

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Budget



Fiscal Year 2012

Lincoln D. Chafee, Governor

The Agency

Public Utilities Commission

Agency Operations

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) comprises two distinct regulatory bodies: a three member Commission (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 railroad, ferry boats, gas, electric distribution, water, telephone, telegraph, and pipeline public utilities, the location of railroad depots and stations, and the control of 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 Chapter 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, and 39-14. 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; implement legislative mandates that facilitate renewable electric generation, improve water availability, deliver rapid communications and assure that Rhode Island is on the cutting edge of reliability and environmental quality regulation; and cooperate with other state and federal government agencies to coordinate efforts to meet the above objectives.

Statutory History

The PUC 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.

The Budget

Public Utilities Commission

	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Enacted	FY 2011 Revised	FY 2012 Recommended
Expenditures By Object					
Personnel	5,097,701	5,369,382	6,729,267	6,743,381	7,148,290
Operating Supplies and Expenses	485,654	574,985	947,052	920,741	923,379
Aid To Local Units Of Government	-	-	-	-	-
Assistance, Grants and Benefits	336	336	337	337	337
Subtotal: Operating Expenditures	\$5,583,691	\$5,944,703	\$7,676,656	\$7,664,459	\$8,072,006
Capital Purchases and Equipment	51,915	45,273	50,000	50,561	33,000
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-
Operating Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	\$5,635,606	\$5,989,976	\$7,726,656	\$7,715,020	\$8,105,006
Expenditures By Funds					
General Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Funds	67,758	105,096	296,330	296,330	309,373
Restricted Receipts	5,567,848	5,884,880	7,430,326	7,418,690	7,795,633
Total Expenditures	\$5,635,606	\$5,989,976	\$7,726,656	\$7,715,020	\$8,105,006
FTE Authorization	44.0	45.5	46.0	46.0	46.0
Agency Measures					
Minorities as a Percentage of the Workforce	11.1%	11.3%	11.3%	11.3%	13.1%
Females as a Percentage of the Workforce	36.5%	39.5%	38.6%	38.6%	39.2%
Persons with Disabilities as a Percentage of the Workforce	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%
Program Measures					
Percentage of Consumer Services Offered that Meet Completion Schedules	84.0%	84.0%	84.0%	84.0%	86.0%
Percentage of Formal Written Reports of Motor Carrier Applications Completed within 60 Business Days of Filing	96.0%	100.0%	95.0%	95.0%	95.0%
Percentage of Consumer Inquiries related to Cable Service resolved within Thirty Days	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%