



# KNOW YOUR FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Matthew M. Carter II, Commissioner

## What We Do

The Florida Public Service Commission, created by the Florida Legislature in 1887, ensures that Florida's regulated utilities are providing you with safe and reliable utility services at reasonable rates. At first, we only regulated railroads, but as the state's population and industry grew, the Florida Legislature added telegraph service, telephone service, motor carrier transportation, electric, natural gas, water and wastewater services, and airlines to our responsibilities. As America's and Florida's economies have evolved, some industries have been deregulated. Today, the Commission has jurisdiction, to a varying degree, over investor-owned and municipally-owned electric and natural gas utilities, and some telecommunications and certain water and wastewater utilities. The Commission shares the responsibility for regulating these industries to varying degrees with the federal and local governments.

The Commission's goals are balanced between the utilities and their customers: we regulate the utilities' rates and charges while offering the companies an opportunity to earn a fair rate of return *and* we make sure residents receive reliable services in a safe and affordable manner. For example, whenever utilities want to make changes in their rates, they must come to the Commission for approval. The rates that are approved reflect an attempt by the Commission

to balance the customers' needs for affordability with the utilities' needs for financial health. This type of regulation is known as "economic regulation." The Commission's role is to act in place of market forces when a true marketplace is absent because of government-sanctioned monopoly, or when market forces are insufficient to promote favorable competition. Additionally, if customers have disputes about billing or service issues, they can call the Commission for help in resolving these issues. We want the public to have good service!

The Florida Public Service Commission has five Commissioners, appointed by the governor for four-year terms, who make decisions on the utility issues and cases that are presented at Agenda Conferences. These decisions are based on a record created in formal and informal hearings. A staff of 375 professionals conduct research and provide financial and legal recommendations about each case to the Commissioners. Our decisions affect Florida's \$27 billion dollar plus utility industry and more than 16 million people living in Florida. Since we are a part of the state government, the public is welcome to attend our Agenda Conferences and hearings to learn how our agency works.

In addition to our work in Tallahassee, the Commission staff and I have been meeting with consumers around the

state on numerous utility topics. Programs that I want to emphasize are the Link-Up and Lifeline Assistance Programs, designed to ensure that all Florida residents have access to basic telephone service in their homes. We want all eligible consumers to take advantage of these programs, so we are hosting community forums, participating in discussions with church groups, and holding one-on-one sessions with senior citizens and low-income residents. For consumers' benefit, we have also made public service announcements in various formats, CDs, and other consumer publications that explain utility-related topics.

Since my appointment in 2006, I have met so many people across the state who have had interesting questions about our agency. Consumers have a right to know how our decisions affect them. I am proud to serve the citizens of Florida with my fellow Commissioners, and we are committed to keeping you informed on what is happening within the industries we regulate. If you want more information or have questions about the Florida Public Service Commission, please contact us at **1-800-342-3552** or via e-mail at:

**contact@psc.state.fl.us.** You can also read about current issues and access publications at our Web site **www.floridapsc.com.**