

Fiscal Year 2017-2018



At a Glance

Office of Consumer Counsel

ELIN SWANSON KATZ, *Consumer Counsel*

Established - 1975

Statutory authority - Connecticut General Statute §16-2a

Central office - Ten Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051

Number of employees - 12

Recurring operating expenses - \$2,678,448

Organizational structure – Independent office. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection provides administrative support pursuant to Public Act 11-80.

Mission

The Office of Consumer Counsel serves as a strong independent voice for Connecticut's public utility and telecommunications consumers through advocacy and customer education.

Statutory Responsibility

The Office of Consumer Counsel's ("OCC") statutory responsibilities include:

- Advocating for Connecticut's ratepayers in all matters relating to public service companies, electric suppliers, and certified telecommunications providers;

- Participating in any regulatory or judicial proceedings, federal or state, that involve the interests of Connecticut utility ratepayers, or matters affecting utility services provided in Connecticut;
- Representing utility ratepayers as a party to each contested docket before the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (“PURA”);
- Appealing decisions, orders, or authorizations in any state regulatory proceeding impacting utility ratepayers;
- Addressing issues involving rate increases and ratepayer-funded programs, as well as matters concerning the reliability, maintenance, operations, infrastructure, and quality of service of utility companies, suppliers and providers; and
- Working actively with the Connecticut General Assembly, including the Energy and Technology Committee, in developing utility-related legislation in the best interests of consumers.

In addition to these statutory responsibilities, as of July 1, 2015, the Office of State Broadband (“SBO”) was established within OCC by the General Assembly. SBO is responsible for facilitating the availability of broadband access to every state citizen and increasing access to and adoption of high-speed broadband internet access networks in Connecticut. This is further discussed below.

Improvements/Achievements Fiscal Year 2017 – 2018

In Fiscal Year 2017-2018, OCC continued to operate as a fully independent state agency committed to effectively carrying out its statutory mandate. Despite operating with its lowest level of staff in decades, the office continues to work diligently to fulfill its mission. OCC’s specific achievements this Fiscal Year include:

- **Savings to Consumers:** OCC achieved over \$550 million dollars in direct savings to Connecticut ratepayers in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year through OCC’s advocacy (along with other allies and stakeholders, including fellow state agencies) in dockets before PURA, court decisions, and advocacy in matters before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”), including the following:
 - a. \$125 million in customer benefits from the negotiated extension to the rate freeze and delay of Eversource/CL&P rate case;

- b. \$195 million in annual savings from the Eversource rate case settlement;
 - c. \$7 million in ratepayer benefits for Southern Connecticut Gas Company customers for the first year of the rate plan approved in rate case settlement;
 - d. Continued rate freeze for Aquarion Water Company customers;
 - e. Customer bill savings of \$10 million for Connecticut Water Company customers due to Settlement that limited rate increase to Rockville Treatment Plant reconstruction costs offset by reduced Federal Income Tax Expenses that result from the Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act;
 - f. Approximately \$150 million in annual savings from entering into a settlement that replaced the originally-proposed Locational Installed Capacity (“LICAP”) approach for compensating power plants for capacity in the regional wholesale market with the Forward Capacity Market;
 - g. \$93 million in savings from the United Illuminating (“UI”) rate case for the three-year Rate Plan (2017-2019);
 - h. Continued rate freeze providing approximately \$16.5 million in ratepayer benefits to Eversource/Yankee Gas Company customers;
 - i. Negotiated rate freezes and overearning settlements with smaller water companies;
 - j. Continued to receive rate credits, rate freezes and other economic benefits for SCG, CNG and UI customers due to 2015 settlement in Iberdrola/UIIL change of control proceeding; and,
 - k. \$8.2 million in annual savings from the CL&P Storm Cost Recovery docket.
- **Advocacy in PURA Dockets:** OCC was a party in over 500 dockets during Fiscal Year 2017-2018 that were opened or re-opened by PURA. Some key dockets include:
 - a. In Docket No. 14-07-15, PURA assessed a civil penalty of \$250,000 against Choice Energy, LLC (“Choice”) for failure to comply with relevant law related to terms in its customer contracts. To date, this is the highest civil penalty that PURA has imposed against a third-party electric supplier. In this docket, OCC advocated for both PURA’s findings of statutory violations and an appropriate civil penalty, which both serve to protect consumers from unfair business practices.
 - b. In Docket No. 17-10-46, OCC and the designated Prosecutorial Staff of PURA entered into a Settlement Agreement with Eversource Energy (“Eversource”) regarding Eversource’s Application to PURA to increase its existing distribution rates in a three-year rate plan. PURA

approved this Revenue Requirements Settlement Agreement on April 18, 2018. The Settlement Agreement achieved an overall reduction of \$182.4 million from Eversource's requested three-year rate plan, including an over 60% reduction to Eversource's rate year one request, while still enabling Eversource to continue to provide safe and reliable service to its customers. The Settlement Agreement included reductions to rate base, operations and maintenance expense, depreciation and amortizations, cost of capital, and uncollectibles expense. The Settlement Agreement also included a decrease to Eversource's revenue requirements request reflecting a reduction to the federal corporate tax rate from 35% to 21%. Also in this docket, per OCC's advocacy, PURA approved a significant reduction to the residential non-electric heating customer charge from \$19.25 per month to \$9.21 per month.

- c. In Docket No. 17-01-12, PURA set a methodology for the electric distribution companies to set a residential, non-electric heating customer charge. In adjudicating this docket, PURA largely followed OCC's recommendations as to the classes of expenses that should properly be included in a customer charge per Connecticut statute.
- d. In Docket No. 17-06-30, PURA approved Eversource's acquisition of the Aquarion Water Company ("Aquarion"). OCC was an active party in this change of control proceeding, during which OCC advocated that Eversource possessed the requisite financial, technological, and managerial suitability and responsibility to acquire control of Aquarion. OCC also posited that the transaction was in the public interest.
- e. In Docket No. 18-06-02, recently opened in June 2018, PURA will review the feasibility, costs, and benefits of transferring to electric distribution company standard service all electric hardship customers. OCC's detailed petition to PURA spurred the opening of this important docket.
- f. In Docket No. 14-07-19RE05, PURA is examining compliance with the legal requirement for Eversource and UI residential electric bills to list the "next cycle rate" of a customer's third-party generation supplier on the front page of the bill. The goal of the statute is to give customers advance notice of a generation rate change, and, for example, avoid an upcoming price spike by switching suppliers or reverting to utility standard service for generation before the new rate goes into effect. PURA has identified instances where the "next cycle rate" listed on the bill does not match the actual rate charged, as well as many other

instances where the relevant information is not provided by the third-party suppliers to Eversource or UI, and also has found that utilities retain only very limited records regarding compliance with the “next cycle rate” provision. OCC is seeking what it views as a common sense improvement -- that utility systems require that the “next cycle rate” be filed by the third-party supplier in time for printing of the utility bill, or else the third-party electric supplier does not get to change the rate for the next cycle. Prior PURA decisions left too much system flexibility that has been detrimental to customers and has not provided them what the Connecticut Legislature recognized is a key piece of rate information, the next cycle rate. A PURA ruling is expected soon.

- g. In Docket No. 17-10-31, PURA investigated a claim by the Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) that the natural gas utilities, also known as Local Distribution Companies or “LDCs,” were mishandling their gas pipeline contracts and assets and creating artificial shortages. The LDCs make contractual arrangements with interstate pipelines as part of a portfolio of resources (along with locally stored liquefied natural gas) to meet customer’s peak needs for heating fuel in the winter. OCC investigated these CLF claims through highly-experienced consultants hired for this proceeding and found the CLF claims to have no merit, and advanced that position to PURA. OCC determined that our LDCs are responsibly managing their contracts and assets to meet the needs of customers. A PURA ruling should be forthcoming shortly.

- h. In Docket No. 11-03-07RE01, relating to the standards for utility pole administration by the electric distribution companies as Single Pole Administrator in their respective territories, OCC continued to lead the advocacy before PURA to develop a statewide utility pole and conduit management process to streamline access by competitors and new advanced technology providers in an equitable platform to help make Connecticut competitive among the states in terms of broadband access and speed. For this period, the process of overlashing (applying new wires over existing strands or cables) was litigated before PURA. OCC was pleased that PURA adopted OCC’s idea and proposal and ordered the development of statewide pole and attachments database called the Connecticut Utility Pole Database. The docket’s working group will once again dig in on the database issue with OCC as a lead participant. In the meantime, Frontier has filed an appeal of PURA’s ruling with the Superior Court and OCC has intervened on the side of PURA.

- i. Docket No. 17-09-37, Municipal Gain Declaratory Ruling, dealt with a petition to determine the scope of the statutory rights granted to all 169 municipalities by the state General Assembly (since 1905) to affordable access to a designated location, called the “municipal gain” on all utility poles and in telecom conduit. The focus is on whether municipalities can seek to serve their citizens, including some who today do not have any broadband access or can only access the internet at very slow speeds, with high-speed broadband services through the municipal gain. PURA ruled, over OCC’s objection, that under the statute, municipalities may not provide broadband to the general public. This docket is the third in as many years to attempt to clarify the parameters of this statute, and OCC along with a municipalities association and several municipalities have initiated an administrative appeal of the PURA final decision.
 - j. In Docket No. 17-02-49, Small Cell jurisdiction and notice to adjoining property owners, the OCC successfully detailed the separate authority of the FCC, PURA, and the CT Siting Council with reference to various new types of cellular infrastructure and services, thereby reducing the number of state superior court challenges that have been opened. This issue has national significance at Congress and the FCC since it has direct impact on the implementation of 5G cellular service, the proposed future wireless technology to be developed in the next few years.
 - k. In Docket No. 17-05-42, the OCC and Prosecutorial Staff of PURA entered into a Settlement Agreement with the Southern Connecticut Gas Company (“SCG”) regarding SCG’s Application to PURA to increase its existing distribution rates in a three-year rate plan. PURA approved this Revenue Requirements Settlement Agreement on December 12, 2017. The Settlement Agreement reduced the first year rate increase by \$7 million and by over \$20 million over the three-year rate plan. Approved in the Settlement Agreement were the establishment of a Distribution Integrity Management Program mechanism to fund the replacement of bare steel and cast iron mains and services and a revenue decoupling mechanism.
- **Legislative Advocacy**: The Office of Consumer Counsel actively participated in the 2018 legislative session, testifying on numerous utility and telecommunications measures.

- a. In the telecommunications area, OCC joined with other consumer advocacy organizations to successfully advocate against the passage of SB-330, concerning the regulation of voice service providers, specifically proposed by the two local exchange carriers in Connecticut for virtual deregulation of their retail voice services, which would cut out OCC's advocacy and PURA's regulatory authority and would have eliminated protections for certain telephone consumers.
- b. OCC joined with many state and national consumer advocacy organizations to unsuccessfully support passage of Committee Bill-2 concerning internet service providers and net neutrality principles, which got swept up in national fervor by incumbent telecom providers opposing safeguards for the consumer protection principles of net neutrality by preventing internet service providers from abusing their gatekeeper role to block or interfere with the ability of users to access the content of their choosing.
- c. OCC also successfully removed offensive sections of RB-5591 concerning municipal revenue which would have functioned as a tax on the electric and telecommunications consumers represented by OCC, place undue burdens on low-income and middle-income customers, and further dampen economic activity in this state by rendering our utility rates even less competitive, including for business customers.
- d. Consumer Counsel Katz selected, and OCC provided guidance to, the new consumer advocates for the Municipal District Commission, which is the water utility for Hartford and the surrounding towns, and the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative, whose members are municipally-owned electric companies, mostly in Eastern Connecticut. These advocates are not part of OCC, but Consumer Counsel Katz has some oversight responsibilities. The legislation approving these positions passed in the 2017 session.
- e. OCC supported House Bill 5343, which among other things would have given the right of PURA to order restitution. PURA at present can fine utilities or third-party electric suppliers for misdeeds, but cannot order restitution to customers (although PURA may approve settlements that offer restitution as a remedy). OCC maintained that it would be an important tool and customer protection, and also promote fairness, for PURA to have restitution authority, but the Bill did not pass the House until very late in the Session and the Senate did not have a chance to consider it. OCC hopes that this proposal will re-emerge in the upcoming session.

- **Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy (BETP) Advocacy, and Energy Procurement Activity**

OCC continued work on collaborative energy procurements with DEEP, including large-scale and small-scale renewable energy developments as well as assisting in the development and selection process pursuant to Public Act 15-113, an act establishing a Shared Clean Energy Facility Pilot Program (SCEF). This pilot will deliver 6 MW of Shared Clean Energy to consumers in Eversource and United Illuminating territory. The objectives of the SCEF pilot program were expanding clean energy deployment, increasing access to clean energy for low-to moderate-income customers, optimizing the re-use of sites with limited alternative uses, all while supporting in state economic development and minimizing cost to electric ratepayers.

- **Federal Advocacy:** OCC continued to be involved in this fiscal year with numerous cases at FERC and in the federal courts. Of note:
 - a. OCC continued to participate in the years-long litigation (FERC Docket #s EL13-33 EL14-86, and EL16-64) involving the investment returns earned by the high-voltage transmission lines by utilities in New England.
 - b. As to the “bigger picture,” OCC is part of a coalition of New England state agencies that is seeking at FERC (Docket No. EL16-19) to ensure that the annual rate filings by transmission owning utilities (including Eversource and Avangrid/UI) will be understandable and subject to questioning in advance by government parties. The negotiations continued during this year before a FERC Settlement Judge, and a settlement signed by OCC and many other parties has now been forwarded to FERC for consideration. This is a partial list of the types of items that OCC is involved in at the federal level.
 - c. OCC is involved with its State of Connecticut agency allies in FERC Docket No. ER18-1639, which is considering whether the Mystic Power Plant in Massachusetts, which claims to be under-earning, should receive a cost-of-service arrangement to retain it and its nearby liquefied natural gas service in operation, and if so, how the compensation should be set. This proceeding has a genesis in the region’s concerns about the sufficiency of electric and natural gas capacity in the wintertime, given that laws and court rulings in

Massachusetts in particular have blocked proposals to build new and expanded interstate natural gas pipelines. Many important wholesale market and infrastructure adequacy issues are implicated in this proceeding.

- **Advocacy in Court Cases:** In Fiscal Year 2017-2018, OCC was a party in 4 Administrative Appeals to the Superior Court and 1 appeal to the Connecticut Appellate Court.
 - a. Included in these cases was the OCC's involvement in *Liberty Power Holdings, LLC v. Public Utilities Regulatory Authority* ("Liberty"), a Superior Court appeal in which OCC represents electric ratepayer interests as an intervening defendant. In the *Liberty* appeal, OCC argued before the Superior Court that PURA correctly concluded in its Final Decision that the electric supplier Liberty Power Holdings, LLC violated General Statutes § 16-259a when it submitted back-billing rates to Eversource Energy (Eversource) without a payment plan for 294 commercial accounts, with 121 bills actually being generated and issued. OCC also argued that PURA, in the exercise of its broad discretion, appropriately assessed Liberty a civil penalty of \$60,500 for its violations of General Statutes § 16-259a.
 - b. Also included in these cases is *PMC Property Group, Inc. v. Public Utilities Regulatory Authority*, in which OCC supported PURA's ruling that a scheme for tenant billing for the electric usage of the heating and air conditioning system in an apartment building owned by PMC in New Haven constituted electric submetering. The Superior Court upheld this PURA ruling, and rejected the appeal by PMC, based on PURA's and OCC's advocacy. PMC has now appealed that Superior Court ruling to the Appellate Court, where it remains pending. The parties, including OCC filed their briefs during this fiscal year, and oral argument before the Appellate Court should occur this fall.
- **State, National and Regional Advocacy in Key Organizations, Committees, and Boards**

The Consumer Counsel and OCC staff serve on numerous state, regional, and federal boards and organizations. They also continue to be in great demand as speakers and participants at national conferences and meetings, regional panels, Connecticut organizations, and other forums. OCC's participation was extensive, but highlights include:

- a. Consumer Counsel Katz is a statutory member of the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Board and the Commission for Education Technology, and the Water Planning Council Steering Committee, and served on the Water Planning Council Steering Committee, among other state boards.
- b. Consumer Counsel Katz is President of the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (“NASUCA”), an association of 55 consumer advocates in 43 states and the District of Columbia Barbados, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica. She is also NASUCA’s representative on the Federal Communication Commission’s Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service. Consumer Counsel Katz also serves as Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy’s designee on the FCC’s Intergovernmental Advisory Commission. She is on the Advisory Committee for the Critical Consumer Issues Forum, a joint initiative of NARUC, NASUCA, and the Edison Electric Institute, and the Advisory Board of the Financial Research Institute within the Robert J. Trulaske, Sr. College of Business at the University of Missouri, which provides a neutral environment for stakeholders in the regulated public utility industry to come together to examine, understand, and debate current issues relating to public utility policy.

Consumer Counsel Katz is a popular and frequently-requested speaker on utility, advocacy, governance, and women’s issues. Her speaking engagements during the 2017-1018 fiscal year include:

- c. *The Wooden Pole – Your Most High-Tech Infrastructure*, on July 17, 2017 at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners’ (NARUC) 2017 Summer Policy Summit in San Diego, California;
- d. *Roundtable on Customers*, 2017 Grid Evolution Summit – A National Town Meeting by the Smart Electric Power Summit, Washington, D.C., July 26, 2017;
- e. *Keeping Homes Heated*, at the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) Legislative Summit in Boston, Massachusetts, August 6, 2017;
- f. *Keynote Panel: The Energy-Water-Gas-Telecom Nexus and What It Means for Consumers: A Conversation with Utility CEO’s*; NASUCA Annual Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland, November 13, 2017;

- g. *FCC Rural Downgrade: Keeping the FCC From Abandoning Rural America*, Congressional Briefing, Washington, D.C., December 6, 2017;
- h. *Lessons Learned from Political Appointees*, Women’s Council on Energy and the Environment, Washington, D.C., January 9, 2018;
- i. *Closing the Digital Divide: Broadband Infrastructure Solutions*, testimony before the Communications & Technology Subcommittee, a subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives Energy & Commerce Committee, Washington, D.C., January 30, 2018;
- j. *Luncheon Presentation*, Alliance for Transportation Electrification, Washington, D.C., March 9, 2018;
- k. *Innovation at the Bleeding Edge: The future of the Grid*, New England Council of Public Utility Commissioners, Ogunquit, Maine, May 21, 2018;
- l. *Pole Attachments*, Educational & Networking Event, New England Wireless Association, Burlington, Massachusetts, June 8, 2018.
- m. *What Advocates Need to Know About Municipal Broadband; and Year of the Woman? The Women of NASUCA Debate the Issues*, NASUCA Summer Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 25, 2018.
- n. *Another Outlet for Discussion: The Effects of Electrification on the Electric and Natural Gas Industries, the Environment, and Consumers*, NARUC Summer Policy Summit, July 16, 2018, Phoenix, Arizona.
- o. Principal Attorney Bill Vallee is a member of the NTIA State Broadband Leaders Network which is comprised of state broadband leaders from the 56 entities of the U.S. (50 states, 5 possessions and territories, and D.C.), seeking to develop and promote best practices to expand affordable broadband internet access.
- p. Principal Attorney Bill Vallee represents the OCC/SBO as a board member and chair of the Audit Committee of the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), which works with public utility companies and other state agencies and private corporations to promote the economic well-being of Connecticut.

- q. Principal Attorney Bill Vallee represents the OCC/SBO as a board member of the Commission on Educational Technology (CET), the governance board of the Connecticut Education Network and other fiber network infrastructure managed by the state; he is also a member of the CET Broadband Infrastructure subcommittee, which developed and published a Digital Equity Toolkit for use by municipalities, educational institutions, and libraries
- r. Principal Attorney Bill Vallee is a board member of the Public Safety Broadband Working Group within the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), which is tasked as liaison with the governor's office and the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), an independent authority within NTIA to provide emergency responders with the first nationwide, high-speed, broadband network dedicated to public safety. This year saw the board structure the governor's response on behalf of the state by joining the FirstNet program and negotiating a 30-year contract with AT&T for services.
- s. OCC Rate Specialist Taren O'Connor participated in the 2017 Rising Star Forum at the 2017 Women's Energy Summit in Chicago.
- t. OCC's Taren O'Connor has continued in her role as Vice-Chairperson on the state's Low Income Energy Advisory Board ("LIEAB"), which helps in the planning, development and implementation of energy-assistance programs, and low-income weatherization programs and policies. The LIEAB worked to craft the Connecticut Energy Affordability Policy Initiative for Low-Income Households as well as the 2018/2019 LIEAB Recommendations. The Board specifically focused on how to best design and implement the Utility Companies' low-income programs to best assist customers and ultimately lessen the significant uncollectibles problem in Connecticut.
- u. OCC has continued its leadership on the state's Energy Efficiency Board ("EEB") in 2017-2018, with Taren O'Connor in her continued role as the Board's Chairperson, serving as Consumer Counsel Katz's designee. In June of 2018, Ms. O'Connor stepped down as Chairperson but remains an active member of the EEB. The EEB serves Connecticut ratepayers through the programs it offers that act as a first line of defense against high winter energy prices. The programs service residential consumers, businesses, government agencies, institutions such as schools and hospitals, and Connecticut communities, by educating consumers, offering financial incentives

along with technical and installation assistance, and providing energy resources at lower costs. Ms. O'Connor also serves as the Chair of the EEB's Evaluation Committee and as a member of the Executive, Residential and Consultant Committees.

- v. In addition to contributing to policy decisions on program design and allocation of resources, OCC worked to advise the 2018 Conservation and Load Management ("C&LM") Plan Update. OCC continued its advocacy for an appropriate funding level for both program evaluations and performance management incentives ("PMI") for the utility companies and for an independent and transparent evaluation process. With a focus on cost-effectiveness testing design, OCC is eager to participate in the design of the next three-year 2019-2021 C&LM Plan.
- w. The 2018 Connecticut legislative session resulted in a blow to the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund ("CEEF") in the form of a diversion of \$127 million of the CEEF to the CT General Fund. What is really the creation of an energy tax by the General Assembly, OCC fought against this unfortunate raid on ratepayer funds and will continue its effort to protect these dollars from any future like action.
- x. Joseph Rosenthal, a Principal Attorney for OCC, continued to be on the Coordinating Committee for the Consumer Liaison Group ("CLG"), a New England-wide entity which hosts public forums on a quarterly basis to consider significant topics affecting electricity consumers, with a particular focus on high-use commercial and industrial customers. Being involved with CLG is part of OCC's effort to work with stakeholders to try to reduce electricity prices, promote electric reliability, and promote fair and effective electric rate policies.
- y. Consumer Counsel, Katz, Dave Thompson, and Joe Rosenthal were the active OCC personnel who were involved with the discussions among regional electric stakeholders called the New England Power Pool ("NEPOOL"). NEPOOL meetings are often attended by nearly 100 representatives of various electric industry participants, including utilities (privately-owned and publicly-owned), power plant owners (renewable, fossil, and nuclear), demand response developers, retail suppliers, heavy industrial users, and parties that serve the public interest (like OCC). OCC is the sole Connecticut agency that is a voting member of NEPOOL, which functions almost as a quasi-legislature, with proposals, votes, coalitions, and the like. The recommendations of NEPOOL stakeholders do not generally

bind the grid operator, ISO New England, but more often than not, the views of a clear majority of NEPOOL stakeholders usually hold sway in the region or at FERC.

- z. In September 2017, OCC Attorney Lauren Bidra attended the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative (“SECC”) Members Meeting & Fall Workshop in Austin, Texas during which she participated in the Breakout Sessions for SECC’s Education and Outreach Initiatives related to strengthening consumer knowledge. SECC is a nonprofit organization with a mission to serve as a trusted source of information for industry stakeholders seeking a broad understanding of consumers' views about grid modernization, electricity delivery and energy usage, and for consumers seeking an understanding of the value and experience of a modern electrical grid.
- aa. During this fiscal year, various OCC staff participated in panel discussions of an organization called the Critical Consumer Issues Forum (“CCIF”), of which Consumer Counsel Katz is on the Advisory Committee. The focus of this year’s discussions was on “Connecting Communities: Smart Cities, Enabling Technologies, and the Grid,” including how electric infrastructure and electric technology can promote improved transportation systems, the efficient use of power, electric reliability, and environmental sustainability.

- **Conferences**

- a. On June 14, 2018, OCC Consumer Counsel and Principal Attorney Bill Vallee joined with Hartford urban center experts in education and Nicol Turner-Lee of the Brookings Institution, at various locations across the North End of Hartford to develop a program to increase digital inclusion to all residents, including access to affordable broadband for educational purposes. The OCC organized a screening and panel discussion of Without A Net, a documentary about the homework gap and digital divide in the US, with the Hartford mayor, Comptroller Lembo, Senator Bye and others at the Hartford Public Library.
- b. On May 18, 2018, OCC Consumer Counsel and Principal Attorney Bill Vallee participated in panel discussions at the Annual Member Conference hosted by the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) to

help shape a new business plan and corporate strategy in light of diminished state funding.

- c. On May 16, 2018, OCC Principal Attorney Joseph Rosenthal gave a presentation at a EUCI Conference in Nashville, TN on the subject of proposals to implement residential electric demand charges entitled, “Residential Demand Charges, a Look at Consumer Advocacy and Regulatory Considerations.”
- d. On April 29-May 3, 2018, Principal Attorney Bill Vallee was a panelist at the Broadband Communities Conference in Austin, TX, focusing on CT State Legislative challenges and opportunities for improving local affordable broadband internet access.
- e. On April 9-10, 2017, Principal Attorney Bill Vallee attended a conference in NYC at the Practicing Law Institute for discussions with cable industry participants on a wide variety of consumer and broadband issues.
- f. On April 5, 2018, Principal Attorney Bill Vallee hosted an initial meeting with a group of Yale College students focused on the use of broadband to reduce digital inequity in low income neighborhoods, as part of a year-long student program run by the Law School.
- g. On February 13-14, 2018, Principal Attorney Bill Vallee, a member of the State Broadband Leaders Network (SBLN) within the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA), met with federal agency officials (White House, USDA), the National Governors Association, and SBLN member to develop a strategy for continuing the work of the State Broadband Initiative (2009-2015) in developing broadband and fiber network solutions for federal/state cooperation.
- h. On December 11-12, 2017, OCC Consumer Counsel and Principal Attorney Bill Vallee visited FCC commissioners and NTIA (Department of Commerce) officials in D.C., then meeting with US Senate staff on copper-to-fiber transitions policy in anticipation of a vote.

- **Working Group Advocacy**

- a. Principal attorneys Joe Rosenthal and Bill Vallee will lead the OCC's activities in the Docket No. 11-03-07RE01 Single Pole Administrator Working Group, to develop a statewide utility pole and conduit management process to streamline access by competitors and new advanced technology providers in an equitable platform to help make Connecticut competitive among the states.
- b. OCC has continued to participate in the Supplier Working Group, which was initiated by PURA in 2011 as a forum to address changes in Connecticut's retail energy market. The Supplier Working Group currently provides a collaborative process for stakeholders to consider current regulatory and legislative supplier issues, and to discuss and implement best practices with regard to the Rate Board.
- c. OCC participated in the Electronic Business Transaction ("EBT") Working Group, which was initiated to develop the processes necessary to exchange data between licensed electric suppliers and the electric distribution companies to implement the residential electric bill redesign initiative of Section 1 of Public Act 14-75, *An Act Concerning Electric Customer Consumer Protection*. The EBT Working Group continues to meet to resolve ongoing issues with regard to the electric bill redesign and other billing concerns.
- d. During this Fiscal Year, OCC participated in a newly-formed Working Group to discuss consumer protection issues in competitive electric markets, including issues with telesales and door-to-door marketing as well as the effect that predatory marketing tactics has on vulnerable populations and the general class of electric ratepayers. The Working Group is comprised of representatives from various Attorney General Offices and state consumer advocate agencies from states which have deregulated energy markets.

- **Third Party Electric Supplier Outreach and Education**

Each month the OCC examines and analyzes 3rd party electric supplier compliance data and produces a "Monthly Supplier Fact Sheet," which is posted regularly on the [OCC website](#). This [fact sheet](#) reports on the state of the residential electric supplier market in Connecticut and the impact it is having on customers with 3rd party electric suppliers. Many metrics can be derived from this data, but three important ones stand out. The first of these

metrics is the percentage of customers paying more or less than the EDC standard service rate. The second is how much savings or overpayments customers, as a whole, experienced for a particular month. The final metric is a big picture view of the impact of electric suppliers on customers. It examines how much savings or overpayments customers experienced on a rolling year basis. The OCC uses this report as a tool to help inform Connecticut customers about competitive supply and the impact it can have on their bills.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

OCC has complied with all state requirements regarding affirmative action and equal opportunity, most particularly Conn. Gen. Statutes §§46a-70 through 46a-78, and is in compliance with all federal requirements.