

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

**An Act To Address Recommendations from the Report  
by the Office of Program Evaluation and Government  
Accountability Regarding the Public Utilities Commission**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §1701, sub-§2**, as enacted by PL 1987, c. 141, Pt. A, §6, is amended to read:

**2. Staff of the Public Advocate.** The staff of the Public Advocate ~~shall consist~~consists of such other personnel, including staff attorneys, as the Public Advocate determines necessary to represent and advise the using and consuming public, as required by ~~subsection~~section 1702. All such personnel ~~shall be~~are appointed, supervised and directed by the Public Advocate. The Public Advocate is not subject to the supervision, direction or control of the ~~chairman~~chair or members of the commission.

**Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §1701, sub-§3, ¶¶E and F**, as enacted by PL 1999, c. 259, §4, are amended to read:

E. Business Services Manager, salary range 26; ~~and~~

F. Special Assistant to the Public Advocate, salary range 20; and

**Sec. 3. 35-A MRSA §1701, sub-§3, ¶G** is enacted to read:

G. Consumer Advisor, salary range 25.

This paragraph is repealed June 30, 2015.

**Sec. 4. 35-A MRSA §1702, sub-§11** is enacted to read:

**11. Advice to using and consuming public.** The Public Advocate may advise a member of the using and consuming public regarding participation in proceedings before the commission.

**Sec. 5. Report.** By February 1, 2015, the Public Advocate shall submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy and utilities matters regarding the performance, duties and funding of the consumer advisor under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 1701, subsection 3, paragraph G. The joint standing committee may submit a bill related to the subject matter of the report to the First Regular Session of the 127th Legislature.

**SUMMARY**

This bill creates a temporary consumer advisor position in the Office of the Public Advocate to advise citizens participating in proceedings before the Public Utilities Commission. The position is established to address a recommendation in the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability's

HP1303, LD 1816, item 1, 126th Maine State Legislature  
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2013 report on the Public Utilities Commission that the Public Utilities Commission and the Public Advocate explore ways to facilitate consumers' ability to effectively represent themselves in adjudicatory proceedings before the Public Utilities Commission. This bill also requires the Public Advocate to report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy and utilities matters on the performance, duties and funding of the consumer advisor.