

**Energy and Environmental Advocacy
Office of Consumer Protection
Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2019**

In FY19, the Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) advocated on behalf of Montgomery County regarding several issues. OCP continues to fulfill its mandate under the legislation introduced by former Councilmember Berliner as codified in Bill #35-07, Consumer Protection – Energy and Environmental Advocacy, and Bill #31-07, Real Property – Energy Performance. Effective August 2008, Bills #35-07 and #31-07 specifically established a role for OCP to work with other County agencies in the area of energy and environmental issues to advocate for the County's interests in obtaining the lowest possible utility rates consistent with environmental stewardship and to assist consumers with information regarding utility usage and costs.

These bills established the following mandates for OCP:

- Work with other County agencies to advocate for the County's interests in obtaining the lowest possible utility rates consistent with environmental stewardship; and
- Assist home sellers and buyers to obtain information about utility usage and costs.

There are now many County departments involved in Energy and Environmental Advocacy under the direction of an Assistant Chief Administrative Officer in the Office of the County Executive and with the assistance of an attorney in the Office of the County Attorney. The OCP however continues to serve as a subject matter expert on issues related to consumer protection.

Accomplishments

- OCP met with Del. Charkoudian to discuss possible revisions to HB730 and Community Choice Aggregation for the next legislative season.
- Continued to represent Montgomery County on two work groups created by the Public Service Commission: the Rate Design & Competitive Markets and Customer Choice Work Groups (PC44). Worked with Lisa Brennan (OCA) and Eric Coffman (DGS), to represent the County's interests on these work groups.
- Testified at a Public Service Commission Hearing dated August 23, 2018 regarding consumer issues relevant to the revised regulations proposed in RM62: Revisions to COMAR 20.32, 20.50, 20.53, 20.55, and 20.59–Competitive Markets and Retail Gas and Electric Choice.

Continuing Initiatives

- Coordinate activities with Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Specifically, the OCP collaborated with DEP on outreach and education programs and events and promoted DEP messaging on social media. In FY20, OCP will work with DEP on a newsletter on Greenwashing and will collaborate on the Energy Roadshow with a focus on educating consumers on energy scams.
- Consult with appropriate County departments on matters affecting Montgomery County's energy and environmental interests.
- Ongoing participation in Public Service Commission Rate Design & Competitive Markets and Customer Choice Work Groups.