

Oregon Public Utility Commission 101! For Advocates

- (Especially for: 1) organizations that haven't had a seat at energy decision-making tables in the past, and 2) organizations that haven't engaged much at the PUC in the past.)
- Goals: (Start to) demystify the PUC and its processes and help us all get a seat there!

Agenda and Ground Rules for this Conversation

GROUND RULES

- This training is primarily for 1) organizations that haven't had a seat at energy decision-making tables in the past, and 2) organizations that haven't engaged much at the PUC in the past.
- Step up (into speaking/questioning); step up (into listening).
- Observe/name power dynamics and respect everyone's time.
- Avoid acronyms and jargon.
- Any question is a good one.
- Recorded!

AGENDA

- What is the PUC?
- What does the PUC do?
- Public information and input (esp. for non-wonks)
- Key Topics
- Closing
- Break!

Who are you and why are you here?

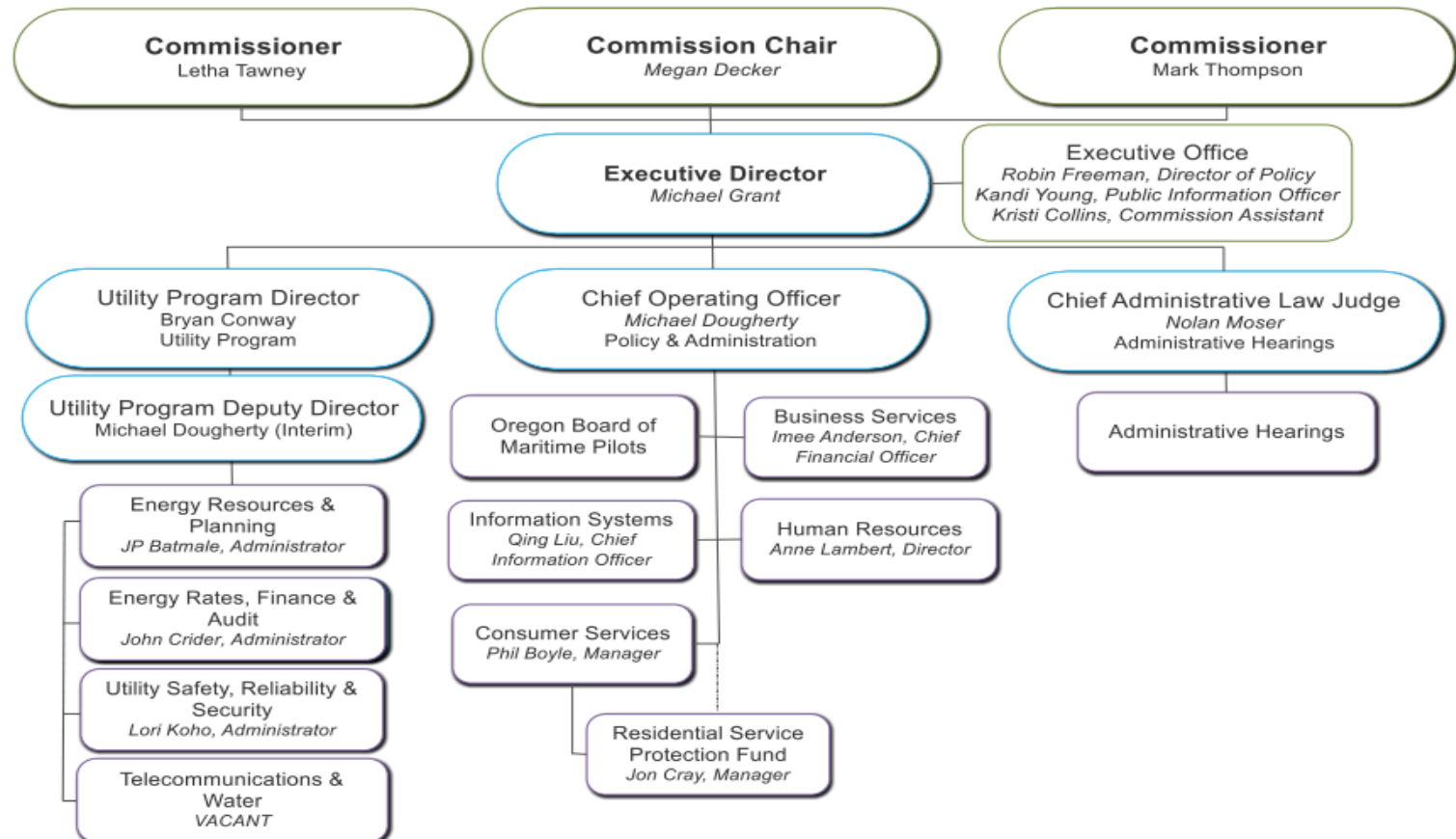
- Name, pronouns, organization/community, favorite summer dessert
- Why are you here?



Who is the PUC?



Organizational Chart



What does the PUC do?

- Regulate private utilities AKA IOUs (monopolies).
 - Let's name the electric and gas (majority of their work): Avista, Cascade, NW Natural, PGE, Pacific Power (part of PacifiCorp), Idaho Power
- “To ensure Oregon utility customers have access to safe, reliable, and high-quality utility services at just and reasonable rates.”
 - How are these concepts defined and by whom?
- Informs public/legislature
- Make recommendations to legislature

Discuss!



Quasi-legislative and Quasi-judicial

- Four decision-making processes (see [Internal Operating Guidelines](#))

1. Open Meetings

- For what: minor revisions, asking for public input on whether they should open another case
- Agenda for regular public meetings held every other Tuesday at 9:30 AM:
 - General public comment: on “anything” not on agenda
 - Consent agenda: probably non-controversial
 - Rulemaking agenda
 - Regular agenda: “require individual discussion”:
https://oregonpuc.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=566

Quasi-L and Quasi-J Processes Contd.

2. Rulemakings (quasi-L):
change or establish rules
applicable to agency

- Decision not based on "evidentiary record"
- Informal discussions with Commissioners OK (before deadline)
- Commissioners can only talk to each other about the issue in the context of a public meeting = public meeting law



Quasi-L and Quasi-J Processes Contd.

3. Contested Cases (quasi-J): address formal complaints/petition (usually issued by lawyer, at utility or otherwise)

- Must "petition to intervene" to get on the record
- May only use “evidentiary” official record to make decisions
- Commissioners may talk to each other in private; may decline requests to meet
- If you're not/don't have an attorney, you can't present legal argument

Quasi-L and Quasi-J Processes Contd.

- **4. Hybrid Proceedings**
 - Mix of other proceedings (technically considered open meetings)
 - Example: Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs)

Discuss!



Public Information and Input: What's a Docket?

- "A record of all of the filings and proceedings related to a particular matter."
- Every docket has a set of numbers and letters attached to it
<https://www.oregon.gov/puc/filing-center/Documents/DocketDesignations.pdf>
- A docket can be/contain any kind of proceeding or multiple proceedings

Docket/Proceeding Type Examples

- Community solar (UM 1930)
- Distribution system planning (UM 2005)





Discuss!

Public Information and Input: Information

- Get Info
 - Receiving info about a docket (different from being a party): email puc.hearings@state.or.us
 - Docket-specific
 - Industry-specific (water, electric, gas, telecomm)
 - “Party” (formal participant) to a docket
 - In contested/protected case: File a petition to intervene (best with an organization); ask for form from puc.hearings
 - Right to file testimony, briefs (lawyer) and cross-examine (lawyer)
 - Recordings/minutes:
<https://www.oregon.gov/puc/news-events/Pages/default.aspx>

Information Pt. 2

- Docket website (internet search)
- [EDockets search](#) (see main PUC page)
 - Text search: must ask for help from puc.hearings@state.or.us, and it doesn't work well
 - Some dockets are inactive and closed (see search)

Discuss!



How to offer comments (formally or informally)

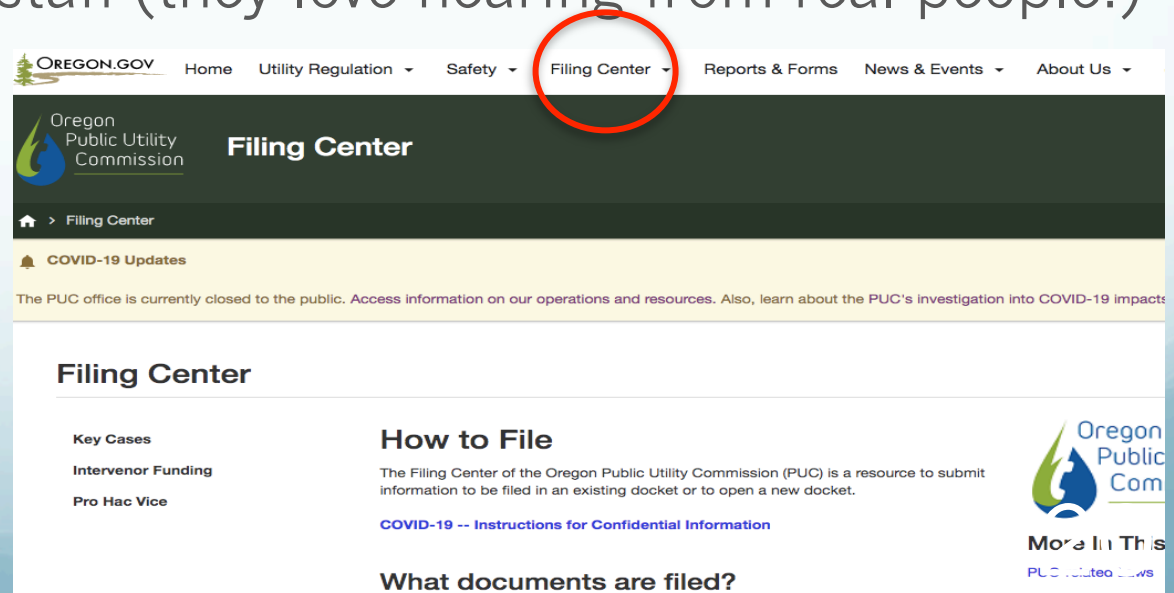
- Spoken Comments
 - General public comment at open meeting (every other Tuesday morning at 9:30 AM): just speak up!
 - the first 10-15 minutes is for anything not on the agenda.
 - Informal workshops and investigations: just speak up!

Offering Comments Pt. 2

- More formal:
 - Things on the schedule at a public meeting (consent, rulemaking, and regular agenda): 24-hr notice preferred
 - If needed: wait for ALJ/Commissioner-in-charge to ask who wants to comment
 - Must provide your name, organization to make an official comment as part of a rulemaking
 - Contested case

Offering Comments Pt. 3

- Written (filing)
 - Formal: For rulemaking/contested (intervene!) case, file by a certain date/time and certain format
 - See guidelines on website
- Informal email to staff (they love hearing from real people!)



Participation Tips

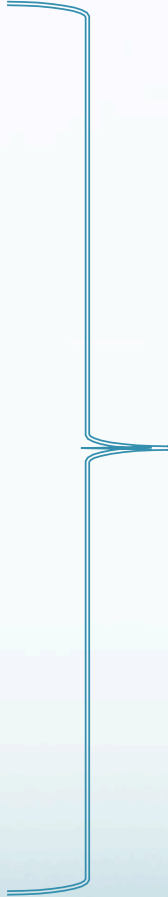
- Etiquette
 - Ask to speak about a certain agenda item.
 - Use titles: "Judge ____, Chair Decker, Commissioner Tawney"
 - You can speak “out of turn” if needed.
 - They’re new to totally virtual participation, too.
 - If it’s not a public meeting, you have to register first.
- General tips
 - Mute audio or phone until it’s your turn to speak.
 - Speak clearly, slowly, into your microphone.
 - Begin every comment with name, organization (or zip code/city).
- Accessing recordings:
<https://www.oregon.gov/puc/news-events/Pages/default.aspx>

Discuss!



Topics

- Rate cases, rate adjustments, accounting, mergers/acquisitions
- Resource planning: Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs), Distribution System Planning, Resource Value of Solar, Transportation Electrification (TE)
- PURPA/Qualifying facilities (rulemaking)
- Community solar
- General capacity
- Safety (wildfires/Consumer-Owned Utilities)
- ...a bunch of other things too



Executive Order
Implementation

Discuss/Thank you!

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