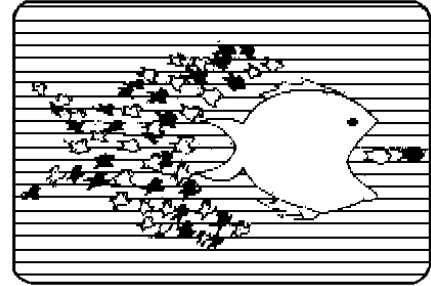


# The British Columbia Public Interest Advocacy Centre

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## BC Utilities Commission Fact Sheet

### What is the BC Utilities Commission?

The British Columbia Utilities Commission (“BCUC”) is an independent regulatory agency of the Provincial Government that operates under and administers the *Utilities Commission Act*.

The BCUC states its mission as follows:

The Commission's mission is to ensure that ratepayers receive safe, reliable, and non-discriminatory energy services at fair rates from the utilities it regulates, and that shareholders of those utilities are afforded a reasonable opportunity to earn a fair return on their invested capital.

In regulating utilities, the BCUC makes several kinds of decisions, including about:

- the level and structure of rates
- construction of new facilities
- the issuance of securities

For more information, see [www.bcuc.com](http://www.bcuc.com).

### Who can participate in hearings at the BCUC?

When a utility wants to take certain actions, such as building a new facility, it must make an application to the BCUC. The BCUC will hold a hearing on that application, which provides the opportunity for interested parties or members of the public to intervene and make submissions on how the BCUC should respond to the application. Regular intervenors include consumer groups (industrial, commercial and residential), environmental groups, business associations, and municipalities.

## What utilities are regulated by the BCUC?

The following utilities are regulated by the BCUC:

- Insurance Corporation of British Columbia
- British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority
- BC Transmission Corporation
- FortisBC Inc.
- Hemlock Valley Electrical Services Limited
- Princeton Light and Power Company, Limited
- Silversmith Power & Light Corporation
- The Yukon Electrical Company Ltd.
- Cal-Gas Inc.
- Pacific Northern Gas (N.E.) Ltd.
- Pacific Northern Gas Ltd.
- Port Alice Gas Inc.
- Stargas Utilities Ltd.
- Sun Peaks Utilities Co., Ltd.
- Terasen Gas (Squamish) Inc.
- Terasen Gas (Vancouver Island) Inc.
- Terasen Gas (Whistler) Inc.
- Terasen Gas Inc.
- Terasen Multi-Utility Services Inc.
- Central Heat Distribution Limited
- City of Grand Forks
- City of Kelowna
- City of Nelson
- City of New Westminster
- City of Penticton
- District of Summerland

## Who does BC PIAC represent at the BCUC?

Since its creation in 1981, BC PIAC has represented a coalition of low income British Columbians in relation to the regulation of utilities. Our clients include anti-poverty groups, seniors groups, and consumer groups. In many regulatory hearings, we are the only voice speaking for the interests of residential consumers, and almost always the only voice speaking for low income people. Our clients' priorities usually include support for keeping utilities public, fair rates for residential consumers, and measures that benefit everyone such as sustainable practices and safety programs.

## Glossary

**Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (“CPCN”)**: a formal approval from the Commission for a utility to make a capital investment at the expense of its customers.

**revenue requirement application**: an application made by a utility seeking approval for its financial plan. The utility must show how much revenue it will require to provide services, and where that revenue will come from.

**tariff:** a document produced with legislative authority, similar to a regulation, governing how a utility must conduct itself. For example, BC Hydro is bound by the terms of the Electric Tariff.

**investor-owned utility:** a utility that is owned by shareholders. In the case of publicly owned utilities such as ICBC and BC Hydro, the “investor” or the “shareholder” is the Province of British Columbia.

**rate payer:** a customer of a utility, (either an individual or a business), who pays a certain rate to access energy such as electricity.

**special direction:** an order issued by the provincial cabinet, instructing the BCUC how to regulate a certain aspect of a utility.

**transmission grid:** an interconnected system of energy transportation lines and associated facilities, used for bulk transfers of energy products.