATE CASE

The Connecticut Water Company, a company serving 100,000 customers across 60 towns in Connecticut, filed an application with PURA in March seeking a rate increase of $28.8 million above currently authorized revenues. If approved by PURA, this increase would result in an approximate 20% increase in the rates currently being charged to customers. At the end of the proceeding, new rates will become effective February 1, 2027.

To date, OCC has issued over 250 interrogatories with additional requests for information forthcoming. Our advocacy has centered around keeping costs as low as possible, while recognizing significant investments that need to be made in our water infrastructure, including to upgrade aging water systems and address PFAS remediation required by federal law in order to meet updated public health and safety standards.

Two in-person public comment hearings will be held on July 29th and August 10th, while a virtual public comment hearing will be held on August 26th. Members of the public can register for the virtual hearing here. In person public comment hearings will be held on July 29th in Thompson and on August 10th in East Hampton. Timing and location details for these hearings can be found on PURA's Calendar of Events.

If you are unable to participate in the public comment hearings but wish to submit comments into the evidentiary record for consideration, send them via email to pura.executivesecretary@ct.gov referencing Docket No. 26-03-15 or Connecticut Water Rate Case in the subject line. The deadline to submit public comment in the proceeding is August 28th, 2026.

EVERSOURCE RATE CASE

On July 14th, Eversource Energy, which delivers electricity to 80% of the state's customers, filed an application with PURA seeking the largest electric distribution rate increase request in Connecticut history. The company is requesting an increase of approximately $451 million in base distribution rates, which would increase the average residential customer's bill by approximately $20, or 11%, per month. However, pending the outcome of a decision in a separate PURA proceeding concerning accrued storm costs from 2018-2023, the application outlines that the requested increase could potentially total approximately $727 million, representing an increase of approximately $33, or 18%, for the average residential customer's monthly bill. At the conclusion of the proceeding, new rates will be effective in June 2027.

The application's submission to PURA marks the beginning of a yearlong proceeding and the first comprehensive review of Eversource's finances, operations and priorities in nearly a decade. OCC has advocated for transparency ahead of this process, including arguing against the company's request to file more than 300,000 documents under blanket confidentiality, which PURA correctly denied in accordance with the law. OCC has begun an extensive discovery process and anticipates filing hundreds of requests for additional information to ensure customers pay no more than is necessary, prudent and that provides a direct customer benefit.

The proceeding will also include several opportunities for members of the public to participate, and while the official schedule is forthcoming, they will be posted on OCC's social media channels. To file written comments for consideration into the evidentiary record, send them via email to pura.executivesecretary@ct.gov referencing Docket No. 26-05-10 or Eversource Rate Case in the subject line.

CASES CLOSED: PURA PROCEEDINGS IN REVIEW

Attention Aquarion Water Customers

After a lengthy process, the requested acquisition of Aquarion Water Company by Eversource Energy and the South Central Regional Water Authority officially closed, resulting in the creation of a new entity Aquarion Water Authority (AWA) providing water service to approximately 735,000 people across 60 municipalities formerly served by the investor-owned Aquarion.

AWA's approval statutorily ends both PURA's jurisdiction over the now dissolved regulated utility and OCC's ability to advocate for Aquarion customers. Customer questions and concerns moving forward can be directed to AWA at 1-800-732-9678.

Hazardville Water Rate Case

In June, PURA issued a **final decision** in **Docket No. 25-07-12**, which was the first rate increase application the Hazardville Water Company submitted in 14 years. Due to the length of time since the company's prior base distribution rate case, OCC had concerns with the impact of the proposed 34% increase, totaling a requested $5.68 million revenue requirement with a 10.6% return on equity (ROE).

Throughout the proceeding, OCC challenged costs that were not adequately supported, which served as the basis for PURA's disallowance of approximately $900,000 in costs in the final decision. After a thorough review of the request, PURA approved a revenue requirement of $4.85 million as well as a 9.5% ROE, ultimately resulting in an approximate 13% increase in customer bills.

These savings represent the importance of rate proceedings and OCC's advocacy that ensures customers only pay for prudent, necessary, and well-documented costs proven to provide direct customer benefits.

PURA Reduces Eversource Storm Cost Recovery

PURA issued its **final decision** in **Docket No. 25-12-13**, disallowing approximately $500 million, or nearly 40 percent, of Eversource's $1.36 billion request to recover 2018–2023 storm costs, which includes $396.7 million in retrospective carrying charges, and approximately $193 million in previously recovered storm reserves and Rate Adjustment Mechanism (RAM) offsets to further reduce customer costs.

The decision reflects several key issues raised by OCC throughout the proceeding, including concerns related to storm eligibility, vendor oversight, duplicative cost recovery, and excessive expenses. OCC will continue advocating for stronger utility accountability, more rigorous storm cost reviews, and reforms to ensure customers pay no more than is necessary for safe and reliable electric service.

Connecticut Supreme Court Victory

The Connecticut Supreme Court unanimously affirmed PURA's handling of its investigation into Eversource's response to the Norfolk accident, rejecting each of the utility's procedural challenges and upholding the agency's authority to conduct investigations and issue findings outside of a contested case. The decision clarifies several important administrative law principles governing PURA proceedings, including that the use of contested case procedures does not, by itself, transform an investigation into a contested case, and that PURA may address contested issues that arise during an uncontested proceeding without initiating a separate docket.

The Court also confirmed that PURA may evaluate a utility's conduct, including making prudency findings, without automatically affecting a utility's legal rights or triggering adjudicative consequences. At the same time, the decision preserves due process by requiring utilities to have an opportunity to present evidence and respond before any such findings may later be relied upon in a contested proceeding.

The decision adopts key arguments advanced by OCC and provides important guidance for future PURA proceedings. By reaffirming PURA's ability to conduct thorough investigations and rejecting procedural challenges that have increasingly been used to erode the agency's oversight, the ruling instead strengthens the regulatory framework supporting effective utility oversight and consumer protection in Connecticut.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Connecticut Light and Power Co. v. Public Utilities Regulatory Authority* can be found **here**.

Federal Regulatory Advocacy

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)

OCC continues to advocate before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to ensure Connecticut consumers pay no more than their fair share for the regional electric transmission system. Transmission costs make up a growing portion of electric bills, and several proceedings currently underway could reduce those costs for ratepayers across New England.

In March, FERC issued a long-awaited decision in a case originally filed by a coalition of state consumer advocates, including OCC, challenging the return on equity (ROE) earned by New England transmission owners, including Eversource and UI. FERC concluded that the existing ROE was unjust and unreasonable and reduced the authorized ROE from 11.4 percent to 9.57 percent, with the decision applied retroactively to 2014. If upheld on appeal, the decision could return nearly $1 billion in refunds to New England ratepayers while reducing transmission costs by approximately $100 million annually going forward. OCC has intervened in the appeal to support FERC's decision.

Following FERC's order, New England transmission owners submitted a new filing seeking to increase their authorized ROE despite FERC's prior ruling. OCC joined consumer advocates and state agencies throughout the region in opposing the proposed increase, arguing that it would unnecessarily increase costs for customers. That proceeding remains ongoing before FERC.

OCC is also pursuing a separate complaint seeking to eliminate the 50-basis-point "RTO membership adder" included in the returns earned by Connecticut's transmission owners. Historically, FERC allowed this additional return as an incentive for utilities to participate in a regional transmission organization. Following passage of Public Act 25-173, Connecticut now requires transmission owners operating in the state to participate in ISO New England, eliminating the need for that incentive. OCC joined the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, and the Office of the Attorney General in asking FERC to remove the adder for Connecticut Light & Power and United Illuminating. If approved, the complaint could reduce transmission costs by approximately $17 million annually across the region, including an estimated $4.5 million in annual savings for Connecticut customers. In response, Eversource and UI sued OCC and the other state agencies in federal court to try to stop our FERC action. OCC intends to vigorously defend against the utilities' claims. That case, Connecticut Light and Power Co. v. Coleman remains pending.

Together, these proceedings reflect OCC's ongoing efforts to challenge excessive transmission costs and ensure customers pay rates that are just, reasonable and supported by current market conditions.

NARUC Summer Policy Summit

On July 22, Consumer Counsel Coleman was a panelist at the 2026 NARUC (National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners) Summer Policy Summit, bringing the consumer advocate perspective into a conversation focused on the multilateral coordination needed to maintain grid reliability during extreme events.

On July 20, OCC's Staff Attorney & Broadband Policy Coordinator Burt Cohen spoke at NARUC's "The State Role in Broadband Regulation" panel, which explored lessons learned from federal and state telecom regulation and how they can inform approaches to the regulation of a new generation of services.

NECA Renewable Energy Conference

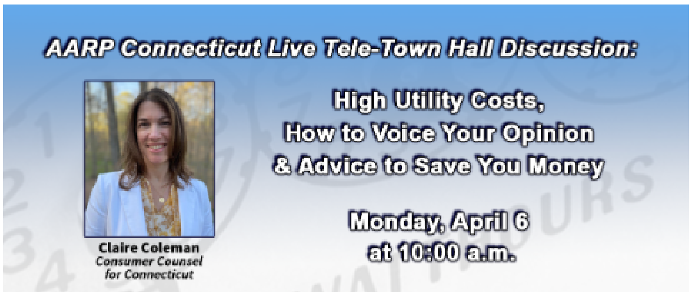
On March 18, Consumer Counsel Coleman spoke on the "Renewables, Rates and Reality – Building a Least-Cost Grid" panel at the NECA (Northeast Energy and Commerce Association) Renewable Energy Conference in Boston, sharing about affordability, reliability, and rate design through the consumer advocate lens.

NEUAC Annual Conference

On May 19, one of OCC's research analysts presented at the NEUAC (National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition) Annual Conference, sharing about how Connecticut is using data-sharing to help facilitate enrollment in utility discount programs, increasing access to critical energy affordability measures.

2026 NECPUC Symposium

On May 20, Consumer Counsel Coleman was a panelist at the 2026 NECPUC (New England Conference of Public Utilities Commissioners) Symposium, where she shared updates about supply procurement reform for standard service in a time of rising affordability concerns and evolving energy markets.



AARP Tele-town hall

On April 6, Consumer Counsel Coleman joined AARP Connecticut's live interactive Telephone Town Hall conversation about the high costs of utility rates and shared more about how residents can save on their energy bills and how they can ensure their voices are heard.

ABOUT THE OCC

The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) is an independent state agency with statutory responsibility to represent customers of Connecticut's regulated utilities – electric, gas, water, and telecommunications providers – primarily in matters that go before the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). OCC is authorized to participate on behalf of consumer interests in all administrative and judicial forums and in any matters in which the interests of consumers with respect to public utility matters may be involved.

OCC's core mission is to advance the interests of Connecticut's utility customers with a goal of achieving affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy services and improving utility company performance to best meet the needs of consumers. This includes cost-effectively achieving the state's clean energy targets, environmental and greenhouse gas reduction goals, and environmental justice and equity priorities. OCC is also committed to achieving universal access to high-speed affordable broadband connections for all its residents. We help improve Connecticut residents' access to essential services that are critical to the health, safety, and economic well-being of our state.

The Office consists of attorneys, accountants, financial and research analysts, communications and support staff. Together, OCC pursues its core mission through strategic litigation, policy development, research and data analysis, and engagement with regulators and policymakers, the legislature, the public, and other key stakeholders.