

SENATOR DELORES G. KELLEY
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

—
Chair
Finance Committee

—
Executive Nominations Committee
Rules Committee
Legislative Policy Committee



Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Suite 3 East
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3606 · 301-858-3606
800-492-7122 Ext. 3606
Fax 410-841-3399 · 301-858-3399
Delores.Kelley@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR DELORES G. KELLEY
REGARDING SENATE BILL 430 – PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION-VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARINGS
BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

February 9, 2021

Dear Vice-chair and members:

Given the current pandemic, it's still vitally important that the public is able to access information readily, especially if it involves raising utility rates.

Senate Bill 430 is an emergency bill authorizing the Public Service Commission to conduct meetings virtually when discussing rate increases, and certificates of public convenience and necessity (CPCN).

Prior to the pandemic, the Maryland Public Service Commission conducted in person hearings. However, since the pandemic began, the Commission transitioned to holding fully virtual proceedings, including public hearings. Meetings are broadcast live on YouTube, and the public also has the ability to view meetings at a later date and time through archived footage. Conducting meetings this way potentially helps increase the number of people aware of what's happening by the ability to view hearings from the convenience of their homes.

Senate Bill 430 requires the Public Service Commission to prominently display notices of utility rate increase hearings via its website, thereby giving the public ample time to comment and respond. The Public Service Commission is currently holding public comment hearings virtually under an executive order due to the pandemic. SB 430 has no effect until after the expiration of the temporary authority, and more than likely will go into effect no earlier than fiscal year 2022.

The Public Service Commission says that holding virtual hearings reduces expenditures associated with travel to and from in-person hearings, and save time.

I therefore ask for your support for Senate Bill 430.