



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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**JANEES L LEWIS GEORGE**

Ward 4 Councilmember  
Chair of the Committee on  
Facilities

**COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Committee on Transportation and the Environment  
Committee on Executive Administration and Labor  
Committee on Public Works and Operations

**Statement of Introduction  
Public Trust in Utility Regulation Act of 2026  
June 15, 2026**

Today, alongside Councilmembers Parker, Nadeau, and T. White, I am introducing the Public Trust in Utility Regulation Act of 2026.

Over the past several years, District residents have faced steadily rising utility bills at a time when the costs of housing, food, transportation, and other basic necessities have also increased significantly. For many residents – particularly seniors, those on fixed incomes, and low- and moderate-income families – higher electricity and gas costs have placed additional strain on already stretched budgets. At the same time, utility companies have sought rate increases to recover the costs of major infrastructure investments and capital improvement projects. While investments in the safety, reliability, and modernization of utility systems are often necessary, District ratepayers deserve greater transparency regarding how these costs are incurred, why they are needed, and whether more affordable alternatives have been adequately considered.

The Public Trust in Utility Regulation Act of 2026 strengthens accountability and transparency in the District’s utility regulation and ratemaking processes. The legislation recognizes that utility services are essential public necessities and that residents should have confidence that every dollar collected from ratepayers and invested by utility companies is justified, prudent, and in the public interest.

Under current practice, the Public Service Commission (PSC) evaluates utility rate applications and determines whether proposed expenditures are reasonable. However, the existing process does not consistently provide ratepayers, policymakers, and other stakeholders with clear, project-specific information regarding the capital investments that drive requests for higher rates. This legislation requires electric and gas companies seeking rate increases to provide detailed information about each proposed capital expenditure, including its purpose, cost, expected useful life, location, and anticipated benefits to customers. The bill further requires this information to be provided to the Council and made publicly available through the PSC’s docketing system, making utility investment proposals more transparent, accessible, and understandable to residents and stakeholders.

In addition, the bill establishes a regular audit requirement for public utilities operating in the District. These audits will provide a comprehensive review of utility finances, capital expenditures, affiliate transactions, service quality, and other factors that directly affect rates and customer outcomes. The resulting information will be transmitted to the Council and the Department of Energy and Environment, ensuring that policymakers have access to the data

necessary to oversee utility performance and protect consumers. Enhanced transparency regarding key financial metrics—including the cost of equity, cost of debt, and utility investment practices—will also better equip the District to identify and pursue policies that address affordability challenges and respond to the unique rate pressures facing District residents.

This legislation does not diminish the authority of the Public Service Commission. Rather, it provides the Commission, policymakers, and the public with additional tools and information to support informed decision-making and effective oversight. By increasing transparency and strengthening accountability, the Public Trust in Utility Regulation Act of 2026 seeks to restore public confidence in the utility ratemaking process and help ensure that District residents receive safe, reliable utility service at the lowest reasonable cost.

For these reasons, I am pleased to introduce the Public Trust in Utility Regulation Act of 2026, and I look forward to working with my colleagues, the Public Service Commission, consumer advocates, and District residents to advance this important legislation.



Councilmember Zachary Parker



Councilmember Janeese Lewis George



Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau



Councilmember Trayon White, Sr.

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To require an electric or gas company proposing a change in rates to submit with its application a detailed description of their capital expenditures to the Public Service Commission, and to require the Public Service Commission to conduct audit of public utilities once every three years.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the "Public Trust in Utility Regulation Act of 2026".

Sec. 2. Definitions.

For the purposes of this act, the term:

(1) "Capital expenditure" means an expenditure for a utility project, investment, facility, equipment, or other asset, including upfront capital costs and financing costs, that an electric company or gas company proposes to capitalize and recover from ratepayers through rates, charges, riders, surcharges, or any other cost-recovery mechanism approved by the Commission.

(2) "Commission" means the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia.

32 (3) “Electric company” shall have the same meaning as provided in paragraph 1  
33 of section 8 of An Act Making appropriations to provide for the expenses of the government of  
34 the District of Columbia for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and fourteen,  
35 and for other purposes, approved March 4, 1913 (37 Stat. 976; D.C. Official Code § 34-207).

36 (4) “Gas company” shall have the same meaning as provided in paragraph 1 of  
37 section 8 of An Act Making appropriations to provide for the expenses of the government of the  
38 District of Columbia for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and fourteen, and  
39 for other purposes, approved March 4, 1913 (37 Stat. 975; D.C. Official Code § 34-209).

40 (5) “Public utility” shall have the same meaning as provided in paragraph 1 of  
41 section 8 of An Act Making appropriations to provide for the expenses of the government of the  
42 District of Columbia for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and fourteen, and  
43 for other purposes, approved March 4, 1913 (37 Stat. 974; D.C. Official Code § 34-214).

44 Sec. 3. Consideration of capital expenditures in rate proceedings.

45 (a) As a separate and distinct part of any filing by an electric or gas company proposing a  
46 change in rates pursuant to paragraph 94 of section 8 of An Act Making appropriations to  
47 provide for the expenses of the government of the District of Columbia for the fiscal year ending  
48 June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and fourteen, and for other purposes, approved March 4, 1913  
49 (37 Stat. 994; D.C. Official Code § 34-901) or paragraph 24 of section 8 of An Act Making  
50 appropriations to provide for the expenses of the government of the District of Columbia for the  
51 fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and fourteen, and for other purposes, approved  
52 March 4, 1913 (37 Stat. 981; D.C. Official Code § 34-1123), the electric or gas company shall  
53 provide a detailed description of any proposed capital expenditure to be considered in the  
54 proceeding.

55 (b) The description required by subsection (a) of this section shall be provided on a per-  
56 project basis and shall include:

- 57 (1) The purpose of and the specific necessity for each proposed capital  
58 expenditure;
- 59 (2) The total estimated cost of the project;
- 60 (3) The expected period of usefulness or asset life of the investment;
- 61 (4) The specific location of the project within the District;
- 62 (5) The rationale for including the expenditure in the current rate proceeding; and
- 63 (6) The anticipated benefits to ratepayers and the impact on the safety and  
64 reliability of the distribution system.

65 (c) The Commission shall post the per-project descriptions required by this section on its  
66 public website within 7 days of the electric or gas company's filing.

67 (d) In any proceeding involving a change in rates, the burden of proof to show that the  
68 proposed rate change related to each specific capital expenditure shall be on the electric or gas  
69 company.

70 (e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or restrict the existing statutory  
71 powers or regulatory authority of the Commission.

72 Sec. 4. Commission to conduct regular audits of public utilities.

73 (a) Beginning at the end of the fiscal year of the effective date of this act, and every three  
74 years thereafter, the Commission shall conduct a regular audit of each public utility, including:

- 75 (1) Market information;
- 76 (2) Quality of services and customer satisfaction;
- 77 (3) Utility financial information, including:

- 78 (A) Valuation schedules,  
79 (B) Capital expenditures and depreciation schedules, and  
80 (C) Operational and other expenses;  
81 (4) Societal impact data;  
82 (5) Affiliate transaction information;  
83 (6) Cost of equity;  
84 (7) Cost of debt; and  
85 (8) Any additional information as deemed appropriate by the Commission.

86 (b) The information collected during this audit shall be transmitted to the Department of  
87 Energy and Environment and the Council within 30 days.

88 Sec. 5. Fiscal impact statement.

89 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal  
90 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,  
91 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

92 Sec. 6. Effective date.

93 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or, in the event of veto by the  
94 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto) and a 30-day period of congressional review  
95 as provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December  
96 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)).