

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Water Utilities

Briefing for the Energy, Utilities and
Technology Committee by the
Maine Public Utilities Commission
January 19, 2011

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Water Utilities

- Over 150 water utilities in Maine
- Comprised of districts, departments and companies
- Districts are quasi-municipal formed through Private and Special Laws (charter)
- Departments are a part of a municipality
- Companies are privately held, usually with shareholders

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Water Utilities

- Maine water utilities range in size from less than 30 service connections to more than 45,000 connections
- PUC regulates the rates and customer service side of water utilities.
- PUC does not regulate
 - Quality of the water (Drinking Water Program)
 - Sewer services
 - Bottled water companies

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Water Utilities

- Water districts and departments have the ability to file a “shortened” rate case in accordance with Title 35-1, section 6104
 - Requires certain public notice and hearing requirements
 - Customers can petition the PUC to open an investigation
 - Once petitioned, it becomes a regular, investigated rate case
 - If it isn’t petitioned, rates go into effect automatically

Water Utilities

- Major water rules include:
 - Chapter 140, which requires utilities to submit infrastructure maps and data
 - Chapter 65, which regulates water main extensions to serve customers
 - Chapter 69, which determines the amount a municipality pays a water utility for fire protection (hydrants)

Water Utilities

- Typical customer complaints include:
 - Billing issues
 - Water main extension issues
 - Metering issues (size, type)
- Typical water utility questions concern:
 - Terms and condition filings
 - Water main extension issues
 - Rate questions
 - Accounting procedures, policies, etc