



THE ROLE OF THE CONSUMER IN RATE HEARINGS

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

You can get involved by becoming an intervenor.

An intervenor is a consumer who is unconnected to the Applicant*, who the Commission has permitted to participate in a public hearing. As an intervenor a consumer can take part in a Rate Hearing by calling witnesses, presenting evidence and asking questions of the Applicant.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN A HEARING IS SCHEDULED?

When the Commission decides to hold a Public Hearing, Notices are published in the daily newspapers. The Public Notice gives a brief outline of the nature of the matter (the Application) and informs you of the times and dates on which the application documents can be collected from the Commission's offices.

HOW CAN I BECOME AN INTERVENOR

To be an Intervenor, the consumer must send a letter to the Commission indicating that he/she wishes to participate in the hearing. This letter must reach the Commission before the deadline stated in the Public Notice.

Intervenors can be represented by Public Counsel, but it is not essential for members of the public to engage a lawyer, they can appear before the Commission and speak on their own behalf.

CAN I GET LEGAL ASSISTANCE IF I WANT TO BE AN INTERVENOR?

Yes. Public Counsel, based at the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development, is available to help each Intervenor prepare his/her contribution and to further explain and inform the Intervenor of the procedures to be followed during the hearing. Staff of the Commission are also available to ensure that consumer's questions about the hearing process are adequately answered.

WHERE ARE HEARINGS HELD?

Hearings are open to the public, and the Commission in its Public Notice will inform consumers of the venue and the date of the particular hearing.

*Applications are usually made by utility companies for changes in rates, depreciation of assets and rate design.