

Office of the People's Counsel for the District of Columbia • 1133 15th Street, N.W. •
Suite 500 • Washington, D.C. 20005 • (202) 727-3071 • FAX: (202) 727-1014 • TTY/TDD
(202) 727-2876 • www.opc-dc.gov

Elizabeth A. Noël, People's Counsel
PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT: PHIL HARMON ☐ (202) 727-3071 ☐ email: ccceo@opc-dc.gov

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Hallelujah to Consumers! Way to Go Public Service Commission!

"I have been around a number of years, and I have never seen the Commission exert its authority like this. This is a major victory for consumers," said People's Counsel Elizabeth A. Noël in response to the D.C. Public Service Commission's decisions today in Washington Gas' rate case.

"Washington Gas has flaunted its arrogance before the Commission for far too long. The company has insulted the Commission at the expense of ratepayers. The Commission's fine, starting at \$350,000 and growing \$5,000 per day until the company complies, is a clear sign the PSC is standing up to Washington Gas! This is only the third time the Commission has issued sanctions and never of this magnitude," stated Ms. Noël.

"Today's decisions by the Commission affirm the positions taken by the Office of the People's Counsel in this case. First, the consumer advocate and the other parties have the absolute right to review the disputed contract to determine its impact on WG's rate increase request. Second, the Commission's sanction and use of the maximum fine affirms its broad authority to review documents pertinent to this case. Finally, the Commission has postponed the case until further notice" Ms. Noël enumerated.

"The ball is now in Washington Gas' court. If they continue to ignore the Commission's authority, then OPC will certainly file to dismiss the company's request for a \$20.5 million increase. PEPCO and Verizon should take note of the broader message the PSC is sending," said the People's Counsel.

"There should now be no question the tiger has teeth."