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State of Vermont Public Utility Commission

PRESS RELEASE

Public Utility Commission Reports on Easier Participation in Its Proceedings

Montpelier, VT (December 14, 2017) – Today the Vermont Public Utility Commission ("Commission" or "PUC") delivered to the Vermont Legislature its progress report on "Increasing Ease of Citizen Participation in Public Utility Commission Proceedings." The report details the many steps the Commission has taken to make it easier for members of the public to understand and participate in proceedings that may affect them, from utility rate cases to energy and telecommunications infrastructure projects around the state.

The 14-page report describes a wide range of actions, including:

- Standardized notice of proposed projects;
- New instructions and templates for public participation;
- Response to public comments as part of the hearing process;
- Improved technology in the hearing room;
- Engagement with the public in different areas of the state;
- Changing the name of the Public Service Board (PSB) to the Public Utility Commission, which has eliminated much of the public's confusion about the difference between the PUC's quasi-judicial decision-making role and the consumer-advocate role of the Department of Public Service; and
- Full implementation of "ePUC," the Commission's online filing and document management system, which now provides citizens with a free, searchable database of orders and documents, along with website-based instructions and other material for people wishing to participate in PUC proceedings.

The report fulfills a requirement of 2017's Act 53, which asked the Commission to submit a report by December 15 on the "progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Access to Public Service Board Working Group," which was created in 2016 to examine these issues. The Commission had already initiated many of the changes described in the report as it became clear over recent years that members of the public were often confused or frustrated by their experience with the then-Public Service Board. Some of the difficulty was due to the quasi-judicial nature of the processes, while other difficulties emerged as the nature of cases changed from widely spaced regulatory cases 20 years ago to today's exponentially greater number of infrastructure projects that have the potential to affect Vermonters all over the state.

Commission Chair Anthony Roisman said, "This report reflects the excellent work of PUC staff, led by Commissioner Margaret Cheney, to vastly enhance citizen participation in PUC proceedings and establishes a road map for future improvements."

The report can be read on [the Commission's website](#).

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