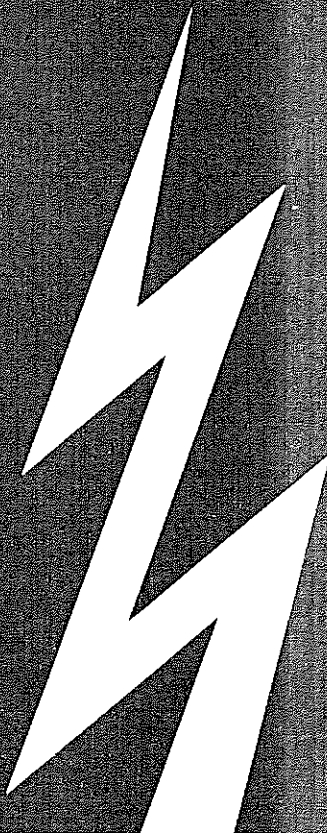


**CONSUMER
SERVICES
ACTIVITY
REPORT
1986**



**Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Bureau of Consumer Services
Joseph W. Farrell, Director**

CONSUMER SERVICES
ACTIVITY REPORT: 1986

JUNE 1987

PA. PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
BUREAU OF CONSUMER SERVICES
JOSEPH W. FARRELL, DIRECTOR

THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF THE BUREAU OF CONSUMER
SERVICES HONOR THE MEMORY OF OUR COWORKER, LOU BOLTON,
WHO PASSED AWAY SUDDENLY THIS YEAR.
LOU'S SENSITIVITY AND DEDICATION TO HELPING OTHERS IS
AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL.

CONSUMER SERVICES ACTIVITY REPORT - 1986

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THE CONSUMER SERVICES ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 1986

INTRODUCTION

This report highlights the complaint handling activities of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's Bureau of Consumer Services. It is an annual overview based on problem indicators for the major electric, gas and telephone companies for the year 1986. This report is designed to assess individual company performance in the areas of consumer complaints and payment negotiations. The results reported below provide the Commission with information which can be used in evaluating its activities and in setting policies and goals.

The Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) was mandated under Act 216 of 1976 to provide responsive, efficient and accountable management of consumer complaints. In order to fulfill this mandate, the Bureau began investigating utility customer complaints and mediating service termination cases in April 1977. In the ensuing decade the Bureau has investigated 203,044 cases and has received an additional 188,256 opinions and requests for information. To manage this complaint data, the Bureau maintains a computer based consumer information system through a contract with the Pennsylvania State University. This permits complaints to be aggregated and analyzed so that generic as well as individual problems can be resolved.

A number of studies have found that only a minority, often a small minority, of dissatisfied persons complain about unsatisfactory products or services. The Bureau's experience reflects this fact as it has found that a seemingly small number of individual complaints from utility customers represents management failures or systemic problems in companies. This information is secured by aggregating data from thousands of complaints to provide information about the effectiveness of utilities meeting consumers' needs and complying with Commission standards. These results are periodically communicated to companies so that they can act independently to resolve problems before a formal Commission reaction becomes necessary. In many cases, companies which have taken advantage of this information have been able to resolve problems and improve service to customers. Companies which fail to act responsively to resolve problems have been subjected to fines and rate case adjustments of expenses or revenues.

The data in this report have been aggregated in a similar manner as in the past four annual activity reports. The bulk of the data is from the Bureau's Consumer Services Information System (CSIS). In addition, this report aggregates data from the Bureau's Collections Reporting System (CRS). The CRS provides a valuable resource for measuring company performance in collections from year to year. Cases involving termination of service are distinctly different from consumer complaints and the two should not be jointly analyzed. In recognition of this, termination cases handled in the regional offices and involving

electric, gas or water service have been classified as mediation cases. The only exception to this involves telephone suspension and termination complaints which are analyzed with the consumer complaint statistics.

The data and performance measures in this report have been in use for a number of years. The first two measures, the relative rate of mediation requests and consumer complaints for each company, are the most basic error signals in use.¹ Two additional statistics, reponse time and percent of cases justified, are included in this report. The Bureau provides the measures in the form of Quarterly Closing Automated Reports Formats (ARFS) to all major electric, gas and telephone companies which have requested that information. Therefore, the companies reviewed in this report are well acquainted with the concepts and measures used here. An explanation of these measures is included in Chapters VII and VIII of this report for readers who encounter them for the first time.

A number of cases are eliminated from the data base for this report because they do not represent company behavior which is appropriate to evaluate here. For example, one treatment of the data involves the purging of cases which do not represent complaints about residential service. In this context the term investigatory is used to include both mediations and consumer complaints when used in this report. In conjunction with the Bureau's policy of focusing on residential accounts, all cases that involve commercial accounts are deleted from Tables 2 thru 21. This is done because the Bureau's customer service regulations address only residential customers. Appendix A lists the distribution of commercial cases by company for the electric, gas and telephone industries. Future reporting will continue to focus on BCS cases involving residential accounts. (See Appendix B for the industry percentage of BCS cases defined as residential and commercial).

1 Formulas for Mediation and Complaint Rates

$$\text{Mediation Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Mediation Cases}/12}{\text{Monthly Average Number of Overdue Residential Customers}/1000}$$

$$\text{Complaint Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Consumer Complaints}}{\text{Monthly Average Number of Residential Customers}/1000}$$

I. OVERVIEW OF 1986 BUREAU OPERATIONS

The Bureau of Consumer Services was created by Act 216 of 1976. The Bureau is charged with the responsibility for a number of Commission programs. These responsibilities are defined both in statute and through direct assignments from the Commission. The discussion below explains the major responsibilities charged to the Bureau. It also describes how the Bureau acted during 1986 to satisfy its various responsibilities.

Act 114 of 1986 confers four primary responsibilities of the Bureau of Consumer Services. The first of these is to "...investigate and issue final determinations on all informal consumer complaints...". The Bureau's Field Services Division is responsible for receiving, investigating and deciding all informal complaints received by the Commission. The second legislative mandate states that "The Bureau shall on behalf of the commission keep records of all complaints...and shall at least annually report to the Commission on such matters." In this regard, the Bureau's Division of Research and Planning maintains a sophisticated information system. This allows it both to access pertinent information regarding complaints and to use statistics from complaints to evaluate a company's performance. The third legislative mandate requires that the Bureau "...shall advise the Commission as to the need for formal Commission action on any matters brought to its attention by the complaints." The Bureau uses complaints in a number of ways to identify failures of utility operations or problems which require formal Commission action. Finally, Act 114 confers on the Commission a responsibility for maintaining the quality of utility service. The Bureau has a number of assignments in this area where utility customer services are involved.

The Commission has assigned the Bureau the operational responsibility for a number of programs. One of the foremost of these is the development, implementation and monitoring of programs to assist payment-troubled customers. The Bureau is also responsible for periodically conducting performance audits of the customer services operations of selected utilities. In addition, the Bureau is charged with the broader assignment of monitoring and evaluating the customer services practices of all electric, gas, water and telephone companies. Finally, the Bureau is directed to plan the Commission consumer education programs and to evaluate the consumer education programs of utility companies.

The Bureau's programs are largely based on the use of consumer complaints as indicators of management breakdown and systematic problems in company operations. Once an individual's complaint is resolved, the case record is coded to allow computerization. The computer system, the Consumer Services Information System (CSIS), is then used to aggregate case information so that company performance can be compared and evaluated. This relationship has formed the "tip of the iceberg" because it uses complaints as problem indicators. This framework of analysis has supported the Bureau's successful intervention in rate cases, fines for noncompliance and other formal actions, and cooperative problem solving with individual companies. Research and investigations have demonstrated that a limited number of complaints can provide information which points to a much broader pattern of problems.

The Bureau meets its often complementary responsibilities through a focus on seven programmatic areas. These are: complaint handling, complaint analysis and feedback, utility program evaluation, consumer policy analysis, regulation enforcement, consumer education, and management reports. The Bureau's activities in these areas during 1986 are discussed below in order to place them in their programmatic context.

Consumer Complaints - The Field Services Division

The handling of consumers' complaints against utilities is the foundation for a number of Bureau programs. The Field Services Division receives and investigates consumer complaints in one of three sections. Complaints about billing, service and company operation are handled in the Informal Complaint Unit. Complaints against telephone companies are handled in the Telephone Complaint Unit. Requests for help with payment agreements are handled in the Residential Termination Unit. Complaint handling demands a substantial portion of the Bureau's resources. The complaint process provides an avenue through which consumers can gain rapid redress for errors and improper behavior by utilities. During 1986 the Field Services Division received 30,740 contacts from customers. Of these, 16,077 were found to be complaints which required investigation and, in most cases, the rendering of a binding decision. Each of these complaints was coded to allow the Bureau to develop aggregate pictures of where consumers are encountering problems and of each company's performance. The bulk of this Activity Report is devoted to the analysis of statistics from the complaints received by the Bureau.

Complaint Analysis - Identifying Patterns and Trends

Complaint analysis is the process through which BCS applies information from individual complaints to the identification of broader utility problems. As indicated above, the "tip of the iceberg" concept underlies the broad application of statistics based on complaints. Each individual case is evaluated to determine whether the company handled the case properly. Excessive delay and unfair or arbitrary actions are specifically identified and computer coded so that information from numerous complaints can be combined and analyzed to evaluate utility operations. The following programs involved complaint analysis activities:

- * The Bureau maintains an automated reporting system which provides information about utility customer services' performance. Information from this phase of complaint analysis is supplied to utilities on a quarterly basis. This "early warning system" allows them to detect and respond to unsatisfactory trends in performance before these become the focus of Commission concern.

- * The results of long-term complaint analysis were presented in Bureau report Consumer Complaints in Pennsylvania: The Electric, Gas and Water Industries 1982-1984. This was published in May, 1986 and examined the performance of all companies. The

report identified the very worst among the 357 companies in the three industries.

- * The Bureau's Annual Overview Report, published in June, 1986 focused on the performance of the major gas, electric and telephone companies. This report permits the Commission, the public and companies to compare basic indices of customer services' performance for the small number of companies which serve the large majority of the state's population.

Evaluation of Utility Performance

The products of complaint analysis activities are combined with other information sources to provide in-depth evaluations of utilities' customer services performance. These overall evaluations are used to focus Commission resources on companies which are unable to maintain effective customer services. Companies with ongoing problems are monitored and the Bureau can intervene with companies which have declining performance.

- * Electric and Gas utilities are required to report monthly regarding bill collection and termination activities. The analysis of the reported data permits the evaluation of the systems which utilities use to collect unpaid bills. This ongoing effort is presented in detail in Chapter IX where basic statistics related to the performance of major utility collections activities are analyzed. Companies which evaluations reveal are performing poorly are targeted for in-depth review.
- * Utilities' general customer services activities have been another focus for evaluation. The Bureau has performed customer services audits of the operations of PP&L, UGI-Gas and Penelec. These revealed many problems which these companies addressed. The Bureau continues to track the activities of UGI and Penelec in order to assess company effectiveness at solving operational and administrative problems.

Policy Analysis

The Bureau has always supported and participated in policy analysis activities. These have helped to develop long-range plans by identifying areas where regulatory intervention is needed or where regulatory policy needs to be changed.

- * The Commission's nationally renowned programs for assisting payment-troubled customers are a direct outgrowth of special analyses and of a program of survey research conducted by the Bureau in conjunction with Penn State. First, the Commission approved

guidelines in February, 1986 for utility companies to use in tapping public and private resources to help payment-troubled and low income customers. These programs, which have already been widely implemented, maximize existing resources by mandating both early identification of customers who need help and the well planned coordination of community services to help those customers. Second, the Bureau recently secured approval of regulations mandating standardizing of utility programs to weatherize the homes of utilities' low income heating and water heating customers. These programs will protect thousands of poor households against unnecessarily high utility bills. Third, the Bureau has also been directed to recommend whether the Commission should promote service limiters, arrearage forgiveness and guaranteed service programs. Finally, the Bureau reported to the Commission on its review of all utility programs for payment-troubled customers. All of these programs will be the focus of Bureau scrutiny in the future.

- * The Bureau also published an extensive analysis of consumer experiences and perspectives gathered through a telephone survey. This exposed a number of areas in which efforts are needed to inform consumers or improve company performance in dealing with customers.
- * A report on utility hardship programs was produced in the fall of 1986. This gave the Commission a perspective on the amount of financial assistance which customers receive directly from utilities and the methods in which that assistance is provided.
- * Bureau staff members prepared research papers for a conference sponsored by the National Regulatory Research Institute. Also, presentations were prepared for conferences and meetings sponsored by Penn State, COCO, the National Association of State Community Service Programs, the Governor's Energy Council and the Energy Resources Group.

Compliance - Insuring Proper Utility Practices

Utility compliance with statutes and Commission regulations is achieved through several Bureau activities. First, the staff of the Field Services Division identifies potential violations in the handling of individual cases. Over 1500 violations were identified in this way in 1986. In each case the company involved is required to respond in writing to the alleged violation. This process calls the utility's attention to violations so that it can take steps to voluntarily comply with the regulations. This also allows documentation to be accumulated

which will support further action if a pattern of violations persists over time.

- * In 1986 the Commission's Office of Administrative Law Judges reviewed the Bureau's charges of violations committed by Equitable Gas Company of Pittsburgh. The Commission had acted at the end of 1985 to initiate the proceeding to fine the company \$133,000 for repeated and extensive violations of the Commission's regulations regarding billing, credit, termination of service and customer complaints. Equitable eventually admitted responsibility for a large number of these violations. The company was required to pay a fine of \$35,000, contribute \$80,000 to low income weatherization and modify its procedures to insure proper treatment for customers.

- * In response to hundreds of violations of customer service regulations, the Commission acted on the Bureau's recommendation and initiated a proceeding to fine the Philadelphia Electric Company \$217,000. The company voluntarily settled the case by providing \$150,000 for low income weatherization and by paying a \$50,000 fine. In addition, PECO. agreed to modify its customer services procedures to prevent recurrence of these violations.

Consumer Education - Helping Customers to be Smart Consumers

Consumer education is directed at making utility customers better able to make good consumer decisions. The Bureau evaluates utility educational and informational programs to insure that they provide complete, accurate and understandable information. These efforts have focused on the review of billing inserts, information provided to payment-troubled customers, and information regarding customer rights and responsibilities.

- * The Bureau also determines the information consumers need from the Commission. In 1986, the Bureau held regional meetings with consumer leaders to inform them about Commission programs and to solicit their advice. At these meetings the Bureau organized the statewide conference "Utilities and Public Policies: Current and Emerging Issues" for consumers to meet with the Commissioners and with utilities to discuss mutual problems and concerns.

- * Specific information for consumers was provided through a series of nine "Fact Sheets" which explained how to file a complaint, how to understand a utility bill, and other topics of use to utility customers.

- * A broader perspective on Commission programs was presented through a Quarterly Newsletter which was sent to hundreds of consumer leaders, social services agencies and community organizations.

Management Support

The complexity of the Bureau's approach to influencing utility company activities requires a sophisticated support system. This system produces two primary products. The first of these is information which helps to maintain the quality of Bureau programs. For example, each complaint is independently evaluated to insure that acceptable standards for complaint handling are maintained. Bureau policies relating to complaint handling and the correct interpretation of regulatory guidelines are regularly reviewed by both staff and management to insure consistent results. The coding of case records is also reviewed on a regular basis to guarantee the reliability of CSIS information and insure that utility evaluations are accurate. Management information is the other product which supports and protects Bureau programs. Supervisors in the Field Services Division receive reports which compare staff performance and allow quantitative goals to be reinforced. Also, information is provided to the Bureau's managers so that they can evaluate progress at achieving goals and prepare plans for future Bureau activities.

II. OVERALL ACTIVITY

The Bureau's cases fall into three basic categories: consumer complaints, mediation requests, and inquiries. The Bureau received 16,077 contacts which required investigation from utility customers in 1986. In nearly 700 of these contacts the Bureau saved the customers money in billing adjustments. The total amount of money saved for these customers was over \$155,000. The 5,896 consumer complaints involved complaints about utilities' actions related to billing, service delivery, repairs, etc. Mediation requests, of which there were 10,181, came from customers who needed help in negotiating payment arrangements with their utility companies in order to avoid termination of service or to have service reconnected. It is important to note that telephone service termination cases are not under the jurisdiction of the mediation unit and are treated as consumer complaints. The Bureau also received 14,663 inquiries and information requests which did not require investigation.

Mediation Requests

Mediation requests decreased by nearly 29% from 14,272 in 1985 to 10,181 in 1986. This is the smallest annual number of BCS mediations since the Bureau began keeping records in 1978. The mediation volume peaked at 19,603 in 1982 and has dropped 48% since then. (See Appendix C - Table 2 for annual volume). In this light, the 1986 results are encouraging. Companies seem to have improved negotiation techniques needed to reduce unnecessary requests for arbitrated payment agreements. In addition, the development of broadly applicable payment-troubled customers' programs appears to have helped many customers to cope successfully with their problems.

Consumer Complaints

Consumer complaints decreased by 14% from 6,738 in 1985 to 5,896 in 1986. This is indicative of a much longer term decline in complaints which were at a high of 11,409 in 1978. The total decrease since 1978 is 49%. Commission regulations require that customers seek to resolve problems directly with their utilities prior to registering a complaint with the Commission. In view of this, the Bureau's goal is to cause a steady decline in the number of consumer complaints by fostering improvements in utility complaint handling operations. The results achieved to date appear to validate the success of the Bureau's efforts. The Bureau will continue to concentrate its efforts in 1987 on reducing consumer complaints. (See Appendix C - Table 1 for the monthly volume of mediations and consumer complaints).

Inquiries and Opinions

There were 14,663 cases which required no follow-up beyond the initial contact during 1986. These cases involved requests for information which were handled at the time of contact, protests or questions related to rates, and referrals to other Commission offices and to appropriate agencies outside the P.U.C. See Appendix D for the distribution of inquiries and opinions by major problem categories.

III. NATURE OF BCS CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

The table below presents a comparison of major problems areas which were the source of consumer complaints in 1985 and 1986. The most common problems are billing and service. (See Table 1). Billing problems include complaints about confusing estimation methods, disputed usage, and inaccurately estimated bills. Service and people delivered service complaints relate to utility unresponsiveness, poor quality of service, and delays in repairs. The remaining complaints are distributed among credit and deposits, telephone service termination and rates and tariff complaints.

Table 1

PRIMARY PROBLEMS FOR CONSUMER COMPLAINTS: 1985-1986

| | 1985 | 1986 | Percent change 1985-1986 |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|-----------------------------|
| Billing/Payment | 46% | 47% | 2% |
| Credit/Deposits | 8% | 7% | -13% |
| Rates/Tariffs | 3% | 2% | -33% |
| Service | 18% | 23% | 28% |
| People Delivered Service (Repairs) | 11% | 11% | no change |
| Termination (telephone) | 14% | 10% | -29% |

IV. GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF BUREAU ACTIVITY

County by county variations in mediation requests and consumer complaints are depicted in Appendix E, Tables 1 and 2. The calculation of cases per 1,000 households makes the comparisons, which were previously based on cases per 10,000 households, more understandable. In general, the geographic distribution of cases does not conform to population density.

Mediation Requests

The average state-wide county mediation rate was 1.54 per 1,000 households in 1986. The number of mediation requests in 1986 ranged from 0 in Sullivan county to 3,283 in Allegheny County. (See Appendix E, Table 1). Lawrence County had the highest rate of mediation requests at 6.01 per 1,000 households. Other counties with high mediation rates were Allegheny (5.75), Beaver (4.54) and Dauphin (3.90). The extent of regulated utility service, the degree of urbanization, relative economic well-being, and the quality of company negotiations may be factors which affect mediation requests. High mediation rates tend to be clustered in the western part of the state and low rates are most common in rural counties.

Consumer Complaints

The average state-wide consumer complaint rate was 1.27 per 1,000 households in 1986. Consumer complaints varied from a low of 2 in several counties to a high of 1,313 in Allegheny County. (See Appendix E, Table 2). Complaint rates were the highest in Greene (3.27), Monroe (2.90), Allegheny (2.30), Blair (2.06) and Lackawanna (2.04).

V. TYPE OF UTILITIES INVOLVED

As in past years, almost all mediation cases in 1986 involved electric (53%) or gas companies (42%). (See Appendix F). Only 5% of mediation requests (510 cases) stemmed from threatened termination of water service. This industry distribution has been consistent over the past three years. All telephone complaints related to suspension and termination are classified by BCS as consumer complaints because they are not subject to arbitrated payment agreements based on ability to pay.

Telephone companies were involved in 35% of consumer complaints. Electric and gas companies accounted for 30% and 24% of all complaints respectively. The most significant changes from 1985 to 1986 involved the telephone industry which experienced a 28% decrease in consumer complaints. Also, the telephone industry's proportion of BCS consumer complaints decreased from 42% to 35%. These 1986 industry proportions are similar to the levels in 1984. Thus, it appears as though the increase from 1984 to 1985 caused by the impacts of Chapter 64 and the opening of the Commission's telecommunications hot-line were only temporary. The water industry accounted for 11% of the 1986 complaints. The Bureau will monitor the water industry more closely in 1987. There were relatively few complaints regarding other industries.

VI. MAJOR COMPANIES

The calculation of cases per thousand residential customers permits basic comparisons to be made among utility companies. (See Appendix G for the number of residential customers for the major electric, gas and telephone companies). Some variations may be attributed to dissimilar customer populations, geographic locations and utility rates. However, unusually high mediation and complaint rates have been shown to be reliable indicators of situations which require investigation. Thus, this information is used to expose patterns and trends which help to focus BCS research and compliance activities. The discussion below provides an overview of Bureau activity along with some preliminary findings. (See Appendix H for detailed statistics).

Consumer Complaints

The Commission has established a dispute process in which the companies play the primary role in handling consumer complaints. The Bureau normally does not become involved in consumer complaints until negotiations between the customer and the company fail. Thus, high rates of complaints to the Bureau can indicate that a company is unable to effectively resolve consumer problems. In addition, significant decreases in the frequency of problems over time may also indicate that a company is improving.

Gas Utilities

There was a 1% increase in complaints against the major gas utilities from 1985 to 1986 (See Table 2). This small increase follows three consecutive annual declines in complaints. It is hoped that the number of consumer complaints against gas companies will begin to drop again in 1987.

Table 2

Residential Consumer Complaints Major Gas Companies

(1985-1986)

| Company | 1985 | | 1986 | | 1985-1986 |
|--------------------------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|---------------------|
| | N | Complaint Rate | N | Complaint Rate | Percent Change in N |
| Columbia | 159 | .52 | 178 | .58 | 12% |
| Equitable | 414 | 1.84 | 479 | 2.13 | 16% |
| NFG | 159 | .86 | 81 | .44 | -49% |
| P.G.&W.-Gas | 68 | .64 | 88 | .82 | 29% |
| Peoples | 217 | .72 | 242 | .80 | 12% |
| UGI-Gas | 199 | 1.06 | 156 | .83 | -22% |
| Total (average rate) | 1216 | (.94) | 1224 | (.93) | (1%) |

Among the highlights of the past year:

- * NFG's 49% reduction in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986 is the largest in the gas industry. As a result, NFG's complaint rate is the industry's best in 1986. This is the first time since 1978 that the company has achieved this standing.
- * UGI's 22% decrease in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986 is the third annual decline in the past four years. Consequently, UGI's 1986 complaint rate is better than the industry average for the first time since 1983.
- * PG&W's 29% increase in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986 is the industry's largest and is the fourth increase in the last five years. PG&W's complaint rate ranking has dropped from first in the gas industry in 1984 to fourth in 1986.
- * Equitable's 16% increase in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986 is its fifth increase in the past six years. In addition, Equitable's complaint rate is more than twice as high as the next worst company's.

Electric Utilities

There were 8% fewer consumer complaints against major electric companies in 1986 than in 1985. This decrease follows two consecutive annual increases. As in the past, the complaint rate for major electric companies continues to be less than half of that for major gas companies. No clear explanation for this difference is available.

Table 3

Residential Consumer Complaints Major Electric Companies

(1985-1986)

| Company | 1985 | | 1986 | | 1985-1986 |
|-------------------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|---------------------|
| | N | Complaint Rate | N | Complaint Rate | Percent Change in N |
| Duquesne | 205 | .42 | 253 | .51 | 23% |
| Met. Ed. | 168 | .50 | 94 | .27 | -44% |
| Penelec | 261 | .56 | 206 | .44 | -21% |
| Penn Power | 44 | .39 | 35 | .31 | - 7% |
| P.P.&L. | 259 | .28 | 242 | .26 | - 9% |
| P.E. Co. | 537 | .44 | 488 | .40 | -30% |
| UGI-Luzerne | 27 | .54 | 19 | .38 | 19% |
| West Penn | 185 | .35 | 221 | .42 | |
| Total (average rate) | 1686 | (.44) | 1558 | (.37) | (- 8%) |

Among the preliminary findings:

- * Met.Ed.'s 44% decline in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986 is the first drop in three years. Met.Ed.'s 1986 complaint rate has become better than the industry average for the first time since 1983 and its ranking has improved to second among the eight major electric companies.
- * Penelec's 21% decrease in consumer complaints is its third decline in the past four years. Despite this positive trend, Penelec's complaint rate remains worse than the industry average for the eighth year in a row and its 1986 ranking is next to worst in the industry.
- * PP&L's 7% reduction in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986 led to a complaint rate which is the best in the industry for the second year in a row.
- * UGI-Luzerne's 30% decrease in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986 is the second largest decline in the industry. The company's 1986 complaint rate approaches the industry average for the first time since 1982.
- * Duquesne's 23% increase in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986 is the first in four years. Duquesne's complaint rate is the industry's worst for the first time since 1983.

Telephone Utilities

Complaints against major telephone companies decreased by 33% from 1985 to 1986 (See Table 4). This is largely a result of divestiture removing some areas from PUC jurisdiction. It is important to note that in 1986 21% of BCS telephone complaints involve non-residential service. The telephone industry has the highest incidence of non-residential complaints. (Statistics on BCS cases involving non-residential telephone accounts for 1985 and 1986 appear in Appendix A).

Table 4

Residential
Consumer Complaints
Major Telephone Companies

(1985-1986)

| Company | 1985 | | 1986 | | 1985-1986 |
|-------------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------------------------|
| | N | Complaint Rate | N | Complaint Rate | Percent Change in N |
| Bell | 1276 | .39 | 759 | .23 | -41% |
| Commonwealth | 78 | .62 | 79 | .62 | 1% |
| Continental# | 61 | 1.06 | 29 | .50 | -52% |
| General | 277 | .86 | 207 | .64 | -25% |
| Alltel | 122 | 1.20 | 116 | 1.14 | - 5% |
| United | 146 | .66 | 128 | .58 | -12% |
| Total (average rate) | 1960 | (.80) | 1318 | (.62) | (-33%) |

includes Quaker State

Among the highlights of the past year:

- * Bell's 41% decrease in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986 has enabled its 1986 complaint rate to remain the industry's best. In fact, Bell's complaint rate is more than twice as good as the next best telephone company.
- * Continental's 52% decline in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986 is the industry's most positive change. Continental's complaint rate ranking improved from next to worst in 1985 to next to best in the industry in 1986.
- * Despite a 5% decline in consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986, ALLTEL's complaint rate is the industry's worst for the fifth year in a row.

Mediation Requests

The Commission's service termination procedures protect utility customers' rights and provide companies with an effective collections tool. The Bureau normally intervenes at the customer's request only after direct negotiations between the customer and the company have failed. In 1985 and 1986, 20% of these customers had their service terminated prior to BCS intervention. The Bureau has once again targeted improvement in payment negotiations as a major point of emphasis in 1987.

The number of mediation requests per 1,000 overdue residential customers - the mediation rate - is used to permit comparisons among

companies. The mediation rate can be used as a preliminary evaluation of companies' effectiveness in making payment arrangements. Unusually high or low rates, or sizeable changes in rates can reflect company performance. The Bureau views significant increases in the number of mediation cases or high mediation rates as error signals which companies should address.

The volume of mediation requests has declined substantially. The reductions depicted in Tables 5 and 6 merely reflect reductions over the past five years which have totaled 52% for the major electric companies and 48% for the major gas companies. These reductions are directly attributable to the companies' increased attention to the quality of payment agreements. The stabilizing of residential bills appears to have contributed to the ability of companies to master effective payment negotiations. In addition, greatly increased programs for payment-troubled customers have improved the ability of many customers to pay their arrearages. Continued attention to the management of collections and to payment-troubled customers activities should, at the very least, stabilize mediation cases at the current level.

Gas Utilities

Mediation requests from gas customers decreased by 27% from 1985 to 1986. The Bureau is encouraged by this and has targeted the gas industry for further improvement in 1987.

Table 5

Residential Mediation Requests Major Gas Companies

(1985-1986)

| Company | 1985 | | 1986 | | 1985-1986 |
|-------------------------|------|----------------|------|----------------|---------------------|
| | N | Mediation Rate | N | Mediation Rate | Percent Change in N |
| Columbia | 977 | 2.72 | 536 | 1.53 | -45% |
| Equitable | 1528 | 4.65 | 1361 | 4.31 | -11% |
| National Fuel | 374 | 1.40 | 277 | .99 | -26% |
| P.G.&W.-Gas | 262 | 1.09 | 161 | 1.00 | -39% |
| Peoples | 1731 | 4.46 | 1086 | 2.63 | -37% |
| UGI-Gas | 646 | 2.23 | 625 | 2.39 | -3% |
| Total (average rate) | 5518 | (2.76) | 4046 | (2.14) | (-27%) |

Among the preliminary findings:

- * Columbia's 45% decrease in mediations from 1985 to 1986 is the most favorable change in the industry. This marks the third improvement for the company in the past four years.

- * PG&W's 39% reduction in mediations from 1985 to 1986 is the fourth consecutive annual improvement. PG&W's mediation rate is more than twice as good as the industry average.
- * NFG experienced a 26% decline in mediations from 1985 to 1986, which marks the fifth decrease in the past six years. Consequently, NFG's 1986 mediation rate is the industry's best for the first time since BCS began keeping records in 1978.
- * UGI's 3% decrease in the number of mediations marks the third consecutive annual decline. Despite this past year's numerical reduction, UGI's 1986 mediation rate rose and is now above the industry average. The increase in the rate is a statistical artifact which results from the company's reduction in overdue customers. The Bureau feels that this latter factor is significant and reflects a more positive effect on the overall collections picture for UGI.
- * Despite an 11% decrease in mediations from 1985 to 1986, Equitable's mediation rate is the industry's worst for the second year in a row.

Electric Utilities

The electric industry experienced a 32% decrease in mediation requests from 1985 to 1986. This is cause for continued optimism in that this is the second consecutive annual decrease by the electric industry. The mediation rate for the electric industry (.70) continues to be less than half of that for the gas industry (2.14). Heating customers have higher bills, and hence higher arrearages than do non-heating customers. The gas industry has a greater saturation of heating customers than does the electric industry. This explains, in part, why its customers have more serious payment problems. Consequently, the mediation rate is expected to be greater for the gas industry than for the electric industry.

Table 6
Residential
Mediation Requests
Major Electric Companies
(1985-1986)

| Company | 1985 | | 1986 | | 1985-1986 Percent Change in N |
|-------------------------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | N | Mediation Rate | N | Mediation Rate | |
| Duquesne Light | 1813 | 2.06 | 947 | 1.06 | - 48% |
| Met. Ed. | 407 | .67 | 140 | .24 | - 66% |
| Penelec | 117 | .11 | 255 | .28 | 118% |
| Penn Power | 396 | 1.38 | 315 | 1.37 | - 20% |
| P.P.&L. | 816 | .56 | 788 | .53 | - 3% |
| P.E.Co. | 2720 | .79 | 1753 | .55 | - 36% |
| UGI-Luzerne | 121 | 1.56 | 67 | .86 | - 45% |
| West Penn | 965 | .96 | 707 | .68 | - 27% |
| Total (average rate) | 7355 | (1.01) | 4972 | .70 | (- 32%) |

Among the highlights of the past year:

- * Met.Ed.'s 66% decline in mediations from 1985 to 1986 represents the greatest improvement by any major company. Met.Ed.'s mediation rate is now the industry's best for the first time since 1979.
- * Due to a 48% decrease in mediations from 1985 to 1986, Duquesne's mediation rate ranking improved so that, for the first time in six years, it is not the industry's worst.
- * Even though the number of cases involving Penelec increased 118% from 1985 to 1986, its 1986 mediation rate is more than twice as good as the industry average.
- * Despite a 20% decrease in mediations from 1985 to 1986, Penn Power's 1986 mediation rate, at twice the industry average, is the worst in 1986. Penn Power's reduction in its overdue customer population was proportional to the decrease in the number of mediations, thereby yielding a stable mediation rate. The company's continuing high mediation rate is a source of concern but the reduction in overdue customers, through better attention to negotiating payment agreements, merits favorable recognition.

VII. RESPONSE TIME

Response time is a problem indicator which quantifies a utility's responsiveness in resolving BCS complaints. Response time is the time span in days from the date of the Bureau's first contact with the company regarding a complaint to the date on which the company provides the Bureau with all of the information needed to resolve the complaint. In this report, response time is presented as the mean number of days for each company. Mediation requests and consumer complaints are reviewed separately. Significant improvements or declines in performance, as well as failure to improve on conspicuously bad performance, are the focus of the analysis here.

Mediation Response Time

Unresponsiveness in mediation cases reflects indecisiveness or mismanagement by the company about what should constitute an acceptable payment arrangement. Every day that a mediation case remains open and unresolved, the customer continues to accumulate a larger debt to the company. As a result, there is a strong, inherent economic incentive for the company to process mediation requests expeditiously so that a final disposition of the complaint can be determined. The statistics below seem to reflect this logic as company performance has improved and converged over time.

Electric Utilities

The major electric companies' overall average mediation response time is three days shorter in 1986 than in 1985. The Bureau views this favorably as only two companies took longer to respond in 1986 than in 1985.

Table 7

Mediation Response Time Major Electric Companies

| Company | Ave. Time in Days 1985 | Ave. Time in Days 1986 | 1985-1986 Change in Days |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Duquesne Light | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| Met.Ed. | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Penelec | 5 | 5 | no change |
| Penn Power | 4 | 2 | - 2 |
| P.P.&L. | 4 | 4 | no change |
| P.E.Co. | 15 | 6 | - 9 |
| UGI-Luzerne | 8 | 5 | - 3 |
| West Penn | 12 | 8 | - 4 |
| Ave. Response Time* | 9 | 6 | - 3 |

*Total days of response time divided by total cases

- * PECO's improvement was very dramatic as it reduced its mediation response time by nine days from 1985 to 1986. Consequently, PECO is now in line with the industry average.

Gas Utilities

The mediation response time for the major gas companies, as a group, remained the same from 1985 to 1986. However, three of the six major gas companies took longer to respond in 1986 than in 1985. Collectively, the major electric companies are three days quicker at responding to mediations in 1986 than the major gas companies. The less responsive of the major gas companies are encouraged to improve their responsiveness to mediations in 1987.

Table 8

Mediation Response Time Major Gas Companies

| Company | Ave. Time in Days 1985 | Ave. Time in Days 1986 | 1985-1986 Change in Days |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Columbia | 10 | 9 | - 1 |
| Equitable | 17 | 15 | - 2 |
| National Fuel | 7 | 6 | - 1 |
| P.G.&W. - Gas | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Peoples | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| UGI-Gas | 5 | 6 | 1 |
| Ave. Response Time* | 9 | 9 | no change |

*Total days of response time divided by total cases

- * NFG, Peoples, PG&W and UGI all have response times which are within the range of the major electric companies.
- * In spite of an improvement over 1985, Equitable's 1986 average mediation response time is six days longer than the next worst gas company. The company is almost solely responsible for the gas industry's slow response time in comparison to the electric industry. Equitable must redouble its efforts in order to bring its performance into the range of the other gas and electric companies.

Consumer Complaint Response Time

Unresponsiveness to BCS consumer complaints is an indication of inadequate complaint handling procedures. If a company is unresponsive to a BCS complaint, there is an indication that it may also be unresponsive in handling the large majority of customer complaints which never reach the Bureau. In many instances, detailed investigations have

verified the existence of the relationship between poor response time to the Bureau and unresponsiveness to customers. Responsiveness is an important component of the complaint handling process and responsive complaint handling by companies is one way for companies to reduce the number of customers who complain to the Bureau.

Electric Utilities

The major electric companies show a slight improvement in responsiveness to consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986. In light of the very good performance by two companies, the 1986 average response time of four weeks is too long. The Bureau will target this area for improvement in 1987.

Table 9

| Consumer Complaint Response Time Major Electric Companies | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Company | Ave. Time in Days 1985 | Ave. Time in Days 1986 | 1985-1986 Change in Days |
| Duquesne Light | 45 | 31 | -14 |
| Met.Ed. | 24 | 24 | no change |
| Penelec | 17 | 16 | - 1 |
| Penn Power | 24 | 11 | -13 |
| P.P.&L. | 21 | 21 | no change |
| P.E.Co. | 30 | 39 | 9 |
| UGI-Luzerne | 22 | 25 | 3 |
| West Penn | 50 | 26 | -24 |
| Ave. Response Time* | 29 | 28 | - 1 |

*Total days of response time divided by total cases

- * Penn Power and Penelec serve as very clear evidence that an average response time of about two weeks is a realistic goal for every company.
- * Duquesne and West Penn made substantial improvements in response time. They should focus resources on duplicating these improvements in 1987.
- * PECO had an average response time to consumer complaints which was over 11 days worse than the industry average. The company should make every effort in the future to reverse this undesirable trend.

Gas Utilities

In 1986, major gas companies as a group are quicker than the major electric companies at responding to consumer complaints. Even so,

the industry average of twenty-four days is not acceptable and is targeted by BCS for improvement in 1987.

Table 10

Consumer Complaint Response Time
Major Gas Companies

| Company | Ave. Time in Days 1985 | Ave. Time in Days 1986 | 1985-1986 Change in Days |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Columbia | 30 | 21 | - 9 |
| Equitable | 39 | 32 | - 7 |
| National Fuel | 14 | 10 | - 4 |
| P.G.&W. - Gas | 24 | 29 | 5 |
| Peoples | 26 | 21 | - 5 |
| UGI-Gas | 15 | 17 | 2 |
| Ave. Response Time* | 26 | 24 | - 2 |

*Total days of response time divided by total cases

* Four of the six major gas companies improved their responsiveness to consumer complaints in 1986. NFG is, by far, the most responsive major gas company. Its positive performance should serve as incentive for other companies which have failed to perform effectively.

* Despite an improvement of one week in responsiveness from 1985 to 1986, Equitable's average consumer complaint response time continues to be the industry's longest.

Telephone Utilities

The telephone industry showed slight improvement in responsiveness to consumer complaints from 1985 to 1986. The industry average of two weeks is acceptable. Most companies need to set goals for additional improvement in 1987.

Table 11

Consumer Complaint Response Time
Major Telephone Companies

| Company | Ave. Time in Days 1985 | Ave. Time in Days 1986 | 1985-1986 Change in Days |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ALLTEL | 16 | 7 | - 9 |
| Bell | 14 | 14 | no change |
| Commonwealth | 8 | 11 | 3 |
| Continental | 16 | 23 | 7 |
| General | 18 | 17 | - 1 |
| United | 17 | 14 | - 3 |
| Ave. Response Time* | 15 | 14 | - 1 |

*Total days of response time divided by total cases

- * ALLTEL more than halved its response time from 1985 to 1986. This very commendable effort sets a standard against which the other companies can set their goals.
- * The Bureau is concerned with the one week increase in Continental's response time. The company's response time is now over three times as long as the best company presented here.

VIII. CASE OUTCOME - JUSTIFIED PERCENT

Case outcome statistics are an indication of a utility's effectiveness in resolving customers' problems before they are brought to the Bureau's attention. Commission regulations require that electric, gas and telephone customers contact their utilities to resolve a complaint prior to seeking PUC intervention. Although exceptions are permitted under extenuating circumstances, the Bureau's policy is to accept complaints only from customers who have already been unable to work out their problems with the companies prior to contacting the Bureau.

Informal complaints to the Bureau represent customer appeals of disputed issues with utilities. These cases are a result of the inability of the utility and the customer to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution of a dispute. Once the Bureau is contacted, there are three possible outcome classifications: complaint justified, other and complaint unjustified. Recently, the method for determining the outcome variable was revised. In the past, the outcome variable was based on whether the BCS case concluded with the person's need being met by the company after BCS intervention. Specifically, complaints were "upheld" when the original problem was resolved as the customer requested; complaints were "dismissed" if the complaint was not resolved as the customer requested; or complaints were considered to be a "compromise" if there had been a partial solution to the problem. The new approach rewards companies which follow the regulations without punishing them for trying to accommodate the customer's needs.

The outcome variable will continue to be used as a means to identify utility effectiveness in dealing with customers prior to BCS intervention. However, beginning with consumer complaints opened on July 1, 1985, and mediation cases opened on January 1, 1986, this variable is used to identify whether or not correct procedures were followed by the utility at the time the customer contacted the company and prior to the time the customer contacted the Bureau. Specifically, a case will be considered "justified" in the appeal to BCS if it is found, prior to BCS intervention, that the company did not comply with PUC orders, regulations, reports, Secretarial Letters, tariffs, etc. "Unjustified" complaints are those cases in which the company has clearly demonstrated that correct procedures were followed prior to BCS intervention. "Other" complaints are those in which it is difficult to determine whether or not the customer was justified in the appeal to the Bureau. It is anticipated that the majority of cases will now fall into either the "justified" or "unjustified" category. This will allow the Bureau to more closely monitor company performance.

Mediation Justified Percent

The effectiveness of individual companies in negotiating payment arrangements when service termination is threatened is a major concern of the Bureau. In monitoring utility performance, the Bureau uses the percent of mediation cases justified to measure a company's

effectiveness in negotiating with its customers. When a company's negotiations prior to a customer's appeal to BCS are found to have failed to conform to long-standing regulatory requirements, the case is said to be "justified". The following analysis focuses on the effectiveness of the major electric and gas companies in negotiating payment arrangements.

Electric Utilities

The range of performance in the electric industry is quite broad. The major electric companies as a group were somewhat less effective in negotiating payment arrangements than the major gas companies in 1986.

Table 12

Justified Mediations Major Electric Companies

| Company | Justified Percent 1986 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Duquesne Light | 46% |
| Met.Ed. | 22% |
| Penelec | 27% |
| Penn Power | 31% |
| PP&L | 25% |
| P.E.Co. | 31% |
| UGI-Luzerne | 48% |
| West Penn | 37% |
| Average Justified Percent | 34% |

- * Met.Ed.'s percent of mediations which are "justified" is the electric industry's best. Penelec, PP&L and PECO also did quite well at independently negotiating for payment.
- * Duquesne Light and UGI-Luzerne had cases found to be justified more than twice as often as did Met.Ed. Those two companies must focus on identifying the reasons for their failure to perform effectively.

Gas Utilities

The gas companies exhibited an even broader range of performance, 14 to 42 percent, than the electric companies. There are clearly problems in the quality of some companies' performance.

Table 13

Justified Mediations
Major Gas Companies

| Company | Justified Percent 1986 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Columbia | 14% |
| Equitable | 42% |
| National Fuel | 24% |
| P.G.&W. - Gas | 39% |
| Peoples | 20% |
| UGI-Gas | 41% |
| <hr/> | |
| Average Justified Percent | 31% |

- * Columbia is by far the most effective company with less than one in seven mediation cases found to be justified.
- * Equitable is the least effective at customer payment negotiations in 1986. Its performance is a source of concern to the Bureau and should clearly be of concern to company managers as well.

Consumer Complaint Justified Percent

Substantially more consumer complaints than mediation cases are found to be "justified". There are several reasons for this. First, consumer complaints are very different from mediation requests in that they involve a multiplicity of problems and their resolution requires considerable expertise. In contrast, mediation cases involve a portion of the regulations which is procedurally less complex. In addition, mediations typically involve large amounts of money. It appears that this factor has led to a greater supply of managerial, technical and personnel resources being applied to payment negotiations. There appears to be clear opportunities for improvement by all companies in effectively handling consumer complaints.

Electric Utilities

The complaint handling performance of the major electric companies was much less widely scattered than in the mediation area. Electric companies as a group were more effective in consumer complaint handling than telephone companies in 1986 while less effective than gas companies.

Table 14

Justified Consumer Complaints
Major Electric Companies

| Company | Justified Percent 1986 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Duquesne Light | 41% |
| Met.Ed. | 35% |
| Penelec | 38% |
| Penn Power | 57% |
| P.P.&L. | 40% |
| P.E.Co. | 52% |
| UGI-Luzerne | 44% |
| West Penn | 50% |
| Average Justified Percent | 45% |

- * As with mediation cases, Met.Ed. is the most effective major electric company in handling consumer complaints.
- * Penn Power, PECO and West Penn have a percent of consumer complaints justified that is worse than the industry average in 1986. These companies must strive to improve their independent handling of complaints.

Gas Utilities

Of the three industries reviewed in this report, the gas companies as a group were marginally most effective in handling consumer complaints. The best companies were better than any in the electric industry.

Table 15

Justified Consumer Complaints
Major Gas Companies

| Company | Justified Percent 1986 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Columbia | 37% |
| Equitable | 56% |
| National Fuel | 41% |
| P.G.&W. - Gas | 29% |
| Peoples | 33% |
| UGI-Gas | 42% |
| Average Justified Percent | 44% |

- * PG&W is the most effective major gas company in consumer complaint handling in 1986. Its performance is somewhat better than any other gas company but substantially better than any electric company.
- * In contrast, Equitable is the least effective gas company. This result is consistent with Equitable's unacceptable performance in other areas.

Telephone Utilities

The telephone industry was the least effective of the three industries reviewed in this report in consumer complaint handling. This result is not unexpected in view of the relatively short period of time that Chapter 64 has been in effect.

Table 16

Justified Consumer Complaints Major Telephone Companies

| Company | Justified Percent 1986 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| ALLTEL | 28% |
| Bell | 45% |
| Commonwealth | 59% |
| Continental | 57% |
| General | 68% |
| United | 50% |
| Average Justified Percent | 49% |

- * ALLTEL is by far the most effective major telephone company in handling consumer complaints in 1986. Its performance far outstrips any other telephone company and is the best among all companies reviewed in this report while General is the least effective.
- * Similarly, General Telephone is by far the worst company, not only in the telephone industry, but among all companies reported here.

IX. COLLECTIONS STATISTICS

All regulated electric and gas companies must submit monthly residential service termination reports to the Bureau. These reports list the number of customers, number of overdue customers, amount of money overdue and various statistics related to service termination. The data from these reports form the Bureau's Collections Reporting System (CRS). The CRS is a unique system that gives the Bureau the ability to compare similar activities both among companies and over time. The BCS can chart an individual company's performance over a period of years as well as compare the individual company to others in its respective industry.

The total amount owed by residential gas and electric customers in an average month in 1986 was nearly \$100.4 million. This is virtually no change from 1985 (\$100.5 million). Much of this money will eventually be recovered, but delayed payments affect cash flow and have a direct impact on customers' rates. For these reasons, collections problem indicators are carefully monitored by the Commission staff.

Overdue Customers

In an average month in 1986 there were 849,059 residential accounts of major gas and electric companies in arrears. This aggregate figure represents an 8% decrease since 1984. (See Table 17). Comparisons between companies cannot be made on a purely numerical basis because of the substantial differences in the size of companies. The percent of customers is used instead to allow the relative performance of companies to be determined. This is important because companies which have lower percentages of customers in arrears have less risk of losing money to unpaid bills. The table below shows several clear findings.

Table 17
Percentage of Customers Overdue*

| Company | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | Percent Change 1984-1986 |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------------------------|
| Duquesne | 14.1% | 14.8% | 15.0% | 6% |
| Met. Ed. | 15.7 | 15.1 | 14.4 | - 8% |
| Penelec | 19.7 | 19.5 | 16.7 | -15% |
| Penn Power | 20.8 | 21.2 | 16.9 | -19% |
| P.P.&L. | 13.0 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 2% |
| P.E.Co.# | 25.8 | 23.7 | 21.4 | -17% |
| UGI-Luzerne | 12.6 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 3% |
| West Penn | 15.3 | 15.9 | 16.4 | 7% |
| Columbia | 10.9 | 9.9 | 9.6 | -12% |
| Equitable | 12.7 | 12.2 | 11.7 | - 8% |
| N.F.G. | 12.2 | 12.1 | 12.7 | 4% |
| P.G.&W. | 12.7 | 13.2 | 12.5 | - 2% |
| Peoples | 11.2 | 10.8 | 11.4 | 2% |
| UGI-Gas | 12.6 | 12.8 | 11.6 | - 8% |
| Overall Avg. | 16.8% | 16.4% | 15.5% | - 8% |
| Percent Change | | | | |

* Overdue customers/total customers

Combined electric and gas

- * As has always been the case, the major gas and electric companies show a substantial range in the percentage of overdue customers in 1986, from a high of 21.4% for PECO to a low of 9.6% for Columbia Gas. PECO's percentage of overdue customers has been the highest since the Bureau began reporting this data in 1980, while Columbia's has been the lowest since 1984.
- * Overall, eight of the fourteen major electric and gas companies showed fewer overdue residential accounts in 1986 than in 1984. The overall reduction was 8% from 1984 to 1986. Penn Power, PECO, Penelec and Columbia experienced the largest declines in overdue customers.
- * No major electric or gas company had a significant increase in overdue customers from 1984 to 1986. West Penn's 7% increase was the largest. The Bureau is encouraged to see a declining overdue customer population for the major companies.

Weighted Arrearage

The amount of money owed by overdue residential customers is illustrative of the payment problems faced by individual companies. These amounts vary substantially from company to company. For example, the amount of money owed in an average month of 1986 ranged from \$619,000 for UGI-Luzerne to more than \$31.4 million for PECO. While this is enlightening, the total dollars figure explains little about the role of individual customers in determining total amounts owed. Rather it is statistics which reflect individual arrearages which provides information on the true extent of payment problems.

Weighted arrearages represent the number of average bills contained in an average arrearage. Thus, the lower the weighted arrearage score, the better the collections system performance. Companies can be compared using this measure because the differences in arrearage sizes which are due to differences in the size of bills are eliminated. Weighted arrearages permit comparisons of collections efficiency by adjusting arrearages to compensate for differences in customer bills. These statistics are available monthly, so comparisons of both collections systems and trends in collections efficiency are possible far more frequently than if write-offs ratios, which are only available annually, are used. Also, weighted arrearages are not subject to short run distortions caused by accounting and management practices, as is the case with write-offs ratios. To sum up, this statistic appears to be a useful measure for both regulators and collections systems managers to use in comparing the collections performance between companies and of individual companies over time. (Average usage and average bills are presented in Appendix I, Tables 1 and 2 and average arrearages are presented in Appendix J).

Table 18
Weighted Arrearage*

| Company | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | Percent Change 1984-1986 |
|----------------|------|------|------|-----------------------------|
| Duquesne | 2.45 | 2.75 | 3.04 | 24% |
| Met. Ed. | 1.82 | 1.77 | 1.87 | 3% |
| Penelec | 2.23 | 2.81 | 2.08 | - 7% |
| Penn Power | 1.28 | 1.31 | 1.21 | - 5% |
| P.P.&L. | 1.54 | 1.62 | 1.81 | 18% |
| P.E.Co.# | 1.98 | 1.85 | 1.86 | - 6% |
| UGI-Luzerne | 1.78 | 1.83 | 1.82 | 2% |
| West Penn | 1.59 | 1.64 | 1.68 | 6% |
| Columbia | 1.99 | 1.87 | 2.01 | 1% |
| Equitable | 3.60 | 3.18 | 2.86 | - 21% |
| N.F.G. | 2.17 | 2.12 | 2.36 | 9% |
| P.G.&W. | 1.91 | 2.24 | 2.17 | 14% |
| Peoples | 3.02 | 2.71 | 2.91 | - 4% |
| UGI-Gas | 1.68 | 1.99 | 1.86 | 11% |
| Overall Ave. | 1.91 | 1.91 | 1.92 | |
| Percent change | | | | 1% |

*Average arrearage divided by average bills

#Combined electric and gas

Among the preliminary findings:

- * Weighted arrearage scores increased by 1% from 1984 to 1986 for the major electric and gas companies as a group.
- * Five major companies, Penelec, Penn Power, PECO., Equitable and Peoples showed lower weighted arrearage scores in 1986 than in 1984. Equitable has been replaced by Duquesne as the company which maintains the highest score.
- * Penn Power and UGI-Gas had the best weighted arrearage scores in their respective industries in 1986.

Termination of Service

Service termination is expensive in many regards. It costs a great deal to negotiate unsuccessful payment agreements, make pre-termination contacts and to terminate service. The social costs of termination are difficult to quantify but are obvious. In view of the costs involved, service termination is the one area where some sort of carefully considered standardization from company to company should exist.

The goal of companies should be to decrease the number of service terminations through non-coercive collections techniques. (See Table 19 for individual company performance).

Table 19
Number of Service Terminations

| | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | Percent Change 1984-1986 |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Duquesne | 4,692 | 3,967 | 1,998 | - 57% |
| Met. Ed. | 2,757 | 2,189 | 1,929 | - 30% |
| Penelec | 2,885 | 799 | 1,643 | - 43% |
| Penn Power | 991 | 1,073 | 1,053 | 6% |
| P.P.&L. | 6,709 | 5,741 | 5,413 | - 19% |
| P.E.Co.# | 33,649 | 41,853 | 31,345 | - 7% |
| UGI-Luzerne | 757 | 694 | 691 | - 9% |
| West Penn | 6,068 | 5,838 | 6,103 | 1% |
| Columbia | 5,693 | 4,436 | 2,979 | - 48% |
| Equitable | 4,449 | 4,887 | 3,858 | - 13% |
| NFG | 4,915 | 4,093 | 3,934 | - 20% |
| P.G.&W. | 2,155 | 1,760 | 1,352 | - 37% |
| Peoples | 3,697 | 4,577 | 3,702 | no change |
| UGI-Gas | 5,373 | 4,537 | 4,157 | - 23% |
| Total | 84,790 | 86,444 | 70,157 | - 17% |

Combined electric and gas

Among the preliminary findings:

- * The overall trend for the major electric and gas companies in the number of service terminations showed a decrease of 17% from 1984 to 1986. Collectively, the overdue customer population declined by 8% over the same period. The reduction in terminations is particularly encouraging because it substantially exceeds the reduction in overdue customers.
- * In the electric industry, only Penn Power and West Penn terminated more residential customers in 1986 than in 1984.
- * PECO's 25% reduction in terminations from 1985 to 1986 is very encouraging. In fact, PECO's total number of terminations is at its lowest since 1982.

Termination Rate

Termination rate is calculated by dividing the number of terminations by the monthly average number of residential customers. Termination rate is a statistic which enables BCS and companies to

compare termination practices between companies without regard to differences in company size. It also allows the Bureau to monitor individual companies over a period of time. Companies which have a termination rate that is substantially worse than their industry mean will be investigated by the Bureau.

Table 20

Termination Rate*

| Company | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | Percent Change 1984-1986 |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------------|
| Duquesne | 0.96% | 0.80% | 0.40% | - 58% |
| Met. Ed. | 0.83% | 0.65% | 0.57% | - 31% |
| Penelec | 0.62% | 0.17% | 0.35% | - 44% |
| Penn Power | 0.88% | 0.95% | 0.93% | 6% |
| P.P.&L. | 0.73% | 0.62% | 0.58% | - 21% |
| P.E.Co.# | 2.80% | 3.44% | 2.54% | - 9% |
| UGI-Luzerne | 1.53% | 1.39% | 1.38% | - 10% |
| West Penn | 1.16% | 1.11% | 1.16% | no change |
| Columbia | 1.88% | 1.46% | 0.98% | - 48% |
| Equitable | 1.96% | 2.17% | 1.72% | - 12% |
| N.F.G. | 2.66% | 1.66% | 1.26% | - 20% |
| P.G.&W. | 2.04% | 1.66% | 1.26% | - 38% |
| Peoples | 1.24% | 1.53% | 1.22% | - 1% |
| UGI-Gas | 2.86% | 2.41% | 2.21% | - 23% |
| Overall Ave. | 1.57% | 1.59% | 1.28% | - 18% |
| Percent Change | | | | |

*Annual terminations as a percentage of the monthly average number of residential customers

#Combined electric and gas

- * Collectively, the major electric and gas companies terminated a smaller proportion of residential customers in 1986 than in 1984.
- * Penelec and Columbia terminated the lowest ratio of customers in their respective industries in 1986. In contrast, PECO and UGI-Gas terminated the greatest percentage of customers. Thus, while these two terminated substantially fewer customers in 1986 than in 1984, they are still terminating customers at a comparative rate far above average. The Bureau is concerned about PECO and UGI-Gas and has targeted their termination practices for investigation.
- * Penn Power was the only major company to terminate a greater percentage of residential customers in 1986 than in 1984.

* Duquesne and Columbia showed the largest decrease in the percentage of terminated customers in their respective industries from 1984 to 1986.

Uncollectible Accounts

The most commonly used measure of collections system performance is the proportion of accounts written-off as uncollectible to revenues, the "write-offs ratio." In order to report a statistic that is easier to read, comprehend and compare, BCS is changing the raw score ratio of write-offs to revenues to the percentage of residential billings written off as uncollectible. The statistics in Table 21 use residential gross write-offs. Write-offs and revenues can be traced to both residential and non-residential service. With the focus of this report being residential accounts, a percentage of residential billings written off as uncollectible is the best available measure of performance in collecting bills. However, while revenues are commonly reported according to service class, not all companies distinguished write-offs in this way prior to 1983. Thus, it is not possible to compare these residential write-offs over long periods.

Collectively, the major electric and gas companies showed a 13% increase in the percentage of billings written off from 1984 to 1986. This negative trend is of concern. (Appendix K provides a listing of net total write-offs as a percentage of total revenues from 1984 to 1986. An extensive discussion of this statistic can be found in the Bureau's 1983 Report "Utility Payment Problems: The Measurement and Evaluation of Responses to Customer Nonpayment").

Table 21

Percentage of Residential Billings Written Off As Uncollectible

| Company | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | Percent Change 1984-1986 | Bills Percent 83-85 | 84 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----|
| Duquesne | 1.44% | 1.37% | 1.59% | 10% | 12% | -1% |
| Met. Ed. | 0.91% | 1.07% | 1.06% | 16% | 6% | - |
| Penelec | 1.14% | 1.27% | 1.66% | 46% | 12% | 0 |
| Penn Power | 0.46% | 0.48% | 0.49% | 7% | 8% | - |
| P.P.&L. | 0.97% | 1.01% | 1.17% | 21% | 11% | - |
| P.E.Co.# | 1.63% | 1.84% | 1.91% | 17% | 15% | - |
| UGI-Luzerne | 0.67% | 0.38% | 0.38% | -43% | -5% | - |
| West Penn | 0.53% | 0.59% | 0.57% | 8% | 3% | - |
| Columbia | 1.34% | 1.49% | 1.92% | 43% | 2% | - |
| Equitable | 2.24% | 3.76% | 3.24% | 45% | 3% | - |
| N.F.G. | 1.42% | 1.69% | 1.36% | -4% | -8% | - |
| P.G.&W. | 1.53% | 1.56% | 1.73% | 13% | -2% | - |
| Peoples | 1.12% | 1.16% | 1.11% | -1% | 1% | - |
| UGI-Gas | 1.79% | 1.69% | 1.80% | 1% | 2% | - |
| Overall Ave. Percent Change #Combined electric and gas | 1.38% | 1.48% | 1.56% | 13% | | |

- * UGI-Luzerne, NFG and Peoples were the only major electric and gas companies to show a reduction in the percentage of residential billings written off as uncollectible from 1984 to 1986. On the other hand, Penelec and Equitable experienced the largest increases in their respective industries.
- * UGI-Luzerne and Peoples had the smallest percentage while PECO and Equitable had the largest percentage of residential billings written off as uncollectible in 1986 in their respective industries.
- * Overall, UGI-Luzerne ranks as the best and Equitable ranks as the worst among the major electric and gas companies in consideration of both the 1986 percentage of billings written off as uncollectible and the change in the percentage from 1984 to 1986.

X. CONCLUSION

This report has provided an overview and a general analysis of BCS complaint handling activity during 1986. The consumer complaint and mediation rates are quantitative problem indicators related to utility company performance in various customer services areas. Response time and case outcome-justified percent are more sophisticated statistical performance measures which reflect a company's responsiveness and effectiveness in BCS cases. These measures are included in the Activity Report for the second time. Once again, this represents an increased emphasis on improvement in all areas of complaint handling as well as a goal of making assessments of utility performance generally available.

The Bureau has consistently sought to improve the customer services performance of utility companies. Towards this end, the Bureau has pursued the goal of reducing the number of both mediations and consumer complaints. In 1986, the Bureau met this goal for mediation requests because of the improvements made by both the gas and the electric industries. Also, consumer complaints decreased by 14%, a result which is encouraging because it follows two slight annual increases. The reduction in 1986 is largely attributable to the smaller number of cases against the telephone industry. In addition, some companies made dramatic improvements in responsiveness. A number also proved better able to handle customer problems effectively without Bureau involvement. On the other hand, a review of collections statistics shows that most major electric and gas companies have experienced an increase in their percentage of residential billings written off as uncollectible.

Overall, the utility collections picture in Pennsylvania showed stability from 1984 to 1986. Improvements as indicated by some collections statistics offset the deteriorations as indicated by other statistics. On the positive side in 1986, fewer customers were in arrears and terminations decreased. On the negative side, weighted arrearages increased and the percentage of residential billings written off as uncollectible increased. Although collections results are once again mixed, the Bureau is encouraged by the collections performance of the major gas and electric companies in 1986 and looks for companies to improve in 1987.

There are numerous examples throughout this report of results which point to opportunities for companies to make significant improvements in customer services. Individual company performance varied greatly in 1986. Some companies have done a better job of effectively managing and running their customer services operations. These companies include Met.Ed., PP&L, Columbia, NFG and Bell. The best of these is Met.Ed. as indicated by the percent of consumer complaints justified, the mediation rate, and the percent of mediations justified. The efforts of the better companies warrant careful study by those companies which did not perform well. At the same time, no company came close to being the best in all areas. Thus, the better companies should resolve to improve in the areas where they are only average or even below average. On the other hand, the Bureau is very concerned about other companies which have generally ineffective customer services. These companies are PECO, Duquesne, Equitable and General Telephone. They are all targeted

for close scrutiny in 1987. The worst of these is Equitable which had the poorest performance according to the consumer complaint response time, the percent of consumer complaints justified, the mediation rate, the mediation response time, the percent of mediations justified and the percentage of residential billings written off as uncollectible.

The Bureau attempts to assist company efforts at self-monitoring. In addition to periodic reviews of company procedures, the Bureau provides most of the data used in the preparation of this report to companies on a quarterly basis. Companies which seek to improve performance and confront problems can then determine causes for problems and respond appropriately long before the BCS becomes concerned.

There is sufficient evidence to show that companies which make a sincere effort to improve complaint handling have been successful. The Bureau will continue to criticize those companies which show declines in the measures of customer services performance that are presented in this report. The objective of the criticism is to encourage companies to undertake efforts which will improve their complaint handling.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Distribution of Commercial Cases

| Company | 1985 | | 1986 | |
|--------------|------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|
| | Mediations | Consumer Complaints | Mediations | Consumer Complaints |
| Duquesne | 145 | 40 | 203 | 39 |
| Met. Ed. | 19 | 18 | 20 | 16 |
| Penelec | 25 | 43 | 16 | 29 |
| Penn Power | 3 | 8 | 4 | 6 |
| PP&L | 73 | 47 | 64 | 39 |
| PECO | 68 | 72 | 80 | 58 |
| UGI-Luz. | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| West Penn | 42 | 29 | 42 | 43 |
| Columbia | 15 | 11 | 5 | 7 |
| Equitable | 23 | 22 | 37 | 28 |
| NFG | 5 | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| PG&W-Gas | 0 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Peoples | 10 | 14 | 13 | 16 |
| UGI-Gas | 13 | 10 | 9 | 12 |
| ALLTEL | | 16 | | 23 |
| Bell | | 214 | | 234 |
| Commonwealth | | 13 | | 11 |
| Continental | | 22 | | 12 |
| General | | 58 | | 48 |
| United | | 29 | | 16 |

APPENDIX B

BCS Complaints - 1986
Residential-Commercial

| <u>MEDIATIONS</u> <u>INDUSTRY</u> | Total Mediations | Residential Mediations | % Residential Mediations | Commercial Mediations | % Commercial Mediations |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Electric | 5,411 | 4,979 | 92% | 432 | 8% |
| Gas | 4,257 | 4,184 | 98% | 73 | 2% |
| Water | 510 | 502 | 98% | 8 | 0% |
| Other | 3 | 3 | 100% | 0 | 0% |
| Total (%) | 10,181 | 9,668 | 95% | 513 | 5% |

| <u>CONSUMER COMPLAINTS</u> <u>INDUSTRY</u> | Total c.c. | Residential c.c. | % Residential c.c. | Commercial c.c. | % Commercial c.c. |
|---|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Electric | 1,791 | 1,560 | 87% | 231 | 13% |
| Gas | 1,383 | 1,301 | 94% | 82 | 6% |
| Telephone | 2,038 | 1,606 | 79% | 432 | 21% |
| Water | 651 | 599 | 92% | 52 | 8% |
| Other | 33 | 25 | 76% | 8 | 24% |
| Total (%) | 5,896 | 5,091 | 86% | 805 | 14% |

APPENDIX C

TABLE 1

Monthly Volume

| | Mediation Requests | | Consumer Complaints | |
|-----------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| | <u>1985</u> | <u>1986</u> | <u>1985</u> | <u>1986</u> |
| January | 675 | 369 | 621 | 517 |
| February | 553 | 281 | 529 | 468 |
| March | 753 | 375 | 612 | 524 |
| April | 1,574 | 1,336 | 543 | 483 |
| May | 1,548 | 1,217 | 560 | 449 |
| June | 1,396 | 1,177 | 457 | 441 |
| July | 1,501 | 1,193 | 566 | 515 |
| August | 1,491 | 1,121 | 579 | 485 |
| September | 1,455 | 1,129 | 626 | 550 |
| October | 1,648 | 1,013 | 640 | 549 |
| November | 1,172 | 675 | 509 | 495 |
| December | 506 | 295 | 496 | 420 |
| TOTAL | 14,272 | 10,181 | 6,738 | 5,896 |

TABLE 2

BCS ACTIVITY

| | <u>Mediations</u> | <u>Consumer Complaints</u> | <u>Inquiries</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------|-------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1978 | 11,749 | 11,441 | 7,095 | 30,285 |
| 1979 | 14,976 | 10,207 | 42,000* | 61,183 |
| 1980 | 15,006 | 7,454 | 15,229 | 37,689 |
| 1981 | 16,599 | 6,762 | 20,636 | 43,997 |
| 1982 | 19,603 | 7,084 | 23,553 | 50,240 |
| 1983 | 15,896 | 6,563 | 20,128 | 42,587 |
| 1984 | 16,014 | 6,603 | 18,808 | 41,425 |
| 1985 | 14,272 | 6,738 | 26,144 | 47,154 |
| 1986 | 10,181 | 5,896 | 14,663 | 30,740 |
| TOTAL | 134,296 | 68,748 | 188,256 | 391,300 |
| Ave. | 14,922 | 7,639 | 20,917 | 43,478 |

*Includes 27,000 TMI Protests

APPENDIX D

Major Problem Categories
for Inquiries and Opinions

| 1986 | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| Category | Number | Percent |
| Referral to Company | 6,435 | 44% |
| Referral to Other BCS/ Other Bureau | 844 | 6% |
| Referral to Other Agency | 1,821 | 12% |
| Specific Information | | 19% |
| Request | 2,746 | 4% |
| Rate Protests and Opinions | 666 | 2% |
| Opinions - General | 314 | |
| Equal Access (E.A.) and Pre-subscription (P.S.) | 65 | |
| Quality of Service - E.A. and P.S. | 9 | |
| Telephone Resellers | 9 | |
| Long Distance Carrier- Choice | 100 | |
| COCOT | 175 | |
| Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) - Bell | 42 | 3% |
| Access Charges | 22 | |
| Internal Wiring | 2 | |
| CPE-Independents | 7 | |
| Local Service Options | 7 | |
| Other | 1,399 | 10% |
| Total | 14,663 | |

APPENDIX E

Table 1

MEDIATION REQUESTS
1986

PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

| | <u>N</u> | <u>C/1,000</u> | | <u>N</u> | <u>C/1,000</u> |
|----------------|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------|----------------|
| 01. ADAMS | 7 | .29 | 35. LACKAWANNA | 127 | 1.42 |
| 02. ALLEGHENY | 3283 | 5.75 | 36. LANCASTER | 206 | 1.59 |
| 03. ARMSTRONG | 80 | 2.58 | 37. LAWRENCE | 238 | 6.01 |
| 04. BEAVER | 341 | 4.54 | 38. LEBANON | 13 | .32 |
| 05. BEDFORD | 11 | .56 | 39. LEHIGH | 148 | 1.39 |
| 06. BERKS | 153 | 1.28 | 40. LUZERNE | 295 | 2.17 |
| 07. BLAIR | 192 | 3.69 | 41. LYCOMING | 47 | .99 |
| 08. BRADFORD | 15 | .60 | 42. MCKEAN | 27 | 1.25 |
| 09. BUCKS | 487 | 2.94 | 43. MERCER | 184 | 3.86 |
| 10. BUTLER | 124 | 2.34 | 44. MIFFLIN | 19 | 1.02 |
| 11. CAMBRIA | 169 | 2.52 | 45. MONROE | 72 | 1.93 |
| 12. CAMERON | 3 | .68 | 46. MONTGOMERY | 425 | 1.83 |
| 13. CARBON | 19 | .82 | 47. MONTOUR | 9 | 1.51 |
| 14. CENTRE | 32 | .81 | 48. NORTHAMPTON | 111 | 1.32 |
| 15. CHESTER | 161 | 1.46 | 49. NORTHUMBERLAND | 72 | 1.76 |
| 16. CLARION | 10 | .58 | 50. PERRY | 20 | 1.35 |
| 17. CLEARFIELD | 39 | 1.17 | 51. PHILADELPHIA | 649 | .95 |
| 18. CLINTON | 11 | .69 | 52. PIKE | 10 | .56 |
| 19. COLUMBIA | 40 | 1.67 | 53. POTTER | 8 | .74 |
| 20. CRAWFORD | 21 | .53 | 54. SCHUYLKILL | 63 | .97 |
| 21. CUMBERLAND | 77 | 1.18 | 55. SNYDER | 4 | .34 |
| 22. DAUPHIN | 373 | 3.90 | 56. SOMERSET | 13 | .39 |
| 23. DELAWARE | 305 | 1.51 | 57. SULLIVAN | 0 | .00 |
| 24. ELK | 9 | .55 | 58. SUSQUEHANNA | 11 | .64 |
| 25. ERIE | 173 | 1.67 | 59. TIOGA | 7 | .41 |
| 26. FAYETTE | 226 | 3.68 | 60. UNION | 6 | .54 |
| 27. FOREST | 2 | .23 | 61. VENANGO | 33 | 1.24 |
| 28. FRANKLIN | 8 | .19 | 62. WARREN | 17 | .78 |
| 29. FULTON | 1 | .19 | 63. WASHINGTON | 258 | 3.18 |
| 30. GREENE | 40 | 2.67 | 64. WAYNE | 40 | 2.04 |
| 31. HUNTINGDON | 18 | 1.07 | 65. WESTMORELAND | 414 | 2.80 |
| 32. INDIANA | 41 | 1.26 | 66. WYOMING | 10 | .94 |
| 33. JEFFERSON | 27 | 1.31 | 67. YORK | 119 | 1.01 |
| 34. JUNIATA | 6 | .77 | | | |

Mean = 1.54

N = Number Of Cases

C/1,000 = Cases Per 1,000 Housing Units

APPENDIX E

Table 2

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS
1986

PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

| | <u>N</u> | <u>C/1,000</u> | | <u>N</u> | <u>C/1,000</u> |
|----------------|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------|----------------|
| 01. ADAMS | 32 | 1.31 | 35. LACKAWANNA | 183 | 2.04 |
| 02. ALLEGHENY | 1313 | 2.30 | 36. LANCASTER | 131 | 1.01 |
| 03. ARMSTRONG | 59 | 1.90 | 37. LAWRENCE | 50 | 1.26 |
| 04. BEAVER | 93 | 1.24 | 38. LEBANON | 30 | .74 |
| 05. BEDFORD | 25 | 1.26 | 39. LEHIGH | 74 | .70 |
| 06. BERKS | 92 | .77 | 40. LUZERNE | 192 | 1.41 |
| 07. BLAIR | 107 | 2.06 | 41. LYCOMING | 60 | 1.26 |
| 08. BRADFORD | 23 | .91 | 42. MCKEAN | 27 | 1.25 |
| 09. BUCKS | 177 | 1.07 | 43. MERCER | 75 | 1.57 |
| 10. BUTLER | 82 | 1.55 | 44. MIFFLIN | 27 | 1.45 |
| 11. CAMBRIA | 94 | 1.40 | 45. MONROE | 108 | 2.90 |
| 12. CAMERON | 2 | .45 | 46. MONTGOMERY | 206 | .89 |
| 13. CARBON | 20 | .86 | 47. MONTOUR | 2 | .33 |
| 14. CENTRE | 44 | 1.11 | 48. NORTHAMPTON | 60 | .71 |
| 15. CHESTER | 84 | .76 | 49. NORTHUMBERLAND | 64 | 1.57 |
| 16. CLARION | 28 | 1.63 | 50. PERRY | 28 | 1.89 |
| 17. CLEARFIELD | 53 | 1.60 | 51. PHILADLPHIA | 437 | .64 |
| 18. CLINTON | 13 | .81 | 52. PIKE | 30 | 1.69 |
| 19. COLUMBIA | 25 | 1.05 | 53. POTTER | 4 | .37 |
| 20. CRAWFORD | 46 | 1.17 | 54. SCHUYLKILL | 52 | .80 |
| 21. CUMBERLAND | 90 | 1.37 | 55. SNYDER | 16 | 1.37 |
| 22. DAUPHIN | 184 | 1.92 | 56. SOMERSET | 37 | 1.11 |
| 23. DELAWARE | 147 | .73 | 57. SULLIVAN | 3 | .62 |
| 24. ELK | 15 | .92 | 58. SUSQUEHANNA | 17 | .99 |
| 25. ERIE | 145 | 1.40 | 59. TIOGA | 21 | 1.24 |
| 26. FAYETTE | 77 | 1.25 | 60. UNION | 15 | 1.34 |
| 27. FOREST | 2 | .23 | 61. VENANGO | 39 | 1.46 |
| 28. FRANKLIN | 35 | .82 | 62. WARREN | 26 | 1.19 |
| 29. FULTON | 9 | 1.70 | 63. WASHINGTON | 155 | 1.91 |
| 30. GREENE | 49 | 3.27 | 64. WAYNE | 38 | 1.94 |
| 31. HUNTINGDON | 18 | 1.07 | 65. WESTMORELAND | 200 | 1.35 |
| 32. INDIANA | 28 | .86 | 66. WYOMING | 18 | 1.69 |
| 33. JEFFERSON | 22 | 1.06 | 67. YORK | 183 | 1.56 |
| 34. JUNIATA | 8 | 1.03 | | | |

Mean = 1.27

N = Number Of Cases

C/1,000 = Cases Per 1,000 Housing Units

APPENDIX F

Type of Industry

| <u>INDUSTRY</u> | <u>MEDIATION REQUESTS</u> | | <u>CONSUMER COMPLAINTS</u> | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| | <u>1985</u> | <u>1986</u> | <u>1985</u> | <u>1986</u> |
| Electric | 54% | 53% | 29% | 30% |
| Gas | 41% | 42% | 20% | 24% |
| Telephone | - | - | 42% | 35% |
| Other | 5% | 5% | 9% | 11% |

APPENDIX G

Monthly Average Number of
Residential Customers - 1986

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Duquesne | 497,634 |
| Met.Ed. | 345,148 |
| Penelec | 463,064 |
| Penn Power | 113,316 |
| PP&L | 936,479 |
| PECO | 1,234,725 |
| UGI-Luzerne | 50,220 |
| West Penn | 525,946 |
| <hr/> | |
| Major Electric-Total | 4,161,532 |
| | |
| Columbia | 304,896 |
| Equitable | 224,567 |
| NFG | 184,630 |
| PG&W-Gas | 107,449 |
| Peoples | 302,440 |
| UGI-Gas | 187,740 |
| <hr/> | |
| Major Gas-Total | 1,311,722 |
| | |
| ALLTEL | 101,770 |
| Bell | 3,271,836 |
| Commonwealth | 126,765 |
| Continental* | 57,596 |
| General | 322,524 |
| United | 220,306 |
| <hr/> | |
| Major Telephone-Total** | 4,100,797 |

*Includes Quaker State

**Same as 1985 data - 64.201 data for 1986 not available at publication time.

APPENDIX H

TABLE 1

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS BY ELECTRIC COMPANIES 1982 - 1986

| | NUMBER OF CASES | | | COMPLAINT RATE | | | PERCENT CHANGES IN N | | | PERCENT CHANGE IN N 1982 - 1986 | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|------|----------------------|------|------|------------------------------------|------|-----|------|------|-----|
| | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | | 1986 | | | | |
| DUQUESNE | 330 | 303 | 244 | 205 | 253 | .67 | .61 | .50 | .42 | .51 | - 8 | -19 | - 16 | 23 | -23 |
| MET. ED. | 173 | 133 | 164 | 168 | 94 | .53 | .41 | .49 | .50 | .27 | -23 | 23 | 2 | - 44 | -46 |
| PENELEC | 436 | 262 | 240 | 261 | 206 | .94 | .56 | .51 | .56 | .44 | -40 | - 8 | 9 | - 21 | -53 |
| PENN POWER | 48 | 50 | 37 | 44 | 35 | .43 | .45 | .33 | .39 | .31 | 4 | -26 | 19 | - 20 | -27 |
| P. P. & L. | 434 | 249 | 331 | 259 | 242 | .48 | .27 | .36 | .28 | .26 | -43 | 33 | - 22 | - 7 | -44 |
| PECO | 325 | 259 | 427 | 537 | 488 | .28 | .22 | .36 | .44 | .40 | -20 | 65 | 26 | - 9 | 50 |
| UGI - I.UZ. | 23 | 26 | 33 | 27 | 19 | .47 | .53 | .67 | .54 | .38 | 13 | 27 | - 18 | - 30 | -17 |
| WEST PENN | 281 | 223 | 200 | 185 | 221 | .55 | .43 | .38 | .35 | .42 | -21 | -10 | - 8 | 19 | -21 |
| TOTAL | 2,050 | 1,505 | 1,676 | 1,686 | 1,558 | .54 | .44 | .45 | .44 | .37 | -27 | 11 | 1 | - 8 | -24 |
| RATE/% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1982 - 1986 (AVE. RATE) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

1982 - 1986 (AVE. RATE)

.45

APPENDIX H

TABLE 2

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS BY GAS COMPANIES 1982 - 1986

| | NUMBER OF CASES | | | COMPLAINT RATE | | | PERCENT CHANGES IN N | | | PERCENT CHANGE IN N 1982 - 1986 | | | | | |
|------------|-----------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|------|----------------------|------|------|------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | | 1986 | | | | |
| COLUMBIA | 282 | 286 | 242 | 159 | 178 | .93 | .94 | .80 | .52 | .58 | 1 | -15 | -34 | 12 | -37 |
| EQUITABLE | 326 | 392 | 470 | 414 | 479 | 1.44 | 1.73 | 2.07 | 1.84 | 2.13 | 20 | 20 | -12 | 16 | 47 |
| NFG | 261 | 190 | 199 | 159 | 81 | 1.42 | 1.03 | 1.08 | .86 | .44 | -27 | 5 | -20 | -49 | -69 |
| PG&W - GAS | 94 | 99 | 59 | 68 | 88 | .92 | .94 | .56 | .64 | .82 | 5 | -40 | 15 | 29 | -6 |
| PEOPLES | 340 | 322 | 208 | 217 | 242 | 1.15 | 1.08 | .70 | .72 | .80 | -5 | -35 | 4 | 12 | -29 |
| UGI - GAS | 225 | 201 | 259 | 199 | 156 | 1.19 | 1.07 | 1.38 | 1.06 | .83 | -11 | 29 | -23 | -22 | -31 |
| TOTAL | 1,528 | 1,490 | 1,437 | 1,216 | 1,224 | 1.18 | 1.13 | 1.10 | .94 | .93 | -2 | -4 | -15 | 1 | -20 |

RATE/%

1.06

1982 - 1986 (AVE. RATE)

APPENDIX H
TABLE 3

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS BY TELEPHONE COMPANIES 1982 - 1986

| | NUMBER OF CASES | | | COMPLAINT RATE | | | PERCENT CHANGES IN N | | | PERCENT CHANGE IN N 1982 - 1986 | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|------|----------------------|------|------|------------------------------------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----|--|
| | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | | 1986 | 1982 - 1983 | 1984 - 1985 | 1985 - 1986 | | |
| BELL | 1,156 | 1,151 | 1,072 | 1,276 | 759 | .35 | .35 | .33 | .39 | .23 | 0 | -7 | 19 | -41 | -34 | |
| COMMONWEALTH | 43 | 44 | 56 | 78 | 79 | .35 | .36 | .45 | .62 | .62 | 2 | 27 | 39 | 1 | 84 | |
| CONTINENTAL* | 30 | 27 | 37 | 31 | 17 | .94 | .85 | 1.16 | .91 | .50 | -10 | 37 | -16 | -45 | -43 | |
| GENERAL | 131 | 255 | 269 | 277 | 207 | .44 | .84 | .89 | .86 | .64 | 95 | 5 | 3 | -25 | 58 | |
| ALLTEL | 121 | 103 | 121 | 122 | 116 | 1.15 | 1.02 | 1.19 | 1.20 | 1.14 | -15 | 17 | 1 | -5 | -4 | |
| UNITED | 125 | 136 | 114 | 146 | 128 | .62 | .66 | .54 | .66 | .58 | 9 | -16 | 28 | -12 | 2 | |
| TOTAL | 1,606 | 1,716 | 1,669 | 1,930 | 1,306 | .64 | .68 | .76 | .77 | .62 | 7 | -3 | 16 | -32 | -19 | |
| RATE/% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1982 - 1986 (AVE. RATE) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

* Excludes Quaker State For Historical Analysis

APPENDIX H

TABLE 4

MEDIATIONS BY ELECTRIC COMPANIES 1982 - 1986

| | NUMBER OF CASES | | | | COMPLAINT RATE | | | PERCENT CHANGES IN N | | | PERCENT CHANGE IN N 1982 - 1986 | | | | |
|------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|------|------|----------------------|------|------|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | | | | | |
| DUQUESNE | 2,673 | 2,054 | 1,621 | 1,813 | 947 | 2.84 | 2.29 | 1.96 | 2.06 | 1.06 | -23 | -21 | 12 | -48 | -65 |
| MET. ED. | 639 | 483 | 666 | 407 | 140 | 1.06 | .81 | 1.07 | .67 | .24 | -24 | 38 | -39 | -66 | -78 |
| PENELEC | 1,442 | 809 | 610 | 117 | 255 | 1.49 | .82 | .56 | .11 | .28 | -44 | -25 | -81 | 118 | -82 |
| PENN POWER | 260 | 356 | 319 | 396 | 315 | .93 | 1.32 | 1.14 | 1.38 | 1.37 | 37 | -10 | 24 | -20 | 21 |
| P.P.&L. | 1,643 | 1,196 | 1,654 | 816 | 788 | 1.22 | .86 | 1.16 | .56 | .53 | -27 | 38 | -51 | -3 | -52 |
| PECO | 2,651 | 2,918 | 3,258 | 2,720 | 1,753 | .72 | .80 | .88 | .79 | .55 | 10 | 12 | -17 | -36 | -34 |
| UGI - LUZ. | 80 | 76 | 90 | 121 | 67 | .72 | .75 | 1.21 | 1.56 | .86 | -5 | 18 | 34 | -45 | -16 |
| WEST PENN | 942 | 947 | 753 | 965 | 707 | 1.09 | 1.07 | .78 | .96 | .68 | 1 | -20 | 28 | -27 | -25 |
| TOTAL | 10,330 | 8,839 | 8,971 | 7,355 | 4,972 | 1.26 | 1.10 | 1.10 | 1.01 | .70 | -14 | 2 | -18 | -32 | -52 |

RATE/%

1982 - 1986 (AVE. RATE)

1.03

APPENDIX H
TABLE 5

MEDIATIONS BY GAS COMPANIES 1982 - 1986

| | NUMBER OF CASES | | | | COMPLAINT RATE | | | | PERCENT CHANGES IN N | | | PERCENT CHANGE IN N | | | |
|------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|------|------|------|----------------------|------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-----|
| | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1982 - 1983 | 1984 - 1985 | 1985 - 1986 | 1982 - 1986 | |
| COLUMBIA | 1,664 | 1,612 | 1,662 | 977 | 536 | 3.72 | 3.69 | 4.20 | 2.72 | 1.53 | -3 | 3 | -41 | -45 | -68 |
| EQUITABLE | 2,066 | 376 | 682 | 1,528 | 1,361 | 4.19 | 1.00 | 1.97 | 4.65 | 4.31 | -82 | 81 | 124 | -11 | -34 |
| NFG | 650 | 470 | 681 | 374 | 277 | 1.86 | 1.66 | 2.52 | 1.40 | .99 | -28 | 45 | -45 | -26 | -57 |
| PG&W - GAS | 463 | 310 | 297 | 262 | 161 | 1.54 | 1.89 | 1.84 | 1.09 | 1.00 | -33 | -4 | -12 | -39 | -65 |
| PEOPLES | 2,329 | 1,777 | 1,300 | 1,731 | 1,086 | 4.72 | 4.59 | 3.24 | 4.46 | 2.63 | -24 | -27 | 33 | -37 | -53 |
| UGI - GAS | 640 | 910 | 813 | 646 | 625 | 1.44 | 2.17 | 2.87 | 2.23 | 2.39 | 42 | -11 | -21 | -3 | -2 |
| TOTAL | 7,812 | 5,455 | 5,435 | 5,518 | 4,046 | 2.91 | 2.50 | 2.77 | 2.76 | 2.14 | -30 | 0 | 2 | -27 | -48 |
| RATE/% | 2.62 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

1982 - 1986 (AVE. RATE)

APPENDIX I

Table 1

HEATING CUSTOMERS*
1986

| | Monthly Averages | | Cost Per Unit (\$/KWH or MCF) |
|---------------|------------------|----------|----------------------------------|
| | Usage | Bills | |
| Duquesne | 1107 KWH | \$ 87.85 | \$.0794 |
| Met.Ed. | 1244 KWH | 96.08 | .0772 |
| Penelec | 1254 KWH | 95.29 | .0760 |
| Penn Power | 1421 KWH | 101.45 | .0714 |
| PP&L | 1436 KWH | 109.05 | .0759 |
| PECO-Electric | 1399 KWH | 121.90 | .0871 |
| UGI-Luzerne | 1631 KWH | 107.06 | .0656 |
| West Penn | 1496 KWH | 75.25 | .0503 |
| Columbia | 10.6 MCF | 64.77 | 6.11 |
| Equitable | 11.0 MCF | 71.09 | 6.46 |
| NFG | 11.1 MCF | 59.58 | 5.37 |
| PG&W | 11.1 MCF | 80.80 | 7.28 |
| Peoples | 11.8 MCF | 69.10 | 5.86 |
| PECO-Gas | 9.7 MCF | 71.67 | 7.39 |
| UGI-Gas | 7.6 MCF | \$69.86 | \$9.19 |

*Source: Data reported by companies - Figures used are for average bills and usage for each company, not typical bills.

APPENDIX I

Table 2

NON-HEATING CUSTOMERS*
1986

| | Monthly Averages | | Cost Per Unit (\$/KWH or MCF) |
|---------------|------------------|----------|----------------------------------|
| | Usage | Bills | |
| Duquesne | 459 KWH | \$ 47.19 | \$.1028 |
| Met.Ed. | 553 KWH | 47.22 | .0854 |
| Penelec | 505 KWH | 43.46 | .0861 |
| Penn Power | 637 KWH | 55.02 | .0864 |
| PP&L | 566 KWH | 48.72 | .0861 |
| PECO-Electric | 512 KWH | 59.73 | .1167 |
| UGI-Luzerne | 447 KWH | 39.81 | .0891 |
| West Penn | 648 KWH | 35.65 | .0566 |
| Columbia | 2.2 MCF | 17.45 | 7.93 |
| Equitable | 2.0 MCF | 16.66 | 8.33 |
| NFG | 4.1 MCF | 25.86 | 6.39 |
| PG&W | 1.7 MCF | 16.82 | 9.89 |
| Peoples | 2.3 MCF | 19.16 | 8.33 |
| PECO-Gas | 2.2 MCF | 21.67 | 9.85 |
| UGI-Gas | 1.4 MCF | \$18.74 | \$13.39 |

*Source: Data reported by companies - Figures used are for average bills and usage for each company, not typical bills.

APPENDIX J

Average Customer Arrearages

| | <u>Company Residential Population</u> | | | 1984-1986 |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| | <u>1984</u> | <u>1985</u> | <u>1986</u> | <u>Percent Change</u> |
| Duquesne | \$115 | \$129 | \$149 | 30% |
| Met. Ed. | 106 | 100 | 104 | - 2 |
| Penelec | 97 | 128 | 101 | 4 |
| Penn Power | 65 | 72 | 69 | 6 |
| P.P.&L. | 83 | 93 | 115 | 39 |
| P.E.Co.# | 115 | 114 | 119 | 3 |
| UGI-Luzerne | 86 | 86 | 95 | 10 |
| West Penn | 60 | 62 | 68 | 13 |
| Columbia | 144 | 122 | 125 | -13 |
| Equitable | 277 | 214 | 200 | -28 |
| NFG | 143 | 127 | 139 | - 3 |
| P.G.&W. | 138 | 151 | 146 | 6 |
| Peoples | 213 | 184 | 197 | - 8 |
| UGI-Gas | 96 | 102 | 95 | - 1 |
| Ave.-Majors | \$108 | \$114 | \$118 | 9% |
| Percent Change | | | | |

Combined electric and gas

APPENDIX K

Net Total Write-Offs As A Percentage Of Total Revenues*

| Company | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | Percent Change 1984 -1986 |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------------|
| Duquesne | 0.55% | 0.50% | 0.60% | 9% |
| Met. Ed. | 0.33% | 0.42% | 0.42% | -27% |
| Penelec | 0.39% | 0.42% | 0.57% | 46% |
| Penn Power | 0.15% | 0.19% | 0.17% | 13% |
| P.P.&L. | 0.38% | 0.41% | 0.47% | 24% |
| P.E. Co.# | 0.69% | 0.81% | 0.80% | 16% |
| UGI-Electric | 0.39% | 0.37% | 0.38% | - 3% |
| West Penn | 0.16% | 0.31% | 0.21% | 31% |
| Columbia | 0.64% | 1.02% | 1.09% | 70% |
| Equitable | 1.57% | 1.74% | 1.77% | 13% |
| National Fuel | 0.75% | 0.83% | 0.73% | - 3% |
| P.G.&W.-Gas | 0.70% | 0.70% | 0.90% | 29% |
| Peoples | 0.63% | 1.22% | 0.72% | 14% |
| UGI-Gas | 0.63% | 0.65% | 0.85% | 35% |
| Average | 0.55% | 0.66% | 0.67% | 22% |

*Source: Company reported data
#electric and gas combined