



NEWS RELEASE
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PSC Receives More Than 880 Consumer Contacts in 2024

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) today reported that the agency received 889 consumer contacts in 2024. These contacts include informal complaints against regulated entities, public input submitted as part of an open case, referrals to other agencies and/or requests for information.

Commissioner Sheri Haugen-Hoffart, who oversees the Consumer Affairs portfolio, emphasized the importance of public and consumer engagement in shaping effective policies. “One of our top priorities at the Commission is to actively listen to public and consumer feedback. The input is critical in crafting well-informed rules, regulations and decisions,” said Haugen-Hoffart. “Our existing system is highly effective in addressing the daily issues and concerns, allowing us to respond promptly and appropriately.”

Informal complaints are received and processed regarding utilities the Commission regulates, including certain aspects of telephone service, natural gas providers, and the three investor-owned electric companies in the state: Xcel, Otter Tail and MDU. Of the 889 contacts, 90 (10.1%) were informal complaints against public utility companies regulated by the Commission. Informal complaint numbers overall were slightly higher for 2024 than the previous year. The most frequent reasons for complaints are billing issues, disconnects and phone outages. The most common billing complaints include customers wanting to investigate if their bill is correct, higher than normal bills, and payment plans to avoid disconnections.

In addition to recording complaints and concerns, the Commission also receives public input for cases being considered by the Commission. Public input is most often received for siting cases where the Commission is looking at permitting new transmission projects like pipelines, electric transmission lines and wind farms or for rate cases. Siting hearings are held in a community close to where the project is proposed to be built. The comments can be either in support or opposition of the project. In 2024 there were 179 public input contacts recorded or 20% percent of the total contacts. Public input was submitted for a variety of different cases throughout the year with the majority submitted for the Summit Carbon Solutions Pipeline Project, the Oliver Wind IV Project, MDU and Xcel’s gas rate increase cases, and Otter Tail’s electric rate increase case.

“This Commission takes public input seriously,” said Commission Chair Randy Christmann. “It provides us with the information we need to make the best possible decisions, so we urge North Dakotans to contact us.”

The Consumer Affairs Portfolio is headed by Commissioner Haugen-Hoffart and provides additional focus on consumer issues and complaints and on improving communication with the public through traditional public information channels, public meetings and social media. An annual public contact report is issued showing data and trends related to complaints and input received by the Commission. The Commission launched a new public comment tracking system in January 2020 that allows more flexibility to record comments from the public and generate statistics and reports.

“Public input is an integral part of the Commission’s process,” said Commissioner Jill Kringstad. “It allows us to listen to the important information provided by our citizens and evaluate and consider how best to support their needs. It’s also important to know our staff is available to assist or answer questions.”

When a complaint is received, a PSC staff member works as a liaison between the consumer and the company to resolve the problem within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Often, the complaint is outside of the Commission’s jurisdiction and needs to be referred to another agency or the caller simply needs information. These calls are recorded as “referrals.” The Commission recorded 291 referrals in 2024.

This report does not include any docketed information that is part of formal cases before the Commission. During the 2021-23 biennium, there were 840 formal cases filed with the Commission.

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate certain business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation. For more information, contact the Public Service Commission at (701) 328-2400 or www.psc.nd.gov.

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Note to the Media: A summary sheet for the 2024 consumer contact report is included on the next 2 pages.

2024 Consumer Contact Report Summary by Jurisdiction

(Includes informal complaints, public input, information requests, general comments and offsite referrals)

Jurisdiction	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Abandoned Mine Lands	23	10	5	13	9
Auction	51	84	83	75	2
Common Pipeline Carrier	19	1	0	0	1
Damage Prevention	0	0	4	2	1
Electric Utility	316 ¹	230	84	91	155
Gas Pipeline Safety	0	0	0	0	1
Gas Utility	14	249	134	11	82 ⁵
Grain	14	0	0	0	0
Railroad Safety	17	25	26	16	21
Reclamation	2	11	0	1	3
Siting	22	8	86 ²	226 ⁴	105 ⁶
Telecommunications	51	34	37	34	49
Weights & Measures	96	167	344 ³	139	169
Offsite Referral	194	211	224	243	291
Total	819	1030	1027	851	889

¹162 Northern Divide Wind Project-Public Input

²47 related to Summit Carbon Solutions CO2 Pipeline Project

³187 related to Notices of Noncompliance

⁴180 related to Summit Carbon Solutions CO2 Pipeline Project

⁵MDU Gas Rate Case (66); Xcel Gas Rate Case (5)

⁶80 related to Summit Carbon Solutions CO2 Pipeline Project

Informal Complaints (Public Utilities)

Regulated Entity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
CenturyLink Communications, LLC	28	22	36	32	35
Dakota Natural Gas	0	1	0	0	0
Montana-Dakota Utilities Co.	16	11	12	12	10
Otter Tail Power Company	7	7	4	7	6
Xcel Energy Inc.	13	26	33	22	39
Total	64	67	85	73	90