

# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

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Over the 13 years since the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA or the Authority) was established through Connecticut Public Act 11-80, An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and Planning for Connecticut's Energy Future, PURA's mission continues to evolve. In addition to its statutory charge to ensure that Connecticut's investor-owned utilities, including the state's electric, natural gas, and water companies, provide safe, clean, reliable, and affordable service, PURA also now oversees programs, policies, and tariff designs that advance the state's energy, economic, and climate goals. These responsibilities play a vital role in ensuring public health and safety and a robust economy in Connecticut.

Given the growing importance of enhancing utility service and realizing the state's climate goals, transparent communications and accessible stakeholder resources have become increasingly important, not just for frequent participants in PURA's processes, but also for elected officials, policymakers, and members of the public alike. In recent years, PURA continues to prioritize improvements to its communications and engagement opportunities with both the public and the diverse set of stakeholders that engage in our proceedings. Notably, in 2020, the Authority established the Office of Education, Outreach, and Enforcement (EOE), which is tasked with directly engaging with non-traditional stakeholders on matters before PURA and fielding important ratepayer complaints and inquiries. Moreover, the Authority recently established a program to [provide compensation to underrepresented groups](#) to participate in PURA processes.

PURA also offers a number of public resources available to stakeholders through the release of its [Quarterly Newsletters](#),

[rate case video series](#), [live-streamed events](#), [PURA 101 Workshops](#), and this report ([Annual Report or Report](#)). This Annual Report provides a concise summary of the Authority's work completed in the previous year, and shares insights into the year ahead. It provides both quantitative metrics on the Authority's work, as well as abridged versions of key decisions across all of the industries regulated by PURA. The Report is organized around the key public service sectors that PURA regulates, with a section for each sector and additional sections providing a specific overview of the Authority's high impact work on rate cases, performance-based regulation, and PURA's [Equitable Modern Grid Initiative](#).

The Annual Report also summarizes the reports submitted to the General Assembly in the previous year, and reports progress on specific PURA investigations required by recent legislation. The Annual Report also includes an update on the work of EOE and on all appeals of prior PURA decisions. Finally, the Annual Report addresses major upcoming topics in the current year, such as new program launches, anticipated rate proceedings, and the transition to performance-based regulation.

The Authority intends to use this Report to increase stakeholder engagement with and awareness of ongoing and future proceedings. As a quasi-judicial agency, PURA can only make decisions based on the record evidence placed before it in any given proceeding. The Authority's decisions affect a wide variety of stakeholders both directly and indirectly and are, therefore, made more robust with increased awareness and participation from all stakeholders. The Annual Report will evolve year over year, based on feedback received by the Authority, in order to best communicate with all stakeholders.

## PURA'S MISSION

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The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) is statutorily-charged with ensuring that Connecticut's investor-owned utilities, including the state's electric, natural gas, water, and telecommunications companies, provide safe, clean, reliable, and affordable utility service and infrastructure. PURA's mission is essential to advancing the state's energy, economic, and environmental goals and is critical to maintaining public health and safety as well as a robust economy.

## PURA'S STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

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PURA is a quasi-judicial agency that interprets and applies the statutes and regulations governing all aspects of Connecticut's investor-owned utility sector. PURA replaces the former Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) and, along with the Bureau of Energy

and Technology Policy, is part of the Energy Branch of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). DEEP was created in July 2011 and brings together the state's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the DPUC, and an energy policy group that had been based at the Office of Policy and Management.

Among other things, PURA sets the distribution rates charged by investor-owned utilities, advances the modernization of the electric distribution system, sets rates for customer-owned renewable energy resources, regulates the retail electric supplier

market, implements federal requirements for natural gas pipeline safety, ensures adequate water system infrastructure investments, reviews mergers and acquisitions, provides education and outreach for consumers, and regulates the expansion of certain telecommunications infrastructure.

The majority of key statutes that govern the work of PURA are found in Title 16 of the General Statutes of Connecticut (Conn. Gen. Stat.), "Public Service Companies." Several of the most referenced statutes are summarized by Table 1 below.

**What does "Quasi-Judicial" mean?**  
 This means that PURA's decisions are legally binding on the utilities it regulates.

**Table 1: PURA's Governing State Statutes**

| Statutory Section | Purpose                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| § 16-9            | Governs the issuance of orders by PURA.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| § 16-11           | Requires PURA to regulate the condition of the plant, equipment, and manner of operation of all public service companies. Enables PURA to order reasonable improvements, repairs or alterations to companies' plant or equipment, or changes to the manner of operation as necessary in the public interest. |
| § 16-18           | PURA has jurisdiction over the method and manner of construction of wire, poles, conductors, and fixtures for the transmission of electricity.                                                                                                                                                               |
| § 16-19           | Establishes PURA's ratemaking authority.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| § 16-19e          | Sets forth the principles PURA must apply when regulating public service companies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| § 16-41   | Authorizes PURA to issue civil penalties.                                                                                                                                                  |
| § 16-43   | Requires public service companies to obtain our approval prior to taking certain actions (listed in the statute).                                                                          |
| § 16-244i | Requires PURA to oversee quality and reliability of electric service. Obligates the electric distribution utilities to provide safe and reliable service to customers, among other things. |
| § 16-245  | Establishes PURA's authority to regulate electric suppliers.                                                                                                                               |

## PURA'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

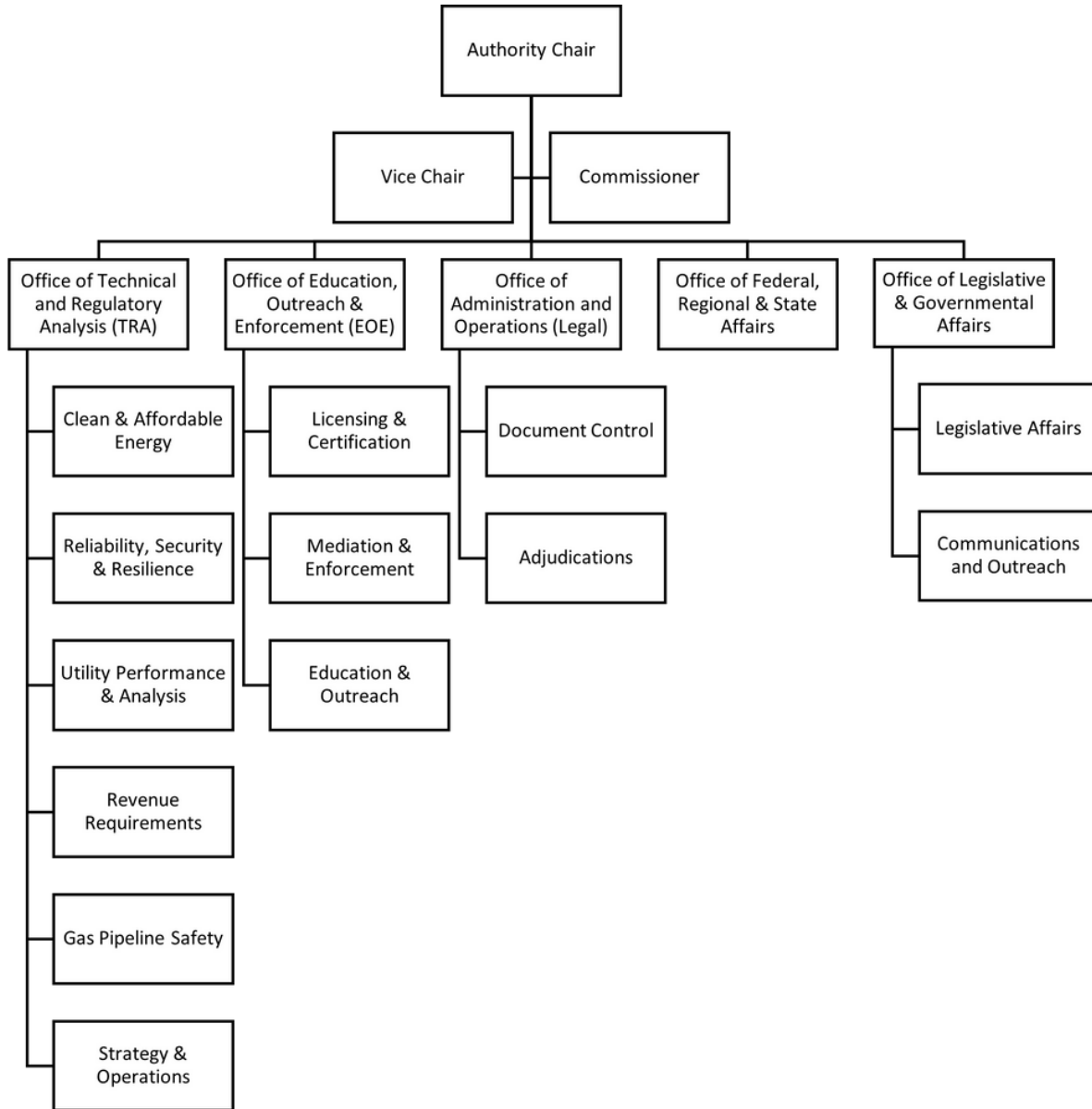
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All matters and proceedings before the Authority are presented to a panel of PURA's three commissioners. Each commissioner is appointed by the Governor, typically to a four (4) year term, with consent from the legislature.

The Authority's staff assist the Commissioners in reviewing evidence submitted into the record, issuing information requests like interrogatories, and conducting cross-examination during hearings, and propose recommended decisions to the commissioner panel. A decision on a particular proceeding is reached by a majority vote among the three commissioners.

The Governor, in each odd-numbered year, selects the chairperson of PURA from among the sitting commissioners. Every June, the commissioners hold a vote to elect a Vice Chair of the Authority for a one-year term. Per Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16-2(f), appointment as Chair comes with the responsibilities of coordinating all the activities of the Authority and organizing staff into divisions to maximize efficiency and effectiveness. The Chair also approves hiring, contracting, and other administrative resources. Currently, this position is filled by Marissa P. Gillett, with John "Jack" Betkoski III as Vice Chair, and Michael Caron as the third Commissioner. PURA staff are currently organized into five distinct offices, as shown in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1: PURA's Operational Organization**



All docketed work that is primarily related to public policy or that is technical in nature (i.e., adjudicated investigations) is assigned to the Office of Technical and Regulatory Analysis (TRA), which supports the technical and substantive elements of each of the sectors included in this Report. Other docketed work that is primarily legal in nature is assigned to the Office of Administration and Operations, which houses PURA’s Adjudications unit. Together, TRA and the Office of Administration and Operations make up PURA “decisional staff”.[1]

Each docket is assigned technical staff from TRA based on expertise, and at least one legal advisor (attorney) from the Office of Administration and Operations, with other staff assisting as necessary and appropriate. Other matters, such as routine licensing, dispute

mediation, or enforcement, are assigned to the Office of Education, Outreach, and Enforcement (EOE). As discussed in greater detail in Section 8, EOE staff are separate from TRA Staff and are subject to ex parte limitations in communicating with other Authority staff. This allows EOE to also participate in PURA dockets as a separate party, particularly when a docket is related to rate amendments, performance-based regulation, or other alternative forms of regulation.[2]

The Office of Legislative & Governmental Affairs serves as PURA's primary contact for the Connecticut General Assembly, news media, and other interested stakeholders. The office handles all inquiries and interview requests from these parties to ensure the Authority's goals, services, activities, and programs are communicated in an accurate, transparent, and timely manner to the benefit of Connecticut ratepayers.

Finally, the Office of Federal, Regional and State Affairs monitors the federal, interstate and interregional policies that affect the wholesale energy market, and the reliability and security of energy transmission and distribution. This team is also tasked with matters related to in-state siting, including representing the PURA chairperson as her designee to the Connecticut Siting Council and serving as technical staff in reviewing relevant applications (e.g., construction method and manner applications).

## **PURA'S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH**

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The Authority's work impacts all of Connecticut's businesses and residents, making outreach to the public essential. Ensuring that the relevant stakeholders are able to provide input into PURA's proceedings is critical to preparing robust and equitable decisions. In 2023, legislation was passed granting PURA with expanded resources to equitably increase engagement with stakeholders, which PURA has begun to implement. Most significantly, Section 15 of Public Act 23-102, An Act Strengthening Protections for Connecticut's Consumers of Energy (Public Act 23-102), directed PURA to establish a process for awarding compensation to eligible stakeholder groups for participation in certain proceedings of the Authority. Specifically, this legislation authorized PURA to distribute up to \$1.2 million per year across proceedings. This important provision will help stakeholders who otherwise do not have the financial resources or time necessary to participate in PURA proceedings ensure that their perspectives are represented with the Authority. Stakeholder groups eligible for this funding include those representing residential customers who live in environmental justice communities, hardship customers, small business customers, or nonprofits representing any of those groups. Through Docket No. 23-09-34, PURA Implementation of the Stakeholder Group Compensation Provisions of Section 15 of Public Act 23-102 (Stakeholder Compensation Docket), PURA established the formal process for groups applying for and being awarded funds. As of January 3, 2024, eligible stakeholder groups may now apply for compensation in relevant proceedings.

In addition to the stakeholder compensation provisions, Section 15 of Public Act 23-102 also authorized PURA, in coordination with the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC), to distribute up to \$1 million per year to allow stakeholder groups to attend trainings designed to support public understanding of the Authority's decisions, public service company regulations and operations, and the roles and functions of PURA and OCC. The Authority has begun collaborating with OCC to identify such trainings and other resources and will direct stakeholder groups to them as they are available.

Section 30 of Public Act 23-102 also authorizes PURA to distribute up to \$1 million per year to organizations or individuals providing legal assistance to residential customers negotiating bill or arrearage payment agreements with their utilities. As discussed in Section 3 of this report, PURA has heavily focused on ensuring that there are effective and fair solutions and programs available to customers who have unpaid bills, and/or cannot afford their utility bills. Nonetheless, these funds will make sure that vulnerable customers who need further assistance navigating these programs can access these resources. The Authority is working to establish a program through Docket No. 23-11-04, [PURA Implementation of the Legal Services Funding Provisions of Section 30 of Public Act 23-102](#), and expects that the funding distribution process will be operational soon after completion of the docket.

These efforts are in addition to multiple public outreach and engagement efforts implemented by the Authority in recent years, including the creation of [educational videos](#), the publication of [quarterly newsletters](#) that highlight recent decisions and upcoming procedural events, and the [PURA 101 Roadshow](#), which brings live engagement to public audiences statewide. The Authority is committed to ongoing education and will continue to modify and enhance its resources so that they can best serve the needs of the public.

## **PURA'S DOCKET DATABASE**

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All documents related to each docket's procedural record are filed in PURA's online docket database. To search the record of any docket, simply type the docket number into the search box. To access the database, click the button to the right.

[Access PURA's  
Docket Database](#)



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[1] Decisional staff work directly with the PURA Commissioners on decisions and, therefore, are subject to the Authority's prohibition on ex parte communications (i.e., decisional staff are unable to discuss substantive matters related to an open investigation with docket Parties, Intervenors, or Participants).

[2] Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16-19(a) states that the Authority may require a portion of its staff to serve as a party to any proceeding. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16-19j(b) mandates that such an assignment shall occur when the proceedings relate to: (1) a rate amendment proposed pursuant to section 16-19 by a public service company having more than seventy-five thousand customers; (2) the approval of performance-based incentives pursuant to subsection (b) of section 16-19a; or (3) the approval of any alternative form of regulation pursuant to section 16-247k.