

You should know...



Public Service Commission

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North Dakota Public Service Commission

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About the ND Public Service Commission (PSC)

HISTORY & FUNCTION

Dakota Territory established a Board of Railroad Commissioners in 1885, with general jurisdiction over railroads, sleeping car companies, express companies, and telegraph companies. At statehood, the Constitution of North Dakota provided for election of a Board of Railroad Commissioners with powers and duties prescribed by law. In 1940, its name was changed to Public Service Commission (PSC).

The Legislature has significantly broadened the duties of the PSC. Today, the Commission has varying degrees of jurisdiction over electric and natural gas utilities, telecommunications companies, weights and measures, reclamation of mined lands, the siting of energy plants and electric and natural gas transmission facilities, and railroad safety. The Commission does not have jurisdiction over the rates of rural electric or telephone cooperatives or small telephone companies.

ORGANIZATION

The Commission has approximately 45 full-time employees (including Commissioners). The staff is divided into support services groups and divisions that provide direct regulatory oversight and consumer assistance.

COMMISSIONERS

North Dakota has three Public Service Commissioners, each elected to six-year terms. One Commissioner is up for election every two years.

Each Commissioner's workload is divided into portfolios to facilitate the handling of cases. Regardless of portfolio assignments, the Commissioners exercise equal authority and share equal responsibility for every decision. Present Commissioners and their portfolios are:

Randy Christmann, Chair: Business Operations; Coal mining and reclamation; abandoned mine lands; SPP/RSC; and telecommunications.

Sheri Haugen-Hoffart: Wind & solar reclamation; economic regulation-electric; pipeline safety; damage prevention; weights & measures; consumer affairs; and cybersecurity.

Jill Kringstad: Transmission pipeline, energy conversion, and electric transmission siting; railroads; MISO & OMS; and economic regulation-gas

Executive Director: is appointed by the PSC to coordinate operations and communications. (Steve Kahl, Executive Director)

General Counsel: The Attorney General is the Attorney for the Commission, but based on Commission recommendation appoints General Counsel to act as a legal advisor to the Commission. (John Schuh, General Counsel)

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Abandoned Mine Lands (AML)

Division: administers a federal program to eliminate hazards and environmental problems associated with abandoned mines. It investigates AML sites, designs reclamation projects, submits applications for federal funds, and manages construction projects under public contracts. (Jonathan Emmer, Director)

Reclamation Division: is responsible for the administration and enforcement of state law regarding surface coal mining and reclamation operations. It also administers Commission authority under the Surface Owner Protection Act. (Jonathan Emmer, Director)

Compliance Division: consists of three programs: (1) **Weights and Measures Program**, which promotes a fair basis for commercial transactions by testing the accuracy of commercial weighing and measuring devices; (2) the **Railroad Safety Program**, which supplements federal oversight of rail safety. The Commission also represent ND's rail interests before federal agencies and Congress; and (3) the **Gas Pipeline Safety Program**, with responsibility over pipeline standards for intrastate gas distribution and transmission systems, and (4) **Damage Prevention and Enforcement**, which protects public safety by enforcing the state's One-Call laws. (Konrad Crockford, Director)

Public Utilities Division:

responsibilities and functions relating to public utilities. The division monitors and enforces utility (telecommunications, natural gas and electricity) compliance with applicable laws, rules, orders, procedures and tariffs. The division enforces siting requirements to ensure that the location, construction and operation of energy conversion and transmission facilities will have minimal adverse effects on the environment and people.

The division is responsible for regulation of the rates, terms and conditions of retail electric service provided by investor-owned utilities. The Commission does not have jurisdiction to regulate rates, terms and conditions for rural electric cooperatives or municipal providers.

(Victor Schock, Director)

INQUIRIES

General correspondence may be addressed to the Executive Director. Specific inquiries may be addressed to the respective division directors.

Requests for hearing, ruling, or participation in rulemaking should be addressed to the Executive Secretary unless the public notice directs otherwise.

Consumers wanting to file complaints against regulated entities can contact the Commission and they will be directed to the appropriate division.