

JASON M. STANEK
CHAIRMAN

MICHAEL T. RICHARD
ANTHONY J. O'DONNELL
ODOGWU OBI LINTON
PATRICE M. BUBAR



PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

July 8, 2022

Modernizing the Commission's Staffing and
Resources

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Administrative Docket
PC 57

NOTICE OF PUBLIC CONFERENCE AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

Maryland is a leader among states in the aggressive pursuit of energy policies that combat climate change and preserve and improve environmental quality for its citizens. In the past 20 years, the State has developed and expanded its major energy and environmental initiatives such as the Renewable Portfolio Standard^{1,2}, EmPOWER Maryland³, and Net Metering^{4,5} and enacted significant legislation including the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, the Clean Energy Jobs Act, and most recently, the Climate Solutions Now Act. The State has looked to the Commission to manage or implement many of these new policies. Other responsibilities, including the regulation of Transportation Network Companies, the administration of federal energy assistance funds⁶, increased pipeline safety initiatives, and innovative ratemaking policies⁷, have also

¹ See the most recent [Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard Report](#).

² For Offshore Wind, see Case No. [9431](#) and Case No. [9666](#).

³ [Case No. 9648](#).

⁴ See the most recent [MD PSC Report on the Status of Net Energy Metering](#)

⁵ For the Community Solar Pilot, see [RM56](#).

⁶ [PC53](#).

emerged. Accordingly, the Commission requires expanded resources to fulfill its newly-acquired responsibilities to the fullest extent possible. The Commission has typically requested additional resources with the addition of new requirements; however, these incremental requests have not resulted in additional positions.

This situation is not unique to the Maryland Public Service Commission. As a recent Harvard Law Review article noted about public service commissions in other states, “[e]ven when given authority to regulate environmental and climate issues, these agencies have neither a road map nor adequate resources to do so.”⁸ Moreover, the article concluded, “[r]egardless of an agency’s willingness and authority to act on a particular goal, a new objective for an agency will only survive so long as it is achievable. To be workable, a goal must have identifiable targets. And critically, the agency must have the resources and expertise necessary to make technical and well-educated decisions about how to attain these targets.”⁹

This Commission continues to innovate in terms of its operations and services. The Commission recently launched an effort to overhaul the agency’s website, and update its information technology assets on an agency-wide basis. And in recent years, the Commission has rapidly become a more efficient agency, successfully navigated a pandemic, implemented new, paperless operations, assumed the regulation of new industries, implemented new regulatory policies,¹⁰ and performed a wide array of new tasks mandated by statute. The Commission has also identified increased training opportunities for its personnel. However, all

⁷ See, e.g., [Case No. 9618](#).

⁸ *Developments in the Law – Climate Change*, 135 Harv. L. Rev. 1614, 1616 (2022).

⁹ *Id.* at 1635. The Commission notes that it has lowered personnel vacancies significantly during a challenging hiring environment.

¹⁰ For Grid Modernization, see [PC44](#).

of these efforts often come at the expense of other, existing responsibilities, and as a result, may hinder the Commission from innovating to the greatest extent possible.

Accordingly, the Commission initiates Public Conference 57 (“PC 57”) to receive the benefit of public input regarding how the Commission should augment and enhance its staffing and resources to meet its current statutory charges. The Commission appoints Senior Advisor Amanda Best and Executive Secretary Andrew Johnston as co-leaders of this public conference and any associated workgroup. Interested persons are encouraged to file comments by September 1, 2022. Commission Staff is directed to participate. Comments are welcome on the following issues, among others:

1. A recommendation on the appropriate staffing and resources required for the Commission to meet its current statutory charges;
2. A recommendation on additional information services or technology that could enable the Commission to more easily meet its current statutory charges;
3. The willingness of stakeholders to ensure adequate funding for Commission staff and resources;
4. How a Commission enhanced with additional staff and resources could lead to better public policy outcomes;
5. How the Commission could more effectively fund, attract, and retain staff and resources; and
6. Other staffing and resource issues the Commission should consider as part of any workforce enhancement effort.

Participants should also raise any other issues they believe the Commission should consider that relate to the scope of this public conference. Participants are cautioned, however, that comments should focus on staffing and resources, and not the day-to-day operations,

policies, or structure of the Commission. Non-germane comments will not be considered as part of any proceedings that follow the comment period. Where appropriate, parties should provide suggested regulatory language or other Commission action necessary to address issues or procedures identified.

Upon receipt of all written comments, the Commission will consider next steps, including the initiation of workgroup meetings, setting goals for the public conference, and any public hearings, as determined necessary.

By Direction of the Commission,

/s/ Andrew S. Johnston

Andrew S. Johnston
Executive Secretary