



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
**NEWS RELEASE**

Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz

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**OFFICE OF CONSUMER COUNSEL'S EFFORTS RETURN HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS FOR CONNECTICUT'S CONSUMERS IN 2013**

(February 3, 2014 – New Britain) Elin Swanson Katz, Connecticut Consumer Counsel, announced today a review of last year's activities showed that the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC), the independent agency that represents consumers on issues related to electricity, natural gas, water, and telecommunications, achieved hundreds of millions of dollars in direct savings to Connecticut ratepayers' utility bills in 2013. The savings came through OCC's advocacy both in 2013 and prior years in dockets before the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), through litigated cases in state and federal courts, and in matters before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). This amount represents a reduction in the rate increases proposed by various utilities, the reduction or elimination of other proposed charges, and savings arising from court decisions and FERC rulings.

Recent examples where these savings are reflected include the following:

- A reduction in United Illuminating's requested rate-increase from approximately \$91 million to \$46 million, a savings of \$45 million.
- A decision by a FERC administrative law judge to reduce the allowable rate of return on regional electric transmission projects from over 11% to 9.2%, which, barring legal challenges, will save Connecticut residents \$30 million to \$40 million annually.

- A settlement with Connecticut Water Co. relating to tax liabilities which will refund \$10 million to its water customers, under which the average residential customer will see his or her bill reduced by about 6%.
- A reduction in Connecticut Natural Gas Corporation's rate increase from approximately \$20 million to \$6.5 million.

Savings from OCC's work in recent years include rate reductions in rate cases involving Yankee Gas Company, Aquarion Water Company, and Connecticut Water Company, and millions of dollars in ratepayer benefits from the settlement agreement in the Northeast Utilities – NStar merger, all of which continued to reduce customers' bills in 2013.

Katz said, "Last year was an incredibly productive year at the OCC. We participated in over 300 PURA dockets alone, an increase of over 25% from 2012. Of course, OCC's work is often taken in collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders, including the Attorney General, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, all of whom share credit for the excellent results we achieve together. However, I believe the depth of experience of OCC's thirteen staff members, and the dedication they bring to our mission, is a key to our collective success. 2014 is already looking like another very busy year, and every member of this office considers it an honor and a privilege to represent the consumers of Connecticut as we move forward."

The Office of Consumer Counsel was established in 1975 to serve as an independent voice for consumers. Information on the OCC can be found on its website: [ct.gov/occ](http://ct.gov/occ).

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*The Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) is the State of Connecticut's advocate for all utility ratepayers. OCC seeks to ensure just and reasonable rates and reliable utility service for customers of Connecticut's electric, gas, telephone, and water utilities and reasonable protection for cable television customers. For more information, visit [www.ct.gov/occ](http://www.ct.gov/occ).*