

**BEFORE THE  
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**Docket No. R-2024-3046523**

**Duquesne Light Company**

**Statement No. 7**

**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF  
JENNIFER NEISWONGER**

**Subjects: Customer Service Performance and Enhancement**

**Dated: March 20, 2024**

1 **Direct Testimony of Jennifer Neiswonger**

2 **Q. Please state your full name and business address.**

3 A. My name is Jennifer Neiswonger. My business address is 411 Seventh Avenue, Mail Drop  
4 15-1, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

5  
6 **Q. What is your position at Duquesne Light Company (“Duquesne Light” or  
7 “Company”)?**

8 A. I am the Director of Customer Experience.

9  
10 **Q. How long have you worked at Duquesne Light?**

11 A. I have been with Duquesne Light since January 2017.

12  
13 **Q. What are your current responsibilities?**

14 A. I oversee four areas within the Company’s Customer Service department: 1) Customer  
15 Experience; 2) Customer Insights; 3) Customer Relations; and 4) Energy Efficiency / ACT  
16 129. I’m responsible for the design and implementation of strategies to: improve customer  
17 satisfaction, respond more effectively to customer needs and preferences, and make  
18 interactions with customers through various channels as seamless and efficient as possible.

19  
20 **Q. What are your qualifications, work experience and educational background?**

21 A. I attended Robert Morris University, where I graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of  
22 Science in Business Administration and also completed my Masters in Business  
23 Administration. In 2023, I earned the Certified Customer Experience Professional (CCXP)

1 certification which provides professional recognition to only approximately 1,500  
2 individuals worldwide with high levels of knowledge of the customer experience  
3 discipline. It is an industry-wide, independent, standardized certification for CX  
4 practitioners to demonstrate their customer experience management experience and  
5 knowledge.

6

7 Prior to being appointed the Director in 2021, I spent 4 years as Manager, Customer  
8 Experience at Duquesne Light where I was responsible for the day-to-day management and  
9 implementation of our Customer Experience strategy. And prior to that, I spent over eleven  
10 years at Giant Eagle Inc. in Pittsburgh, where I held various customer-related positions,  
11 including most recently as the Senior Manager of Customer Loyalty, where I was  
12 responsible for the strategic development and administration of customer-facing programs,  
13 such as the loyalty card and associated rewards, digital engagement programs, and point-  
14 of-sale offers. In earlier roles with the company, I developed and implemented the omni-  
15 channel marketing strategy for a significant line of business and collaborated with in-store  
16 banks on targeted and in-store marketing campaigns to grow the number of joint customers.

17

18 **Q. What is the purpose of your direct testimony?**

19 A. The purpose of my direct testimony is to explain how we track performance in Customer  
20 Service, to show how we're efficient in our Customer Service Operations through that  
21 performance and outline some of the enhancements over the last few years as we work  
22 toward operational excellence and continuous improvement in our organization.

23

1 **Q. How is your testimony organized?**

2 A. Section I of my direct testimony provides an overview of the Company's customer service  
3 performance and metrics. Section II of my direct testimony describes customer service  
4 initiatives and planned future enhancements to improve the customer's experience with the  
5 Company.

6

7 **Q. Are you sponsoring any exhibits?**

8 A. Yes. I am sponsoring the following exhibits:

9 Exhibit JAN-1 Customer Service Performance Metrics

10 Exhibit JAN-2 Utility Consumer Activities Report and Evaluation (UCARE)

11 Exhibit JAN-3 2023 Research America survey results

12 Exhibit JAN-4 J.D. Power 2023 Residential and Business Customer Satisfaction  
13 Study Results

14

15 **I. CUSTOMER SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

16 **Q. Please explain the metrics used to measure the Company's customer service**  
17 **performance.**

18 A. One means of measuring customer service performance at DLC is through the  
19 performance metrics required by 52 Pa. Code § 54.153(b). The Company monitors,  
20 tracks and reports:

21 o 54.153(b)(1) Telephone Access:

22 ■ Percent of calls answered within 30 seconds;

23 ■ Average busy-out rate; and

- 1                   ▪ Call abandonment rate.
- 2           o 54.143(b)(2) Billing:
  - 3                   ▪ Number and percent of residential bills not rendered once every billing
  - 4                   period; and
  - 5                   ▪ Number and percent of small business bills not rendered once every
  - 6                   billing period.
- 7           o 54.143(b)(3) Meter Reading:
  - 8                   ▪ The number and percent of residential meters for which the company has
  - 9                   failed to obtain an actual or ratepayer supplied reading within the past 6
  - 10                  months to verify the accuracy of estimated readings in accordance with §
  - 11                  56.12(4)(ii);
  - 12                  ▪ The number and percent of residential meters for which the company has
  - 13                  failed to obtain an actual meter reading within the past 12 months to verify
  - 14                  the accuracy of the readings, either estimated or ratepayer read in
  - 15                  accordance with § 56.12(4)(iii); and
  - 16                  ▪ The number and percent of residential remote meters for which it has
  - 17                  failed to obtain an actual meter reading under the time frame in §
  - 18                  56.12(5)(ii).
- 19           o 54.153(b)(4) Response to Disputes:
  - 20                   ▪ The actual number of disputes for which the company did not provide a
  - 21                   response to the complaining party within 30 days.

22

23 **Q. How has the Company performed with respect to those metrics?**

1 A. The Company’s performance with respect to those metrics is included as DLC Exhibit  
2 JAN-1 and the most recent Customer Service Performance Report, which covers calendar  
3 year 2022, can be publicly found on the Commission’s website here:  
4 [https://www.puc.pa.gov/media/2566/2022-customer-service-performance-report-final-](https://www.puc.pa.gov/media/2566/2022-customer-service-performance-report-final-092623.pdf)  
5 [092623.pdf](https://www.puc.pa.gov/media/2566/2022-customer-service-performance-report-final-092623.pdf).

6  
7 The Company performs very well in terms of meter reading and bills rendered. Our AMI  
8 read rate continues to improve, from 99.2% in 2022 to 99.7% in 2023. This high read rate  
9 is a critical foundation for ensuring fewer estimated bills and billing exceptions and  
10 accurate hourly usage data for our customers.

11  
12 Like other EDC’s, Duquesne Light’s performance in 2022 declined compared to 2021 for  
13 answering calls within 30 seconds and call abandonment. This was due to high call volume  
14 and lower staffing levels in the contact center resulting in longer call wait times.

15 As mentioned in the 2022 Customer Service Performance Report, “...the substantial  
16 increase in the number of calls to utilities in 2022, which was largely attributable to the  
17 resumption of collection activities, was the main factor that impacted the ability for utilities  
18 to answer calls within 30 seconds. This, coupled with staffing challenges, contributed to  
19 declines in the performance of all EDCs.” The Company has hired additional full-time  
20 customer service representatives (CSRs) who are being trained and will be available to  
21 answer calls in Spring 2024, which is traditionally a period of high call volume. In addition,  
22 the Company is strategically working to address this long term through the development  
23 of new, and enhancement of existing digital self-service features to reduce overall call

1 volume. Lastly, the Company is updating its quality assurance program to include a  
2 customer feedback survey, expanding the live chat feature and enhancing our automated  
3 phone system (IVR) to best meet the needs of our customers.

4

5 **Q. How else does the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (“Commission”)**  
6 **benchmark the Company’s customer service performance versus other electric**  
7 **utilities?**

8 A. The Commission’s Bureau of Consumer Services (“BCS”) releases a quarterly UCARE  
9 Report that measures major Pennsylvania utilities’ customer service performance across  
10 several metrics. The BCS’s most recent UCARE Report, which covers calendar year 2022,  
11 can be publicly found on the Commission’s website here:  
12 <https://www.puc.pa.gov/media/2606/2022-ucare-final-version.pdf>.

13

14 **Q. How does the Company compare to other utilities in the UCARE Report?**

15 A. The Company’s performance with respect to those metrics is included as DLC Exhibit  
16 JAN-2. While total complaints have increased over the last few years, returning to pre-  
17 pandemic levels, DLC was tied for second among eight electric utilities in the state for  
18 shortest response time to BCS for residential consumer complaints and third for shortest  
19 response time for residential payment arrangement requests (PARs).

20

21 In addition, in late 2023, the Company strategically realigned resources to establish the  
22 Regulatory Performance Group under the Office of the General Counsel. The dedicated  
23 team is tasked with proactively addressing customer complaints and infractions to achieve

1 sustained reductions in both areas. Leveraging existing technology, the Regulatory  
2 Performance Group aims to identify root causes and overarching trends driving  
3 customer dissatisfaction and infractions. Through collaborative decision-making and  
4 process enhancements, they are committed to elevating the overall customer experience.  
5 While still in its early stages, this initiative is geared towards delivering tangible, long-  
6 term improvements in customer satisfaction and compliance metrics.

7

8 **Q. Has the Company performed any surveys related to customer satisfaction?**

9 A. Yes. As required by 52 Pa. Code § 54.154, the Company works with Research America to  
10 conduct transaction surveys of customers who have had interactions with the Company.  
11 Research American benchmarks results across Pennsylvania's EDCs.

12

13 **Q. How has the Company performed with relation to these surveys?**

14 A. The Research America report for 2023 is included as DLC Exhibit JAN-3. Duquesne Light  
15 ranks #4 out of 8 Pennsylvania electric distribution companies in 2023, which is an  
16 improvement over the reported 2021 Customer Service Performance Report, where  
17 Duquesne Light ranked #8 out of 8 and in 2022, where DLC ranked #7 out of 8.

18

19

20 **Q. Are there any other surveys that the Company conducts to assess customer**  
21 **satisfaction?**

22 A. Yes. The Company contracts with Schmidt Market Research to conduct monthly customer  
23 surveys via the phone and web. The surveys measure overall satisfaction with Duquesne

1 Light and probe on areas that are likely to influence customer satisfaction such as power  
2 quality and reliability, company reputation, energy efficiency, corporate citizenship, billing  
3 and payment, and experience with the website and mobile app.

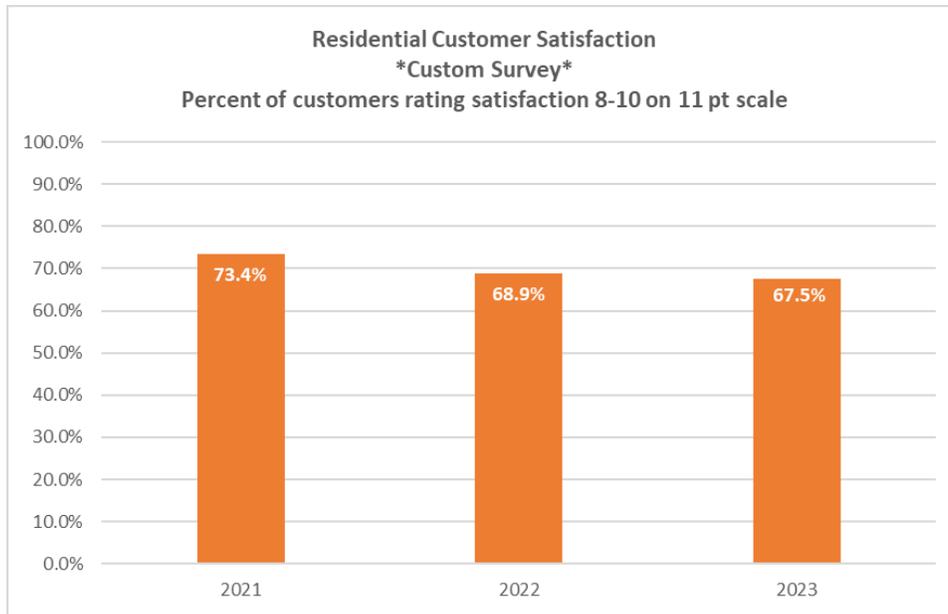
4

5 **Q. Please summarize the results of these surveys.**

6 A. Like many other utilities in PA and across the country, Duquesne Light has seen a decline  
7 in customer satisfaction since the COVID-19 pandemic. Customer satisfaction was at  
8 historic highs in 2020 when utilities offered an extended moratorium, but once  
9 disconnections for non-payment resumed in Spring 2021, customers were able to take  
10 advantage of incremental assistance that was available for a limited period of time due to  
11 the unprecedented need. Now that much of that incremental funding has been depleted,  
12 along with rising supply prices and declining economic conditions, reduced consumer  
13 confidence has continued to drive those scores down.

14

15 Duquesne Light has worked to counteract this impact and support customers through  
16 increased communications about customer assistance and energy efficiency programs, and  
17 education about the price to compare (PTC) and shopping for the supply portion of their  
18 bill.



1

2 **Q. Does the Company benchmark its customer satisfaction performance versus other**  
3 **electric utilities?**

4 A. Yes. The Company benchmarks its performance using the J.D. Power Residential and  
5 Business Electric Utility Customer Satisfaction surveys with utilities in our peer group and  
6 across the country, as well as benchmarks within PA through the Research America  
7 surveys as mentioned above.

8

9 **Q. How has the Company performed in the J.D. Power benchmarking studies?**

10 A. J.D. Power benchmarks residential customer satisfaction for a calendar year that runs  
11 January through December. For the overall customer satisfaction index, Duquesne Light  
12 scored 717 and ranked #6 within the East Large peer group for year-end 2023, which is 13  
13 index points and 3 rank positions above the peer group average score. This was a rank  
14 improvement by 2 positions (#8) compared to the 2022 scores. See DLC Exhibit JAN-4  
15 for additional details.

16

1 Duquesne Light was recently recognized in JD Power’s 2023 residential best practices  
2 webcast as a top utility for helping customers lower their bill by showing them how to  
3 conserve energy. Duquesne Light had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest score among all utilities nationwide.

4  
5 Business customer satisfaction is also measured on a calendar year basis. For the full-year  
6 2023, Duquesne Light ranked #3 in its peer group (East Mid-size) with a score of 747.  
7 Duquesne Light scored 751 in 2022 and 791 in 2021, ranked #3 and #2, respectively. See  
8 DLC Exhibit JAN-4 for additional details.

9

10 **Q. Does the Company follow any other benchmarking studies?**

11 A. Yes, Duquesne Light also follows the Cogent syndicated studies by Escalent for  
12 benchmarking purposes. The Company was recently recognized as one of 34 utilities  
13 nationwide named a 2023 Residential Customer Champion from their 2023 Utility Trusted  
14 Brand & Customer Engagement residential study. Utilities named as Customer Champions  
15 are selected based on having Engaged Customer Relationship Index scores in the top decile  
16 of the industry, the top score within their respective benchmark segment, or an Engaged  
17 Customer Relationship Index score within 20 points of the top benchmark segment score  
18 and above the industry average. Duquesne Light had a score of 711, which was the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
19 highest score among electric only utilities in the East region.

20

21 In 2022, Duquesne Light was also named a Most Trusted Utility Brand in the Cogent  
22 syndicated study by Escalent. Utilities named as Most Trusted Brands are selected based  
23 on having Brand Trust Index scores in the top decile of the industry; top score within their

1           respective benchmark segment; or having a Brand Trust Index score within 20 points of  
2           the top benchmark segment score and above the industry average. The Company had an  
3           index score of 710 which earned them a top 3 spot among electric utilities in the East  
4           region.

5  
6   **Q.    Are there any other metrics the Company uses to measure customer service?**

7   A.    Starting in 2024, the Company plans to evolve the way it measures customer service  
8           performance through the implementation of a CX composite score which is comprised of  
9           4 metrics equally weighted at 25% each:

- 10           • **Customer Satisfaction (CSAT):** measures residential customer satisfaction;  
11           perception-based metric
- 12           • **Firm Order Commit (FOC):** measures DLC’s ability to meet its commitments to  
13           business customers for in-service dates
- 14           • **Self Service:** measures the percentage of customers using self-service for the  
15           following transactions: reporting an outage, making payment arrangements,  
16           changing service, and changing enrollment in budget billing
- 17           • **First Contact Resolution (FCR):** measures the percentage of customers who had  
18           their issue resolved within the first contact with DLC

19           While Duquesne Light still believes it is important to measure customer perception (how  
20           customers view DLC) via CSAT, the Company is expanding that metric for a more well-  
21           rounded view of customer service performance by also tracking descriptive metrics (how  
22           our data says DLC is performing) with FOC and FCR and behavioral or outcome metrics  
23           (what customers are doing) with self-service.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21

The CX composite allows Duquesne Light to better evaluate the customer experience in all channels for all customers. The CSAT measure we use today through Schmidt Market Research, as referenced above, is limited to residential customers and so the firm order commit (FOC) measure allows Duquesne Light to measure experiences with our business customers. In addition, since CSAT is perception-based, it has been negatively affected over the last few years by external factors like inflation and rising supply prices which are primarily outside of the Company’s control. Having a mix of metrics allows the Company to better understand customers’ perceptions and to take action to improve the customer’s experience with Duquesne Light. Lastly, the CX composite is a spanning metric, meaning Duquesne Light has the ability to create ownership and accountability to empower teams across the Company to connect the CX composite to individual team performance.

**II. ENHANCING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

**Q. Has the Company established a strategy for enhancing the customer experience?**

A. Yes. As referenced in Statement No. 1 from Mr. Davis, our Company’s corporate strategy can be summarized by our C.A.R.E.S. model (Customer Centricity, Affordability, Resilient Culture, Energy of Things and Strengthening the Core). The “C” in C.A.R.E.S. or Customer Centricity can be briefly summarized as keeping our customers at the center of everything we do. In 2022, the Company implemented Customer Centricity as a strategic imperative and the vision for success for that imperative is:

1 *Every DLH employee is empowered and enabled to do what's right for our customers. We*  
2 *will provide seamless, personalized experiences for our customers with a digital-first focus*  
3 *powered by modern technology platforms that improve our reputation as a trusted partner.*

4 The primary areas of focus and four workstreams for this imperative include: 1) operational  
5 excellence, 2) digital experience and enhanced technologies, 3) employee engagement and  
6 learning and 4) metrics that matter.

7

8 We also established a Customer Council in 2021 that is comprised of director-level  
9 employees representing the major departments across the organization which convenes  
10 monthly for 90 minutes to review customer research, imperative progress and important  
11 customer initiatives for the company.

12

13 **Q. Please discuss the customer service initiatives implemented from 2021 through**  
14 **2023.**

15 A. A few of the customer service initiatives from 2021 – 2023 include:

- 16 • Implementation of new self-service features on the website that include start, stop  
17 and transfer of service, enrollment/unenrollment for budget billing, street light  
18 outage reporting and medical certification
- 19 • Expansion of other digital self-service features including updating the payment  
20 arrangement portal to accept restoration agreements and extending live chat to  
21 additional pages on the website, both authenticated and unauthenticated
- 22 • Dedicated team focused on processes and controls in Customer Service to ensure  
23 operational excellence

- 1 • Dedicated team focused on data & analytics for Customer Service to generate  
2 operational insights and opportunities for improvement
- 3 • Additional outreach focused on affordability and education for price to compare  
4 (PTC) to help customers manage their bill
- 5 • Development and implementation of a CX dashboard to create better visibility for  
6 Customer Service metrics across the organization
- 7 • A redesign of the mobile app and many updates/enhancements to the website,  
8 including a redesign of the homepage and implementation of social login through  
9 Google and Facebook
- 10 • Established a program that assigns an executive leadership team member to our  
11 largest business accounts to create better connections with our customers with plans  
12 to expand the program in 2024
- 13 • Implemented all new contact center technology in 2022 including new hardware,  
14 user interface and reporting

15

16 **Q. Is the Company planning additional customer enhancements in the next few years to**  
17 **improve customer satisfaction?**

18 A. Yes. We recognize the changing needs of our customers and the desire to have issues  
19 resolved quickly. With that in mind, we are continuing to focus on increasing our self-  
20 service options through our digital channels and the IVR. While we are implementing  
21 these technology solutions, we are also upskilling our agents to handle calls more  
22 efficiently and training them to handle more complex concerns through individualized  
23 learning and impactful coaching. Some of the planned enhancements include:

- 1 • Updating our quality assurance program in the Contact Center to include feedback  
2 from a new post-call survey
- 3 • Development of Company-wide service standards to establish a standard for service  
4 expectations with customers
- 5 • Implementation of our website and mobile app roadmap to ensure continuous  
6 improvement of the digital experience
- 7 • Launch the new outage management system (OMS), including the implementation  
8 of a new customer-facing outage map and outage alerts in their channel of choice
- 9 • Development of a new, centralized training model to ensure there is formalized and  
10 documented training that focuses on customer service and compliance to regulatory  
11 requirements
- 12 • Continued improvement of how we serve our business customers with the  
13 implementation of a new customer relationship management (CRM) software  
14 solution and development of a new homepage, exclusive to business customers
- 15 • Finally, our customer service extends into the ways in which we serve our  
16 community. It is important for us to deliver programs and services that uplift our  
17 neighbors in ways that are supportive to their needs. With that goal in mind, we are  
18 establishing new community partnerships, assessing the impact of our universal  
19 services programs, and seeking new methods for providing the needed services.

20

21 **Q. Does this conclude your testimony?**

22 A. Yes. I reserve the right to supplement my testimony as may be necessary through the  
23 course of this proceeding.

**DLC EXHIBIT JAN-1**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE PERFORMANCE METRICS**

**FULL-YEAR AVERAGE**

54.1433(b)(1) Telephone Access:	2021 Actual	2022 Actual
Percent of calls answered within 30 seconds	84%	76%
Average busy-out rate	0%	0%
Call abandonment rate	9%	16%
54.143(b)(2) Billing:		
Average monthly number and percent of residential bills not rendered once every billing period	4 / 0.00%	2 / 0.00%
Average monthly number and percent of small business bills not rendered once every billing period	4 / 0.01%	1 / 0.00%
54.143(b)(3) Meter Reading:		
Average monthly number and percent of residential meters for which the Company failed to obtain a reading in the past six months in accordance with § 56.12(4)(ii)	0 / 0%	72 / 0.01%
Average monthly number and percent of residential meters for which the Company failed to obtain a reading in the past twelve months in accordance with § 56.12(4)(iii)	0 / 0%	2 / 0.00%
Average monthly number and percent of residential meters for which the Company failed to obtain an actual reading under the timeframe in § 56.12(5)(i).	0 / 0%	0 / 0%
54.143(b)(4) Response to disputes		
The actual number of disputes for which the company did not provide a response to the complaining party within 30 days	7	5

**DLC EXHIBIT JAN-2**

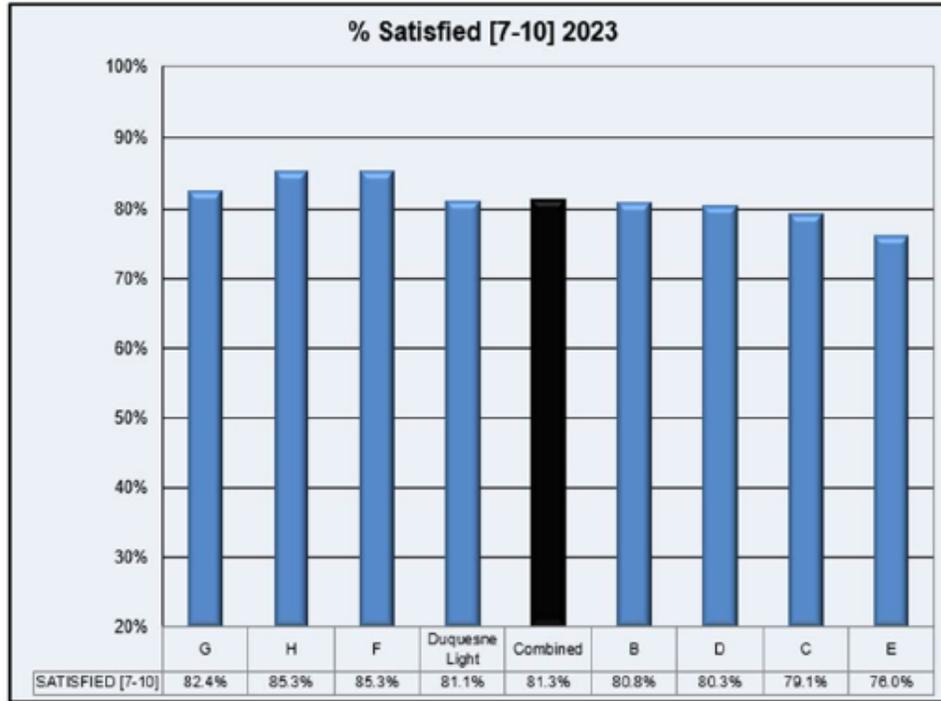
**UTILITY CONSUMER ACTIVITIES REPORT AND EVALUATION (UCARE)**

**FULL-YEAR AVERAGE**

	2021 Actual	2022 Actual
Mediated complaints sent to OALJ from BCS	7	12
Residential consumer complaint number / rate	565 / 1.04	639 / 1.17
Justified residential consumer complaint number / rate	63 / 0.12	67 / 0.12
Average response time to BCS (residential consumer complaints)	14.3	16.6
Residential payment arrangement request (PAR) number / rate	1,523 / 2.80	2,334 / 4.28
Justified residential payment arrangement request (PAR) number / rate	328 / 0.60	33 / 0.06
Average response time to BCS (residential PARs)	8.5	8.6
Residential service terminations / rates	30,945 / 5.70	30,467 / 5.58
Residential service reconnections	24,848	23,976
Commission infraction rates	0.23	0.24

**DLC EXHIBIT JAN-3**

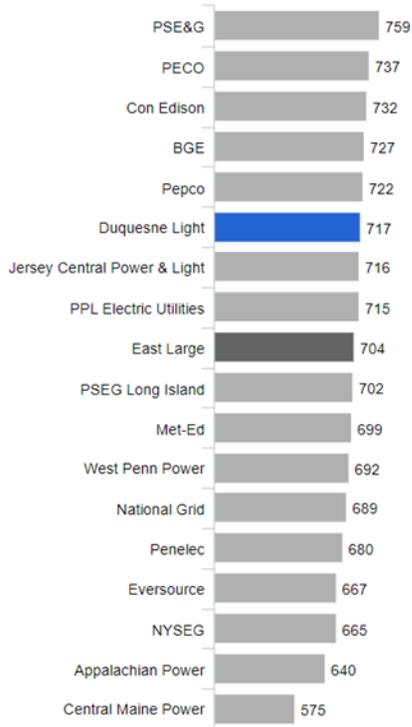
**RESEARCH AMERICA 2023 SURVEY RESULTS**



**DLC EXHIBIT JAN-4**

**J.D. POWER 2023 RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

2023 Residential Study - East Large



2023 Business Study - East Midsize

