

PROPOSED REFORM AT THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



Better Public Notification at the Public Service Commission: HB0715 and HB1387

Along with ensuring safe, reliable, and economic public utility and transportation services to Marylanders, the Public Service Commission (PSC) issues Certificates for Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN), which provide authority for construction or modification of new generating stations or high voltage transmission lines.

This process is unnecessarily difficult for members of stakeholder communities to navigate because the language and visuals of the website are targeted to advocates, utilities and others participating in quasi legal proceedings there.

In recent years a growing number of Maryland residents and neighbors living near utility and infrastructure works, as well as public health professionals and advocates, have found that they are the last to know when an application is approved by the PSC, citing the opaque nature of public facing materials and no direct mandate to communicate with stakeholders.

Accordingly, this legislation comes directly from Marylanders who identified this as an issue of concern and proposed a solution: make the PSC website

- accessible
- plain spoken
- searchable by county

MARYLANDERS NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE PSC IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE MEANINGFULLY

HB0715 would modernize the public notification process at the PSC by requiring public notice via multiple forms of print and social media, and the opportunity to opt into direct text messaging at the first contact and filing of a CPCN by an applicant at the PSC. Stakeholder notification would commence at a filing, through public hearings on matters including generating stations, overhead transmission lines, or qualified generator lead lines.

HB1387 would require a natural gas company to provide prior notice of certain work on natural gas infrastructure by advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation, on two types of social media, and on the gas company's website; and requiring a natural gas company to maintain a record of certain notice.

Committee: Economic Matters

Support enhanced notification at the PSC in #MdGA18!

THE MARYLAND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NETWORK PROMOTES THE
ELIMINATION OF EXPOSURES TO ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS
TO IMPROVE HUMAN HEALTH.