

# AZEconomy || Insiders

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## Utility regulators want to hear from the public



Arizona's energy regulators are making it easier for utility customers to voice their concerns over issues such as rooftop solar, smart meters and efficiency programs.

The Arizona Corporation Commission regulates utilities such as Arizona Public Service Co., Tucson Electric Power and Southwest Gas Corp. Five commissioners are elected to statewide office, and a staff of experts is in charge of researching utility matters and proposing rates and other policies through the proceedings at the commission.

The public has always been allowed to submit comments on commission matters and speak at hearings, but the commission is making that participation easier.

"The commission wants to be sure that citizens all across the state have the ability to participate in our important decision process and this new online access is an exciting new opportunity that makes that participation more accessible to all Arizonans," Commissioner Susan Bitter Smith said.

In recent weeks, the Corporation Commission has added the capability to submit comments to a particular matter. The web site [www.azcc.gov](http://www.azcc.gov) has a new link on the right side to "Submit a Public Comment for a Utility."

The online submission form asks which utility "docket" a customer would like to address. Submitting comments to a specific docket ensures the comments will become a part of the official record for that matter and be available to all of the parties to the case.

Here are a few of the more popular dockets pending at the commission:

» A proposal from APS to put free solar panels on 3,000 customers' homes. Docket No. E-01345A-14-0250

» An investigation into utility "smart meters," which use radio fre-

quencies to transmit data from house to house back to the utility, avoiding the need for meter readers. E-00000C-11-0328

» And a related application for APS to charge customers a fee to use traditional meters. Docket No. E-01345A-13-0069.

» A review of energy-efficiency programs, in which the Corporation Commission staff has suggested cutting the state requirements for utilities to conserve of their projected electricity sales 22 percent by 2020. Docket No. E-00000XX-13-0214.

» A general review of the rate structures used by utilities. Docket No. AU-00000C-14-0329.

For those who prefer to mail their comments to the commission, the street address is 1200 W. Washington St., Phoenix, 85007. And for those who don't want to write their comments, they may call consumer services at the commission at 602-542-4261 or 800-222-7000 and share their thoughts verbally, which will be transcribed and added to the corresponding docket.

The commission also revamped the online docketing system, making it easier to find the documents on any given case.

Some people prefer to show up in person and speak during a hearing when commissioners are addressing an issue they are passionate about.

The commission made it easier to sign up online to speak during the public comment period during meetings. The feature is on the right side of the commission website at [www.azcc.gov](http://www.azcc.gov).

During hearings, those who have signed up to speak will be called to the podium by the chairman of the commission.

And finally, for those who want to follow the proceedings, the commission offers live online broadcasts of its meetings as well as telephone listen lines at 800-250-4525.