

2010 -- S 2403

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2010

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A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Introduced By: Senator Leo R. Blais

Date Introduced: February 11, 2010

Referred To: Senate Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 39-1-18 of the General Laws in Chapter 39-1 entitled "Public  
2 Utilities Commission" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **39-1-18. Hearings and records -- Certified copies.** -- (a) All hearings and orders of the  
4 commission and of the division, and the records thereof, shall be public and any person shall be  
5 permitted to record all or any portion of a hearing by way of camera, video or tape recorder of  
6 any kind, unless a party to the hearing requests, and the chairperson or administrator grants the  
7 request, that the recording be prohibited for the protection of attorney-client privilege,  
8 confidentiality or other interest of the parties. All reports, records, files, books, and accounts in  
9 the possession of the commission or the division shall be open to inspection by the public at all  
10 reasonable times. The division may charge and collect reasonable fees for copies of official  
11 documents, orders, papers, and records, and for authenticating or certifying the same; provided  
12 that no fee shall be charged for single copies of official documents, orders, papers, and records,  
13 furnished to public officers of the state for use in their official capacity, or for the annual reports  
14 in the ordinary course of distribution.

15           (b) All filings made to the division or commission shall also be provided digitally in a  
16 manner established by the division. The commission and division may adopt rules exempting  
17 filings from this requirement.

18           (c) In order to support the ability of the public and interested parties to stay informed of  
19 the activities of the commission and the division, and to promote awareness of utility

1 restructuring, the division shall maintain a site on the internet through which the public may  
2 access:

3 (1) Notices of and agendas of hearings;

4 (2) All filings that are available in digital format and that are not subject to protective  
5 orders;

6 (3) All orders, rules and regulations of the commission or administrator;

7 (4) Announcements of, agendas for, and minutes of open meetings;

8 (5) A calendar of all forthcoming open meetings and hearings;

9 (6) Current tariffs of all public utilities who are subject to assessment pursuant to section  
10 39-1-23; provided, however, that the division may require any public utility with extensive tariffs  
11 to maintain a website and provide access to those tariffs via a link from the division's website;

12 (7) A listing of all public utilities and nonregulated power producers, together with  
13 consumer contact information for each;

14 (8) Consumer information on billing dispute resolution, retail access, conservation, and  
15 consumer assistance programs;

16 (9) Demand side management programs available to residential, commercial and  
17 industrial customers;

18 (10) Other information as the division deems relevant and useful to the public.

19 (11) Notwithstanding any provision of the general or public law to the contrary in lieu of  
20 publishing its hearings notices in a newspaper(s) of general and/or local circulation, the division  
21 may alternatively choose to provide its hearing notices exclusively through electronic media on  
22 its website.

23 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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1           This act would authorize the division of public utilities and carriers to choose to provide  
2 public notice of its hearings exclusively through the use of its website.

3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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