

# The Agency

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## Public Utilities Commission

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### Agency Operations

The Public Utilities Commission comprises two distinct regulatory bodies: an authorized five-member Commission and the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division). The Public Utilities Commission serves as a quasi-judicial tribunal with jurisdiction, powers, and duties to implement and enforce the standards of conduct under §39-1-27.6 and to hold investigations and hearings involving the rates, tariffs, tolls, and charges, and the sufficiency and reasonableness of facilities and accommodations of ferry boats, gas, electric distribution, water and telephone public utilities, the control of railroad grade crossings, the revocation, suspension or alteration of certificates issued pursuant to §39-19-4, appeals under §39-1-30, petitions under §39-1-31, and proceedings under §39-1-32. Through participation in the Energy Facility Siting Board, the commission's chair also exercises jurisdiction over the siting of major energy facilities, pursuant to Chapters 42-98.

The division, which is headed by an Administrator, who is not a Commissioner, exercises the jurisdiction, supervision, powers and duties not specifically assigned to the commission, including the execution of all laws relating to public utilities and carriers and all regulations and orders of the commission governing the conduct and charges of public utilities. The division has exclusive jurisdiction over the rates, tariffs, tolls and charges, and the sufficiency, and reasonableness of facilities and accommodations of common carriers of property and passengers over the State's public roadways, pursuant to Chapters 39-12, 39-13, 39-14 and 39-14.1. Additionally, the division supervises and regulates Community Antenna Television Systems (CATV) in Rhode Island; certifies all public utilities;; and has independent regulatory authority over the transactions between public utilities and affiliates; and all public utility equity and debt issuances.

### Agency Objectives

To provide fair regulation of public utilities, CATV, common carriers, and major energy facilities; ensure just and reasonable rates; ensure sufficient utility infrastructure to promote economic development; and cooperate with other states and federal government agencies to coordinate efforts to meet the other previously-stated objectives.

### Statutory History

The Public Utilities Commission and its predecessor agency, the Rhode Island Railroad Commission, have been regulating utilities in this state since 1839. The Railroad Commission was later abolished by an act of the legislature, leading to the creation of the more comprehensive Public Utility Commission in 1912. From 1981 to 1996, the duties of the Administrator of the division and Chairperson of the commission were combined in a single position. The Utility Restructuring Act of 1996 later divided these duties into two separate positions: Chairman of the Commission and Administrator, Division of Public Utilities and Carriers. RIGL 39-1-14 added two more commissioners effective January 1, 2004. These appointments are yet to take effect.

# The Budget

## Public Utilities Commission

|  | FY 2007<br>Actual  | FY 2008<br>Actual  | FY 2009<br>Enacted | FY 2009<br>Revised | FY 2010<br>Recommended |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Expenditures By Object</b>  |                    |                    |                    |                    |                        |
| Personnel  | 4,844,447          | 4,801,593          | 5,938,590          | 5,918,170          | 6,072,007              |
| Operating Supplies and Expenses  | 609,450            | 503,459            | 930,287            | 930,187            | 940,187                |
| Aid To Local Units Of Government   | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                      |
| Assistance, Grants and Benefits  | 336                | 57,478             | 337                | 337                | 337                    |
| <b>Subtotal: Operating Expenditures</b>  | <b>\$5,454,233</b> | <b>\$5,362,530</b> | <b>\$6,869,214</b> | <b>\$6,848,694</b> | <b>\$7,012,531</b>     |
| Capital Purchases and Equipment  | 19,636             | 70,754             | -                  | -                  | -                      |
| Debt Service   | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                      |
| Operating Transfers  | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                  | -                      |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>  | <b>\$5,473,869</b> | <b>\$5,433,284</b> | <b>\$6,869,214</b> | <b>\$6,848,694</b> | <b>\$7,012,531</b>     |
| <b>Expenditures By Funds</b>   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                        |
| General Revenue  | 499,163            | 475,034            | -                  | -                  | -                      |
| Federal Funds  | 92,650             | 70,662             | 100,547            | 102,659            | 103,600                |
| Restricted Receipts  | 4,882,056          | 4,887,588          | 6,768,667          | 6,746,035          | 6,908,931              |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>  | <b>\$5,473,869</b> | <b>\$5,433,284</b> | <b>\$6,869,214</b> | <b>\$6,848,694</b> | <b>\$7,012,531</b>     |
| <b>FTE Authorization</b>   | <b>45.7</b>        | <b>45.0</b>        | <b>44.0</b>        | <b>44.0</b>        | <b>44.0</b>            |
| <b>Agency Measures</b>   |                    |                    |                    |                    |                        |
| Minorities as a Percentage of the Workforce  | 11.1%              | 11.1%              | 11.1%              | 11.1%              | 11.3%                  |
| Females as a Percentage of the Workforce   | 35.5%              | 35.5%              | 35.5%              | 35.5%              | 36.3%                  |
| Persons with Disabilities as a Percentage of the Workforce   | 2.2%               | 2.2%               | 2.2%               | 2.2%               | 2.2%                   |
| <b>Program Measures</b>  |                    |                    |                    |                    |                        |
| Percentage of Consumer Services Offered that Meet Completion Schedules   | 87.0%              | 86.0%              | 84.0%              | 84.0%              | 84.0%                  |
| Percentage of Formal Written Reports of Motor Carrier Applications Completed within 60 Business Days of Filing | 88.0%              | 80.0%              | 92.0%              | 92.0%              | 92.0%                  |