

Ensuring Consumer Satisfaction/Dispute Resolution

**Commissioner Frederick Butler
New Jersey Board of Public Utility**

**SECOND ANNUAL GLOBAL
REGULATORY NETWORK CONFERENCE**

July 26-27, 2004

Bamako, Mali

New Jersey Board of Public Utility Mission Statement

“We will ensure the provision of safe, adequate, and proper utility and regulated service at reasonable rates, while effectively managing the transition from protected monopoly franchise markets to competitive markets for the betterment of ratepayers”

Division of Customer Assistance

- The Division of Customer Assistance provides the most visible direct communications link between the BPU and the customers of the utilities it regulates as well as licensed third party energy suppliers and resellers of telephone service.
- The Division assists customers in resolving service and billing problems.
- The Division also participates in investigations and research activities related to emergencies.

Division of Customer Assistance

■ Responsibilities:

- Day-to-day handling of customer complaints regarding all utilities regulated by the BPU (The Office of Cable Television has its own complaint/investigation Unit)
- Operates toll free phone lines and employs bi-lingual personnel to service customers.
- Handled over 106,000 calls in 2003

Division of Customer Assistance



- In addition to maintaining local (973-648-2350) and toll free (800-624-0241) telephone numbers, the Division maintains an Electronic Data Interchange System, which enables major utilities to receive complaints instantaneously over high-speed data lines.
- Processing time is thus reduced and responses are provided faster.

Division of Customer Assistance

- The Division has seen an increase of 27% in the number of customers assisted since 1996.
- For comparison, the Division assisted customers with 10,548 verbal and 3,265 written complaints in the year 1996.
- In the year 2003, the Division assisted customers with 17,984 verbal and 3,294 written complaints.
- In addition, the Division received 3,654 emails from customers requesting assistance or general information.
- The Division received 106,053 telephone inquiries in the year 2003.

Division of Customer Assistance



- With the implementation of competition in the energy and telephone industry, other BPU Divisions, governmental agencies, State Public Utility Commissions and customers rely on the Division to provide information as to how well these companies are serving its customers.
- The Division has received inquiries from 952 different companies in which customers had expressed a problem.

Status Report to Commissioners - June 2004

Utilities	Number of Customers	Complaints			Top Two Complaint Categories	
		Verbals	Writtens	Total		
Electric Company						
Conectiv	517,329	145	7	152	Collections 128	Billing 12
JCP&L	1,051,290	172	9	181	Collections 90	Service 50
Rockland	62,372	2	0	2	Collections 2	
Gas Company						
New Jersey Resources	450,727	30	5	35	Collections 18	Billing 13
NUI	261,731	91	20	111	Billing 49	Collections 44
South Jersey Gas	306,938	72	6	78	Collections 47	Billing 16
Gas & Electric Company						
PSE&G	2,360,597	502	31	533	Collections 281	Billing 150
Third Party Energy						
Total Gas & Electric	N/A	1	1	2	Billing 2	

Utilities	Number of Customers	Complaints			Top Two Complaint Categories	
		Verbals	Writtens	Total		
Local Exchange Carriers						
United Telephone	151,110	9	2	11	Service 5	Billing 2
Verizon	2,767,580	322	58	380	Service 233	Billing 42
Long Distance Carriers						
AT&T	N/A	123	38	161	Service 72	Billing 66
MCI	N/A	62	8	70	Service 35	Billing 15
Sprint	N/A	9	2	11	Billing 7	Service 2
Resellers Telephone						
Cleartel Comm.	N/A	2	1	3	Billing 2	Collections 1
Capital Comm.	N/A	3	0	3	Service 2	Billing 1
IDT America	N/A	13	4	17	Billing 5	Collections 5
Talk America	N/A	6	0	6	Service 6	
Water Company						
Elizabethtown Water	205,636	19	5	24	Billing 16	Service 3
NJ American Water	386,893	25	6	31	Billing 15	Service 7
United Water	183,826	17	6	23	Billing 12	Collections 6

June 2004

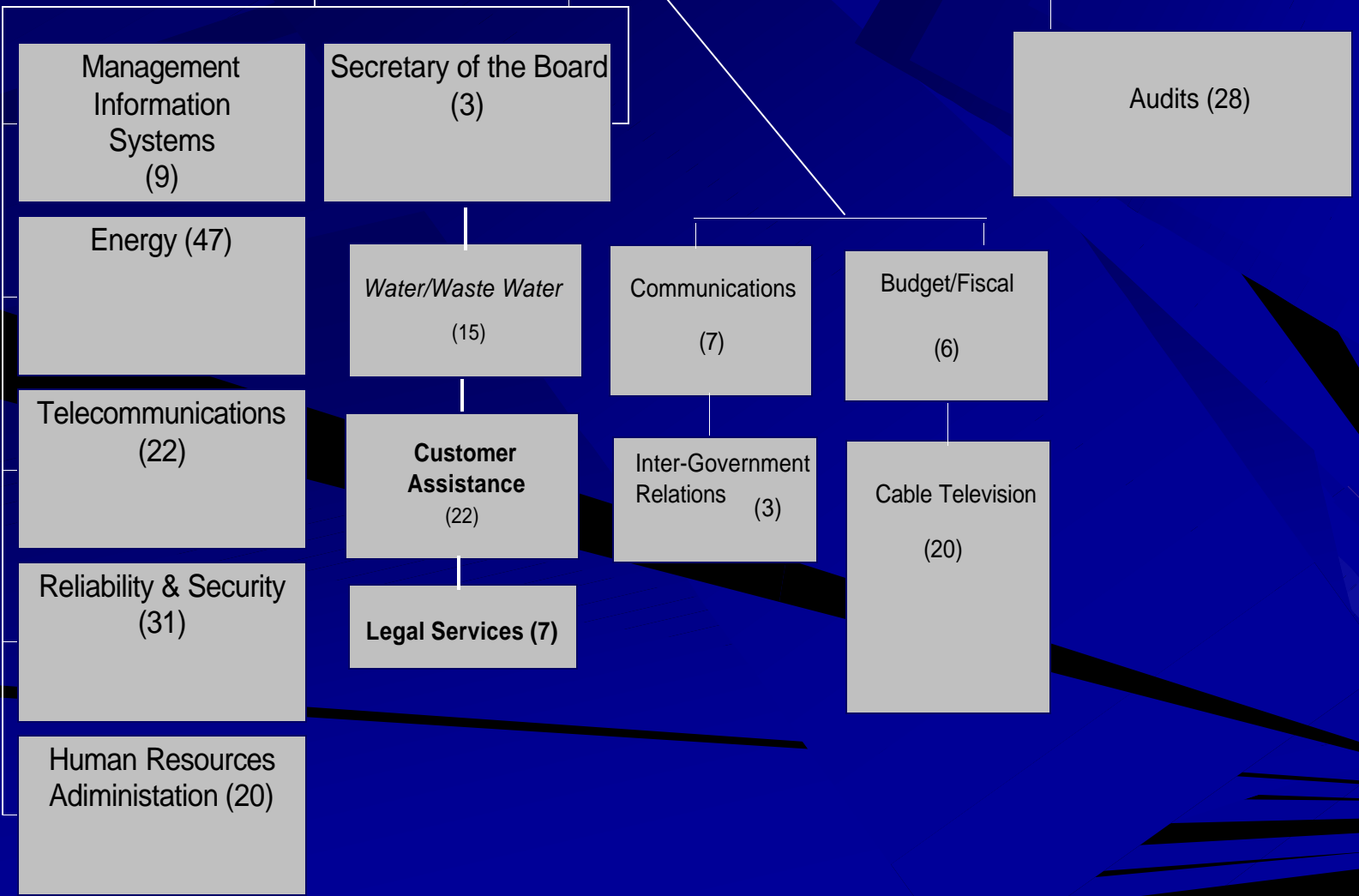
	Verbal	Written	Total
Major Utility Complaints	1,625	209	1,834
Other Utility Complaints	61	41	102
Total	1,686	250	1,936
Cases Received	1,698	254	1,952
Cases Closed	1,770	239	2,009
Cases Pending	1,521	2,291	3,812
Customer Savings			\$87,281.81
Emails Received			363
In Person Office Interviews			37
Information Calls			2,839
Response & Investigation Calls			10,426
Calls Answered (ACD)			4,823

May 2004

	Verbal	Written	Total
Major Utility Complaints	1,622	263	1,885
Other Utility Complaints	53	52	105
Total	1,675	315	1,990
Cases Received	1,713	320	2,033
Cases Closed	1,507	245	1,752
Cases Pending	1,514	2,248	3,762
Customer Savings			\$543,179.67
Emails Received			333
In Person Office Interviews			29
Information Calls			1,963
Response & Invest Calls			9,320
Calls Answered (ACD)			4,320

Commissioner (3) Commissioner (3) President (3) Commissioner (3) Commissioner (3)

Chief Of Staff (3) Executive Director Economist (10)



Utilizing Customer Assistance Data

- Aggregating Data by Company
- Aggregating Data by Type of Complaint
- Identifying Trends
- Identifying Hot Spots

Adjudicating Other Types of Disputes

- Cases before the Board.
- Stakeholder working groups
- Arbitration Panels
- Statute-based Dispute Resolution

Dispute Resolution...

- NJ's "Municipal Land Use Law" Allows a public Utility to appeal to the Board of Public Utilities within 35 days of any aggrieved action by a municipal agency with respect to any action in which the public utility or generator has an interest including the present or proposed use of utility provision

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NJ Board of Public Utilities

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