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Press Release

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Rate Counsel Releases New Consumer Assistance Handbook to Help Answer Utility Questions and Provide Consumer Rights Information

(Trenton, NJ) — The New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel, which advocates for consumers in utility rate cases, announced the release of a new version of its Consumer Assistance Handbook that will help ratepayers understand their rights as utility customers and answer a variety of utility-related questions and concerns.

The handbook features information on telephone, electric, gas, cable and water services. Available online and in hard-copy, the handbook is designed to assist consumers with their questions as well as provide helpful information and tips on saving money on their utility bills.

Some of the most useful sections in the handbook include information on how to read an electric meter and gas meter; how to find and fix water leaks, information on financial assistance programs for all utilities; an explanation of taxes and fees on your utility bills; how to choose the best telephone provider, and what to ask when shopping for an electricity provider. In addition, consumers will find money-saving heating and cooling tips and a consumer bill of rights that applies to all utilities.

“Keeping up with all the changes and resources that are available regarding utilities can be overwhelming for consumers,” said Rate Counsel Director Stefanie Brand. “We’ve packaged some helpful tools to assist ratepayers as they navigate through the complex world of utilities. The handbook is an easy to read guide that strives to help consumers make informed decisions about their water, electric, gas, cable and telephone service,” said Brand. “Consumers will learn what resources are available to them and how they can save money.”

The book also includes information on Rate Counsel’s role in utility cases before the Board of Public Utilities and Federal agencies and how Rate Counsel assists customers. The handbook also explains how to file a complaint against a utility company and provides contact information for regulated utilities statewide.

For more information on the new 2013 version of the Consumer Assistance Handbook offered by the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel, please visit our website at <http://www.nj.gov/rpa> or call 609-984-1460.

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About the Division of Rate Counsel

The Division of Rate Counsel represents and protects the interests of all utility customers — residential, small business, commercial and industrial — whenever utilities in New Jersey seek changes in their rates for delivery of natural gas, electric, water, wastewater, telephone or cable TV services. Rate Counsel also advocates for consumers in certain insurance matters. The mission of the Division is to make sure that all classes of utility consumers receive safe, adequate and essential services at affordable rates that are just and nondiscriminatory. Additional information on this and other utility matters can be found at the Division's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/rpa/>.