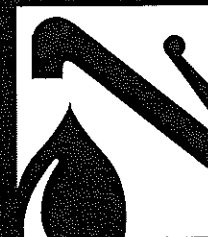
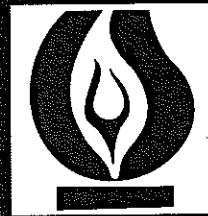


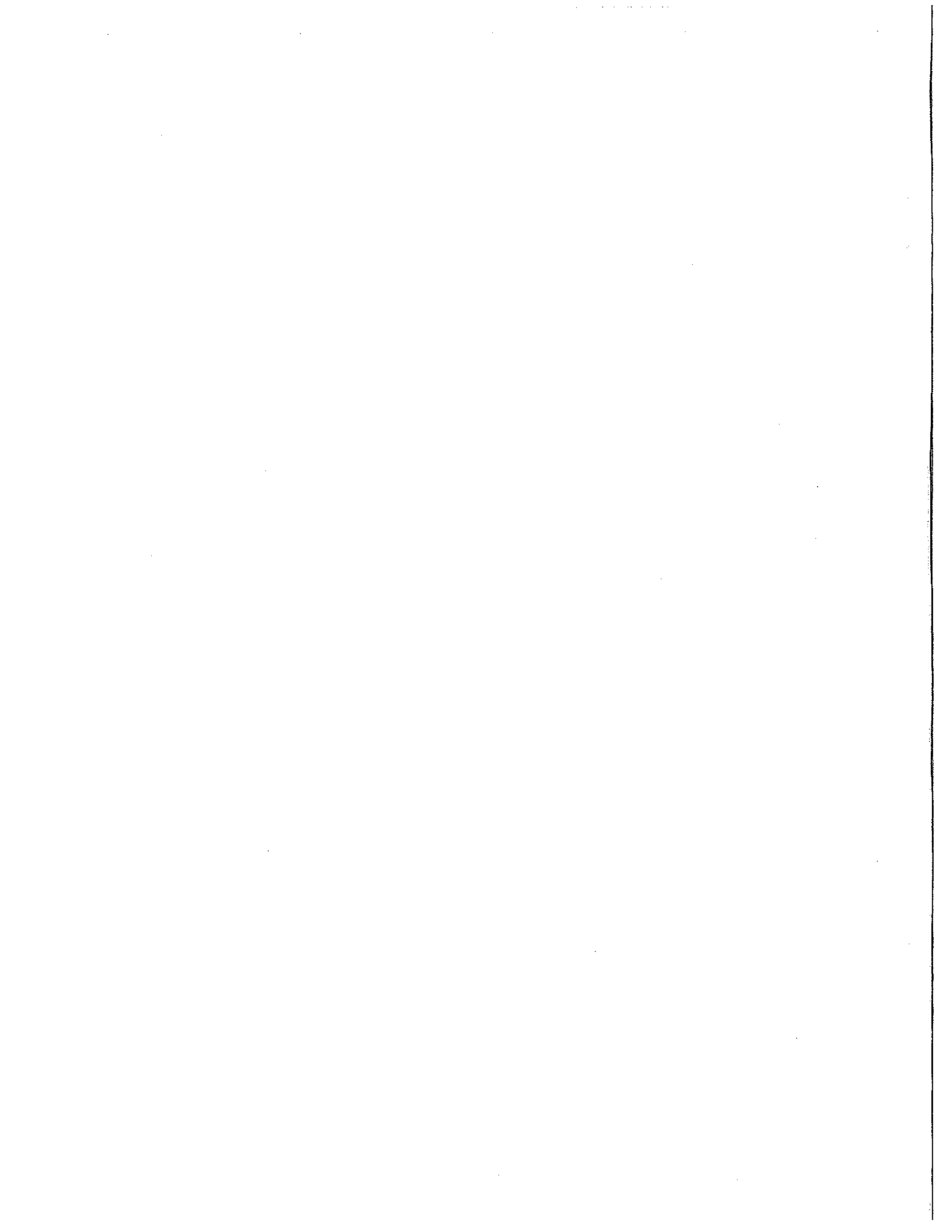
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# Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation

Electric, Gas and  
Water Utilities



Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

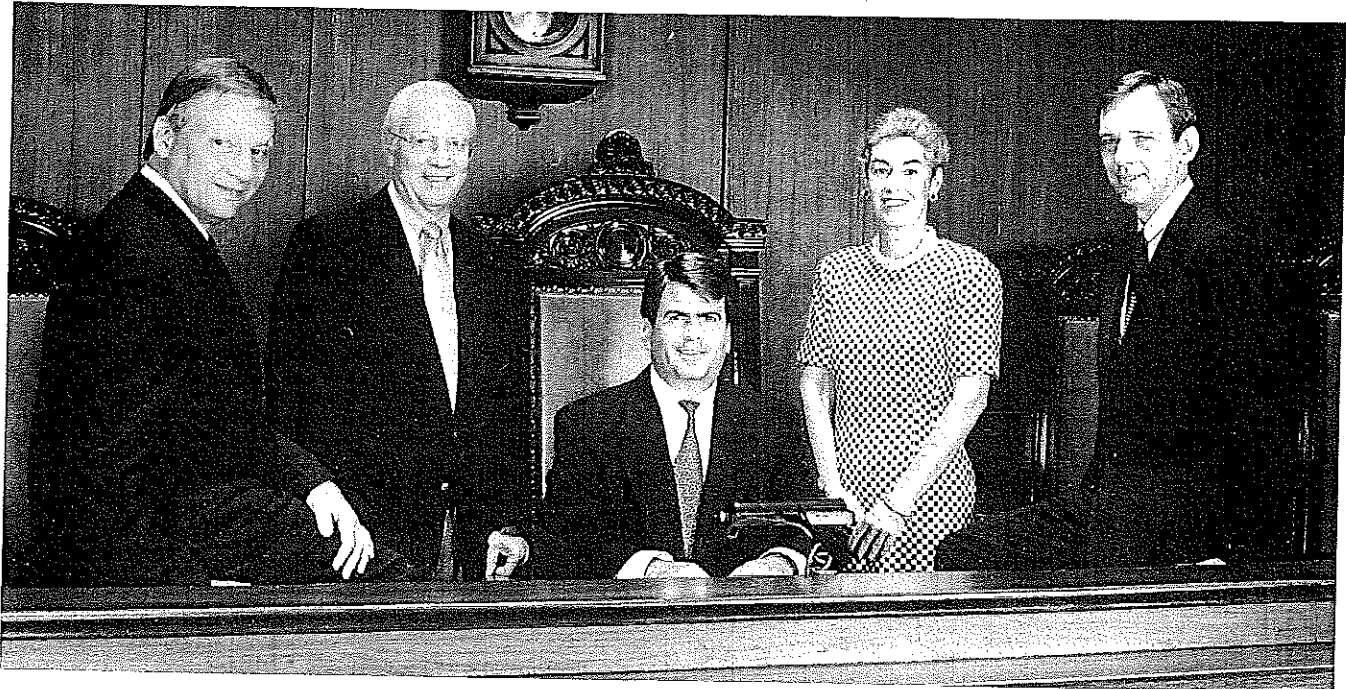


**1996**  
**Utility Consumer Activities Report and**  
**Evaluation**

**Electric, Gas and Water Utilities**

**Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission**

# The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission



Commissioner David W. Rolka, Vice Chairman Robert K. Bloom,  
Chairman John M. Quain, Commissioner Nora Mead Brownell and  
Commissioner John Hanger

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## To Our Report Readers:

The Commission is pleased to present the *1996 Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation: Electric, Gas and Water Utilities* that was prepared by the Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS). Those of you who are familiar with the report from previous years will notice some significant changes. In recognition of Pennsylvania's emerging competitive environment for utilities, the Commission and the Bureau revamped the report format. You will see more changes in future reports because we designed the new format to adapt to and accommodate the changes that will accompany competition.

This year's report, while considerably different from prior reports, still meets the Bureau's goals: to satisfy the statutory reporting requirements of 66 Pa. Code §308 and to communicate to the Commission, the public and to utility management how utilities under the Commission's jurisdiction performed in 1996. The new report's user-friendly format should prove to be a valuable resource to consumers for it will allow them to review their local utility's customer service performance for 1995 and 1996. The Bureau of Consumer Services believes that top utility management will also value the year-to-year comparison of their utility's statistics. In addition, utility management should benefit from the comparisons between their utility and other utilities within their industry.

If you have read past Bureau reports, you will note that the new Bureau of Consumer Services' report graphically represents performance and industry rank rather than describing them in the narrative. The report presents industry tables rather than company profiles and simplifies data presentation to produce overall, a more user-friendly document. We hope that these formatting changes will incorporate inclusion of the new entrants that will be providing utility service to Pennsylvania's consumers. As a result of the changes associated with utility competition, the data and statistics on utility collections have been deleted. However, the report presents a new statistic for the electric and gas utilities: termination rate. A glossary in Appendix A defines this and other terms used throughout the report.

The 1996 report includes reviews of four successful utility universal service and conservation programs: the Customer Assistance Programs (CAPs), Low Income Usage Reduction Programs (LIURP), hardship funds, and CARES programs. These programs are not only cost effective but are also successful at promoting universal utility service.

It is important to note that the discussion and data in this report are based solely on consumer contacts to the BCS and as such, may or may not represent broad statistical trends. Furthermore, the level of activity for a particular utility or geographical area may be influenced by a number of factors such as increased marketing, media visibility, demographics, and regional activity. Therefore, for the first time, the report includes a review of certain consumer contacts to the BCS by geographic area. This information is

valuable because it illustrates the areas in Pennsylvania that are responsible for generating the most consumer contacts about electric and telephone utilities. The electric and telephone industries are used because the Commission has jurisdiction over the vast majority of the electric service and all telephone service in each county. Regulated gas and water service are not available in each county. The report also includes Pennsylvania demographic data by county which indicates areas of poverty and low median incomes (Appendix M).

We would also like to point out that less than half of the consumer complaints brought to the attention of the BCS were mishandled by the subject utility. In other words, in spite of the fact that the utility had followed all the correct procedures and rules in handling the consumer's complaint, the customer remained dissatisfied and appealed to the Commission. In these instances, the Commission has upheld the utility's actions.

Pennsylvania consumers face unprecedented changes within the utility arena. The Commission is committed to assuring that these transformations are in the public interest. Because the data in this report stems almost exclusively from the evaluation of consumer contacts to the Commission, the data has certain shortcomings. The Commission has plans to remedy these shortcomings in the future. We will be developing and implementing quality of service benchmark reporting from utilities. This benchmark reporting will be designed to capture a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the quality of service consumers receive from their utilities. Future reports will include findings from the Commission review of this additional information as it becomes available.

The Bureau of Consumer Services believes this year's report represents a first step in the process of providing an accurate picture of the quality of utility customer service delivered to the public. Because it is only the beginning step, we invite suggestions and comments about the report's strengths and weaknesses. The feedback we receive from those who use the report will be instrumental in its improvement and development.

Sincerely,  
John M. Quain, Chairman  
Mitch Miller, BCS Director  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

# **1. Consumer Contacts to the BCS**

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The Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) was mandated under Act 216 of 1976 to provide responsive, efficient and accountable management of consumer complaints. Its responsibilities were clarified under Act 114 of 1986 in regard to reporting and deciding customer complaints. In order to fulfill its mandates, the Bureau began investigating utility consumer complaints and writing decisions on service termination cases in April 1977. Since then the Bureau has investigated 450,939 cases (informal complaints) and has received an additional 298,774 opinions and requests for information (inquiries). The Bureau received 46,025 utility customer contacts that required review in 1996. It is important to note that more than half of these customer complaints had been appropriately handled by the subject utilities before the customers brought them to the Bureau. In spite of the fact that the utilities had followed all the correct procedures and rules in handling the complaints, the customers had remained dissatisfied and appealed to the Public Utility Commission for assistance in dealing with the utilities.

## **The Staff of the Bureau of Consumer Services**



## **Case Handling**

The handling of utility complaint cases is the foundation for a number of Bureau programs. The case handling process provides an avenue through which consumers can gain redress for errors and responses to inquiries. However, customers are required by Commission regulations to attempt to resolve problems directly with their utilities prior to filing a complaint or requesting a payment arrangement with the Commission. Although exceptions are permitted under extenuating circumstances, the BCS generally handles those cases in which the utility and customer could not find a mutually satisfactory resolution to the problem.

Once a customer contacts the Bureau of Consumer Services with a complaint or payment arrangement request (PAR), the Bureau notifies the utility that a complaint or PAR has been filed. (The vast majority of consumers contact the BCS by telephone using the Bureau's toll-free numbers. In 1996, 91% of informal complaints were filed by telephone.) The utility sends the BCS all records concerning the complaint including records of its contacts with the customer regarding the complaint. The BCS investigator reviews the records, renders a decision and closes the case. The BCS research unit then examines the case and, among other things, classifies the complaint into one of six major problem areas as well as one of nearly 200 specific problem categories. This case information is entered into the consumer services information system data base. The analysis from case information is used by the BCS to generate reports to the Commission, utilities and the public. The reports may present information regarding utility performance, industry trends, investigations, new policy issues and the impact of utility or Commission policy.

## **Consumer Feedback Survey**

In order to monitor its own service to consumers, the Bureau of Consumer Services surveys those customers who have contacted the Bureau with a utility-related problem or payment arrangement request. In the course of processing and investigating complaints from consumers, the BCS staff must operate under jurisdictional, legal and procedural constraints. As these constraints are not entirely understood by consumers, they often give rise to consumer frustration. The purpose of the survey is to collect information from the consumer's perspective about the quality of the Bureau's complaint handling service. The BCS mails a written survey form to a sample of consumers who have been served by the BCS field services staff.

The results of the survey for fiscal year 1996-1997 show that eighty-four percent of consumers reported that they would contact the PUC again if they were to have another problem with a utility that they could not settle by talking with the company. Over 82% rated the service they received from the PUC as "good" or "excellent".

## Consumer Rating of the BCS' Service

How would you rate the service you received from the PUC (BCS)?	1995-96 Fiscal Year	1996-97 Fiscal Year
Excellent	63%	56%
Good	20%	26%
Fair	8%	11%
Poor	9%	7%

Overall, 85% of consumers felt the BCS handled their complaint either very quickly or fairly quickly. In addition, more than 91% of consumers said that the information that the PUC gave them about the outcome of the problem was either "very easy to understand" or "fairly easy to understand". Further, 95% of consumers indicated that the BCS staff person who took their call was either "very" or "fairly polite" and 93% described the BCS contact person as "very" or "fairly interested" in helping with the problem.

The BCS management frequently reviews the findings of the consumer feedback survey and promptly investigates any negative trends.

### Data Bases

To manage and use its complaint data, the Bureau maintains a computer based consumer services information system (CSIS) through a contract with the Pennsylvania State University. This system enables the Bureau to aggregate and analyze complaints from the thousands of complaints that are reported to the Commission each year. In this way the BCS can address generic as well as individual problems.

The bulk of the data presented in this report is from the Bureau's CSIS. In addition, this report includes statistics from the Bureau's Collections Reporting System (CRS) and Compliance Tracking System (CTS). The CRS provides a valuable resource for measuring changes in company collection performance including the number of residential service terminations, while the CTS maintains data on the number and type of infractions attributable to the major utilities.

## Distinctions Between Cases

A number of cases were segregated from the analyses that appear later in this report because they did not fairly represent company behavior. One treatment of the data involved the removal of complaints about problems over which the Commission has no jurisdiction, information requests that did not require investigation and most cases where the customers indicated that they had not contacted the company prior to complaining to the Commission. The information in Chapter 2 explains how the Bureau classified these consumer contacts in 1996. Commercial customer contacts were also excluded from the data base. Although the Bureau's regulatory authority is largely confined to residential accounts, the Bureau handled 1,559 cases from commercial customers in 1996. Of these cases, 458 were related to termination of electric, gas or water service and 60 were related to loss of telephone service. Due to its limited jurisdiction, the Bureau does not issue decisions regarding commercial disputes. Rather, the Bureau gives the customer information regarding the company's position or attempts to mediate a mutually acceptable agreement regarding the disputed matter. All 1996 cases that involved commercial accounts were deleted from the analysis in this report. The table below illustrates that the vast majority of cases handled by the BCS in 1996 involved residential utility service.

### Total Volume of Consumer Complaints and Payment Arrangement Requests to the BCS in 1996

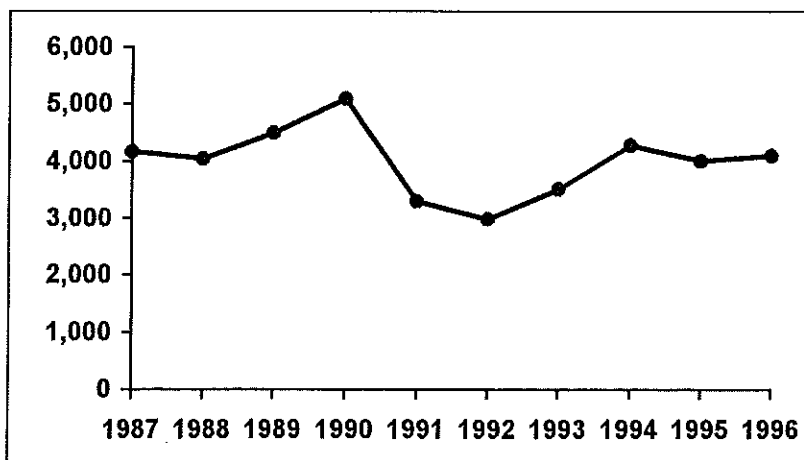
Industry	Consumer Complaints		Payment Arrangement Requests	
	Residential	Commercial	Residential	Commercial
Electric	2,150	225	23,142	390
Gas	1,091	67	8,827	60
Telephone	1,831	717	5,763	60
Water	523	30	1,125	8
Other	8	1	6	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,603</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>38,863</b>	<b>519</b>

## Ten Year Trends

Customer contacts to the Bureau fall into three basic categories: 1) consumer complaints; 2) requests for payment arrangements; and 3) inquiries. The Bureau classifies contacts regarding complaints about utilities' actions related to billing, service delivery, repairs, etc., as *consumer complaints* and contacts involving payment negotiations for unpaid utility service as *payment arrangement requests*. Consumer complaints and payment arrangement requests are often collectively referred to as informal complaints. *Inquiries* include information requests and opinions from consumers, most of which do not require investigation on the part of the Bureau.

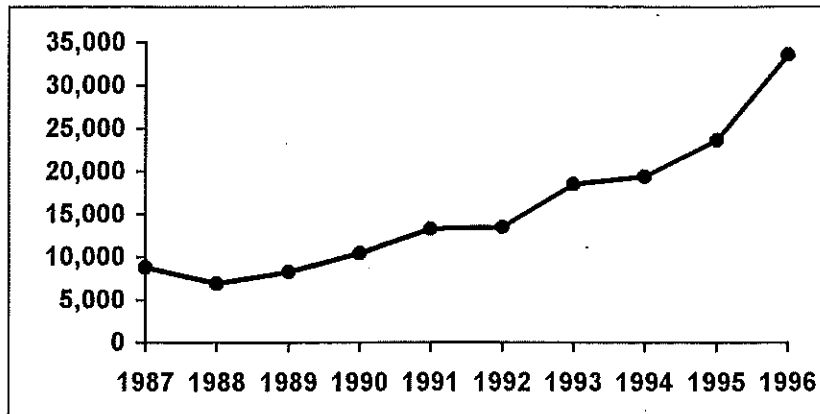
The graphs below show changes in the volume of cases to the BCS over the last ten years. Overall, the volume of all cases has increased since 1987. Again, Commission regulations require that customers seek to resolve problems directly with their utilities prior to registering a complaint with the Commission. The Bureau of Consumer Services has worked to foster improvements in utility complaint handling operations so that customers will not find it necessary to appeal to the Commission. Nevertheless, when a customer remains dissatisfied after working with a utility, the customer may file an informal complaint with the Bureau. It is important to note that many of the cases filed with the BCS, and thus depicted in the graphs below, include cases that were "not justified". In other words, the company had followed all the correct procedures and rules in handling the customer's complaint but the customer remained dissatisfied and appealed to the Commission.

### Ten Year Trend: Consumer Complaints to BCS Electric, Gas & Water Utilities



The following graph depicts the ten-year trend for payment arrangement requests to the Bureau of Consumer Services from customers of the electric gas and water utilities. The volume of payment arrangement requests to the Bureau has been increasing steadily for eight years.

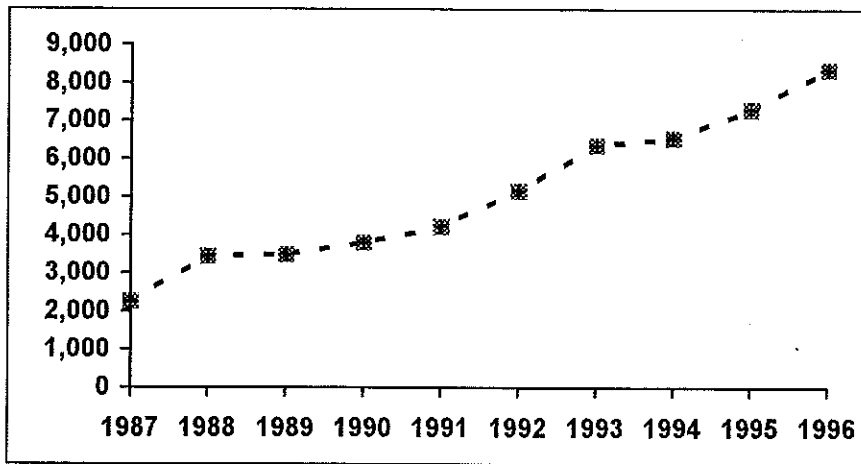
### Ten Year Trend: Payment Arrangement Requests to BCS Electric, Gas & Water Utilities



The graph on the following page shows the ten year trend for all informal complaints from customers of the telephone utilities. Prior to 1995, the BCS classified all telephone cases as consumer complaints. After 1995, the Bureau began to separate telephone cases into the same two categories it uses for cases from electric, gas and water customers: consumer complaints and payment arrangement requests. In this way the BCS can better track problems specifically involving payment arrangements and make clearer distinctions about the nature of customers' problems. However, because the Bureau did not make this distinction until recently, it is not possible to separately show a ten-year trend of consumer complaints and payment arrangements for telephone informal complaints. Therefore, for the following chart, the BCS has combined the two categories of cases to show an overall trend in informal complaints about the telephone industry. As indicated by the chart, the volume of all telephone cases to the BCS has grown steadily during the last ten years.

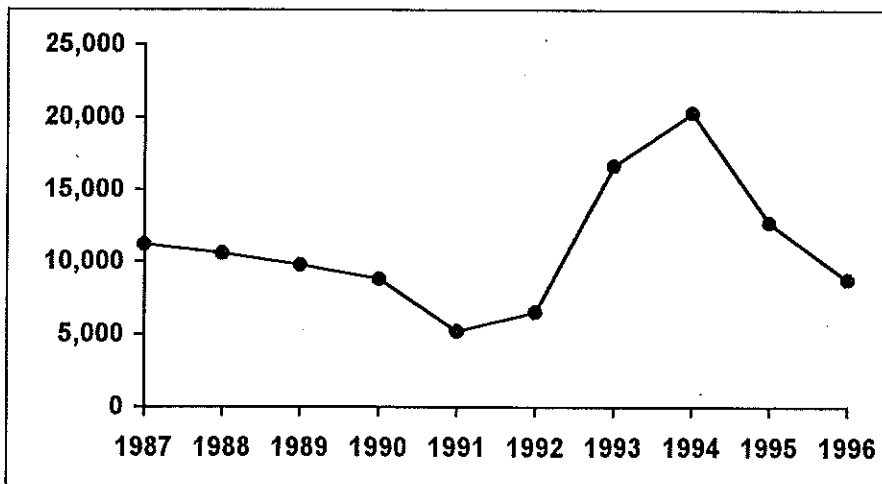


## Ten Year Trend: Cases to BCS Telephone Industry



The following graph depicts the ten-year trend for the volume of inquiries to the Bureau. Inquiries to the BCS decreased in each of the last two years.

## Ten Year Trend: Inquiries To BCS



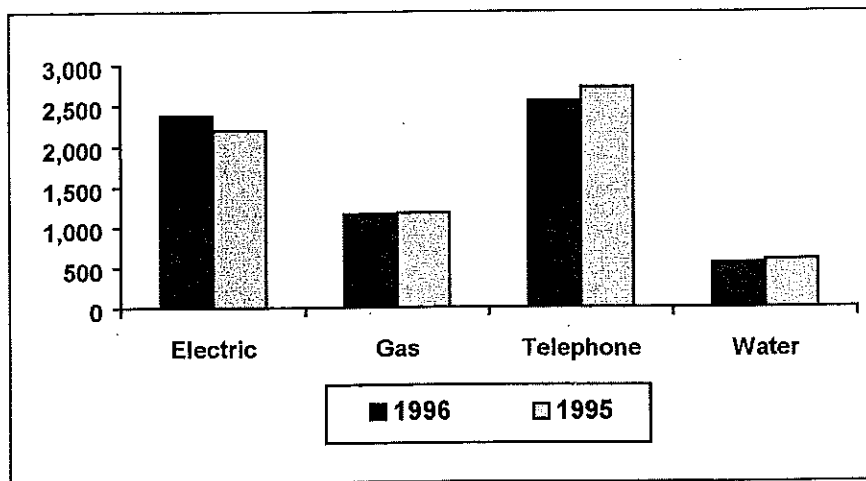
## Overall Bureau Activity

### Consumer Complaints

The Bureau investigated 6,643 consumer complaints in 1996. Overall, the volume of consumer complaints to the Bureau decreased by slightly more than 1% from 1995 to 1996. Consumer complaints about the Chapter 56-covered industries (electric, gas, water,

sewer and steam heat) increased by 2% from 1995 to 1996. Meanwhile, consumer complaints about the telephone industry decreased by 6%. In 1996, electric and gas utilities accounted for 36% and 17 %, respectively of all consumer complaints investigated by the Bureau. Water utilities accounted for 8% of consumer complaints and the telephone utilities were the subject of 38% of all consumer complaints.

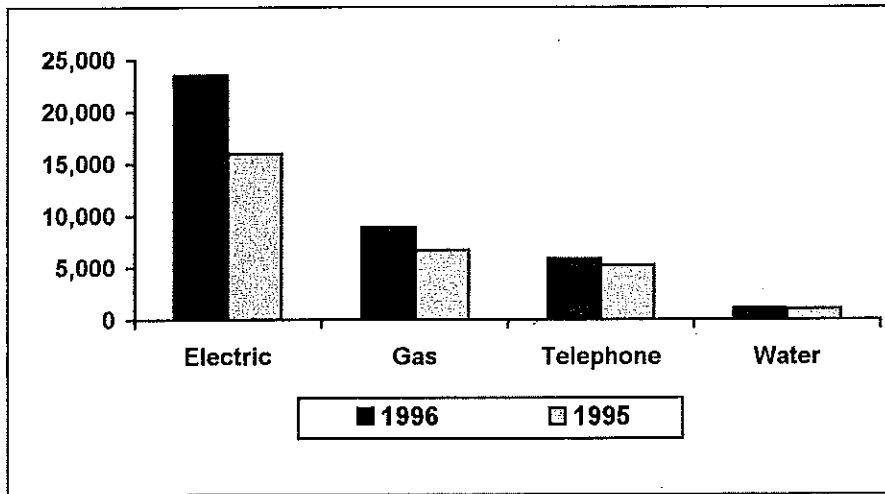
### Consumer Complaints By Industry 1995-1996



### Payment Arrangement Requests

In 1996, the Bureau received 39,382 payment arrangement requests from customers who needed help in negotiating payment arrangements with electric, gas, water and telephone utilities, an increase of 36% from 1995. Payment arrangement requests for the Chapter 56-covered utilities increased 42%, from 23,681 in 1995 to 33,559 in 1996. For the telephone industry, the volume of payment arrangement requests increased by 11%; there were 5,823 requests in 1996 compared with 5,251 in 1995. As in past years, almost all cases involving requests for payment arrangements in 1996 involved electric (60%) or gas companies (23%). Fifteen percent of the payment arrangement requests involved telephone service and 3% stemmed from customers of various water companies.

## Payment Arrangement Requests By Industry 1995-1996



### Inquiries and Opinions

During 1996, the Bureau of Consumer Services received 8,767 customer contacts that, for the most part required no follow-up investigation beyond the initial contact. The Bureau classifies these contacts as "inquiries". In 1996, the number of inquiries decreased for the second year in a row. The Bureau attributes at least part of the decrease to its use of a voice processor that advises callers to call their companies if they have not already done so and informs callers about areas and companies over which the Bureau lacks jurisdiction.

The Bureau of Consumer Services classifies inquiries into categories based on the customer's reason for contact and/or the Bureau's response to the contact. The majority of these contacts involved referrals to other agencies, referrals to utility companies for initial action, and requests for information that the BCS staff handled at the time of contact. The Bureau shifted some contacts that originated as consumer complaints and payment arrangement requests into the inquiry category because it was not appropriate to count them as informal complaints. Examples of these contacts include informal complaints that were found to be duplicates, informal complaints filed against the wrong company, informal complaints that BCS handled in spite of the fact that the customers had not previously contacted their companies about their problems and cases that the investigators verbally dismissed. The following table shows the various categories of customer contacts that the Bureau classified as inquiries in 1996.

## Categories of Inquiries to the BCS 1996

Category	Number	Percent
Referral to Other Agency	2,340	27%
Referral to Company	1,870	21%
Specific Information Request Answered	1,646	19%
Referral to Other BCS/Other Bureau	648	7%
Other or No Reason Listed	625	7%
Opinion-General	317	4%
Rate Protest and Opinion	160	2%
No Jurisdiction-Information Given	41	0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>7,647</b>	<b>87%</b>
Company Changed*	450	5%
Informal Complaint-No Prior Co. Contact*	403	5%
Duplicate Action*	142	2%
Verbally Dismissed*	125	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,767</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Customer contacts that originated as consumer complaints or payment arrangement requests. After its investigation, the Bureau reclassified the contacts as inquiries due to the nature of the contact.

### Electric, Gas and Water Industries

Most of the remainder of this report will focus on the electric, gas and water industries. The Commission has issued a separate *Utility Consumer Activities and Evaluation Report* that focuses on the telephone industry.

In the following chapters on Consumer Complaints, Payment Arrangement Requests and Compliance, the report analyzes only data from those utilities that have more than 100,000 residential customers. The Bureau has found that the inclusion of scores for the smaller utilities can skew the average of industry scores in ways that do not fairly represent industry performance. For this reason, the BCS has excluded the statistics involving UGI-Electric (as well as those of other smaller electric utilities) when it calculated the 1996 averages of the electric industry scores. This is the first year that the findings for UGI-Electric do not appear in these chapters; data for UGI-Electric does appear in the industry tables found in the appendices. The trend toward mergers within the electric industry and the even larger utilities that result, such as the merger of Metropolitan Edison and The Pennsylvania Electric Company into GPU Energy, will

make UGI-Electric increasingly different from the other electric utilities. In 1996, the PUC had jurisdiction over 17 electric utilities and 36 gas utilities. For the electric industry, 99% of the consumer complaints and PARs to the BCS came from customers of the seven largest electric utilities. The remaining one percent came from customers of seven smaller electric companies. For the gas industry, 95% of the gas PARs and 91% of the consumer complaints stemmed from customers of the six largest gas companies. The other PARs and consumer complaints were filed by customers of 22 smaller gas utilities.

For the water industry, this report shows statistics for the two largest water utilities: Pennsylvania-American (PA-American) and Philadelphia Suburban and compares them with data from the combined total of the other "Class A" water companies. Appendix O lists the names of the 13 Class A water utilities. In prior reports, the BCS had also analyzed data from the water division of Pennsylvania Gas and Water. In February 1996, PA-American acquired PG&W-Water; therefore, this year's report contains only a very limited amount of information about PG&W-Water.

The Commission had jurisdiction over 212 water utilities in 1996, including 47 municipal systems. For municipal water systems, the Commission's jurisdiction is limited to include only those customers who reside outside of the municipality's corporate boundaries. In 1996, 98% of the PARs to the BCS from water customers involved the 13 largest (Class A) water companies and 79% of the consumer complaints about water utilities pertained to the Class A companies. The remaining 21% of water consumer complaints were from 45 smaller water companies.

In spite of the fact that the vast majority of informal complaints to the Commission involve the seven largest electric utilities, six largest gas utilities and 15 largest water utilities, the Commission pays a significant amount of attention to the smaller companies, especially the water companies. Often the amount of time that the Commission devotes to a few complaints from customers of a smaller company far exceeds the amount of time it takes to deal with the numerous complaints filed against a larger utility.

## **2. Consumer Complaints to the BCS**

---

The Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) handles consumer complaints regarding the electric, gas, water, sewer and steam heat industries. During 1996, the BCS handled a total of 3,772 consumer complaints from *residential* customers of these industries. Of these consumer complaints, 3,560 were from residential customers of the *major* electric, gas and water utilities. Most of the consumer complaints dealt with matters covered under 52 PA Code, Chapter 56, the Standards and Billing Practices for Residential Utility Service. For the most part, these consumer complaints represent customer appeals to the Commission resulting from the inability of the utility and the customer to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution to a dispute.

### **Classification of Consumer Complaints**

After a BCS investigator closes a case from a utility customer, the BCS research unit reviews the information on the case and translates it into a format so that it can be added to the Bureau's information system (CSIS). One part of this process is that the research staff categorizes each complaint into a specific problem category and enters it into the computerized system. The BCS data system then aggregates the data from all complaints to produce meaningful reports for analysis by the Bureau, the Commission or for utilities.

For this report, the BCS has categorized the 1996 residential consumer complaints into 13 categories. The tables beginning on page 15 show the percent of complaints in each of the 13 categories for the major electric, gas and water utilities in 1996. It is important to note that the percentages shown in the tables are for all the cases that consumers filed with BCS, not just cases determined to be justified in coming to the Bureau. The three tables in Appendix B show the actual number of cases that fell into each category. The following information explains each of the 13 problem categories of complaints.

**Metering:** Billing complaints directly related to the reading of or the failure to read the customer's meter and the accuracy of the meter readings (company reading, customer supplied reading, misreading).

**Billing Disputes:** Complaints about bills from the utility: high bills, inaccurate bills or balances, installation charges, customer charges, service charges, repair charges, late payment charges, frequency of bills and the misapplication of payment on bills.

**Discontinuance/Transfer:** Complaints related to the responsibility for or the amount of bills after discontinuance or transfer of service: the customer requested discontinuance of service and the company failed to finalize the account as requested or

the company transferred a balance to a new or existing account from the account of another person or location.

**Other Payment Issues:** Complaints about the amount of budget bills or the transfer of a customer's debt to a collection agency.

**Credit & Deposits:** Complaints about a company's requirements to provide service: applicant must pay another person's bill, applicant must complete an application, applicant must provide identification, or applicant must pay a security deposit. This category also includes complaints about the amount of or the amortization of a deposit, the payment of interest on a deposit or the failure of a company to return a deposit to the customer.

**Service Extensions:** Complaints about line extensions or installation of service: the responsibility for line extensions, the cost and payment for line extensions, inspection requirements, delay in installation, connection or disconnection of service, and denial of service extensions.

**Service Interruptions:** Complaints about service interruptions: the frequency of service interruptions, the duration of interruptions or the lack of prior notice regarding interruptions.

**Service Quality:** Complaints about a utility's product: The quality of the product is poor (water quality, voltage, pressure), the company's equipment is unsatisfactory or unsafe, the company fails to act on a complaint about safety, the company plans to abandon service, the company does not offer needed service, the company wants to change location of equipment or the company providing service is not certified by the PUC (defactos).

**Damages:** Complaints about a company's lack of payment or lack of restored property related to damages to equipment, appliances or property due to service outages, company construction or repair, and improperly delivered or transferred service.

**Scheduling Delays:** Complaints about problems with a company's scheduling: delays in scheduling or repairing service or relocating poles, failures to keep scheduled meetings or appointments, and lack of accessibility to customers.

**Personnel Problems:** Complaints about performance by company personnel: a company representative did not finish job correctly, a meter reader entered a customer's home to read the meter without knocking, company personnel will not perform a requested service, business office personnel treated the customer rudely, and overall mismanagement of a utility. This category also includes any complaints about sales such as appliance sales by the utility.

**Rates:** General or specific complaints about a utility's rates: general or specific rates are too high, the company's rates are being used to recover advertising costs, or the customer is being billed on the incorrect rate.

**Other:** All other complaints that do not fit into the above categories including but not limited to complaints about termination procedures when there is no need for payment arrangements and complaints about delivered service from the utility.

The tables on the following pages break down the 1996 complaints about the major electric, gas and water utilities into the 13 categories discussed above.

## **Highlights of the Complaint Categories Tables**

### **Major Electric Utilities**

- 45% of the complaints about the major electric utilities involved metering or billing disputes.
- In the coming years, the BCS will monitor complaints about quality of service issues to report on the quality of electric service in a competitive environment.

### **Major Gas Utilities**

- More than 50% of the complaints about the major gas utilities involved metering or billing disputes.
- The percentage of metering complaints increased from 1994 to 1995, while the percentage of complaints about billing was unchanged.

### **Major Water Utilities**

- Sixty-eight percent of the complaints about the major water companies involved billing, service quality and metering disputes.
- The percentage of complaints about service quality decreased from 1995 to 1996. In 1995, 31% of the complaints about the Class A water companies fell into the service quality category compared to 24% in 1996.



# Major Electric Utilities

Categories**	Utilities								Electric Majors
	Allegheny Power	Duquesne	Met-Ed	PECO	Penelec	Penn Power	PP&L		
Metering	18%	15%	34%	21%	28%	21%	29%		23%
Billing Disputes	23%	17%	21%	22%	20%	21%	28%		22%
Discontinuance/Transfer	8%	12%	5%	8%	6%	10%	13%		9%
Other Payment Issues	3%	7%	4%	3%	1%	3%	7%		4%
Credit & Deposits	1%	5%	5%	1%	1%	7%	2%		2%
Service Extensions	7%	1%	5%	2%	7%	17%	2%		4%
Service Interruptions	11%	13%	11%	7%	8%	3%	2%		7%
Service Quality	5%	4%	1%	7%	8%	3%	6%		6%
Damages	14%	9%	1%	5%	11%	10%	3%		7%
Scheduling Delays	5%	4%	5%	6%	4%	3%	2%		4%
Personnel Problems	3%	4%	4%	12%	4%	0%	4%		7%
Rates	0%	1%	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%		1%
All Other Problems	3%	5%	3%	5%	2%	0%	2%		4%
<b>TOTAL***</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>102%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>101%</b>		<b>100%</b>

\* Categories are for all residential complaints filed with BCS: justified, inconclusive and unjustified.

\*\* An explanation of the various complaint categories appears in the beginning of Chapter 2.

\*\*\* Columns may total more or less than 100% due to error caused by rounding.

## Consumer Complaint Categories\*: 1996 Major Gas Utilities

Categories**	Columbia	Equitable	NFG	PG Energy	Peoples	UGI-Gas	Gas Majors
Metering	21%	21%	20%	19%	40%	34%	28%
Billing Disputes	17%	23%	17%	21%	22%	31%	23%
Discontinuance/ Transfer	11%	15%	16%	8%	4%	10%	10%
Other Payment Issues	4%	8%	13%	2%	5%	5%	6%
Credit & Deposits	2%	7%	5%	2%	1%	2%	3%
Service Extensions	10%	5%	15%	11%	4%	2%	6%
Service Interruptions	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Service Quality	15%	4%	6%	8%	7%	3%	6%
Damages	8%	3%	1%	13%	3%	1%	4%
Scheduling Delays	1%	2%	1%	8%	3%	3%	2%
Personnel Problems	2%	4%	1%	6%	6%	3%	4%
Rates	2%	0%	0%	0%	3%	3%	1%
All Other Problems	6%	8%	4%	2%	2%	3%	4%
<b>TOTAL***</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>102%</b>	<b>102%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>98%</b>

\* Categories are for all residential complaints filed with BCS: justified, inconclusive and unjustified.

\*\* An explanation of the various complaint categories appears at the beginning of Chapter 2.

\*\*\* Columns may total more or less than 100% due to error caused by rounding.

## Major Water Utilities

Categories**	PA-American	Philadelphia Suburban	Other "Class A" Water	All "Class A" Water
Metering	18%	21%	13%	17%
Billing Disputes	29%	32%	16%	27%
Discontinuance/ Transfer	3%	1%	1%	2%
Other Payment Issues	1%	0%	1%	1%
Credit & Deposits	1%	4%	4%	2%
Service Extensions	9%	3%	1%	6%
Service Interruptions	1%	0%	3%	1%
Service Quality	11%	30%	48%	24%
Damages	8%	3%	3%	6%
Scheduling Delays	2%	1%	0%	1%
Personnel Problems	6%	1%	3%	4%
Rates	1%	0%	1%	1%
All Other Problems	10%	3%	6%	8%
<b>TOTAL***</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Categories are for all residential complaints filed with the BCS: justified, inconclusive and unjustified.

\*\* An explanation of the various complaint categories appears at the beginning of Chapter 2.

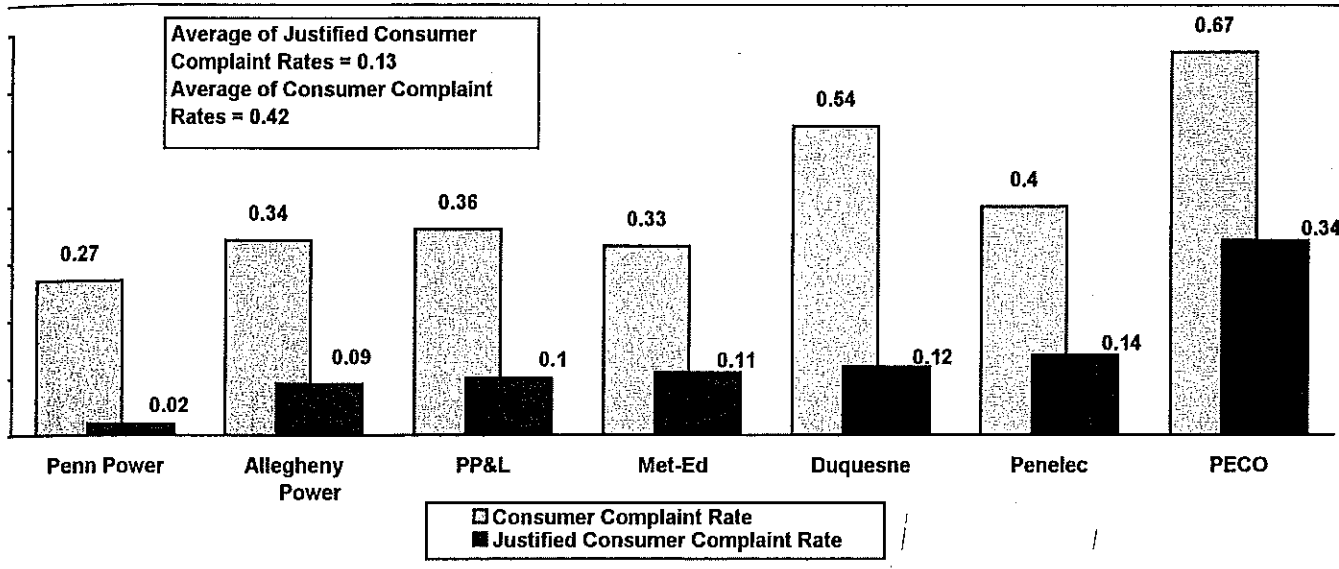
\*\*\* Columns may total more or less than 100% due to error caused by rounding.

## Consumer Complaint Rate

The calculation of consumer complaint rate (consumer complaints per one thousand residential customers) permits the reader to make comparisons among utilities of various sizes. However, dissimilar customer populations, geographic locations and utility rates contribute to variations in complaint rates among the utilities within an industry. Nevertheless, the BCS has found that high consumer complaint rates and extreme changes in consumer complaint rates from one year to the next are often indicative of patterns and trends that it should investigate. It is also important to note that many of the complaints in the consumer complaint rate are not "justified". In other words, in spite of the fact that the company followed all the correct procedures and rules in handling the complaint, the customer remained dissatisfied and appealed to the Commission. For this reason, the "justified consumer complaint rate" (justified consumer complaints per one thousand residential customers) is a truer indication of a utility's complaint handling performance. A discussion of justified consumer complaint rate appears later in this chapter.

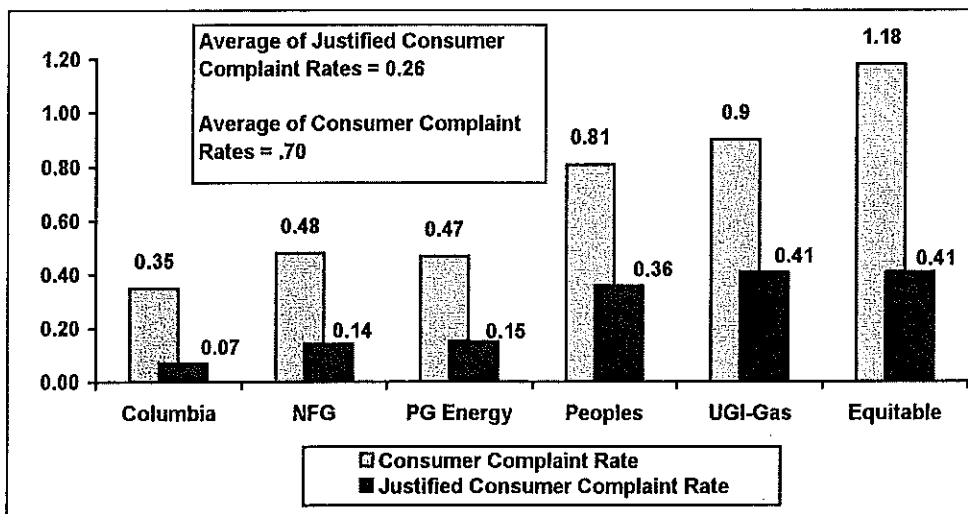
The charts that follow depict the performance of each of the major electric, gas and water utilities by industry. The charts show the consumer complaint rate and the justified consumer complaint rate of each major utility. The charts also show the average of the rates of the major utilities within the industry. Appendix C presents consumer complaint statistics for 1995 and 1996, including the number of consumer complaints, consumer complaint rates and justified consumer complaint numbers and rates.

## 1996 Justified Consumer Complaint Rates/Consumer Complaint Rates<sup>1</sup> Major Electric Utilities



- For the major electric utilities, the average of the consumer complaint rates is more than three times greater than the average of the justified consumer complaint rates.

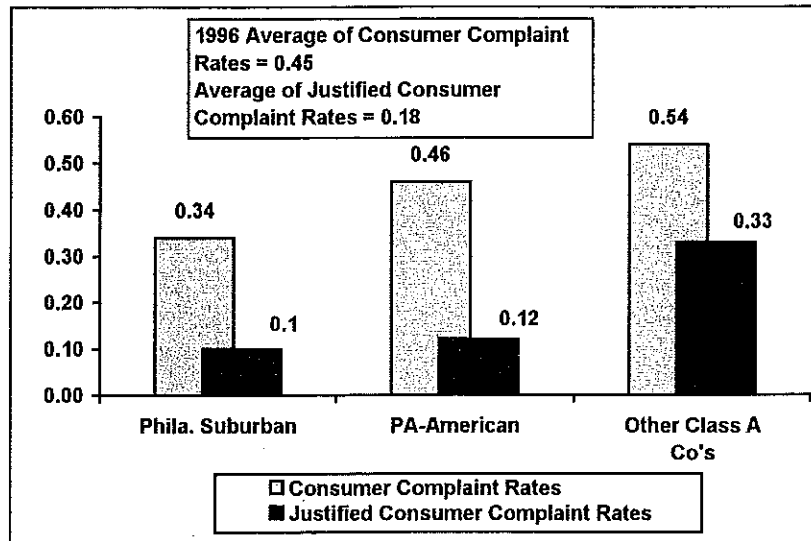
## 1996 Justified Consumer Complaint Rates/Consumer Complaint Rates<sup>1</sup> Major Gas Utilities



- For the major gas utilities, the average of the consumer complaint rates is more than two and one-half times greater than the average of the justified rates.

<sup>1</sup> Justified Consumer Complaint Rate = Justified Consumer Complaints per 1,000 Residential Customers  
Consumer Complaint Rate = Consumer Complaints per 1,000 Residential Customers. See Appendix C, Tables 1 and 2 for supporting data for these charts.

## 1996 Justified Consumer Complaint Rates/Consumer Complaint Rates<sup>1</sup> Major Water Utilities<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Justified Consumer Complaint Rate = Justified Consumer Complaints per 1,000 Residential Customers

Consumer Complaint Rate = Consumer Complaints per 1,000 Residential Customers

<sup>2</sup> Appendix C, Table 3 provides the supporting data for this chart.

- The average of the consumer complaint rates is 2 1/2 times greater than the average of the justified rates for the Class A water companies.

### Justified Consumer Complaints

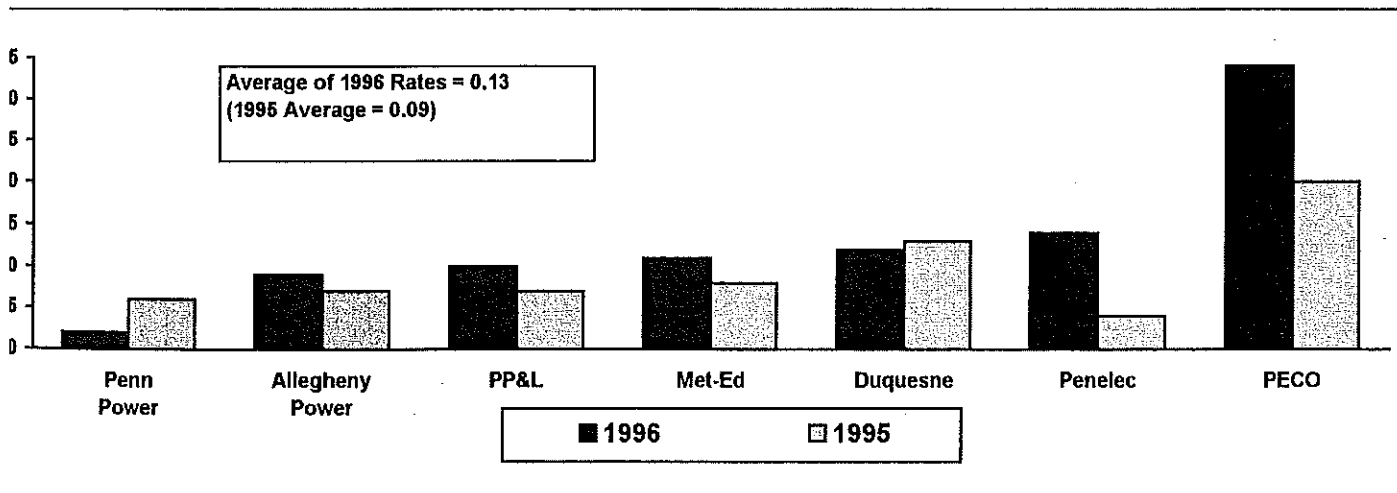
Once a BCS investigator finishes the investigation of a consumer's complaint and makes a decision regarding the complaint, the BCS reviews the utility's records to determine if the utility took appropriate action when handling the customer's contact and uses these records to determine the outcome of the case. There are three possible case outcome classifications: justified, inconclusive and unjustified. This approach focuses strictly on the regulatory aspect of the complaint and evaluates utilities negatively only where, in the judgement of the BCS, appropriate complaint handling procedures were not followed or the regulations have been violated. Specifically, a case is considered "justified" in the appeal to the BCS if it is found that, prior to the BCS intervention, the company did not comply with PUC orders, regulations, reports, Secretarial Letters, tariffs, etc. "Unjustified" complaints are those cases in which the company demonstrates that correct procedures were followed prior to the BCS intervention. "Inconclusive" complaints are those in which incomplete records, equivocal finding or uncertain regulatory interpretations make it difficult to determine whether or not the customer was justified in the appeal to the Commission.

## Justified Consumer Complaint Rate

The performance measure called “justified consumer complaint rate” reflects both the volume and percent of consumer complaints found justified. Justified consumer complaint rate is the number of justified consumer complaints for each 1000 residential customers. By using this ratio, the reader can use the “justified” rate to compare utilities’ performance within an industry. The BCS perceives the justified consumer complaint rate to be a bottom line measure of performance that evaluates the “effectiveness” of company complaint handling.

The Bureau of Consumer Services monitors the complaint rates and justified rates of the major utilities, paying particular attention to the number of justified complaints that customers file with the Commission. When the BCS encounters company case handling performance (justified consumer complaint rate) that is significantly worse than average, there is reason to suspect that many customers who contact the utility are at risk of improper dispute handling by the utility. As part of the monitoring process, the BCS compares the “justified” rates of individual utilities and industries over time and investigates significant changes when they occur. The charts that follow compare each major utility’s 1995 and 1996 justified consumer complaint rates.

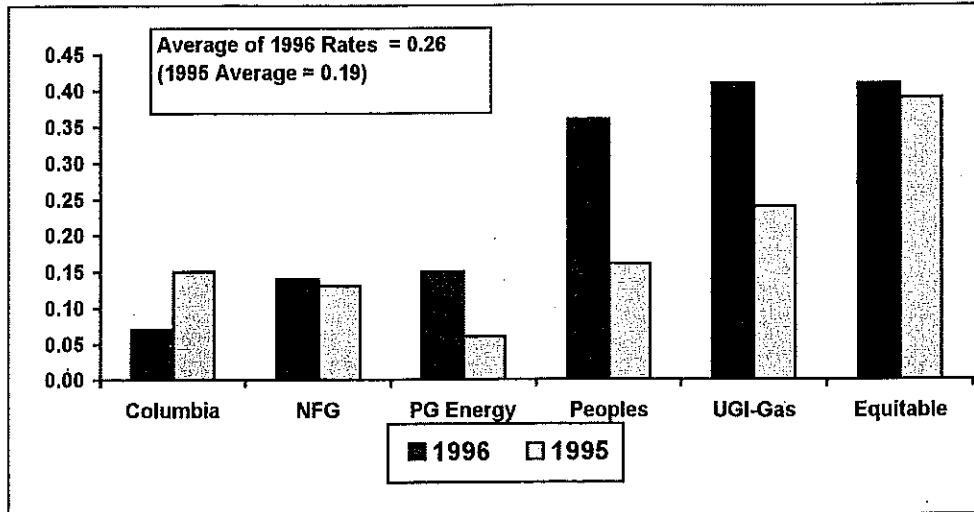
### Justified Consumer Complaint Rates\* Major Electric Utilities



\* Justified Consumer Complaint Rate = Justified complaints per 1,000 residential customers. See Appendix C, Table 1 for supporting data.

- The average of the justified consumer complaint rates for the major electric utilities increased from 1995 to 1996. The justified rates for five of the seven major electric utilities shown in the chart increased from 1995 to 1996.

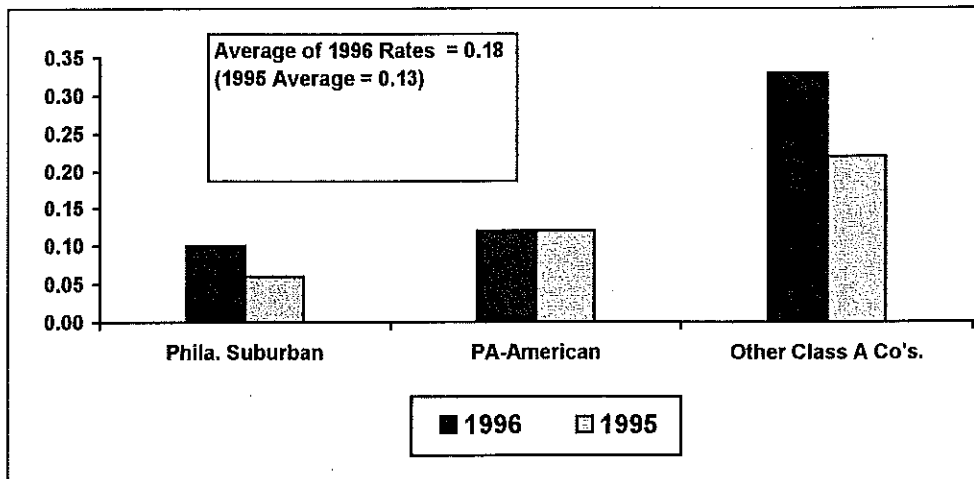
## Justified Consumer Complaint Rates\* Major Gas Utilities



\* Justified Consumer Complaint Rate = Justified complaints per 1,000 residential customers. See Appendix C, Table 2 for supporting data.

- The average of the justified consumer complaint rates for the major gas utilities increased from 1995 to 1996. All but one of the gas utilities had an increase in their justified rates.

## Justified Consumer Complaint Rates\* Major Water Utilities



\* Justified Consumer Complaint Rate = Justified complaints per 1,000 residential customers. See Appendix C, Table 3 for supporting data.

- The average of the justified consumer complaint rates for the "Class A" water utilities increased from 1995 to 1996.

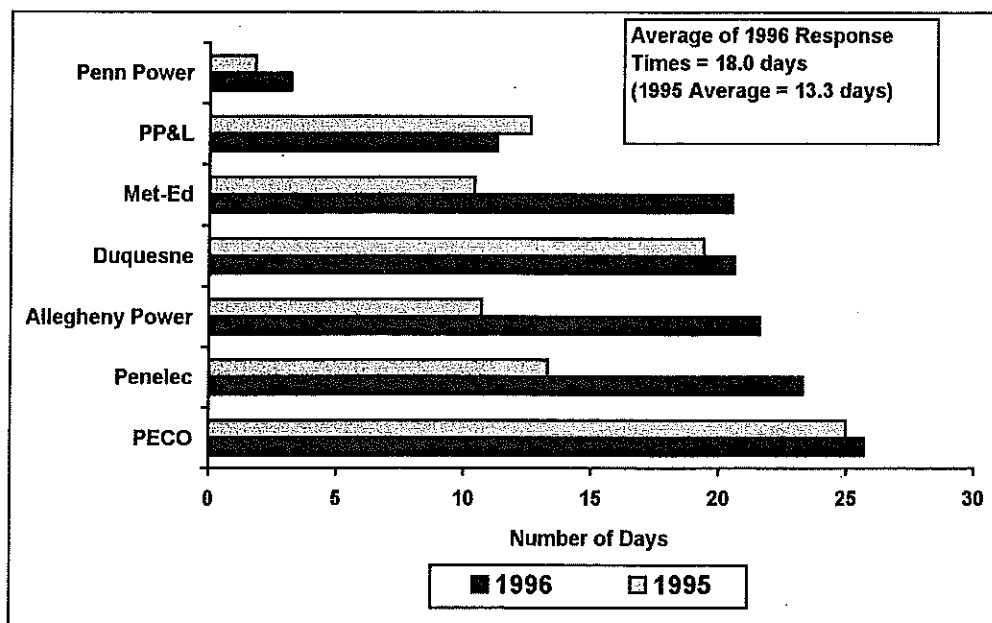


## Response Time

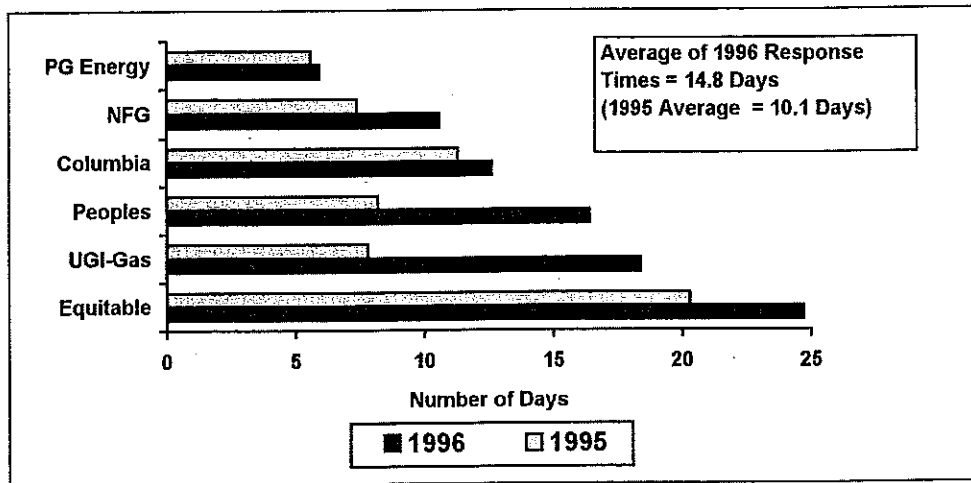
Once a customer contacts the BCS with a complaint about a utility, the Bureau notifies the utility. The utility then sends the BCS records of its contact with the customer regarding the complaint. Response time is the time span in days from the date of the Bureau of Consumer Services' first contact with the utility regarding a complaint, to the date on which the utility provides the BCS with all of the information needed to resolve the complaint. Response time quantifies the speed of a utility's response to BCS informal complaints. In this report, response time is presented as the average number of days that each utility took to supply the BCS with complete complaint information.

The charts that follow compare the 1995 and 1996 average response times of each of the major utilities within an industry. See Appendix D for 1995 and 1996 response time statistics.

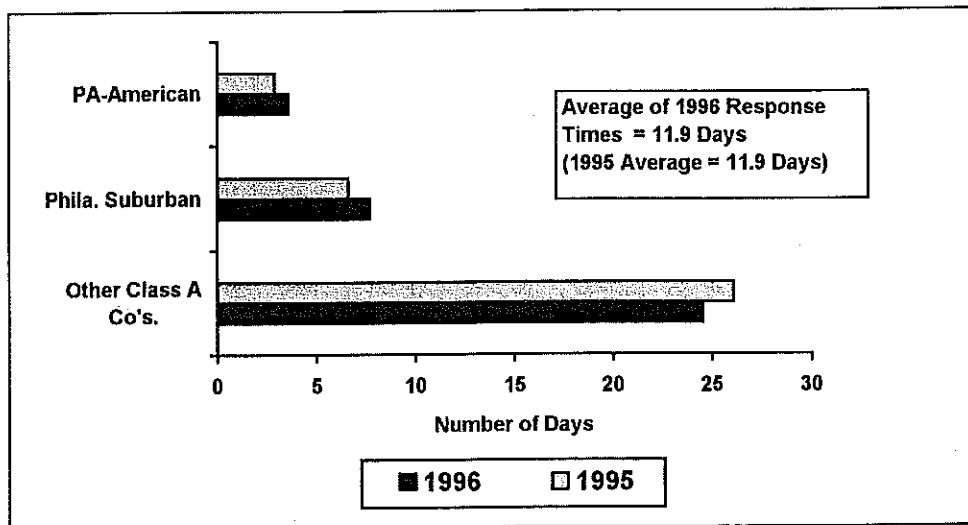
### Response Time to BCS Consumer Complaints Major Electric Utilities



## Response Time to BCS Consumer Complaints Major Gas Utilities



## Response Time to BCS Consumer Complaints Major Water Utilities



The average response times for the vast majority of the major utilities increased from 1995 to 1996. Several questions arise from this trend: What is the reason for the increase in response times? What is the current correlation between increased response time to the BCS and responsiveness to customers? What steps can the BCS and/or utilities take to decrease response time to consumer complaints?

### **3. Payment Arrangement Requests**

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This chapter focuses on the performance of the major regulated electric, gas and water utilities at handling requests for payment arrangements from their customers. Payment arrangement requests (PARs) principally include contacts to the BCS or to utilities involving requests for payment terms in one of the following situations:

- ✓ termination of service is pending,
- ✓ service has been terminated and the customer needs payment terms to have service restored, or
- ✓ the customer wants to retire an arrearage.

All of the measures in this chapter are based on assessments of contacts to the Bureau of Consumer Services by individual customers. As with consumer complaints, almost all customers had already contacted the utility prior to their contact to the BCS.

During 1996, the BCS handled 33,100 requests for payment arrangements from residential customers of the Chapter 56-covered utilities. Of these, 32,610 were from customers of the major electric, gas and water utilities. More than 80% of the 1996 PARs from customers whose service was on at the time of contact to the BCS were first time requests for help in setting up payment arrangements. Meanwhile, 19% of the customers whose service was still on had previously contacted the BCS for help in establishing an arrangement to pay what they owe to the utility. Because the Bureau of Consumer Services receives a very large volume of requests for payment arrangements, the Bureau research unit reviews a sample of cases for response time and case outcome for the companies that have the largest volume of payment arrangement requests: Duquesne, PECO, PP&L, Allegheny Power, Equitable and Peoples. Thus, the calculations for justified payment arrangement request rate and response time that appear in this report are based on a subset of the cases that the BCS received from customers of these six companies. The BCS believes that the size of the samples gives an adequate indication of the performance of these companies.

#### **Payment Arrangement Request Rate**

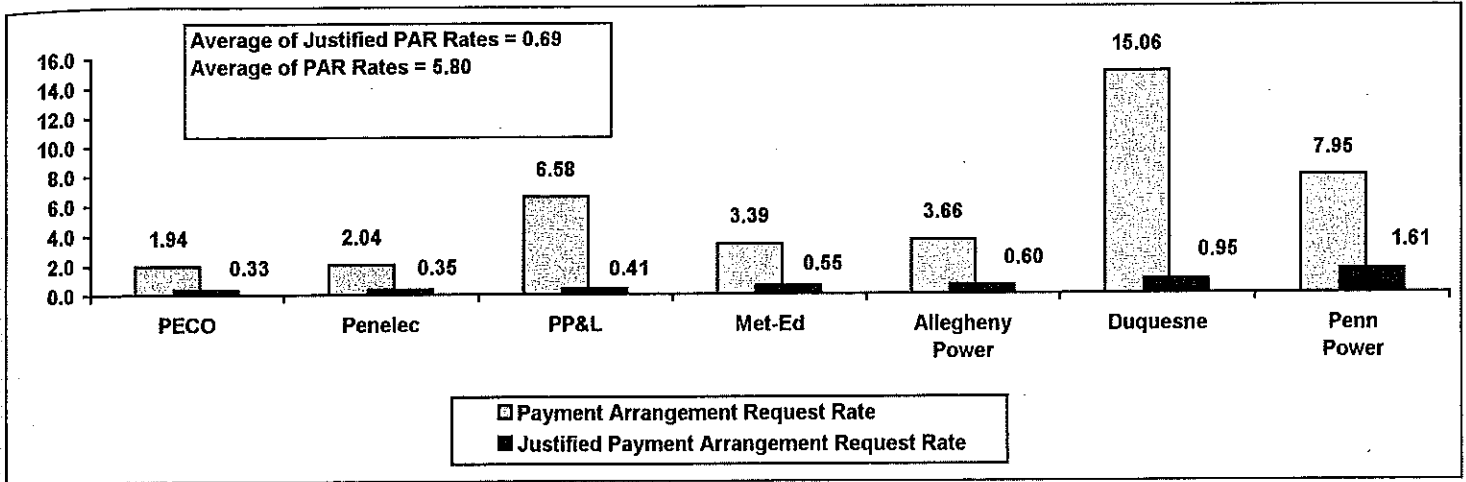
The Bureau of Consumer Services normally intervenes at the customer's request only after direct negotiations between the customer and the company have failed. The volume of PARs from a utility's customers may fluctuate from year to year or even from month to month depending upon the utility's collection strategy as well as economic factors. The calculation of the payment arrangement request rate (payment arrangement

requests per 1,000 residential customers) permits the reader to make comparisons among utilities with differing numbers of residential customers. However, as with consumer complaints, dissimilar customer populations, geographic locations and utility rates contribute to variations in PAR rates among the utilities within an industry. Nevertheless, unusually high or low rates and sizable changes in rates from one year to the next may reflect changes in company policies or bill collection philosophies, as stated earlier, or they may be indicative of problems. The BCS views such variations as potential areas for investigation. Clearly, improved access to the Bureau of Consumer Services has impacted the number of consumers who are able to contact the BCS about payment arrangements. In addition, as utilities have become more aggressive in seeking to collect outstanding bills, the number of PARs to the BCS continues to increase.

It is important to note that many of the payment arrangement requests in the PAR rates were not "justified". In other words, the company followed all the Commission rules and regulations when negotiating with the customer. In spite of this, the customer appealed to the Commission for help in setting up payment arrangements. The "justified payment arrangement request rate" (justified payment arrangement requests per one thousand residential customers) is a truer indication of a utility's payment negotiation performance. The justified rate reflects the payment arrangement requests that a utility did not handle properly.

The following charts show the 1996 payment arrangement request rates and the justified payment arrangement request rates for each of the major utilities within the electric, gas and water industries. Appendix E presents payment arrangement request statistics from 1995 and 1996, including the number of payment arrangement requests, payment arrangement request rates and justified payment arrangement request numbers and rates for each of the major utilities.

**1996 Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rates/  
Payment Arrangement Request Rates<sup>1</sup>  
Major Electric Utilities**

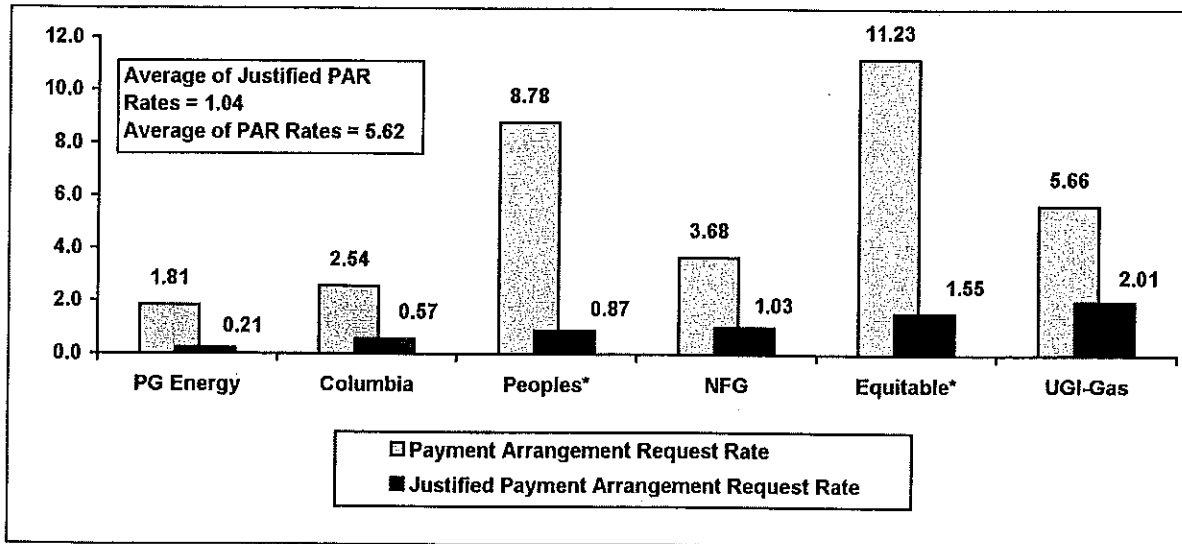


<sup>1</sup> Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate (PARs) = Justified Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers.

Payment Arrangement Request Rate (PAR) = Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers. See Appendix E, Table 1 for supporting data.

- On average, there were almost six payment arrangement requests to the BCS for each 1,000 residential customers of the major electric utilities in 1996.
- In 1996, the average number of justified payment arrangement requests to the BCS was 0.69 for each 1,000 residential electric customers.

**1996 Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rates/  
Payment Arrangement Request Rates<sup>1</sup>  
Major Gas Utilities**



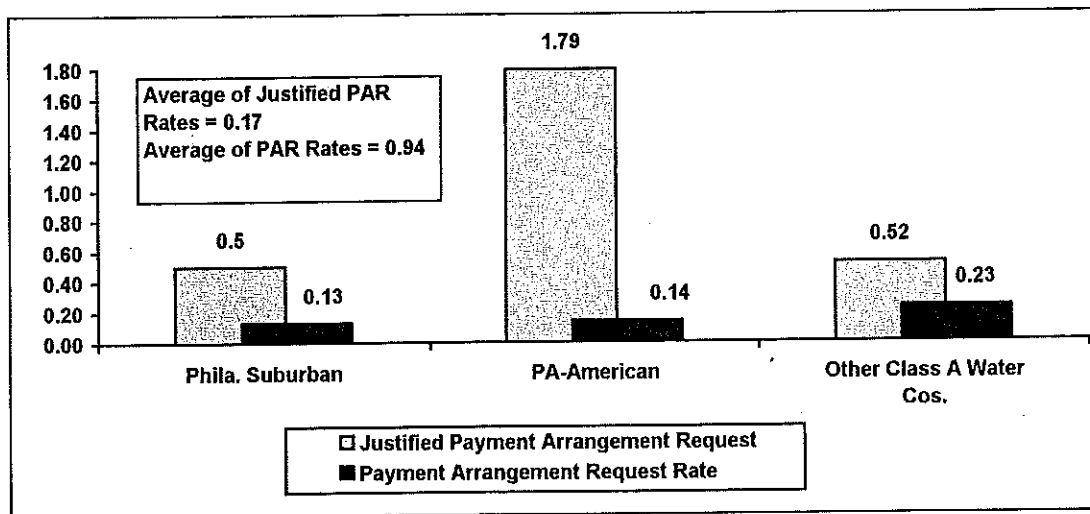
\* JPAR rates based on a probability sample of cases.

<sup>1</sup> Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate (PARs) = Justified Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers.

Payment Arrangement Request Rate (PAR) = Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers. See Appendix E, Table 2 for supporting data.

- On average, there were more than 5.5 payment arrangement requests to the BCS for each 1,000 residential customers of the major gas utilities in 1996.
- In 1996, there was, on average, slightly more than one justified payment arrangement request for each 1,000 residential gas customers.

## 1996 Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rates/ Payment Arrangement Request Rates<sup>1</sup> Major Water Utilities



<sup>1</sup> Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate (PARs) = Justified Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers.

Payment Arrangement Request Rate (PAR) = Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers. See Appendix E, Table 3 for supporting data.

- On average, for the “Class A” water utilities, there was 0.94 payment arrangement request filed with the BCS for each 1,000 residential customers in 1996.
- In 1996, the average number of justified payment arrangements requests to the BCS was 0.17 for each 1,000 residential water customers.

## Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate

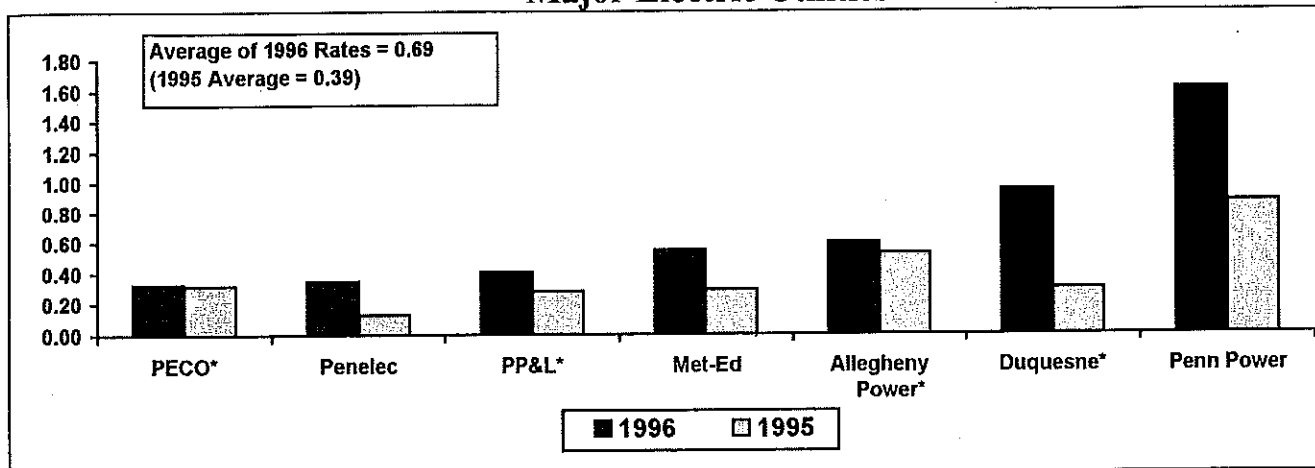
Just as with consumer complaints, once a customer contacts the Bureau with a payment arrangement request, the Bureau notifies the utility. The utility then sends the Bureau records of its contact with the customer regarding the most recent payment negotiation. The BCS research unit reviews the record to determine if the utility negotiated properly with the customer and uses this record to determine the outcome of the case. There are three possible case outcome classifications: "justified", "inconclusive" and "unjustified". This approach evaluates companies negatively only where, in the judgement of the BCS, appropriate payment negotiation procedures were not followed or where the regulations have been violated. Specifically, a case is considered "justified" in the appeal to BCS if it is found that, prior to BCS intervention, the company did not comply with PUC regulations, reports, Secretarial Letters, tariffs, or guidelines.

Changes in company policy can influence not only the volume of PARs to the Commission but also the effectiveness of a utility's payment negotiations. The Bureau uses the "justified rate" to measure a utility's performance at handling payment arrangement requests from customers. The BCS revised the calculation of justified PAR rate for 1996. The justified payment arrangement request rate is the ratio of the number of justified PARs for each 1,000 residential customer. In prior years, the "justified rate" had been based on a utility's overdue residential customers. The justified rate emphasizes the Bureau's concern with the volume of payment arrangement requests that have been mishandled by the utility.

The Bureau of Consumer Services monitors the justified PAR rates of the major utilities. For example, the BCS compares the "justified" rates of individual utilities and industries over time and investigates significant changes when they occur. The charts that follow compare each major utility's 1995 and 1996 justified payment arrangement request rates.



## Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rates<sup>1</sup> Major Electric Utilities

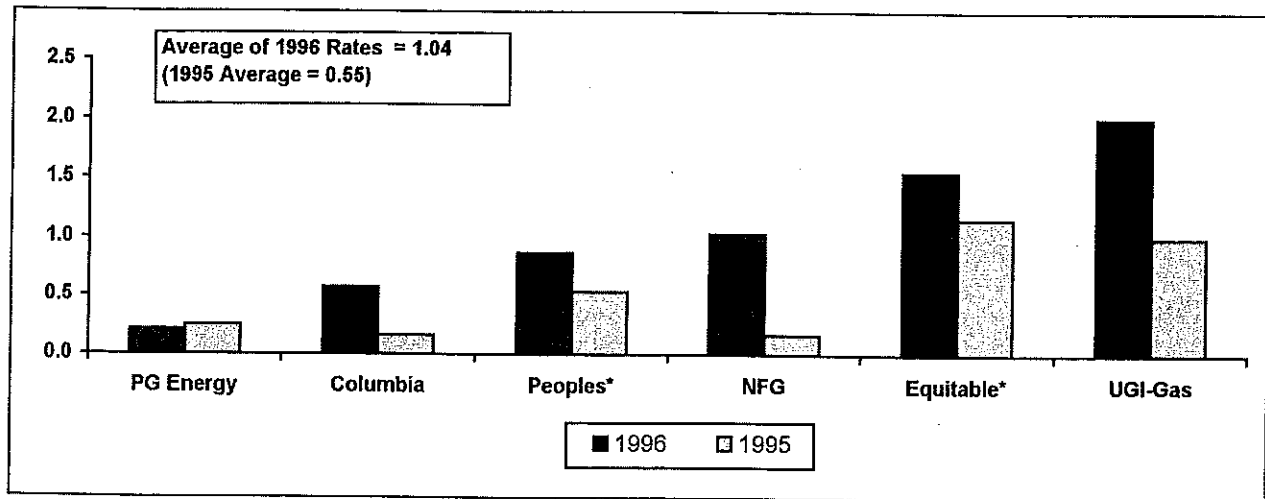


\*Based on a probability sample of cases.

<sup>1</sup> Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate = Justified Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers. See Appendix E, Table 1 for supporting data.

- The justified PAR rate for each of the major electric utilities increased from 1995 to 1996.
- The average of the justified PAR rates for the seven major electric utilities shown on the chart increased by almost 77% from 1995 to 1996.

## Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rates<sup>1</sup> Major Gas Utilities

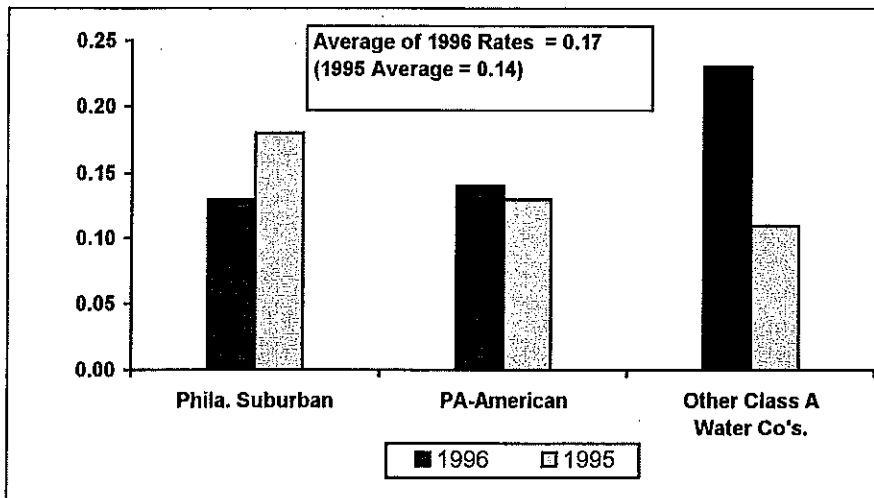


\* Based on a probability sample of cases.

<sup>1</sup> Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate = Justified Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers. See Appendix E, Table 2 for supporting data.

- The justified PAR rates for all but one of the major gas utilities increased from 1995 to 1996.
- The average of the justified PAR rates for the major gas utilities increased by 89% from 1995 to 1996.

## Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rates<sup>1</sup> Major Water Utilities



<sup>1</sup>Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate = Justified payment arrangement requests per 1,000 residential customers. See Appendix E, Table 3 for supporting data.

- The average of the justified PAR rates for the Class A water companies increased by more than 21% from 1995 to 1996.

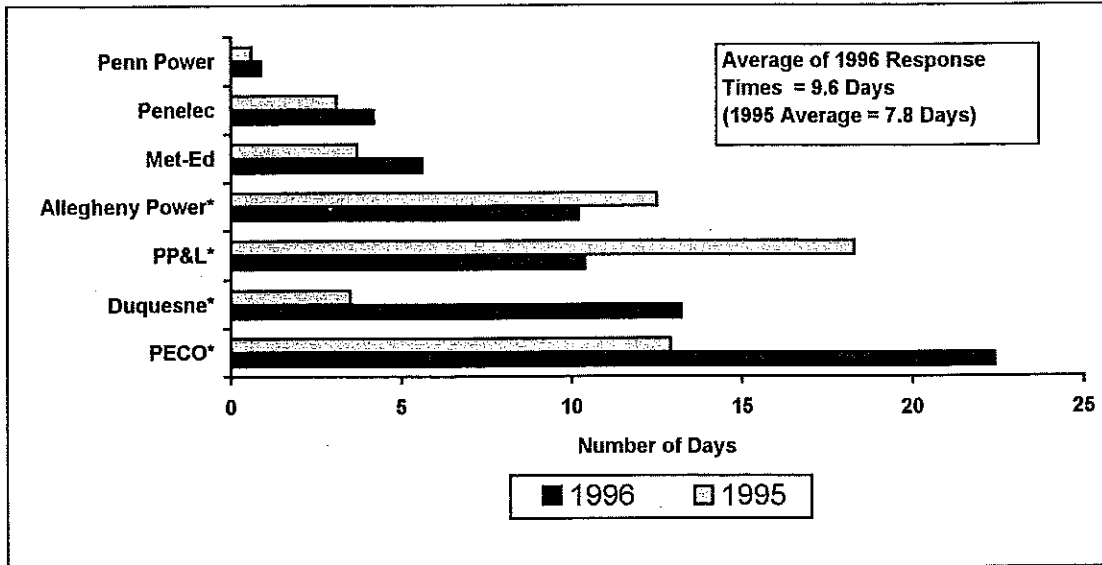
## Response Time

For every day that a case involving a request for payment arrangements remains open and unresolved, the customer may continue to accumulate a larger debt to the company. As a result, there is a strong, inherent economic incentive for a company to process these requests expeditiously so that a final disposition of the complaint can be determined.

Response time is the time span in days from the date of the Bureau of Consumer Services' first contact with a company regarding a payment arrangement request to the date on which the company provides the BCS with all of the documentation it needs to issue payment terms and resolve any other issues raised by the customer. In this report, response time is presented as the average number of days that each company took to supply the BCS with the necessary information

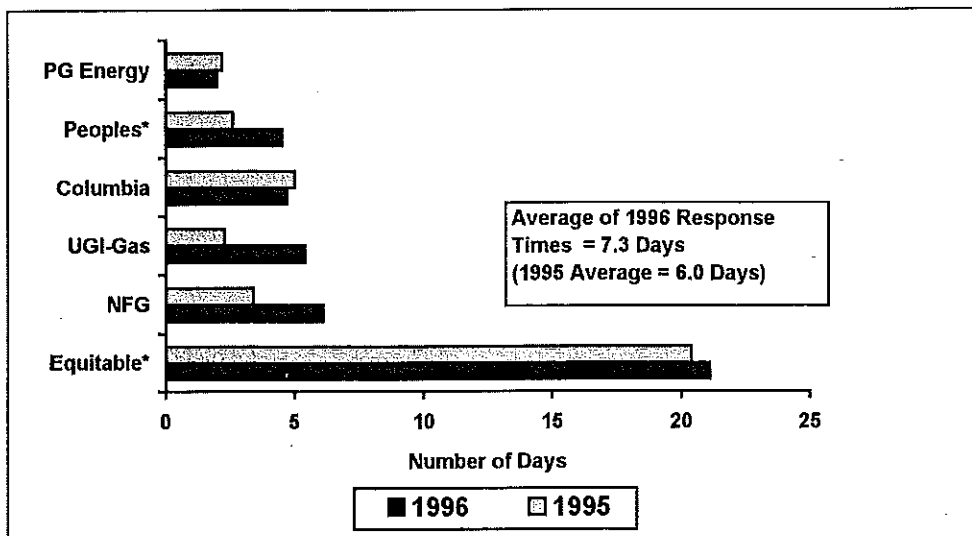
The charts that follow compare the 1995 and 1996 average response times of each of the major utilities within the electric, gas and water industries. See Appendix F for 1995 and 1996 response time statistics.

## Response Time to BCS Payment Arrangement Requests Major Electric Utilities



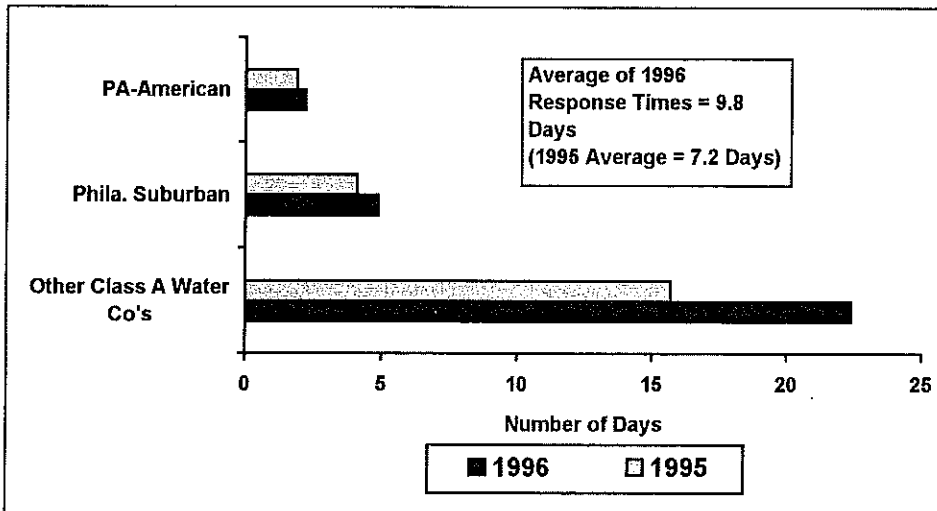
\*Based on a probability sample of cases

## Response Time to BCS Payment Arrangement Requests Major Gas Utilities



\* Based on a probability sample of cases

## Response Time to BCS Payment Arrangement Requests Major Water Utilities



The average response times increased from 1995 to 1996 for all but four of the major utilities. As with consumer complaints, these increases raise questions as to why response time has increased and whether there is a correlation between response time to the BCS and response time to customers.

### Termination of Service

Payment over time through a mutually acceptable payment arrangement is one possible outcome when a customer owes an outstanding balance to a utility company. Termination of the utility service is another. The Bureau of Consumer Services views termination of utility service as a utility's last resort when customers fail to meet their payment obligations.

The calculation of termination rate allows the reader to compare the termination activity of utilities with differing numbers of residential customers. Termination rate is the number of terminations for each 1,000 residential customers. The introduction of "termination rate" is also intended to help the Commission monitor the performance of utilities at maintaining universal utility service as specified in the Electricity Generation Customer Choice and Competition Act. Any significant increase in termination rate would indicate a trend or pattern that the Commission may need to investigate. The following charts present the 1994, 1995 and 1996 termination statistics for the major electric and gas utilities. Water utilities do not report termination statistics to the Commission and thus are not included in the tables.

**Residential Service Terminations Statistics**  
**Major Electric Utilities**

Company Name	Residential Service Terminations				% Change in # 1995-1996	Termination Rates		
	1994	1995	1996			1994	1995	1996
Allegheny Power	5,136	5,820	3,952		-32%	9.06	10.18	6.88
Duquesne	7,621	7,228	8,853		22%	14.82	14.03	17.19
Met-Ed	2,659	2,239	3,040		36%	6.63	5.48	7.36
PECO	39,380	29,268	31,023		6%	29.8	22.03	23.30
Penelec	3,158	3,099	4,201		36%	6.48	6.32	8.54
Penn Power	1,205	1,179	1,635		39%	9.77	9.42	12.93
PP&L	6,154	6,455	10,747		66%	5.79	6.01	9.93
Major Electrics	<b>65,313</b>	<b>55,288</b>	<b>63,451</b>		<b>15%</b>			
Average of Rates						<b>11.76</b>	<b>10.50</b>	<b>12.30</b>

Termination Rate = Terminations per 1,000 Residential Customers

## Residential Service Terminations Statistics Major Gas Utilities

Company Name	Residential Service Terminations				Termination Rates		
	1994	1995	1996	% Change in # 1995-1996	1994	1995	1996
Columbia	4,201	3,841	4,976	30%	12.90	11.70	15.06
Equitable	2,066	2,988	3,323	11%	9.03	13.05	14.51
NFG	2,883	3,231	3,927	22%	14.99	16.70	20.18
Peoples	4,616	3,931	3,217	-18%	14.68	12.57	10.21
PG Energy	2,241	2,266	2,175	-4%	17.80	17.71	16.78
UGI-Gas	3,418	4,135	5,274	28%	15.96	18.88	23.72
<b>Major Gas</b>	<b>19,425</b>	<b>20,392</b>	<b>22,892</b>	<b>12%</b>			
<b>Average of Rates</b>					<b>14.23</b>	<b>15.10</b>	<b>16.74</b>

Termination Rate = Terminations per 1,000 Residential Customers

## 4. Compliance

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The activities of the Bureau of Consumer Services include efforts to ensure that public utilities' practices and procedures conform to the standards of conduct for residential service established in statute and regulation, particularly 52 PA Code, Chapter 56. The purpose of Chapter 56, as stated in §56.1, is to ". . . establish and enforce uniform, fair, and equitable residential utility service standards governing eligibility criteria, credit and deposit practices, and account billing, termination, and customer complaint procedures." During 1996, the BCS continued its informal compliance notification process to improve utility compliance with applicable statutes and regulations relating to the treatment of residential accounts.

### Informal Compliance Process

The Bureau's primary compliance effort remains its informal compliance process. This process gives each utility specific examples of its infractions of Chapter 56. The utilities can use the information to pinpoint and voluntarily correct deficiencies in their customer service operations. The informal compliance process uses consumer complaints to identify, document, and notify utilities of apparent deficiencies. The process begins by the BCS notifying a utility of an alleged infraction. A utility that receives notification of an allegation has an opportunity to affirm or deny the information. If the information about the allegation is *accurate*, the utility indicates the cause of the problem (i.e., employee error, procedures, a computer program, etc.). In addition, the utility informs the BCS of the date and action it took to correct this problem. Corrective actions may entail modifying a computer program; revising the text of a notice, bill, letter or company procedures; or providing additional staff training to ensure the proper use of a procedure. If the utility states that the information is *inaccurate*, the utility provides specific details and supporting data to disprove the allegation. The BCS always provides a final determination to the utility regarding the alleged infraction. For example, if the utility provides supporting data indicating that the information about the allegation is inaccurate, the BCS after reviewing all the information, would inform the utility that, in this instance, the facts do not reflect an infraction of the regulations. On the other hand, if the company agrees that the information forming the basis of the allegation is accurate and indicates the cause of the problem to be other than an employee error, or if the BCS does not find that the data supports the utility's position that the information is inaccurate, the BCS would inform the company that the facts reflect an infraction of a particular section of the regulations. Usually, the notification process allows utilities to receive written clarifications of Chapter 56 provisions and Commission and BCS policies.

The significance of infractions identified by the informal compliance process is frequently emphasized by the fact that some represent systematic errors that are



widespread and affect many utility customers. Since the BCS receives only a small portion of the complaints that customers have with their utility companies, limited opportunities exist to identify such errors. Therefore, the informal compliance process is specifically designed to help utilities identify systematic errors. Utilities should investigate the scope of the problem and take corrective action. Utilities can also develop their information systems to identify problems by reviewing complaints before they come to the Commission's attention.

## **Infraction Rate**

In order to compare utilities of various size within an industry, the Bureau has calculated a measure called "infraction rate". The infraction rate is the number of informally verified infractions for each 1,000 residential customers. Several considerations are important to keep in mind when viewing the following infraction rate charts. First, the data does not consider the causes of the individual infractions. Secondly, some infractions may be more serious than others because of their systemic nature, and therefore may show ongoing or repetitive occurrences. Still other infractions may be more serious because they involve threats to the health and safety of utility customers.

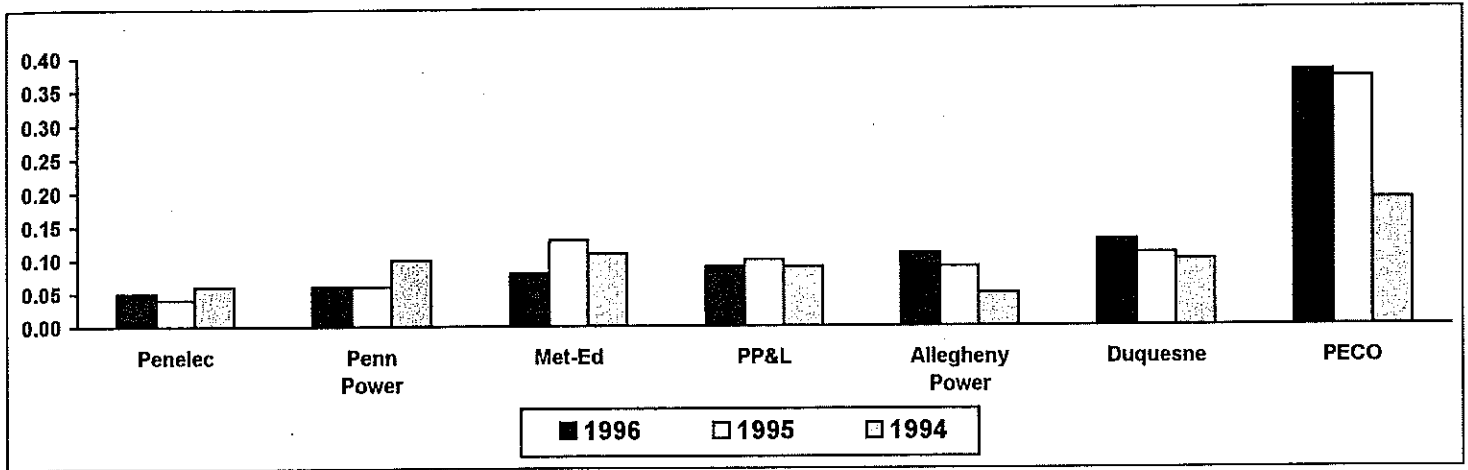
The introduction of "infraction rate" in this report is intended to help the Commission monitor the duty of electric distribution companies at 66 Pa. C.S. §2807(d) to, at a minimum, maintain customer services under retail competition at the same level of quality. In subsequent activity reports, the calculation of "infraction rate" for the electric generation suppliers, the new entrants into electric retail competition, will also help the Commission, pursuant to 66 Pa. C.S. §2809(e), monitor and regulate the service of electric generation suppliers. Electric generation suppliers are required at 66 Pa. C.S. §2809(e) and (f) to both comply with Chapter 56 and to implement practices which prevent deterioration of the present quality of service provided by the electric distribution companies.

The value of the infraction rate is to depict industry trends over time. The trend for 1996 is calculated using the BCS' Compliance Tracking System's (CTS) data as of June 9, 1997. The 1996 trend may change if the total number of infractions increases. This would occur if new infractions are discovered from customer complaints that originated in 1996 but were still under investigation by the Bureau when the data was retrieved from the CTS. Often, the total number of infractions for the year will be greater than the number used in this report.

During 1994, 1995, and 1996, the Bureau of Consumer Services informally verified 3,721 *infractions* of Chapter 56 by the major electric, gas and water utilities under the PUC's jurisdiction. As of June 9, 1997, there were 159 pending infractions for

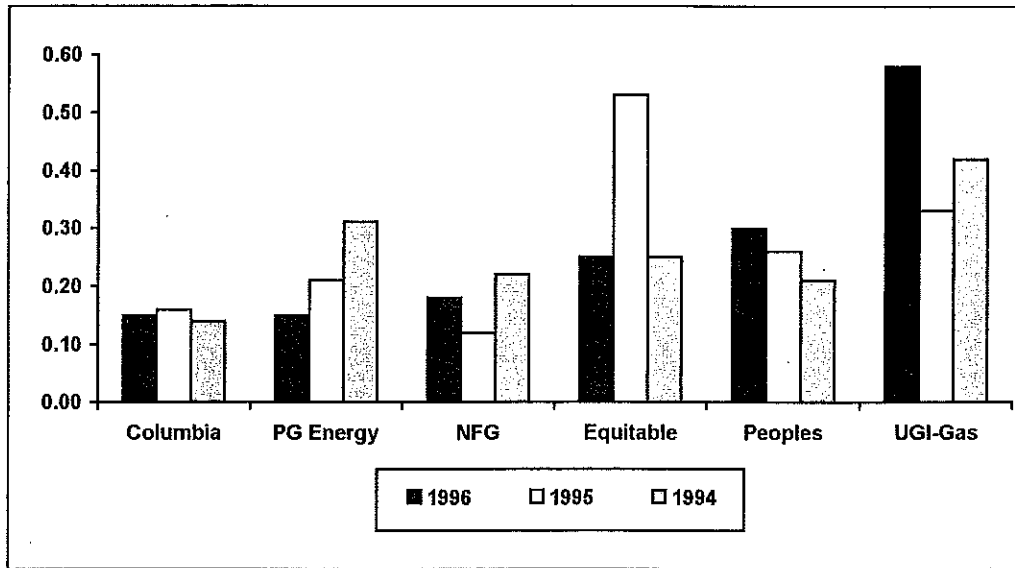
these utilities. The BCS had notified the utilities of the alleged infractions and was waiting for additional information about them from the utilities. An infraction rate for each major electric, gas and water company is shown for 1994, 1995 and 1996. Again, the number of infractions and infraction rates may change for 1996 as the BCS obtains more information on the pending infractions. For example, as of June 9, 1997, the BCS was waiting for information from Penelec regarding 44 alleged infractions and from Met-Ed regarding 43 infractions. See Appendix G for 1994-1996 infraction statistics.

## PUC Infraction Rates Major Electric Utilities



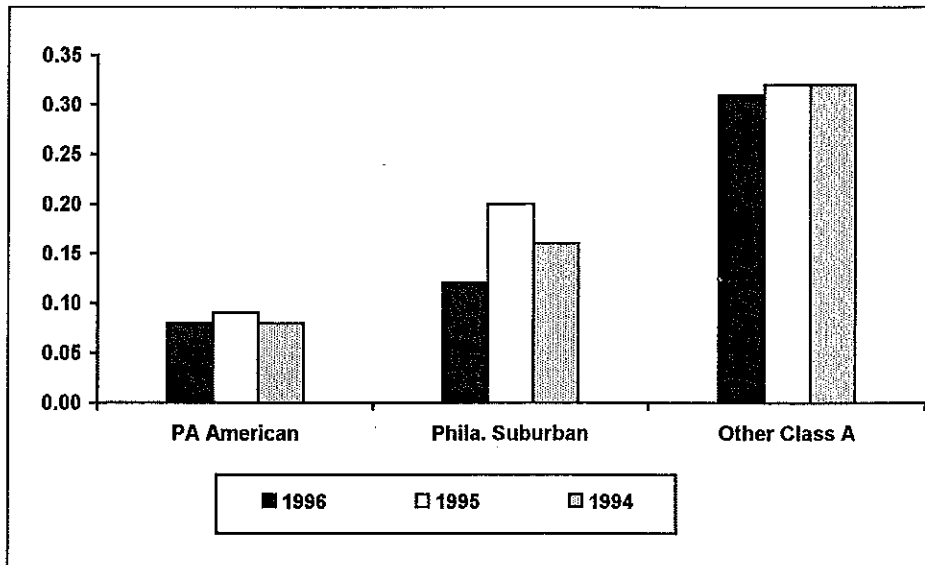
Infraction Rate = Number of Infractions per 1,000 Residential Customers  
See Appendix G, Table 1 for supporting data.

### PUC Infraction Rates<sup>1</sup> Major Gas Utilities



Infraction Rate = Number of Infractions per 1,000 Residential Customers.  
See Appendix G, Table 2 for supporting data.

### PUC Infraction Rates<sup>1</sup> Major Water Utilities



Infraction Rate = Number of Infractions per 1,000 Residential Customers.  
See Appendix G, Table 3 for supporting data.

## 5. Universal Service and Energy Conservation Programs

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The Public Utility Commission has given the Bureau of Consumer Services the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating utilities' universal service and energy conservation programs. The Bureau's goal in monitoring these programs is to increase the effectiveness of utility collections while protecting the public's health and safety. The BCS has long been involved in this type of activity. In 1990, the Commission initiated an investigation into the problems of uncollectible balances and payment troubled customers and directed the BCS to coordinate the investigation and prepare a report of its findings and recommendations. The purpose of the investigation was to assist the Commission in developing policy to address these problems. Related objectives of the report and its recommendations were to develop programs to decrease utilities' uncollectible account levels and to assist low income customers in maintaining their utility service.

As a result of the investigation, the BCS submitted a *Final Report* to the Commission proposing a total of 83 recommendations. Many of the recommendations related to the establishment of universal service and energy conservation programs. The recommendations attempted to balance four potentially conflicting goals: to protect consumers' health and safety, to make bills affordable for low income customers, to limit utility collection costs and to control recommended program costs so the financial impact to other ratepayers is limited.

The programs that grew out of the BCS' recommendations have proven to be highly successful at helping to maintain universal service and cost effective to the utilities. In the words of one of the CAP evaluators, "Equitable's Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is successful. It works as planned. More importantly, it benefits participant customers, non-participant customers, the company and society."<sup>1</sup>

In recognition of the success and value of these programs, the Electricity Generation Customer Choice and Competition Act (Act) that was signed by Governor Ridge on December 3, 1996 ensures that universal service and energy conservation programs are appropriately funded and available in each electric distribution territory. The Public Utility Code, as amended by the Act, imposes a mandate for universal service and energy conservation policies, programs and protections. As a result, the Commission and the Bureau of Consumer Services have devoted a great deal of time and attention in 1997 to developing guidelines for these important programs.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Gil Peach, Impact evaluation of Equitable Gas Company's EAP, September 1996.

This chapter briefly discusses the status of these programs in 1996. The programs include Customer Assistance Programs, the Low Income Usage Reduction Programs, Utility Hardship Fund Programs, Customer Assistance and Referral Evaluation Services programs and A Helping Hand. The 1996 highlights of each of these programs are provided in the sections that follow.

## **Customer Assistance Programs**

On July 25, 1992, the Commission adopted a Policy Statement on Customer Assistance Programs (CAPs). CAPs provide an alternative to traditional collection methods for low income, payment troubled utility customers. Generally, customers enrolled in a CAP agree to make monthly payments to the utility based on household size and gross income. These regular monthly payments, which may be for an amount that is less than the current bill for utility service, are made in exchange for continued provision of the service. Besides regular monthly payments, customers need to comply with certain responsibilities and restrictions to remain eligible for continued participation. This section presents a progress report on the implementation of the Commission's CAP policy statement by the major electric and gas utilities in Pennsylvania and includes a summary of the results of process evaluations for three utilities' CAPs and impact evaluations for four utilities.

The purpose of the Commission's Policy Statement is to encourage the major gas and electric utilities in Pennsylvania to implement pilot CAPs and to provide guidelines for those utilities that voluntarily implement CAPs. These guidelines prescribe a model CAP designed to be a more cost-effective approach for dealing with issues of customer inability to pay than traditional collection methods. In these guidelines, the Commission encourages CAP funding that makes maximum use of existing low income energy assistance programs, most notably LIHEAP. The guidelines also recommend that utilities incorporate a series of features into their CAPs to limit program costs.

### **CAP Progress Report**

Eleven of the 15 major electric and gas utilities have operational CAPs. Only Penn Power and UGI-Electric have not submitted a CAP proposal to the Commission for review and approval. As of March 31, 1997, approximately 52,000 participants were enrolled in utility-sponsored CAPs compared with 46,000 participants in March 1996. The primary reason that this number increased is due to PECO's implementation of a pilot CAP rate that enrolled 10,000 participants. The number of participants who are enrolled and participate in CAPs is not constant. Each utility has a maximum participation limit and determines whether or not it will replace participants who leave CAP pilots with new participants. Participants leave CAP for reasons other than

nonpayment or failure to comply with program rules. Utilities find that many participants voluntarily leave CAP pilots because they move or have changes in income.

Four utilities, PECO, Equitable, NFG and Peoples, replace participants who leave CAP pilots with new participants. All four utilities receive rate recovery for their programs. PECO has two CAPs that maintain a combined enrollment of 40,000 customers. Equitable's Energy Assistance Program (EAP) limits enrollment to 7,000 participants and, on average, enrolls 6,200 participants. Both NFG and Peoples have enrollment limits of 1,000 participants. As participants leave the program, NFG and Peoples replace them with other eligible customers. Peoples maintains an average enrollment of 900. NFG maintained an average enrollment of 950. Allegheny Power, Met-Ed, and Columbia also receive rate recovery for their programs. However, these utilities do not replace participants who leave CAP. These three utilities have a maximum combined enrollment limit of 4,200 participants. As of March 31, 1997, the combined enrollment had decreased to approximately 1,500 participants. Duquesne, PP&L, Penelec, and PG Energy are not receiving any special rate recovery for their CAPs and do not replace participants who leave their programs.

Although the Commission approved the pilot design of UGI-Gas in February 1995, UGI conditioned CAP enrollment on an approved funding mechanism for the pilot. In August 1995, the Commission approved UGI's funding mechanism. UGI expected to begin enrollment in the spring of 1996. However, enrollment did not begin until June 1997.

The table on the following page shows the status of the electric and gas CAPs for 1996.

## 1996 CAP Status Survey

Utility	Customer Program Name	Pilot Size	Enrollment as of 12/96	Evaluation Due Date	Enrollment Began	Qtr Avg Payment*
Allegheny	LIPURP	2,000	798	6/96	6/94	89%
Duquesne	CAP	1,600	932	Spring/98	9/95	89%
Met-Ed	CAP	1,200	467	12/96	8/93	82%
PECO	CAP	29,000	31,969		1984	77%
CAP Rate	CAP Rate	10,000	9,912	Fall/97	1996	70%
Penelec	CAP	1,300	520	Spring/97	7/94	81%
Penn Power	No Program.					
PP&L	OnTrack Pymt Plan	2,000	1,109	7/97	6/93	n/a
UGI-Electric	No Program.					
Electric		47,100	45,707			81%
Columbia	CAP	1,000	565	12/96**	12/96	n/a
Equitable	EAP	7,000	6,347	8/95**	8/95	87%
NFG	LIRA	1,000	946	6/96**	6/96	80%
PG Energy	Partners Program	1,000	245	Spring/98	Spring/98	69%
Peoples	PCAP	1,000	928	12/97	12/97	85%
UGI-Gas	LISHP	1,000				
Gas		12,000	9,031			80%
Total		59,100	54,738			80%

\* Quarterly average percentage of participants making monthly payments.

\*\* Evaluation received.



## **Payment Monitoring**

Quarterly reports from utilities continue to show that a majority of participants enrolled in CAPS make their monthly payments. In 1996, based on a quarterly average, 80 percent of participants enrolled in CAPS made their monthly payments. Based on its experience with monitoring CAPs, the BCS expected that impact evaluations would show that some CAP participants' payments have been set too low and could be raised without negatively influencing affordability. Several impact evaluations found that payments can be raised slightly without compromising affordability. The goal is to establish payment ranges that maximize customer payments, maintain affordable payments and limit, as much as possible, the difference between the CAP participant's actual bill and the agreed upon CAP payment.

## **Summary Status of CAP Evaluations**

The CAP Policy Statement recommends that a utility thoroughly and objectively evaluate its CAP. Each evaluation is to include both process and impact components. The process component focuses on whether the CAP implementation conforms to the program design and determines if the program operates efficiently. Utilities have contracted with independent third parties to conduct process evaluations of the design and administration of pilot CAPs.

Impact evaluations should focus on the degree to which the program achieves the continuation of utility service to CAP participants at reasonable cost levels. The evaluation should include an analysis of the costs and benefits of traditional collection methods versus the costs and benefits of handling low income, negative ability to pay customers through a CAP. The comparative analysis is to include: 1) payment history, 2) energy assistance participation, 3) energy consumption, 4) administrative cost and 5) actual collection costs. Utilities have also contracted with third parties to conduct impact evaluations to determine the cost-effectiveness of CAPs.

In 1996, three utilities, Penelec, Peoples, and PG Energy submitted the results of their process evaluations to the Bureau. These results show that the programs have been implemented as approved by the Commission. Evaluators made minor recommendations to improve the efficiency of these programs. Appendix H briefly summarizes the process evaluation results.

Equitable, NFG and Columbia submitted the results of their impact evaluations to the Commission in 1996. Equitable and NFG's evaluators found that an appropriately designed and well-implemented CAP can be a more cost-effective approach for dealing with issues of customer inability to pay than traditional collection methods. NFG is expanding its participation limit from 1,000 to 5,000 customers. As part of its expanded

program, NFG has implemented tighter default provisions and revised the rate discount feature of its program into three tiers. Based on the evaluation findings, Equitable is increasing monthly payments for its CAP participants. After considering the results of its program evaluation, Columbia is revising its pilot to improve the program's cost-effectiveness. Columbia will also increase the size of payments that its pilot participants must make. PP&L submitted the results of its preliminary impact evaluation. The findings show that participants in PP&L's program continue to make their monthly payments and do not increase usage. See Appendix H for a summary of these evaluations.

For more information about CAPs, readers may contact Janice K. Hummel of the PUC's Bureau of Consumer Services at (717) 783-9088.

### **Low Income Usage Reduction Program**

The Pennsylvania Low Income Usage Reduction Program (LIURP) is a statewide, utility-sponsored, residential usage reduction program, mandated by Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission regulations. Overall, the 15 major electric and gas companies that are required to participate in LIURP have spent \$123.5 million from 1988 through 1996 by providing weatherization/usage reduction treatments to 115,659 low income households. While the initial regulations mandated the program from 1988 to 1992, revised regulations have extended LIURP for an additional five years through January 1998.

The primary goals of LIURP are to assist low income residential customers to conserve energy and reduce their energy bills. If these goals are met, LIURP should serve as an effective means to improve the LIURP recipients' ability to pay their energy bills. LIURP is targeted toward customers with annual incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. Beginning in 1993, companies are permitted to spend up to 10% of their annual LIURP budgets on customers with an income between 150% and 200% of the federal poverty level. Priority is placed on the highest energy users which offer the greatest opportunities for bill reductions. When feasible, customers with payment problems (arrearages) are targeted. The program is available to both home owners and renters. All housing types are serviced, including single family homes, mobile homes, and small and large multi-family residences.

The 1994 program year is the latest year for which post-installation annual usage data is available. Overall, the 15 major electric and gas companies spent \$14,898,315 on LIURP in 1994. These companies provided usage reduction services to 12,408 low income households in 1994. LIURP was successful in achieving its goals by producing benefits in the areas of demand side management, bill reduction, arrearage reduction and

avoided collection costs. The list of LIURP benefits includes many other benefits for both utilities and their customers. Noteworthy among the program benefits is arrearage reduction. The analysis of payment troubled LIURP recipients in recent years has shown that their arrearages were increasing in the year prior to the customers' receipt of LIURP services. However, in the year following these treatments, arrearages declined. Overall, the total annual program arrearage reductions have been between \$1 million and \$2 million. The BCS believes that this result is directly attributable to two factors: 1) bill reductions and 2) the development of a partnership between the customer and the utility as a result of the provision of LIURP services. The energy savings and bill reductions for 1994 are presented in the table below:

<b>Job Type</b>	<b>1994 Average Energy Savings</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Bill Reduction</b>
Electric Heating	11%	\$157
Electric Water Heating	7.7%	\$86
Electric Baseload	11.4%	\$121
Gas Heating	21.6%	\$310

Appendices I and J show the spending and production levels of each participating utility from 1994 to 1996 and include the total spending and production amounts since LIURP began in 1988.

For more information about LIURP, readers may contact David Mick of the PUC's Bureau of Consumer Services at (717) 783-3232.

## Utility Hardship Fund Programs

Utility company hardship funds were created to provide cash assistance to utility customers to help them pay their utility bills. The funds make payments directly to companies on behalf of eligible customers. Contributions from shareholders, utility employees and customers are the primary sources of funding for these programs. In recent years, monies from formal complaint settlements, overcharge settlements, off-system sales, special solicitations of business corporations, and natural gas purchase arrangements with Citizens Energy Corporation have expanded the funding for these assistance programs. Hardship funds provide assistance grants to customers who “fall through the cracks” of other financial programs or to those who still have a critical need for assistance after other resources have been exhausted.

The Pennsylvania Electric Company and Metropolitan Edison Company were the first utilities to begin hardship fund programs. With encouragement from the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, many other major companies began supporting hardship funds. In 1985, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission issued a Secretarial letter to all major utilities urging them to develop and support a utility company hardship fund. By 1986 each major electric and gas company sponsored a utility hardship fund in its service territory. (Appendix K lists the name of the hardship fund(s) each major utility supports). The Commission issued another Secretarial letter in November 1992 that recommended specific guidelines for utility hardship funds:

- Utilities should continue to support and expand company hardship fund programs and advocate shareholder increases in contributions through offering a shareholder and/or employee matching contribution provision, or outright grants.
- All major electric and gas companies should consider adopting the “dollar check-off provision”, or a similar provision, on utility bills to enable customers to make contributions with minimal effort.
- Each company should join with a highly visible charitable organization to increase the effectiveness of its hardship fund programs.
- Utilities should continue to seek donations from community and corporate neighbors and increase visibility in the community through fund raising events and use of mass media.

Shareholders contribute to utility hardship funds in three ways: grants for administration of the programs, outright grants to the funds, and grants that match the contributions of ratepayers. Relative comparisons of shareholder contributions are based

on the total dollars of shareholder contributions in 1995-1996 divided by the company's residential revenues for 1996. The following table shows the amount of contributions from each company's shareholders and from employees and ratepayers for the 1995-1996 program year.

<b>1995-96 Ratepayer/Employee and Shareholder Contributions to Hardship Funds</b>				
<b>Company</b>	<b>Ratepayer/ Employee Contributions</b>	<b>Average Ratepayer/ Employee Contribution per Customer</b>	<b>Shareholder Contributions</b>	<b>1995-96 Contribution/ Residential Revenues</b>
Duquesne	\$313,609	\$.61	\$390,000	0.096%
Met-Ed	88,445	.21	170,459	0.046%
Penelec	61,831	.13	149,878	0.044%
Penn Power	73,078	.58	47,168	0.040%
PP&L	359,638	.33	420,000	0.042%
PECO*	554,282	.42	662,745	0.041%
Allegheny Power	208,927	.36	155,353	0.039%
Columbia	105,612	.32	62,545	0.023%
Equitable	104,778	.46	240,000	0.092%
NFG	44,179	.23	33,333	0.018%
PG Energy	17,219	.13	28,749	0.029%
Peoples	244,330	.78	420,000	0.144%
T.W. Phillips	21,455	.40	36,000	0.085%
UGI*	21,804	.10	60,903	0.036%
PAWC	53,162	.11	42,000	0.028%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,272,349</b>		<b>\$2,919,133</b>	
<b>Average</b>		<b>\$.34</b>		<b>0.054%</b>

\* Includes electric and gas

- Contributions from ratepayers/employees and from shareholders decreased in 1995-1996 compared to 1994-1995. Contributions from these two sources equaled \$5,440,943 in 1994-1995 and \$5,191,482 in 1995-1996.<sup>1</sup>
- For the electric industry the average ratepayer/employee contribution was \$.38 per residential customer. For the gas industry, the average contribution was \$.35 per residential customer.

<sup>1</sup> Activity Report/1995. Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Bureau of Consumer Services.

- For the 1995-1996 program year, shareholders contributed, on average, 0.054% of residential revenues to their utility's hardship fund program. For the electric utilities, the average was 0.05% and for the gas utilities, the average was 0.061% of residential revenues.

### Benefits

The table below presents information regarding the number of ratepayers receiving grants for each utility and the amount of the total benefits disbursed during each of the past two program years.

**Utility Hardship Fund Grant Distribution**

Company	Ratepayers Receiving Grants		Average Grant		Total Benefits Disbursed	
	1994-95	1995-96	1994-95	1995-96	1994-95	1995-96
Duquesne	2,458	2,538	\$264	\$256	\$650,000	\$650,000
Met Ed	2,234	2,935	100	81	224,484	237,972
Penelec	1,885	1,507	104	107	196,754	160,822
Penn Power	587	646	200	207	117,644	133,837
PP&L	3,080	3,983	207	235	638,023	934,274
PECO*	2,962	2,559	410	474	1,215,467	1,211,953
Allegheny Pwr	1,452	1,265	207	237	300,000	300,000
Columbia	2,064	2,842	203	156	418,662	443,136
Equitable	1,676	1,562	239	256	400,000	400,080
NFG	354	355	187	181	66,296	64,109
PG Energy	723	434	89	101	64,617	43,770
Peoples	2,609	2,433	268	288	700,000	700,000
T.W. Phillips	260	227	231	264	60,000	60,000
UGI*	872	731	96	115	84,078	83,731
PAWC	573	494	122	142	70,000	70,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,789</b>	<b>24,511</b>	<b>\$219</b>	<b>\$224</b>	<b>\$5,206,025</b>	<b>\$5,493,684</b>

\* Includes electric and gas

- The amount of benefits disbursed to eligible ratepayers increased by almost 6% from 1994-1995 to 1995-1996.
- The number of ratepayers receiving grants increased by slightly more than 3% in 1995-1996 compared to 1994-1995.

## CARES Programs

In May 1985, the Commission issued a Secretarial letter encouraging the major electric and gas utilities to establish a Customer Assistance and Referral Evaluation Services (CARES) program. The purpose of a CARES program is to provide a cost-effective service that helps selected, payment-troubled customers maximize their ability to pay utility bills. A utility CARES representative works with customers on a personal basis to help them secure energy assistance funds. By securing these funds, customers with special needs can maintain safe and adequate utility service. Besides directly providing assistance to needy customers, CARES representatives also perform the task of strengthening and maintaining a network of community organizations and government agencies that can provide services to the program clients.

The table below shows the number of CARES participants for each of the utilities that sponsor a CARES program. The number of participants enrolled in a CARES program is not necessarily indicative of the quality of the program - case management coupled with strengthening and maintaining a community network are keys to an effective program.

### 1996 CARES Participants

Utility	# of CARES Participants	Short Term Assistance Recipients
Allegheny	377	0
Duquesne	1,237	0
GPU	787	0
Penn Power	92	0
PP&L	450	0
PECO*	N/A	N/A
UGI-electric	N/A	374
Columbia	394	800
Equitable	160	0
NFG	346	0
PG&W	69	0
Peoples	809	1,984
TW Phillips	5	0
UGI-gas	98	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,824</b>	<b>3,158</b>

\*PECO's program will start in the latter half of 1997.

Quantifying the advantages of CARES is often difficult; a CARES program generally helps address health and safety concerns relating to utility service by providing important benefits. In 1996, four utilities attempted to quantify CARES benefits. Columbia, Penn Power, NFG and T. W. Phillips quantify benefits as "Direct Dollars" and "Indirect Dollars." "Direct Dollars" refers to money applied directly to a CARES customer's account; "Indirect Dollars" includes monetary or other assistance that CARES customers receive. For 1996, the CARES participants in the programs of these four utilities received a total of \$289,802 in direct dollars (energy assistance payments) and \$1,251,857 in indirect dollars.

### **Program Status**

In 1995, the Bureau reported that the CARES programs for Penelec, Penn Power, PECO and UGI-Electric did not meet the minimum guidelines for a CARES program. PECO plans to implement a CARES program in 1997. Penelec, Penn Power and UGI-Electric now have CARES programs that meet the minimum guidelines:

- GPU Energy, formerly Met-Ed and Penelec, blended a CARES program from the original Met-Ed program along with several features from Allegheny Power and Columbia. The new CARES program includes a unique feature called Volunteer Program. GPU employees will volunteer their skills to assist customers who cannot pay for installations of service or repairs to correct unsafe conditions. GPU also developed a CARES brochure that explains what programs are available for special needs customers.
- In September 1995, Penn Power implemented a pilot CARES program. Penn Power planned to continue the pilot through 1996. However, as part of its request for Commission approval of its "Rate Stability and Economic Development Plan", Penn Power petitioned the Commission to continue the CARES program through June 2006. The Commission approved Penn Power's revised and expanded CARES program. An important change is that customers throughout Penn Power's service territory are now eligible for enrollment.
- UGI-Electric submitted its 1995 CARES report that shows the program is operating much the same as in 1994. In 1996, UGI staff referred 374 customers to social service agencies, compared with 717 referrals in 1995. In 1996, UGI included training by the Department of Aging for their customer contact personnel and implemented a Gatekeeper program.



The remaining eleven utilities all have CARES programs that reflect the guidelines in the Commission's Secretarial letter. Special features from the various CARES programs are highlighted below.

- Both Duquesne and Equitable provided special LIHEAP outreach at several public housing sites in which staff helped residents complete LIHEAP applications.
- Equitable used monies from a Gulf-Tetco settlement that was approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to establish a fund to assist customers to repair or replace gas lines. In 1996, 65 families received \$37,737 in grants. In 1996 Equitable contributed \$500,000 of its net proceeds from off-system sales to establish a hardship fund to help low income customers pay bills. The fund aids customers whose incomes are between 111%-200% of poverty who are not eligible for LIHEAP benefits. During the 1995-96 heating season, Equitable disbursed \$503,926 in grants to 3,244 customers.

The tables in Appendix L show the design elements of each utility's CARES program. For more information about CARES programs, readers may contact Janice K. Hummel at (717) 783-9088.

### **A Helping Hand**

In 1994, The Philadelphia Suburban Water Company (PSW) requested and received Commission approval to implement a pilot program that combined several of the elements of energy universal service programs with those of conservation programs. In 1996, PSW made A Helping Hand a permanent part of its collection strategy. The program offers a water usage audit and includes an arrearage forgiveness component. This program, called A Helping Hand, is targeted to low-income customers who are payment troubled and have high water bills. The company seeks donations from the community to assist with arrearage forgiveness component. Community agencies administer the program.

Each household enrolled in A Helping Hand receives a water usage audit and water conservation improvements as necessary. The water audit includes conservation education and PSW will pay up to \$100 for minor plumbing repairs. As an incentive to encourage regular bill payment, PSW forgives a percentage of the participant's arrearage if the participant makes regular monthly payments toward the arrearage.

PSW contracted with an independent-third party, David Magnus Boonin, to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of A Helping Hand. Boonin submitted the evaluation to

PSW in 1996. The results of evaluation show that A Helping Hand is cost-effective. Highlights of the evaluation include the following:

- Participants reduced water usage by approximately 20%.
- Conservation services were cost-effective, with a payback period of between 1 and 4.5 years.
- On average, participants paid 86% of their PSW bills as compared with their prior payment history of paying 76% of their water bills.
- On average, arrearages decreased \$82 per participant.
- PSW invested an average of \$85 in conservation measures per participant.
- Participants increased their annual payments by \$39-\$51 annually.
- Potential annual write-offs were reduced by approximately \$82 per account.
- Administrative costs per participant were \$45 per year compared with \$50 for traditional collection costs.

In the future PSW expects to enroll 300-400 customers in its program. As of June 1997, 125 participants were enrolled in A Helping Hand.

## 6. Other Consumer Activities of the Commission

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The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission serves consumers in a variety of ways. The informal complaint handling services of the Bureau of Consumer Services and the establishment and monitoring of universal service programs are just some of the consumer activities in which the Commission engages. The Commission also has a separate division dedicated to educating consumers about utility-related issues. The Public Utility Commission's consumer education division is part of the PUC's Bureau of Public Liaison (BPL). The division's goal is to help utility customers make good consumer decisions. In addition, the Commission sponsors a Consumer Advisory Council that studies and develops issues of concern to utility consumers. This chapter briefly discusses BPL's consumer education division and the Consumer Advisory Council and provides highlights of their 1996 projects.

### Consumer Education\*

The Consumer Education Division's program has four interrelated, operational goals:

- **Consumer Information:** Disseminating consumer information about regulatory matters.
- **Outreach:** Establishing the Commission's presence and increasing its visibility as a consumer education agent.
- **Regulatory Review:** Monitoring utility company performance in consumer education.
- **Feedback:** Obtaining information from the utility industry and consumers about consumer education needs and the success of existing programs.

Two outreach specialists from the consumer education division travel throughout Pennsylvania to help educate consumer leaders and consumers on the workings of the Commission and on Commission and utility actions. They also conduct utility fairs and speak on utility issues at various functions.

\* The information in this section was provided by the PUC's Division of Consumer Education.



Maureen Mulligan, Division Manager; Verna Edmonds; Shari Williams and Grace Cunningham.

In 1996, the division engaged in a large number of projects and activities. Highlights of their activities related to electric, gas and water are listed below. The 1996 Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation on telecommunications lists the division's work that focused on telephone issues.

### **Consumer Information**

The consumer education division established the consumer education toll-free telephone number to accept requests for speakers, publications, meeting schedules and information on key utility issues.

Division staff produced and distributed four quarterly *Utility Consumer Line* newsletters and placed copies of the newsletters on the PUC's Electronic Bulletin Board.

The staff prepared and distributed a number of Action Alert publications and other brochures and handbooks on topics of interest to utility consumers. Publications include *A Glossary of Frequently Used Terms* and *Consumer's Guide to Utility Rate Cases*, as well as a brochure on electric competition that was developed with assistance from the PUC's Bureau of Conservation, Economics and Energy Planning.

## **Outreach and Leadership Training**

The consumer education division staffed the Disaster Relief Centers in areas hit by the flood of January 1996.

Consumer education staff organized, promoted and conducted *Be Winterwise Utility Fairs* in Chambersburg, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Reading, Sayre, Uniontown, Wilkes-Barre and York. Several thousand people attended the fairs.

The staff assisted consumers, businesses, townships, schools and others to enable them to participate in electric competition public input hearings in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Harrisburg. They mailed electric competition information to over 15,000 Pennsylvanians and co-hosted informational public forums in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Harrisburg to educate the communities about proposed electric competition issues.

Staff members participated in numerous senior citizen, community, government and legislative sponsored fairs, conducted numerous outreach seminars and workshops and spoke throughout Pennsylvania to inform the public about the PUC and the regulated industries.

The division filled over 1,367 individual requests for consumer education materials. Materials requested and sent include *Glossary of Electric Terms for the Future*, *Electric Customer Choice*, *Consumer Update Series 1-9*, *Guide to Lower Your Utility Bills*, *Saving Water Around the House*, *Telephone Handbook for Consumers*, *A Look Inside the PUC*, *Consumer's Guide to Utility Rate Cases*, *Caller ID*, and the Commissioners' biographies.

## **Regulatory Review and Protection**

Consumer education staff completed plain language reviews on a wide variety of utility company notices and newspaper advertisements. As part of its review, the staff makes recommendations to utilities regarding the language, content and layout of the materials so that they are accurate and readily understood by residential consumers. The staff uses the Commission's plain language guidelines as a basis for its recommendations. Notices concerning rate changes, plain language summaries of the reasons for requested rate increases, new billing charges, and announcements of public hearings are examples of company materials the staff reviewed.

## **Feedback**

Members of the division staff evaluated the utility fairs that were held in cities across the state. Fair planning committee members and attendees completed fair

evaluations which the consumer education staff used to develop recommendations for future fairs and fair events.

The division solicited informal feedback from consumer leaders and the PUC's Advisory Council on the Commission's education efforts. The division used the feedback to develop appropriate education methods for various consumer groups and geographic areas throughout Pennsylvania.

### **Toll-Free Number**

The toll-free telephone number for reaching the PUC's Consumer Education Division is **1-800-PUC-8685**.

### **The PUC Consumer Advisory Council\***

The purpose of the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) is to represent the public in advising the Commissioners on matters relating to the protection of consumer interests which are under the jurisdiction of the Commission, or which, in the opinion of the Council, should be brought under the jurisdiction of the Commission. The Council acts as a source of information and advice for the Commissioners. Interactions between the Council and the Commissioners occur through periodic meetings with the Commissioners and in writing via minutes of meetings and formal motions. Council meetings are generally held on the fourth Tuesday of the month in PUC Executive Chambers in Harrisburg starting at 10:00 a.m. and are open to the public.

### **Agenda Items**

The Council considers matters which arise from consumer inquiry or request, Commissioner inquiry or request, or the proceedings, deliberations or motions of the Council itself. The Council solicits matters for review from these sources and establishes an agenda for action. In considering matters within its jurisdiction, the Council, or members of the Council acting under direction of the Council, may conduct investigations and solicit and receive comments from interested parties and the general public. Public Utility Commission staff are made available to brief the Council on relevant matters and provide necessary support for the Council to complete its agenda. The monthly meeting agenda is available prior to each meeting from the PUC Press Office (717) 787-5722.

\*The information in this section was provided by the Commission support staff to the Council.

## **Qualifications and Appointment of Council Members**

The following elected officials may each appoint one representative to the PUC Consumer Advisory Council: the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Republican and Democratic Chairpersons of the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee, and the Republican and Democratic Chairpersons of the House Consumer Affairs Committee. The Commission appoints additional "At-Large" representatives, as appropriate, to ensure that the group reflects a reasonable geographic representation of the Commonwealth, including low-income individuals, members of minority groups and various classes of consumers. A person may not serve as a member of the Council if the individual occupies an official relation to a public utility or holds or is a candidate for a paid appointive or elective office of the Commonwealth. Members of the Council serve a two year term, and may be reappointed thereafter without limit. Officers of the Council serve for two year terms. A Chairperson may not act for more than two consecutive terms.

## **PUC Consumer Advisory Council - 1996 Highlights**

Ideas for suggested agenda items are solicited from the Commissioners for the Council's review and consideration. The Council focused on the areas of electric competition and restructuring; consumer education; residential customer service issues, such as proposed revisions to PUC regulations (Chapters 56 and 64) and universal service; and telecommunications issues. The CAC met eleven times in 1996. William Farally served as Chairman and Valeria Bullock served as Vice Chairman. During 1996, the Council was comprised of six positions allocated to elected officials and eleven Commission-at-Large appointments. Appendix N lists the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the 1996 CAC members.



Seated (left to right): Crystal Hollis; William Farally, Chairman; Valeria Bullock, Vice Chairman; Alan Jennings; Standing: George Emmons; Andrea Fitting; Dennis Manown; Katherine Newell; Elliott Lengel; J. D. Dunbar; Julio Tio; Cynthia Datig

### **Outreach Plan for the Electric Competition Investigation**

- The Council expressed concerns about the resources available to the Bureau of Public Liaison to effectively communicate and educate the public about highly technical issues and potential changes in public utility regulation. The Council renewed its request that additional staff resources be made available for consumer education.
- The Council stressed the need for participation by representatives of rural constituencies, and questioned the Commission's decision to limit the public input hearings to three urban locations in the Electric Power Competition Investigation. The Council urged the Commission to consider these concerns when planning future public input hearings and forums, especially when policy oriented decisions are being made.
- The Council recommended that the Commission accept written letters as public input testimony in the Electric Power Competition Investigation, and that the outreach materials being developed include this information.



## **Council Position Statement on the Commission's Report to the Governor and General Assembly on Electric Competition**

In October, the Council issued a Statement on the Commission's Report and Recommendation on Electric Competition. With one exception, the Council supported competition in the generation of electricity, and addressed a number of implementation concerns. The Council Statement offered comments about service reliability, price stability, rate caps and cost shifting, universal service, consumer protections, pilot programs, rural concerns, economic impact and jobs, PUC staff resources, stranded investments, and environmental concerns. The Council strongly recommended that any legislation proposed to accomplish the goals identified in the Commission's report should satisfactorily address these issues. Council members enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the Commission's deliberations on this subject. Several Council members are participating in the implementation working groups, and are actively involved in consumer education, universal service, customer information, service reliability, and other working groups and provide progress reports at Council meetings.

### **Proposed Revisions to Chapter 56, Residential Customer Service Regulations**

The Bureau of Consumer Services briefed the Council on the proposed rulemaking to revise Chapter 56 standards and billing practices regulations for residential utility service. The Council discussed existing Chapter 56 customer service regulations, current interpretations, and proposed changes. The Council endorsed the proposed changes, although some members expressed concern about additional changes being made that could go beyond the changes currently proposed by the Commission.

Readers may contact Dan Mumford of the Bureau of Consumer Services at (717) 783-1957 for more information about the PUC's Consumer Advisory Council. The Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation that focuses on telecommunications discusses the CAC's work in the area of telecommunications during 1996.

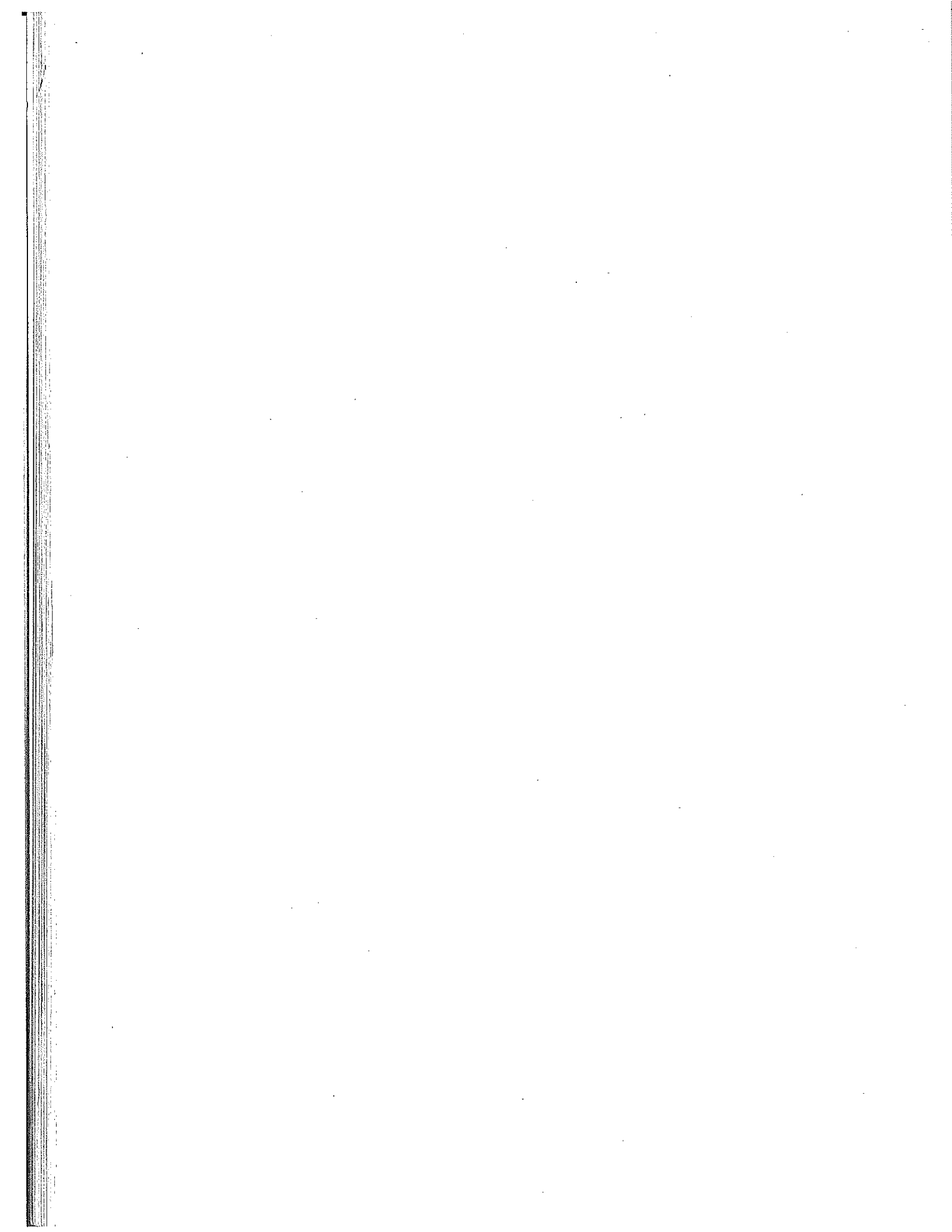
## **7. Quality of Service Benchmarking**

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Historically, the BCS annual report for electric, gas and water utilities has presented information based in large part on customer contacts to the PUC's Bureau of Consumer Services. This has been and still is the case for consumer complaint, payment arrangement and compliance information. As such, the discussion may or may not represent broad statistical trends. The Commission recognizes that this approach has certain shortcomings. For example, most customer contacts to utilities do not result in contacts to the PUC and thus, the BCS and the Commission have had no opportunity to evaluate the quality of the majority of customer contacts with their utilities. The measures that the Bureau of Consumer Services has traditionally used focus on only a portion of the customer service performance of utilities.

In order to capture a more accurate and complete picture of the quality of customer service experienced by customers of utility companies, this report will evolve over the next several years to include additional measures. The development of the report will coincide with the Commission's efforts to develop quality of service measurement and reporting on the part of utilities and other energy providers as appropriate. Some of the expanded areas of measurement may include service reliability, business office access, complaint resolution time, service installation time, kept appointments with customers, and customer satisfaction as measured through surveys. One distinguishing feature of the new approach is that it will measure customer service performance from a variety of perspectives. It is expected that this overall expanded approach to measuring the quality of customer service will take time to evolve but will result in an improved assessment that will provide a well-rounded profile of customer service performance.

# Appendices



## Appendix A

### *Glossary*

**Consumer Complaint Rate** - The number of consumer complaints per 1,000 residential customers.

**Consumer Complaints** - Cases to the Bureau of Consumer Services involving billing, service and all other non-payment related issues.

**Customer Assistance Program (CAPs)** - Alternative collection programs set up between a utility company and a customer that allow low income, payment troubled customers to pay utility bills that are based on household size and gross household income. CAP participants agree to make regular monthly payments, which are usually less than the current bill, in exchange for continued utility service.

**Hardship Funds** - Utility-sponsored funds that provide cash assistance to low income utility customers to help them pay their utility bills.

**Infraction:** A misapplication or infringement of a Commission regulation, particularly the standards and billing practices for residential utility service.

**Infraction Rate** - The number of informally verified infractions per 1,000 residential customers (includes infractions drawn from both consumer complaints and payment arrangement requests).

**Inquiries** - Consumer contacts to the Bureau of Consumer Services that, for the most part, require no follow-up investigation beyond the initial contact.

**Justified Consumer Complaint Rate** - The number of justified consumer complaints per 1,000 residential customers.

**Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate** - The number of justified payment arrangement requests per 1,000 residential customers.

**Payment Arrangement Request Rate** - The number of payment arrangement requests per 1,000 residential customers.

**Payment Arrangement Requests** - Consumer requests for payment arrangements principally include contacts to the PUC's Bureau of Consumer Services involving a request for payment terms in one of the following situations: suspension/termination of service is pending; service has been suspended/terminated and the customer needs payment terms to have service restored; or the customer wants to retire an arrearage.

**Problem Categories** - A breakdown of residential consumer complaints by specific problem categories such as billing, credit and deposits, service quality, rates, etc.

**Response Time in Days** - Response time is the time span in days from the date of the Bureau's first contact with the company regarding a consumer complaint and/or request for payment arrangements to the date on which the company provides the Bureau with all of the information needed to resolve the case. Response time quantifies the speed of a utility's response ("responsiveness") in resolving BCS cases. In this report, response time is presented as a mean number of days for each company.

**Termination Rate** - The number of residential customers whose service was terminated per 1,000 residential customers.

## Appendix B - Table 1

### Consumer Complaint Categories\*: 1996 Major Electric Utilities

Categories**	Allegheny Power	Duquesne	Met-Ed	PECO	Penelec	Penn Power	PP&L	UGI-Elec.	Electric Majors
Metering	31	30	38	152	47	6	92	4	400
Billing Disputes	39	35	23	155	34	6	88	5	385
Discontinuance/Transfer	13	24	5	56	11	3	41	0	153
Other Payment Issues	5	15	4	24	2	1	21	2	74
Credit & Deposits	1	11	5	7	2	2	5	0	33
Service Extensions	12	3	6	16	12	5	6	2	62
Service Interruptions	19	27	12	50	14	1	6	1	130
Service Quality	9	9	1	47	13	1	18	2	100
Damages	24	19	1	38	19	3	11	1	116
Scheduling Delays	8	8	6	42	6	1	5	0	76
Personnel Problems	5	8	4	88	7	0	13	1	126
Rates	0	2	3	7	0	0	3	0	15
All Other Problems	6	10	3	36	3	0	7	0	65
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1,735</b>

\* Categories are for residential complaints evaluated by BCS as of May 12, 1997. The case outcome may have been justified, inconclusive or unjustified

\*\* An explanation of the various complaint categories appears in the beginning of Chapter 2.

**Appendix B - Table 2**  
**Consumer Complaint Categories\*: 1996**  
**Major Gas Utilities**

Categories**	Columbia	Equitable	NFG	PG Energy	Peoples	UGI-Gas	Gas Majors
Metering	20	37	16	10	76	54	213
Billing Disputes	16	41	14	11	41	49	172
Discontinuance/ Transfer	11	26	13	4	8	16	78
Other Payment Issues	4	15	11	1	9	8	48
Credit & Deposits	2	12	4	1	2	3	24
Service Extensions	10	9	12	6	8	3	48
Service Interruptions	0	0	1	1	3	1	6
Service Quality	14	7	5	4	13	5	48
Damages	8	6	1	7	5	1	28
Scheduling Delays	1	3	1	4	5	4	18
Personnel Problems	2	8	1	3	11	5	30
Rates	2	0	0	0	5	4	11
All Other Problems	6	14	3	1	3	4	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>755</b>

\* Categories are for residential complaints evaluated by BCS as of May 12, 1997. The case outcome may have been justified, inconclusive or unjustified.

\*\* An explanation of the various complaint categories appears at the beginning of Chapter 2.



### Appendix B - Table 3

#### Consumer Complaint Categories\*: 1996 Major Water Utilities

Categories**	PA-American	Philadelphia Suburban	Other "Class A" Water	All "Class A" Water
Metering	35	15	10	60
Billing Disputes	56	23	13	92
Discontinuance/Transfer	6	1	1	8
Other Payment Issues	2	0	1	3
Credit & Deposits	1	3	3	7
Service Extensions	17	2	1	20
Service Interruptions	2	0	2	4
Service Quality	22	21	38	81
Damages	16	2	2	20
Scheduling Delays	4	1	0	5
Personnel Problems	12	1	2	15
Rates	2	0	1	3
All Other Problems	19	2	5	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>344***</b>

\* Categories are for residential complaints evaluated by BCS as of May 12, 1997. The case outcome may have been justified, inconclusive or unjustified.

\*\* An explanation of the various complaint categories appears at the beginning of Chapter 2.

\*\*\* Does not include complaints about PG&W-Water

**Appendix C - Table 1**  
**1995-1996 Residential Consumer Complaint Statistics**  
**Major Electric Utilities**

Company Name	1996 Residential Customers	Residential Consumer Complaints to BCS		% Change in #	Consumer Complaint Rates <sup>1</sup>		Justified Consumer Complaints Numbers <sup>2</sup> and Rates <sup>3</sup>			
		1995	1996		1995	1996	1995	1996		
Allegheny Power	574,150	217	197	-9%	.38	.34	40	0.07	50	0.09
Duquesne	515,082	376	280	-26%	.73	.54	68	0.13	64	0.12
Met-Ed	413,030	163	138	-15%	.40	.33	34	0.08	47	0.11
PECO	1,331,669	744	886	19%	.56	.67	270	0.20	456	0.34
Penelec	491,691	124	199	60%	.25	.40	21	0.04	67	0.14
Penn Power	126,474	59	34	-42%	.47	.27	7	0.06	2	0.02
PP&L	1,081,949	280	391	40%	.26	.36	77	0.07	112	0.10
UGI-Electric	53,530	26	20	-23%	.49	.37	9	0.17	8	0.15
<b>Major Electrics</b>	<b>4,587,575</b>	<b>1,989</b>	<b>2,145</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>.44<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>.42<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>527</b>	<b>0.09<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>808</b>	<b>0.13<sup>4</sup></b>
<b>Average of Rates</b>										

<sup>1</sup> Consumer Complaint Rate = Consumer Complaints per 1,000 Residential Customers

<sup>2</sup> Estimated based on the number of cases on CSIS as of May 12, 1997

<sup>3</sup> Justified Consumer Complaint Rate = Justified Consumer Complaints per 1,000 Residential Customers

<sup>4</sup> Does not include UGI-Electric

## Appendix C - Table 2

### 1995-1996 Residential Consumer Complaint Statistics Major Gas Utilities

Company Name	1996 Residential Customers	Residential Consumer Complaints to BCS		% Change in #	Consumer Complaint Rates <sup>1</sup>		Justified Consumer Complaints Numbers <sup>2</sup> and Rates <sup>3</sup>			
		1995	1996		1995	1996	1995	1996		
Columbia	330,427	146	115	-21%	0.44	0.35	50	0.15	22	0.07
Equitable	228,975	335	271	-19%	1.46	1.18	89	0.39	95	0.41
NFG	194,643	103	93	-10%	0.53	0.48	26	0.13	27	0.14
Peoples	315,162	229	255	11%	0.73	0.81	50	0.16	114	0.36
PG Energy	129,615	34	61	79%	0.27	0.47	8	0.06	20	0.15
UGI-Gas	222,372	151	201	33%	0.69	0.90	52	0.24	91	0.41
<b>Major Gas</b>	<b>1,421,194</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>-2%</b>			<b>275</b>		<b>369</b>	
<b>Average of Rates</b>					<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.70</b>		<b>0.19</b>		<b>0.26</b>

<sup>1</sup> Consumer Complaint Rate = Consumer Complaints per 1,000 Residential Customers

<sup>2</sup> Estimated based on the number of cases on CSIS as of May 12, 1997

<sup>3</sup> Justified Consumer Complaint Rate = Justified Consumer Complaints per 1,000 Residential Customers

**Appendix C - Table 3**  
**1995-1996 Residential Consumer Complaint Statistics**  
**Major Water Utilities**

Company Name	1996 Residential Customers	Residential Consumer Complaints to BCS		% Change in #	Consumer Complaint Rates <sup>1</sup>		Justified Consumer Complaints Numbers <sup>2</sup> and Rates <sup>3</sup>	
		1995	1996		1995	1996	1995	1996
PA-American	490,200	148	224	51%	.41	.46	42	.12
PG&W-Water	122,107 <sup>4</sup>	76	17 <sup>5</sup>	N/A	.62	N/A	30	.25
Phila. Suburban	265,765	64	91	42%	.26	.34	16	.06
Other Class A	162,615	87	87	0%	.54	.54	35	.22
<b>Major Waters</b>	<b>918,580<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>375</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>.40<sup>6</sup></b>		<b>123</b>	<b>.13<sup>6</sup></b>
<b>Average of Rates</b>						<b>.45</b>		<b>.18</b>

<sup>1</sup> Consumer Complaint Rate = Consumer Complaints per 1,000 Residential Customers

<sup>2</sup> Estimated based on the number of cases on CSIS as of May 12, 1997

<sup>3</sup> Justified Consumer Complaint Rate = Justified Consumer Complaints per 1,000 Residential Customers

<sup>4</sup> 1995 number of residential customers

<sup>5</sup> PA-American acquired PG&W-Water in February 1996

<sup>6</sup> Does not include PG&W-Water

## Appendix D

### 1995-1996 Response time: BCS Consumer Complaints

Company	Average Time in Days		Change in Days 1995 to 1996
	1995	1996	
Allegheny Power	10.7	21.6	10.9
Duquesne	19.4	20.6	1.2
Met-Ed	10.4	20.5	10.1
PECO	25.0	25.7	0.7
Penelec	13.3	23.3	10.0
Penn Power	1.8	3.2	1.4
PP&L	12.6	11.3	-1.3
UGI-Electric	15.0	16.4	1.4
<b>Major Electrics<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>13.3<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>18.0<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>4.7<sup>2</sup></b>
Columbia	11.3	12.6	1.3
Equitable	20.3	24.7	4.4
NFG	7.4	10.6	3.2
Peoples	8.2	16.4	8.2
PG Energy	5.6	5.9	0.3
UGI-Gas	7.8	18.4	10.6
<b>Major Gas<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>4.7</b>
PA-American	2.9	3.6	0.7
PG&W-Water	5.8	N/A <sup>3</sup>	N/A
Phila. Suburban	6.6	7.7	1.1
Other Class A	26.1	24.5	-1.6
<b>Major Water<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>11.9<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>No Change</b>

<sup>1</sup> Average of response times

<sup>2</sup> Does not include UGI-Electric

<sup>3</sup> PA American acquired PG&W-Water in February 1996

<sup>4</sup> Does not include PG&W-Water

**Appendix E - Table 1**  
**1995-1996 Residential Payment Arrangement Request Statistics**  
**Major Electric Utilities**

Company Name	1996 Residential Customers	Residential Payment Arrangement Requests (PARs) to BCS		% Change in #	Payment Arrangement Request Rates <sup>1</sup>		Justified Payment Arrangement Requests Numbers <sup>2</sup> and Rates <sup>3</sup>			
		1995	1996		1995	1996	1995	1996		
Allegheny Power	574,150	1,765	2,102	19%	3.09	3.66	305	0.53*	345	0.60*
Duquesne	515,082	4,301	7,759	80%	8.35	15.06	155	0.30*	489	0.95*
Met-Ed	413,030	766	1,400	83%	1.88	3.39	120	0.29	226	0.55
PECO	1,331,669	2,987	2,590	-13%	2.25	1.94	419	0.32*	437	0.33*
Penelec	491,691	494	1,005	103%	1.01	2.04	63	0.13	172	0.35
Penn Power	126,474	774	1,005	30%	6.19	7.95	109	0.87	204	1.61
PP&L	1,081,949	4,422	7,124	61%	4.12	6.58	300	0.28*	449	0.41*
UGI-Electric	53,530	136	134	-1%	2.57	2.50	47	0.89	51	0.95
<b>Major Electrics</b>	<b>4,587,575</b>	<b>15,645</b>	<b>23,119</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>3.84<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>5.80<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>0.39<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>2,373</b>	<b>0.69<sup>4</sup></b>
<b>Average of Rates</b>										

<sup>1</sup> Payment Arrangement Request Rate = Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers

<sup>2</sup> Estimated based on a probability sample of cases and/or the number of cases on CSIS as of May 12, 1987

<sup>3</sup> Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate = Justified Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers

<sup>4</sup> Does not include UGI-Electric

\* Based on a probability sample of cases

## Appendix E - Table 2

### 1995-1996 Residential Payment Arrangement Request Statistics Major Gas Utilities

Company Name	1996 Residential Customers	Residential Payment Arrangement Requests (PARs) to BCS		% Change in #	Payment Arrangement Request Rates <sup>1</sup>		Justified Payment Arrangement Requests Numbers <sup>2</sup> and Rates <sup>3</sup>			
		1995	1996		1995	1996	1995	1996		
Columbia	330,427	554	840	52%	1.69	2.54	54	0.16	189	0.57
Equitable	228,975	2,337	2,572	10%	10.20	11.23	266	1.16*	354	1.55*
NFG	194,643	540	717	33%	2.79	3.68	33	0.17	201	1.03
Peoples	315,162	1,751	2,766	58%	5.60	8.78	167	0.53*	273	0.87*
PG Energy	129,615	264	235	-11%	2.06	1.81	32	0.25	27	0.21
UGI-Gas	222,372	876	1,258	44%	4.00	5.66	219	1.00	446	2.01
<b>Major Gas</b>	<b>1,421,194</b>	<b>6,322</b>	<b>8,388</b>	<b>33%</b>			<b>771</b>		<b>1,490</b>	
<b>Average of Rates</b>					<b>4.39</b>	<b>5.62</b>		<b>0.55</b>		<b>1.04</b>

<sup>1</sup> Payment Arrangement Request Rate = Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers

<sup>2</sup> Estimated based on a probability sample of cases and/or the number of cases on CSIS as of May 12, 1987

<sup>3</sup> Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate = Justified Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers

\* Based on a probability sample of cases

**Appendix E - Table 3**  
**1995-1996 Residential Payment Arrangement Request Statistics**  
**Major Water Utilities**

Company Name	1996 Residential Customers	Residential Payment Arrangement Requests (PARs) to BCS		% Change in #	Payment Arrangement Request Rates <sup>1</sup>		Justified Payment Arrangement Requests Numbers <sup>2</sup> and Rates <sup>3</sup>				
		1995	1996		1995	1996	1995	1996			
PA-American	490,200	603	879	46%	1.65	1.79	47	0.13	70	0.14	
PG&W-Water	122,107 <sup>4</sup>	131	5 <sup>5</sup>	N/A	1.07	N/A	17	0.14	N/A	N/A	
Phila. Suburban	265,765	176	134	-24%	0.71	.50	46	0.18	34	0.13	
Other "Class A" Water	162,615	87	84	-3%	0.54	.52	18	0.11	37	0.23	
<b>Major Waters</b>	<b>918,580<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>997</b>	<b>1,102</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>0.97<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>0.14<sup>6</sup></b>			
<b>Average of Rates</b>											<b>0.17</b>

<sup>1</sup> Payment Arrangement Request Rate = Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers  
<sup>2</sup> Estimated based on a probability sample of cases and/or the number of cases on CSIS as of May 12, 1997  
<sup>3</sup> Justified Payment Arrangement Request Rate = Justified Payment Arrangement Requests per 1,000 Residential Customers  
<sup>4</sup> 1995 number of residential customers  
<sup>5</sup> PA-American acquired PG&W-Water in February 1996  
<sup>6</sup> Does not include PG&W-Water



## Appendix F

### 1995-1996 Response Time: BCS Payment Arrangement Requests

Company	Average Time in Days		Change in Days 1995 to 1996
	1995	1996	
Allegheny Power	12.5*	10.2*	-2.3
Duquesne	3.5*	13.2*	9.7
Met-Ed	3.7	5.6	1.9
PECO	12.9*	22.4*	9.5
Penelec	3.1	4.2	1.1
Penn Power	0.6	0.9	0.3
PP&L	18.3*	10.4*	-7.9
UGI-Electric	5.3	6.0	0.7
<b>Major Electrics</b>	<b>7.8<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>9.6<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1.8</b>
Columbia	5.0	4.7	-0.3
Equitable	20.4*	21.1*	0.7
NFG	3.4	6.1	2.7
Peoples	2.6*	4.5*	1.9
PG Energy	2.2	2.0	-0.2
UGI-Gas	2.3	5.4	3.1
<b>Major Gas</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>
PA-American	1.9	2.2	0.3
PG&W-Water	1.9	N/A <sup>2</sup>	N/A
Philadelphia Suburban	4.1	4.9	0.8
Other Class A	15.7	22.4	6.7
<b>Major Water</b>	<b>7.2<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>2.6</b>

\* Based on a probability sample of cases

<sup>1</sup> Does not include UGI-Electric

<sup>2</sup> PA-American acquired PG&W-Water in February 1996

<sup>3</sup> Does not include PG&W-Water

**Appendix G - Table 1**  
**1994-1996 Infraction Statistics**  
**Major Electric Utilities**

Company	1996 Residential Customers	Infractions				% Change in # 1995-1996	Infraction Rates <sup>1</sup>		
		1994	1995	1996	1994		1995	1996	
Allegheny Power	574,150	31	52	61	17%	0.05	0.09	0.11	
Duquesne	515,082	49	54	66	22%	0.10	0.10	0.13	
Met-Ed	413,030	44	53	31	-42%	0.11	0.13	0.08	
PECO	1,331,669	248	492	508	3%	0.19	0.37	0.38	
Penelec	491,691	27	19	27	42%	0.06	0.04	0.05	
Penn Power	126,474	12	8	8	0%	0.10	0.06	0.06	
PP&L	1,081,949	97	106	96	-9%	0.09	0.10	0.09	
UGI-Electric	53,530	32	23	19	-17%	0.60	0.43	0.35	
<b>Major Electrics</b>	<b>4,587,575</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>816</b>	<b>1%</b>				

<sup>1</sup> Infraction Rate = Number of Infractions per 1,000 Residential Customers

- As of June 9, 1997, the BCS was waiting for information from the following major electric utilities regarding 93 additional infractions: Duquesne (4 infractions), Met-Ed (43 infractions), PECO (1 infraction), Penelec (44 infraction) and UGI-Electric (1 infraction).

## Appendix G - Table 2

### 1994-1996 Infraction Statistics Major Gas Utilities

Company	1996 Residential Customers	Infractions				% Change in # 1995-1996	Infraction Rates <sup>1</sup>		
		1994	1995	1996	1994		1995	1996	
Columbia	330,427	46	53	48	-9%	0.14	0.16	0.15	
Equitable	228,975	57	121	58	-52%	0.25	0.53	0.25	
NFG	194,643	43	23	35	52%	0.22	0.12	0.18	
Peoples	315,162	65	82	93	13%	0.21	0.26	0.30	
PG Energy	129,615	39	27	19	-30%	0.31	0.21	0.15	
UGI-Gas	222,372	91	71	130	83%	0.42	0.32	0.58	
<b>Major Gas</b>	<b>1,421,194</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>2%</b>				

<sup>1</sup> Infraction Rate = Number of Infractions per 1,000 Residential Customers

- As of June 9, 1997, the BCS was waiting for information from the following major gas utilities regarding 27 additional infractions: Columbia (1 infraction), Equitable (12 infractions), NFG (4 infractions), Peoples (6 infractions) and UGI-Gas (4 infractions).

### Appendix G - Table 3

#### 1994-1996 Infraction Statistics Major Water Utilities

Company	1996 Residential Customers	Infractions			% Change in # 1995-1996	Infraction Rates <sup>1</sup>		
		1994	1995	1996		1994	1995	1996
PA-American	490,200	26	32	39	22%	0.08	0.09	0.08
PG&W-Water	122,107 <sup>3</sup>	58	34	N/A <sup>2</sup>	N/A	0.48	0.28	N/A
Phila. Suburban	265,765	37	51	32	-37%	0.16	0.20	0.12
Other "Class A"	162,615	47	51	50	-2%	0.32	0.32	0.31
<b>Major Water</b>	<b>918,580<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>168</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>-28%</b>			

<sup>1</sup> Infraction Rate = Number of Infractions per 1,000 Residential Customers

<sup>2</sup> PA-American acquired PG&W-Water in February 1996.

<sup>3</sup> 1995 number of residential customers

<sup>4</sup> Does not include PG&W-Water

## Appendix H

### Summaries of Customer Assistance Program Evaluations

#### Process Evaluations

##### 1. *Pennsylvania Electric Company (Penelec)*

On February 20, 1996 Wirtshafter Associates, Inc. (Wirtshafter) presented to Penelec a process evaluation of Penelec's CAP. The evaluation shows that the program is operating as designed and that the staff and agencies responsible for administering the program are doing an excellent job. Wirtshafter found that Penelec's CAP experienced few start-up problems. Wirtshafter attributes this to careful planning and the high caliber of staff responsible for CAP. Wirtshafter made recommendations regarding consumption limits, account monitoring, consumer and budget counseling, and default provision aimed at improving the efficiency of the program.

One of the highlights of Penelec's CAP is its method of solicitation. Penelec installed a Graphic User Interface (GUI) as a front-end process attached to its Customer Information System (CIS). Wirtshafter found that the installation of GUI made recruitment into CAP much easier for Penelec than it had been for other utilities that Wirtshafter evaluated. First, Penelec identified the eligible population and a control group from payment agreement information. For the eligible population, a "CAP solicit" status field was added to the main customer information screen. As customers contacted Penelec, the GUI automatically checked to see if the customer was "CAP solicit". If the customer was eligible for CAP based on current information, the GUI automatically brought up a series of enrollment screens. The GUI helped the customer service representative explain the CAP, referred the customer to a community assistance agency for intake and sent a letter confirming the referral. Wirtshafter found this method of solicitation simple and effective. Full enrollment occurred with no direct solicitation of customers.

##### 2. *Peoples Gas*

On February 14, 1996, Wirtshafter Associates, Inc. (Wirtshafter) submitted to Peoples a process evaluation of Peoples' PCAP. The evaluation prepared by Wirtshafter Associates, Inc. (Wirtshafter) shows that the program is operating as designed and that the staff and agencies responsible for administering the program are doing an excellent job. Wirtshafter found that PCAP experienced few start-up problems. Wirtshafter

attributes this to careful planning, the high caliber of staff responsible for PCAP, and the decision to automate most of the program's daily tasks.

As a result of a finding that consumer education is one of the screening agencies' weakest skills, Peoples provided additional training to all PCAP screening agencies. Peoples is also testing alternative energy services. Peoples will provide additional individual weatherization education for 390 eligible PCAP participants.

### *3. PG Energy*

Wirtshafter Associates, Inc. (Wirtshafter) conducted a process evaluation for PG Energy's CAP - Partners Program. On October 5, 1996, Wirtshafter submitted the evaluation to PG Energy. Wirtshafter found that the program is implemented and administered as approved by the PUC. Wirtshafter attributes few start-up problems due to attention to details in the planning process and a carefully revised billing system. PG Energy incorporated the CAP tracking and accounting system into its existing computer system. Wirtshafter has also conducted process evaluations for four other utilities who have CAPs. Wirtshafter found that PG Energy implemented changes to its accounting system much more efficiently than other utilities. These changes cost \$100,000; however, costs to maintain the system should be minimal.

PG Energy continues to struggle with low enrollment. PG Energy has a customer base of 140,000 customers and estimates that only 2,100 customers are potentially eligible for CAP. PG Energy has implemented several steps to increase enrollment. A referral to CAP is printed on every termination notice. Potential participants may schedule eligibility interviews at the company or at agencies in the community.

## **Impact Evaluations**

### *1. Columbia Gas*

On November 15, 1996, A&C Enercom, Inc., and Debra Steckel Consulting submitted to Columbia an impact evaluation of Columbia's CAP. The evaluation listed four key findings.

1. Gas consumption did not increase. Consumption decreased slightly for CAP participants.

2. Payment patterns improved and became regular. The percentage of participants who made full payments increased from 23% prior to enrollment in CAP to 50% during the second year of CAP enrollment.

3. CAP reduced collection and customer service costs for participants. Columbia issued fewer termination notices and shut-off orders. Columbia also had fewer payment arrangements and disputes with CAP participants. On average, Columbia realized reduced collection and customer service costs of \$24 per participant per year.

4. The billing shortfall increased for customers enrolled in CAP. The evaluators attribute this increase to two reasons: 1) decreases in the number and dollar amounts of LIHEAP benefits and 2) the type of payment plan.

Columbia plans to submit a revised CAP design to the Commission for approval. The major changes include revisions to the payment plan and tighter account monitoring. Columbia proposes to increase payments and return participants to the regular collections cycle after one missed CAP payment.

## *2. Equitable Gas*

On September 1, 1996, H. Gil Peach & Associates (Peach) submitted to Equitable the results of Equitable's EAP evaluation. Peach offered seven major findings:

1. Payments are affordable. About 70% of participants met EAP requirements by making ten or more EAP payments in the first year of participation. The success rate for two years was 68%.

2. EAP payments cover the variable costs of gas plus contribute to fixed costs. On average, EAP participants enrolled for two years paid 127% of the variable costs of gas. Prior to enrolling in EAP these participants had paid only 72% of the variable costs of gas.

3. EAP restores regular payment patterns. Successful EAP participants made 10 full payments, one partial payment and missed one payment in a year. Prior to their enrollment in EAP, these participants made, on average, five full payments, three partial payments and missed four payments.

4. EAP participants receive about \$70 more a year in energy assistance grants. LIHEAP funding decreased during the EAP pilot years. Decreased funding resulted in shortened application periods and decreases in eligibility. Even with these changes to LIHEAP, the size of the average energy assistance grant increased for EAP participants.

5. Even though Equitable's EAP does not provide arrearage forgiveness, participants' arrearages were reduced, on average, about \$75 a year.

6. EAP participants do not increase energy consumption. Peach analyzed consumption using two approaches: The "pooled" or accounting approach and the individual or statistical approach that treats each participant as a single case. Both approaches show that EAP participants did not increase energy consumption. The pooled data analysis shows participants decreased energy use slightly, by 1.2% to 2.5%. The statistical analysis shows a 2 to 3% decrease in energy use.

7. EAP is cost-effective. The evaluator compared top-down traditional collection costs with EAP administrative costs. For a participant enrolled in EAP, the administrative costs in the first year are \$82 and \$54 in subsequent years while traditional collection costs are \$67 a year. The first year EAP costs are higher because they include a \$28 enrollment cost. For every year after the first year that a participant remains in EAP, Equitable realizes a \$13 savings per year compared with the costs of traditional collection costs.

Peach used two methods of defining benefits and costs of EAP: 1. A "Net Back Ratio" (NBR) and 2. Dollars Returned. "Net back" is the net revenue collected from customers after collection expenses and other costs are netted out. Dollars returned are payments made that exceed the 50% payment rate that EAP participants experienced prior to enrolling in EAP. Both methods show EAP is cost effective.

As a result of Peach's findings and recommendations, Equitable has increased payment requirements for participants whose incomes are above 51% of the federal poverty income guidelines. The payment requirements have increased from 8% of household income to 10% of a household's monthly gross income.

### *3. National Fuel Gas (NFG)*

David W. Bartelt and Eric F. Hoffman from the Institute for Public Policy Studies (IPPS), Temple University completed an impact evaluation for NFG's LIRA program. The IPPS report included six major findings:

1. LIRA participation reduces delinquency levels.
2. LIRA participation reduces the proportion of current payments attributable to past due amount.
3. LIRA participants increased their number of timely payments.
4. LIRA payments are affordable.
5. LIRA participants did not increase energy consumption.



6. LIRA is cost-effective. Compared with traditional collection costs, administrative costs for LIRA participants are lower.

#### *4. Pennsylvania Power & Light (PP&L)*

In November 1996, RPM Systems submitted to PP&L a second interim impact evaluation of PP&L's OnTrack Payment Program (OnTrack). The second interim evaluation continues to show positive results for the OnTrack program. Preliminary findings show the following:

1. OnTrack participants do not increase energy consumption.
2. The retention rate for OnTrack participants remains high. RPM analyzed 1,672 OnTrack participants enrolled through July 1996. Of the 779 who left OnTrack, only 24% (187) were dismissed for nonpayment, 57% were disconnected and 11% were income ineligible. RPM defined retention rate as the number of participants who were active in OnTrack for at least 365 days. RPM found OnTrack has a 12-month retention rate of 68%.

Payment behavior has improved. RPM defines payment compliance as a 65% ratio of payments made to months active in OnTrack. This compares with RPM's finding that low income customers generally pay 65% of their bills. Of the 68% who remained in OnTrack, 87% met the payment standard. For those enrolled in OnTrack for one year, 73% met the payment standard. This compares favorably with two other groups of delinquent PP&L customers: of customers who were referred to OnTrack but did not enroll, only 43% met the payment standard and of other delinquent customers who called for payment arrangements, only 44% met the payment standard. OnTrack participants continue to show improvement in the number of payments made in the winter months. Compared with all other groups, the OnTrack participants made significantly more payments in winter. The evaluator defined winter months from 10/16 through 3/31. Compared with the two pre-program winters of 1993 and 1994, the number of OnTrack participants who made four or more payments during the winter increased from 58% in 1993 and 54% in 1994 to 79% in the winter of 1995.

## Appendix I

<b>LIURP SPENDING</b>				
	1994	1995	1996	Nine Year Total
Allegheny Power	\$1,098,488	\$1,103,101	\$812,439	\$8,278,064
Duquesne	\$717,024	\$644,928	\$778,460	\$6,112,223
Met-Ed	\$1,312,537	\$1,411,201	\$772,065	\$10,750,052
Penelec	\$884,065	\$1,081,240	\$652,372	\$8,248,187
Penn Power	\$111,200	\$149,900	\$162,500	\$1,334,507
PP&L	\$3,006,046	\$3,038,948	\$2,990,666	\$27,062,242
PECO*	\$3,400,000	\$2,500,000	\$3,300,000	\$28,610,000
UGI-Electric	\$121,672	\$110,695	\$102,726	\$634,655
<b>Electric-Total</b>	<b>\$10,651,032</b>	<b>\$10,040,013</b>	<b>\$9,571,228</b>	<b>\$91,029,930</b>
Columbia	\$947,329	\$1,228,323	\$1,324,439	\$8,448,287
Equitable	\$622,858	\$622,468	\$644,062	\$5,068,719
NFG	\$784,029	\$951,839	\$898,757	\$4,949,632
PG Energy	\$292,129	\$313,804	\$305,302	\$2,594,025
Peoples	\$921,339	\$643,089	\$678,224	\$5,969,809
TW Phillips	\$180,000	\$177,196	\$183,559	\$1,340,003
UGI-Gas	\$499,599	\$422,492	\$536,334	\$4,147,232
<b>Gas-Total</b>	<b>\$4,247,283</b>	<b>\$4,359,211</b>	<b>\$4,570,677</b>	<b>\$32,517,707</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>\$14,898,315</b>	<b>\$14,399,224</b>	<b>\$14,141,905</b>	<b>\$123,547,637</b>

\* Combined electric and gas

# Appendix J

## LIURP Production Levels

	Heating Jobs			Water Heating Jobs			Baseload Jobs			Cumulative 9 Yr. Total			
	1994	1995	1996	9 Yr. Total	1994	1995	1996	9 Yr. Total	1994		1995	1996	5 Yr. Total
Allegheny Power	506	450	203	5,466	1,023	803	295	8,564	41	25	1	303	14,333
Duquesne	2	4	73	1,960	20	114	8	968	634	487	624	2,380	5,308
Met-Ed	680	493	302	5,704	599	441	296	4,175	203	95	62	365	10,244
Penelec	428	453	344	4,107	1,232	1,351	809	10,164	224	442	39	742	15,013
Penn Power	20	17	33	505	102	138	91	1,511	58	54	18	144	2,160
PP&L	1,854	1,815	1,849	18,238	325	263	249	4,979	396	738	543	1,677	24,894
PECO*	1,130	747	740	12,250	730	270	1,236	7,644	743	4,001	6,504	11,785	31,679
UGI-Electric	26	24	37	229	0	0	0	12	39	43	29	111	352
<b>Electric-Total</b>	<b>4,646</b>	<b>4,003</b>	<b>3,581</b>	<b>48,459</b>	<b>4,031</b>	<b>3,380</b>	<b>2,984</b>	<b>38,017</b>	<b>2,338</b>	<b>5,885</b>	<b>7,860</b>	<b>17,507</b>	<b>103,983</b>
Columbia	273	350	375	2,505									2,505
Equitable	158	164	181	1,279									1,279
NFG	221	228	232	1,756									1,756
Peoples	362	224	222	2,289									2,289
PG Energy	167	161	143	1,557									1,557
TW Phillips	40	45	41	633									633
UGI-Gas	172	132	220	1,657									1,657
<b>Gas-Total</b>	<b>1,393</b>	<b>1,304</b>	<b>1,414</b>	<b>11,676</b>									<b>11,676</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>6,039</b>	<b>5,307</b>	<b>4,995</b>	<b>60,135</b>	<b>4,031</b>	<b>3,380</b>	<b>2,984</b>	<b>38,017</b>	<b>2,338</b>	<b>5,885</b>	<b>7,860</b>	<b>17,507</b>	<b>115,659</b>

Combined electric and gas

## Appendix K

### Utility Hardship Funds

Company	Hardship Fund Name
Allegheny Power	Dollar Energy Fund
Duquesne	Dollar Energy Fund
Met-Ed	Project Good Neighbor
PECO*	Matching Energy Assistance Fund (UESF and others)
Penelec	Project Good Neighbor
Penn Power	Project Reach
PP&L	Operation Help
Columbia	Dollar Energy Fund (Western PA.) Project Warm-up (Central PA.)
Equitable	Dollar Energy Fund
NFG	Neighbor for Neighbor
Peoples	Dollar Energy Fund
PG Energy	Project Outreach
T.W. Phillips	Dollar Energy Fund
UGI*	Operation Share
PAWC	Dollar Energy Fund

\* Includes electric and gas

**Appendix L - Table 1  
CARES Programs  
Electric Utilities**

		Design Elements			
Utility	Full-Time Utility or Contracted Staff Positions Assigned to CARES	Eligibility	Payment Arrangements	Home Visits	Participation Limit
Allegheny Power	3 Residential Customer Relations Specialists	1. Special needs 2. Arrearage < \$750	1. Flexible payment arrangements	Yes	None
Duquesne	2 outreach workers (Goodwill Industry of Pittsburgh)	1. Terminated or 2. Special needs*	1. Budget Plus 2. Current Plus	Yes	None
GPU Energy	6 Customer Relations Representatives	1. Age 60 years or older or; 2. Disabled or; 3. Seriously ill or; 4. Change in payment history or; 5. Arrearage < \$800	1. Budget Plus	Yes	None
PECO Energy	No full time CARES Reps. CARES responsibilities have been absorbed by Customer Service Reps.	1. Special needs	1. Budget Plus	Yes	None
Penn Power	1 Director - contract staff 1 Field Representative - contract staff	1. Temporary Special needs.	1. Flexible payment arrangements.	Yes	None
PP&L	5 CARES Representatives	1. Special needs	1. Flexible payment arrangements.	Yes	None
UGI-Electric	1 Residential Supervisor 2 Residential Customer Consultants (5% of time spent on CARES activities)	1. Special needs	No	Yes	None

\* Special needs includes medical problems, personal crisis or loss of income.

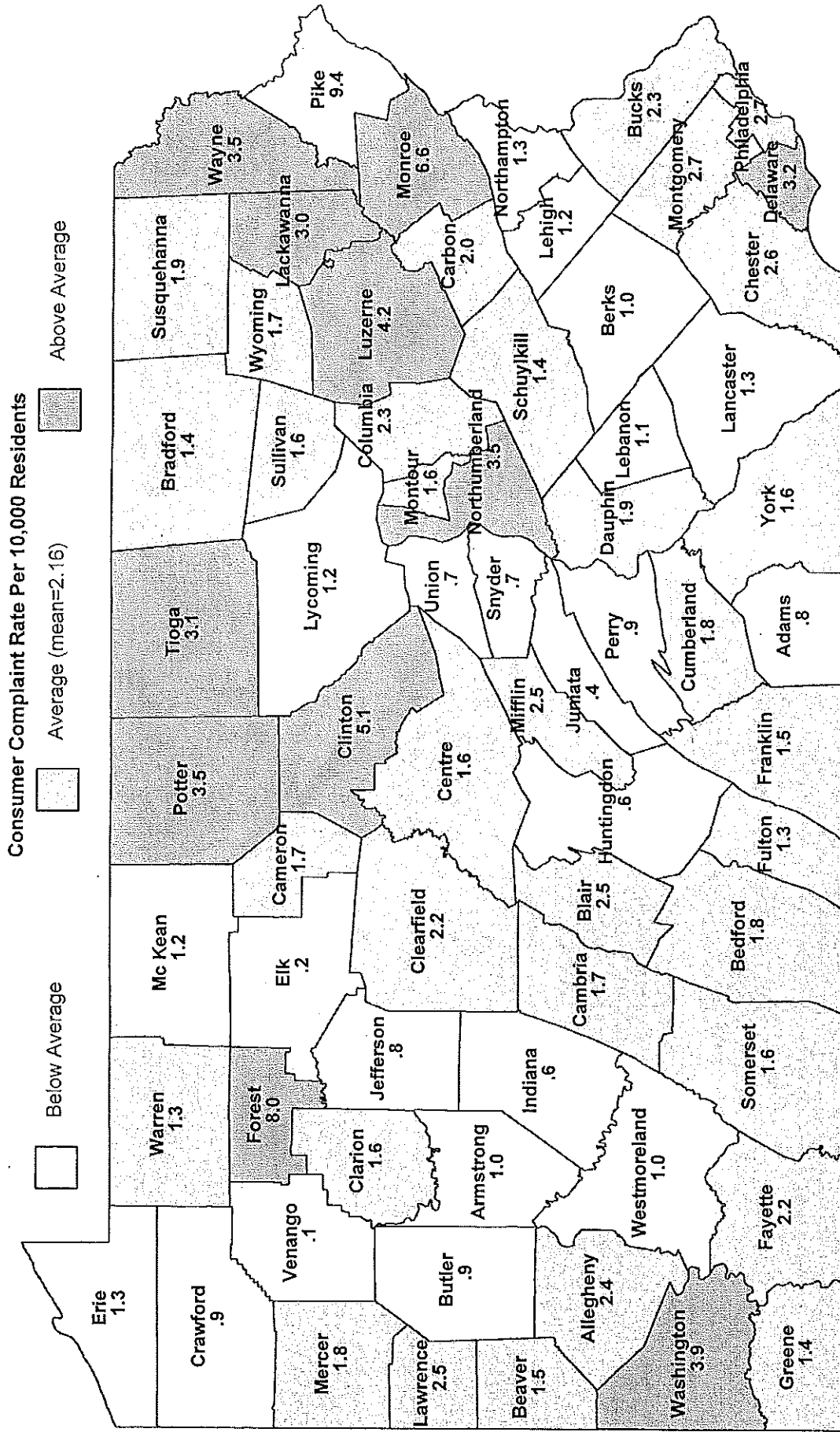
**Appendix L - Table 2  
CARES Programs  
Gas Utilities**

		Design Elements			
Utility	Full-Time Utility or contracted Staff Positions Assigned to CARES	Eligibility	Payment Arrangements	Home Visits	Participation Limit
Columbia	4 Customer Program Consultants	1. Special needs* 2. Short term crisis (18 months)	1. Budget Plus 2. Less than current bill (short term)	Yes	None
Equitable	1 Manager 3 Special Program Administrators 1 Special Needs Representative 3 Consumer Services Reps	1. Special needs OR 2. Age 60 years or older 3. Income $\leq$ 150% of poverty and payment troubled	1. Budget Plus. 2. Enrollment in Energy Assistance Program	Yes	None
NFG	2 Supervisors 2 CARES Representatives 1 part time clerical	1. Special needs 2. Negative ability to pay 3. Temporary financial hardships.	1. Budget Plus 2. Less than current bill	Yes	None
Peoples	2 CARES Representatives	1. Special needs 2. Income $\leq$ 200% of poverty	1. Limited payment arrangements	Yes	None
PG Energy	1 Part-time Community Relations Coordinator 4 Part-time Community Relations Representatives	1. Special needs OR 2. Age 60 years or older	1. Budget Plus	Yes	None
TW Phillips	1 part-time employee	1. Special needs	1. Budget Plus	Yes	None
UGI-Gas	1 Community Outreach Coordinator 4 Community Relations Coordinators	1. Special needs 2. Negative ability to pay	1. Budget Plus	Yes	None

\* Special needs includes medical problems, personal crisis or loss of income.

# COUNTY DISTRIBUTION OF CONSUMER COMPLAINTS (ELECTRIC AND TELEPHONE)

January-December, 1996



Average is based on rate +/- 1/2 of the standard deviation





# Appendix M-3

## 1990 Census Pennsylvania Counties Households, Income, and Poverty

County	Total No. of Households	Median Household Income	% and # of Households Below Poverty
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>4,495,966</b>	<b>\$29,069</b>	<b>11.58</b> <b>520,633</b>
Adams	28,067	\$30,210	6.87 1,927
Allegheny	541,261	\$22,623	12.41 67,176
Armstrong	28,309	\$22,372	13.37 3,785
Beaver	71,939	\$23,962	13.64 9,810
Bedford	18,038	\$21,591	14.33 2,584
Berks	127,649	\$31,712	8.32 10,616
Blair	50,332	\$22,890	14.61 7,355
Bradford	22,492	\$23,977	13.70 3,081
Bucks	190,507	\$42,867	4.41 8,403
Butler	55,325	\$28,860	10.70 5,919
Cambria	62,004	\$21,309	15.19 9,417
Cameron	2,395	\$20,775	12.65 303
Carbon	21,989	\$25,103	10.88 2,392
Centre	42,683	\$25,873	17.77 7,586
Chester	133,257	\$42,215	4.61 6,136
Clarion	14,990	\$21,750	18.11 2,715
Clearfield	29,808	\$21,513	14.93 4,450
Clinton	13,844	\$21,954	15.03 2,081

County	Total No. of Households	Median Household Income	% and # of Households Below Poverty	
			11.58	520,633
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>4,492,958</b>	<b>29,069</b>		
Columbia	23,478	\$23,984	11.23	2,636
Crawford	32,185	\$22,749	14.98	4,822
Cumberland	73,452	\$34,119	5.80	4,258
Dauphin	95,264	\$30,593	10.35	9,857
Delaware	201,374	\$36,901	7.51	15,121
Elk	13,131	\$24,392	11.77	1,545
Erie	101,564	\$26,331	12.94	13,139
Fayette	56,110	\$18,939	21.05	11,811
Forest	1,908	\$19,309	13.21	252
Franklin	45,675	\$28,566	8.56	3,911
Fulton	5,139	\$23,421	14.03	721
Greene	14,624	\$19,704	21.59	3,157
Huntingdon	15,527	\$23,058	14.38	2,232
Indiana	31,710	\$22,454	18.53	5,875
Jefferson	17,608	\$21,727	14.93	2,628
Juniata	7,598	\$25,328	10.70	813
Lackawanna	84,528	\$24,339	12.41	10,487
Lancaster	150,956	\$33,013	7.37	11,132
Lawrence	36,350	\$22,142	14.01	5,094
Lebanon	42,688	\$29,443	7.64	3,260
Lehigh	112,887	\$32,268	7.67	8,658
Luzerne	128,483	\$23,343	12.77	16,413
Lycoming	44,949	\$25,254	12.09	5,436
McKean	17,837	\$23,021	15.04	2,682
Mercer	45,591	\$24,133	13.17	6,002
Mifflin	17,697	\$22,667	14.01	2,480

County	Total No. of Households	Median Household Income	% and # of Households Below Poverty	
			11.58	520,633
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>4,492,958</b>	<b>29,069</b>		
Monroe	34,206	\$32,572	7.47	2,556
Montgomery	254,995	\$43,204	4.24	10,804
Montour	6,543	\$27,210	8.05	527
Northampton	90,955	\$32,416	7.72	7,023
Northumberland	38,736	\$21,941	13.29	5,148
Perry	14,949	\$29,692	7.83	1,170
Philadelphia	603,075	\$23,941	19.51	117,683
Pike	10,536	\$30,265	7.33	772
Potter	6,246	\$21,380	15.98	998
Schuylkill	60,773	\$22,640	12.84	7,804
Snyder	12,764	\$26,097	10.58	1,350
Somerset	29,574	\$21,524	15.06	4,455
Sullivan	2,280	\$20,112	17.24	393
Susquehanna	14,898	\$24,269	13.24	1,973
Tioga	14,974	\$22,542	14.37	2,151
Union	11,689	\$27,552	9.30	1,087
Venango	22,408	\$22,463	14.17	3,176
Warren	17,244	\$26,021	9.71	1,675
Washington	78,533	\$25,251	13.83	10,859
Wayne	14,638	\$24,761	11.67	1,708
Westmoreland	144,080	\$25,307	12.02	17,318
Wyoming	10,002	\$27,038	12.17	1,217
York	128,666	\$32,322	6.70	8,620

## Appendix N

### 1995-97 PUC Consumer Advisory Council

Mr. William Farally, Chair  
Sheet Metal Workers International Association  
Chief International Representative  
1750 New York Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20006-5386  
202-662-0825

Ms. Valeria C. Bullock, Vice Chair  
Energy Project Coordinator  
Community Legal Services, Inc.  
1424 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
215-981-3776

Ms. Cynthia J. Datig, Executive Director  
Dollar Energy Fund  
Box 42329  
Pittsburgh, PA 15203-0329  
412-431-2800 (Ext. 318)

Ms. J. D. Dunbar, Chief Executive Officer  
Penna. Rural Leadership Program  
Pennsylvania State University  
6 Armsby Building  
University Park, Pa. 16802-5602  
ljd@psu.edu(email)

Mr. George Emmons  
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Mr. John Flood  
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Procter & Gamble Paper Products Company  
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GRACE Energy Project  
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Community Action Committee  
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Bethlehem, PA 18018  
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Mr. Elliott G. Lengel  
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717-233-2507  
ofgarcia@ix.netcom.com

## **Appendix O**

### **Class A Water Companies\***

Audubon Water Company  
Citizens Utilities Water - PA  
Columbia Water Company  
Consumers PA Water Company - Susquehanna Division  
Consumers PA Water - Shenango Division  
Consumers Water Company - Roaring Creek Division  
Manufacturer's Water Company (no residential customers)  
National Utilities, Inc.  
Newtown Artesian Water Company  
Pennsylvania-American Water Company  
Philadelphia Suburban Water Company  
United Water of Pennsylvania, Inc.  
York Water Company

\* Class A water companies are water companies with annual revenues of \$750,000 or more.



# **Consumer Access to the Public Utility Commission**

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**The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission provides access to consumers through several toll-free telephone numbers:**

**Consumer Education Hotline: 1-800-PUC-8685**

**Termination Hotline: 1-800-692-7380**

**Complaint Hotline: 1-800-782-1110**

**Competition Hotline: 1-888-782-3228**

**General Information Line: 717-783-1740 (not toll-free)**

** Consumers can also reach the Commission by mail at the following address:**

**Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
PO BOX 3265  
Harrisburg PA 17105-3265**

** Information about the PA PUC is available on the internet at the sites listed below:**

**[http://www.state.pa.us/PA\\_Exec/public\\_utility](http://www.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/public_utility)  
(state government servers)**

**[puc.paonline.com](http://puc.paonline.com)  
(commercial servers)**