



REAL

RETAIL ENERGY ADVANCEMENT LEAGUE

Retail Markets Forum | August 10, 2023

Complaint Reporting and Recordkeeping

States share current processes on fielding and managing customer complaints, report deliverables, rating systems and how to make this information accessible to customers so they are empowered to make the best choice for their energy needs.

Presenters:



Stephanie Bolton

Director, Consumer Affairs Division
Maryland Public Service Commission



Chris Burch

Director, Customer Protection Division
Public Utility Commission of Texas



STATE OF MARYLAND
Public Service Commission

CONSUMER AFFAIRS DIVISION
STEPHANIE BOLTON
Adventures in complaint data
management and collection



“

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES FORTNIGHTLY TEAM never knows what it will discover, in this case, the profound, that Maryland punches well above its weight, with an expansive grid modernization portfolio, ambitious electric vehicle and charging programs, utility-scale batteries deployed as grid assets, and more, backed up by a diverse renewable generation portfolio and nuclear power at the Calvert Cliffs plant.

”

– Public Utilities Fortnightly
July 2021

QUICK STATS

Established:	1910
Deregulated:	1999
Commissioners:	5
Total Staff:	136
Work Groups:	47
IOUs:	5
Supplier Elec Accts:	16.6%
Supplier Gas Accts:	17.4%



Consumer Affairs Division

Answer consumer questions,
investigate and resolve service
complaints, share resources

Sessions of the Commission shall be held at
its office on Wednesday of each week,
between the hours of 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

LIKE AND
SUBSCRIBE



@MarylandPSC

Complaint = A customer's service-related dispute with regulated entities, in writing and submitted to CAD via online complaint portal or paper complaint form

CAD specialists investigate complaints and render a decision

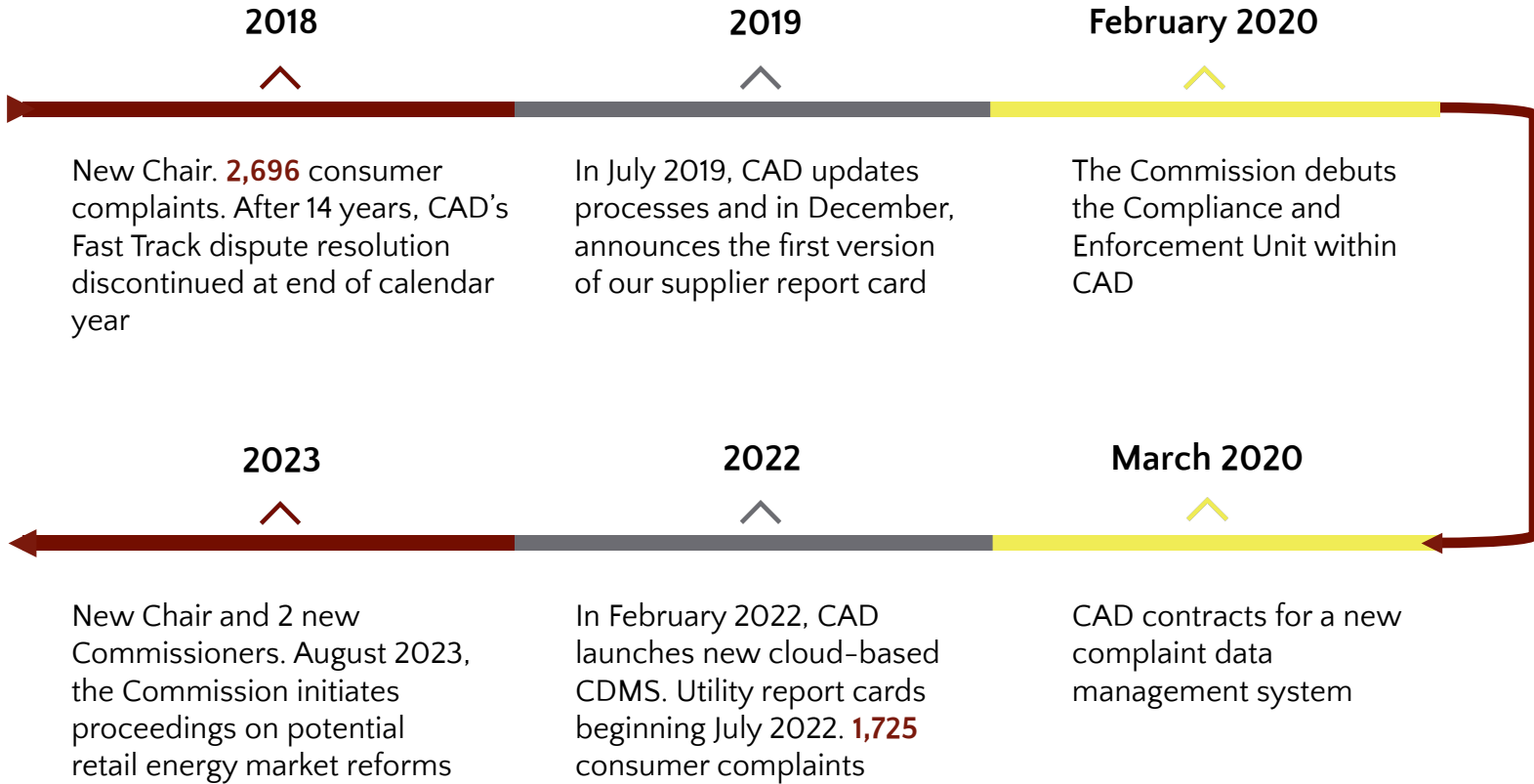
Either party to that decision may request **Further Review**

Either party to a Further Review decision may **appeal to the Commission**



MARYLAND

Public Service Commission

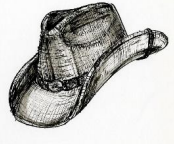


Maryland's CDMS EXPERIENCE

THE GOOD

THE BAD

AND THE UGLY



Improved team collaboration

Effective and efficient engagement: internally, with stakeholders, with our legislators

More and better reports

Expectations

Becoming your own tech support (the bad)

UX and Consumer-facing portal (the ugly...for now)

Maryland Public Service Commission

Filing a complaint online



Preferred Language / Idioma Preferido

English (US)

Maryland Public Service Commission - Online Complaint

Online Complaint Instructions

The Commission's Consumer Affairs Division (CAD) offers free dispute resolution and mediation services to utility customer account holders and applicants for regulated utility service. The CAD is available to assist consumers with disputes concerning gas, electric, local telephone and certain water and sewer company disputes. If a resolution cannot be achieved, the CAD will issue a series of findings that are binding on the utility and the utility account holder or service applicant if not appealed.

Please note that the Commission's CAD is a dispute resolution office; it is **not** a consumer advocacy office.

Prior to contacting CAD, the utility account holder or applicant for regulated service is required by law (COMAR 20.32.01.03A) to first submit their dispute or inquiry directly to the utility for investigation and response. Only after receiving the utility's response may a consumer dispute a utility determination. To do so, they may submit an inquiry to CAD within 7 days of receipt of the utility's response.

Consumers are required to continue to make payment of all current and undisputed charges while the dispute is under investigation. Failure to make payment of the current and undisputed charges may result in disconnection of service.

NOTE: The Maryland Public Service Commission does not regulate the following companies: wireless, oil, propane, cable television providers, or Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. If your dispute concerns a wireless telecommunications company, cable television, or oil or propane companies, please contact the Maryland Attorney General's Office at 1-888-743-0023.

Next





Preferred Language / Idioma Preferido

English (US)

Maryland Public Service Commission - Online Complaint

[Contact Company](#)
[My Information](#)
[Dispute](#)
[Documents](#)
[Summary](#)
[Completion](#)

Contact the Utility/Supplier Company

NOTE: If you have not contacted the company, you must do so prior to filing a complaint with the Commission. If you contacted the company, you must wait for the company to have time to investigate the matter and respond to your complaint, if applicable, before pursuing the matter with the Commission. If after a reasonable period time, you have not received a response from the company, you must wait for the company to have time to investigate the matter and respond to your complaint, if applicable, before pursuing the matter with the Commission.

* Have you contacted the company regarding your inquiry/dispute?

Yes

* Date Contacted

Aug 7, 2023

Have you received a response from the company?

Yes

* Date Responded

Aug 7, 2023

The screenshot shows the Maryland Public Service Commission website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Maryland.gov', 'Online Services', 'Public Agencies', 'Public Directory', and 'Translate'. Below this is a header with the commission's logo and tagline, and a menu for 'Electricity', 'Telecommunications', 'Gas', 'Water', and 'Transportation'. The main content area is titled 'Maryland Public Service Commission - Online Complaints' and features a section 'Ready To File A Utility Dispute?'. This section lists various utility services and provides instructions on how to file a complaint. A 'Case/Maillog Portal' is also visible, along with a 'Previous' and 'Next' navigation bar at the bottom.

Previous [Next](#)



Maryland's CDMS EXPERIENCE

THE PAST



SUPPLIER REPORT 2019

Retail Energy Suppliers with 2 or more	Number of complaint submissions												FY2020 YTD	Issues alleged in complaints (all months):					Determination in favor of (all months):		
	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20		Unsubstantiated	Misrepresentation	Early termination	Start/stop	Other	Customer	Company	N/A
Atlantic Energy MD, LLC			4										8	3	3			4	4	4	
Constellation NewEnergy, Inc.		3	3	3			4			4			17	5	5	9	1	6	7	10	
Direct Energy Services, LLC	5	4		6			7	5		3			30	10	7		8	20	9	21	
IDT Energy, Inc.	3	5	4				4						16	11	5		5	3	9	6	1
Palmco Power MD LLC d/b/a Indra		4					6	6					16	7	8	1	3	11	7	9	
Inspire Energy Holdings LLC	4												4	1	3		1	1	1	3	
Josco Energy USA LLC		3	8	8	3	4			3				29	22	7		2	5	19	10	
Just Energy Solutions, Inc.							7	6	5	4			22	11	7		5	10	5	17	
Liberty Power Maryland, LLC			3			4							7	6		1	2	3	3	4	
U.S. Gas & Electric d/b/a Maryland Gas	8	5	8	3		6	6	8	5				49	31	18	12	10	15	15	34	
Reliant Energy Northeast dba NRG					3		3						3	2			1	1		3	
SFE Energy Maryland, Inc.	3	3		3		4			3	3		3	22	8	10	6	4	11	6	16	
Smart One Energy LLC (license revoked)		3											3	2	1		1	1	3		
Spark Energy LLC					4	5							9	8	2		1	2	4	5	
StateWise Energy Maryland LLC	3	4		3	3	5	6	4	5	5			38	18	10	7	6	9	11	27	1
SunSea Energy, LLC					3	10	8	3		5			29	15	12		8	10	18	11	
Titan Gas, LLC dba Titan Gas and Power								4					4	3	1			1	3	1	
Tomorrow Energy Corporation f/k/a		4											4	4			1	1	1	3	
Unidentified Supplier 4									6	5			6	4	6		2	1	1	1	4
TOTAL	26	42	30	26	13	37	45	37	28	25	5	3	316	167	105	36	63	115	126	185	6

* The total number of issues may be higher than the number of complaints since a single complaint may concern more than one issue.

† N/A-Not applicable if the dispute is still pending or the supplier or customer withdrew the complaint.

‡ Also referred to as "blame game" - blame game occurs when a customer's account is switched to a supplier without the customer's authorization.

§ Unidentified supplier dispute is a complaint filed by customer who could not provide a name of the supplier who contacted them.



Maryland's CDMS EXPERIENCE

THE GOOD



Team collaboration | Inter-division and external engagement | Reports & deliverables



SUPPLIER REPORT 2023

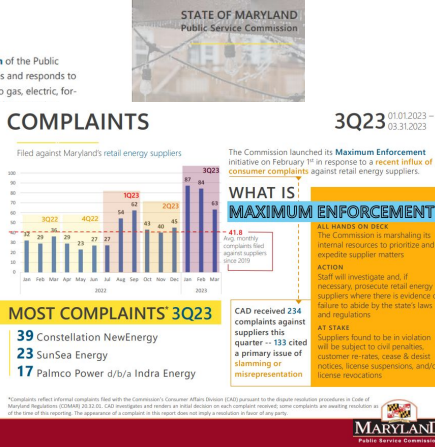


OVERVIEW

The **Consumer Affairs Division** of the Public Service Commission investigates and responds to consumer complaints relating to gas, electric, for-profit water, and local landline.

As an alternative to your utility **choose to buy gas or electric from a retail energy supplier**. Commission licenses suppliers regulate aspects of supplier ma but not the rates that suppliers customers.

FOR MORE INFO
410.767.8028
psc.state.md.us/consum



3Q23 01.01.2023 - 03.31.2023

COMPLAINTS

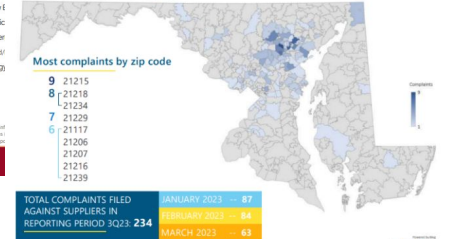
Filed against Maryland's retail energy suppliers

SUPPLIERS WITH 3 OR MORE COMPLAINTS* PER MONTH 3Q23

Supplier	3Q23	2Q23	1Q23
21 Constellation NewEnergy	11	12	7
11 SunSea Energy	7	5	5
7 Palmco Pow	5	5	5
5 CleanView E	4	3	3
5 Major Ener	3	3	3
4 Tomorrow E	3	3	3
3 CleanChoi	3	3	3
3 Inspire Ener	3	3	3
3 Titan Gas of	3	3	3
3 WGL Energy	3	3	3

COMPLAINTS

Filed against Maryland's retail energy suppliers



**Customer Protection Division
Complaint Reporting and
Recordkeeping**

**Chris Burch
Director Customer Protection
Public Utility Commission of Texas**

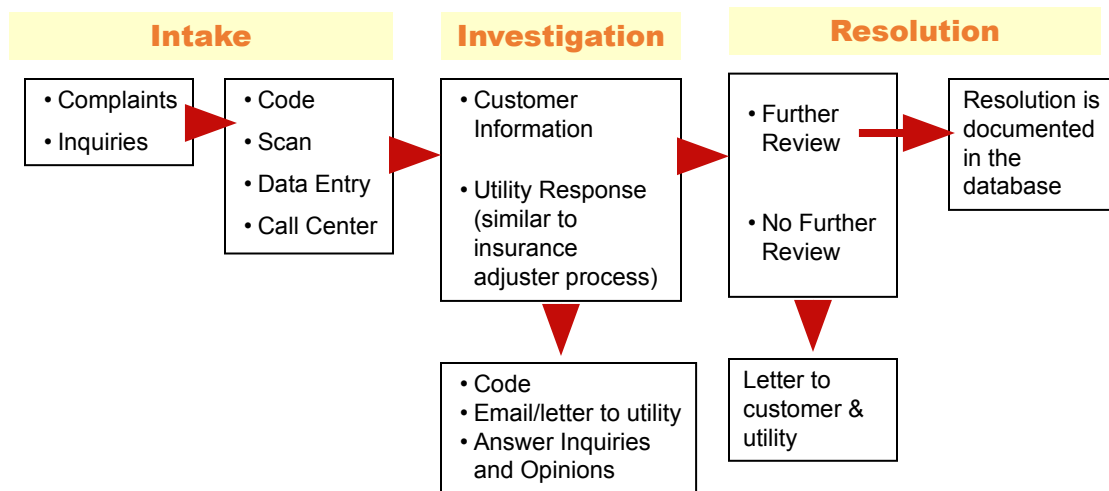


Informal Complaint Handling

- In Texas, the Customer Protection Division only handles Informal Complaints
- Formal complaints are handled by our Legal Division as docketed matters before the Commission
- Informal complaints, once filed and sent to the company, require a response within 15 days
- Calendar year 2022, we handled 13,687 complaints, closing 10,254
- Customer Protection has a 98.8% success rate in closing complaints that do not become a formal complaint
- Informal complaints are not public information, and thus not shared. We consider this confidential information



Complaints Process



Texas Power to Choose

- The Power to Choose website was created when Texas' ERCOT service territory went to competition as a result of the 76th Legislative session in 1999. The market went live on January 1st, 2002.
- The Power to Choose website provides a platform for Retail Electric Providers (Rep's) to list their plans for free, listed by service territory and plan type.



powertochoose.org/en-us/Plan/Results

POWERCHOOSE HOME | RENEWABLE POWER | ABOUT SHOPPING **ESPAÑOL**

Shop. Compare. Choose.

75023 1-10 OF 92 1 2 3 ... SORT BY PRICE/kWh VIEW 10 PER ...

COMPARE	Company	Plan Details	Price/kWh	Pricing Details	Ordering Info
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>FRONTIER UTILITIES</p> <p>COMPANY RATING: ★★★★★</p> <p>HISTORY ⓘ</p>	<p>Frontier Power Saver 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed Rate 12 Months 26% Renewable NEW CUSTOMERS 	<p>1,000 kWh</p> <p>11.4¢</p> <p>500 kWh 2000 kWh</p> <p>11.9¢ 11.2¢</p>	<p>Cancellation Fee: \$150.00</p> <p>Fact Sheet Terms of Service YRAC</p>	<p>Special Terms</p> <p>(877) 261-1024 OR</p> <p>SIGN UP</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>POWERNEXT</p> <p>COMPANY RATING: ★★★★★</p> <p>HISTORY ⓘ</p>	<p>PowerNext 12 Auto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed Rate 12 Months 21% Renewable NEW CUSTOMERS 	<p>1,000 kWh</p> <p>11.4¢</p> <p>500 kWh 2000 kWh</p> <p>11.7¢ 11.2¢</p>	<p>Cancellation Fee: \$20/month remaining</p> <p>Fact Sheet Terms of Service YRAC</p>	<p>Special Terms</p> <p>(844) 304-4215 OR</p> <p>SIGN UP</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>GEXA ENERGY</p> <p>COMPANY RATING: ★★★★★</p> <p>HISTORY ⓘ</p>	<p>Gexa Eco Choice 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed Rate 12 Months 100% Renewable NEW CUSTOMERS 	<p>1,000 kWh</p> <p>11.5¢</p> <p>500 kWh 2000 kWh</p> <p>12¢ 11.3¢</p>	<p>Cancellation Fee: \$150.00</p> <p>Fact Sheet Terms of Service YRAC</p>	<p>Special Terms</p> <p>(866) 329-4392 OR</p> <p>SIGN UP</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>JUST ENERGY</p> <p>COMPANY RATING: ★★★★★</p> <p>HISTORY ⓘ</p>	<p>Autopay PTC Plan - 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed Rate 3 Months 26% Renewable NEW CUSTOMERS 	<p>1,000 kWh</p> <p>11.7¢</p> <p>500 kWh 2000 kWh</p> <p>12.2¢ 11.5¢</p>	<p>Cancellation Fee: \$175.00</p> <p>Fact Sheet Terms of Service YRAC</p>	<p>Special Terms</p> <p>(866) 326-5132 OR</p> <p>SIGN UP</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>AMPIGO ENERGY</p> <p>COMPANY RATING: ★★★★★</p> <p>HISTORY ⓘ</p>	<p>PTC Autopay Plan - 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed Rate 3 Months 26% Renewable NEW CUSTOMERS 	<p>1,000 kWh</p> <p>11.7¢</p> <p>500 kWh 2000 kWh</p> <p>12.2¢ 11.5¢</p>	<p>Cancellation Fee: \$175.00</p> <p>Fact Sheet Terms of Service YRAC</p>	<p>Special Terms</p> <p>(888) 857-8259 OR</p> <p>SIGN UP</p>

75023

REFRESH RESULTS

TDU Area: ONCOR ELECTRIC DELIVERY

Estimated Use: 1,000 kWh

Price/kWh: ¢ to ¢

Contract Length: to mo

Pricing and Billing:

- Show All Plans
- Plans without a minimum usage fee/credit and plans without tiered pricing

Plan Type:

- Fixed Rate
- Variable (Changing Rate)

Prepaid Plans:

- Show All Plans
- Show Only Prepaid Plans
- Do Not Show Prepaid Plans



Texas Power to Choose Scorecard

- The PTC scorecard is published monthly, based upon data from the previous month
- The scorecard methodology is based on a 6-month rolling average of customer count and total number of informal complaints, averaged out against the total number of customers
- The data piece is automated as much as possible, but the scorecard itself is a manual process
- Staff resources is minimal as I handle this myself
- We know this is a valuable resource as many customers comment on the ratings
- Reps are vigilant in their efforts to correct the reasons for complaints, thus causing a low score
- Currently there are roughly 83 Rep's active in the Texas ERCOT market, of those there are 33 that are active on PTC



Texas Power to Choose Scorecard



Retail Electric Provider Complaint Scorecard

Complaint Rates for January 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023

July 2023 Complaint Score (5 circles indicate lowest complaint rate)	Retail Electric Provider (REP)	Date Licensed
•••••	BRANCH ENERGY HOLDINGS	October 19, 2021
•••••	NUECES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE	October 10, 2008
•••••	VARSITY ENERGY	November 7, 2019
•••••	EVOLVE RETAIL ENERGY	April 30, 2019
•••••	RELIANT ENERGY	January 5, 2001
•••••	TXU ENERGY	January 2, 2001
•••••	CHAMPION ENERGY SERVICES	September 16, 2004
••••◦	DIRECT ENERGY	December 4, 2001
••••◦	CAPITAL ENERGY PA, VALUE POWER	December 12, 2008
••••◦	SUMMER ENERGY, PRONTO POWER	September 29, 2011
••••◦	GREEN MOUNTAIN ENERGY	August 2, 2001
••••◦	CONSTELLATION NEWENERGY, STARTEX POWER	February 26, 2001
••••◦	US RETAILERS, CIRRO ENERGY, PENNYWISE ENERGY, COMPA	October 27, 2008
••••◦	174 POWER GLOBAL RETAIL, TEXAS, CHARIOT ENERGY	March 4, 2019
•••◦◦	GEXA ENERGY	January 30, 2004
•••◦◦	AMBIT TEXAS	October 28, 2005
••◦◦◦	FULCRUM RETAIL ENERGY, AMIGO ENERGY, TARA ENERGY RE	October 8, 2008
••◦◦◦	JUST ENERGY TEXAS	September 25, 2020
•◦◦◦◦	SPARK ENERGY	April 22, 2002
•◦◦◦◦	RHYTHM OPS	October 21, 2020
•◦◦◦◦	TRIANGLE ENERGY, POWER HOUSE ENERGY	January 27, 2003
•◦◦◦◦	GOOD CHARLIE AND CO	January 30, 2004
•◦◦◦◦	TARA ENERGY, SMART PREPAID ELECTRIC	March 12, 2002
•◦◦◦◦	VALUED BASED BRANDS LLC	December 5, 2001
•◦◦◦◦	BKV BPP RETAIL	October 18, 2022
•◦◦◦◦	FRONTIER UTILITIES	October 8, 2008
•◦◦◦◦	YOUNG ENERGY, PAYLESS POWER	April 25, 2005
•◦◦◦◦	MP2 ENERGY TEXAS	February 28, 2008
•◦◦◦◦	SOUTHERN FEDERAL POWER	May 22, 2019
•◦◦◦◦	PULSE POWER, ENERGY TO GO	November 30, 2018
•◦◦◦◦	OHMCONNECT TEXAS	October 19, 2020
•◦◦◦◦	DECLARATION ENERGY	October 28, 2020
•◦◦◦◦	MI TEXAS REP 1, ABACUS ENERGY	November 29, 2021
•••••	Lowest Complaint Rate	
••••◦	Lower than Average Rate of Complaints	
•••◦◦	Average Complaint Rate	
•◦◦◦◦	Higher than Average Rate of Complaints	
◦◦◦◦◦	Highest Complaint Rate	

Disclaimer: REPs are scored into five groupings of approximately equal size based on a 6-month rolling average of complaint rates per 1,000 customer relative to other companies. Significant changes in the complaint score may occur from month-to-month for smaller REPs based on only a few complaints. This complaint scorecard should be viewed as only one measure of the customer service provided by REPs. Please note the complaint score is based on a rolling 6-month average of the total number of informal complaints investigated, irrespective of whether or not the company was determined to be at fault or adequately resolved the customer's complaint. In many cases, the PUC's informal complaint process adequately addresses the customer complaints with quick resolution by the REP. You may wish to also review other resources regarding a REP's customer service such as your local Better Business Bureau.

Please note this scorecard is made up of REPs that are currently active on the PTC website.



Questions?



Open Discussion

Intake & Management

- Complaint acquisition platforms
- Complaint management
 - Filter
 - Categorization
 - Escalation Process
 - Stakeholders
 - Timelines

Reporting and Measurement

- Public-facing reporting
 - Methodology
 - Deliverables
 - Cadence
- Trend analysis
 - Stakeholder engagement
- Measuring results



Previous Forum: Customer education campaigns

Presenter: Nils Hagen-Frederiksen, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
(June 26, 2023)

Summary of Resources Available Online:

retailenergychoice.org/summary-of-resources-consumer-education

Examples from state commissions

- Energy choice explanations
- Questions to Ask
- Utility Rate Change Notifications
- Mailers
- Videos, Graphics
- Press releases

Resources from REAL

Unbranded materials available upon request

- State shopping guides
- Monthly market summaries
- Utility rate change alerts



Future Topics for Consideration

- State-managed Shopping Platforms
- Supplier Training and Certification Programs
- Supplier Engagement and Communication
- Consumer Protections

Thank you for participating.

Abby Foster

Retail Energy Advancement League

foster@retailenergychoice.org