

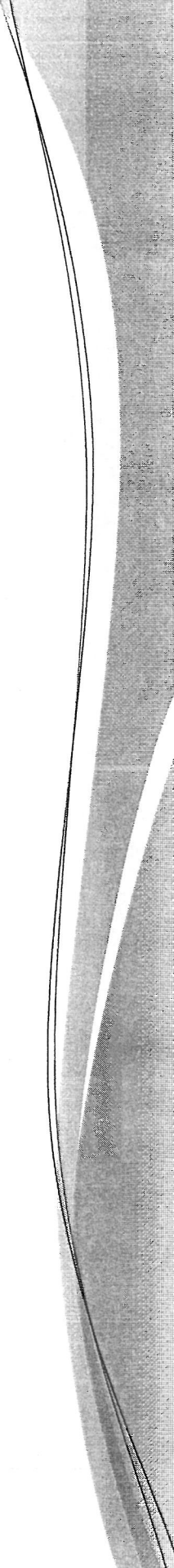


Office of Consumer Advocate

Presentation to Administration
and Regulation Subcommittee

February 1, 2011

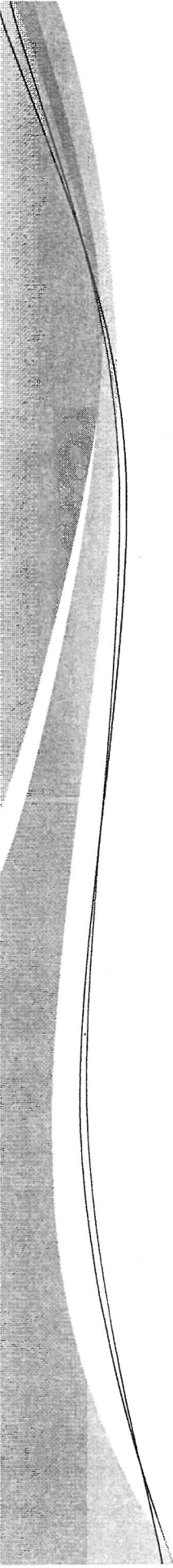
Presenting – Mark R. Schuling
Jennifer Easler



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HISTORY –

During the 1983 legislative session, the 70th General Assembly passed H.F. 312, effective July 1, 1983. The legislation renamed the Office of Commerce Counsel as the Office of General Counsel, and established the Office of Consumer Advocate as a separate entity from the Iowa State Commerce Commission. The Consumer Advocate's primary responsibility is to represent consumers and the public in all proceedings before the Utilities Division.



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STRUCTURE –

- OCA is a division of the Iowa Department of Justice
- The Consumer Advocate is appointed by the Attorney General for a four year term, subject to Senate confirmation
- OCA employees are merit employees
- The Consumer Advocate cannot hold public office or be involved in political activities



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IOWA PUBLIC UTILITY LAWS -

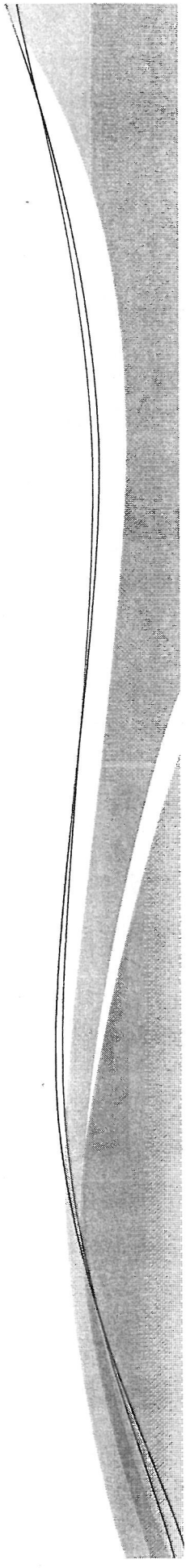
- Public utilities subject to Board regulation must provide reasonably adequate utility service at just and reasonable rates and terms
 - Local telecommunications-service quality (522 Companies)
 - Natural gas, electric, and water utilities-rates, terms and service quality (604 Companies)



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IOWA PUBLIC UTILITY LAWS cont -

- Utility cannot unduly discriminate among its similarly situated customers
- Utilities cannot discriminate against customer use of customer sited/owned renewable energy



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STATUTORY FUNCTIONS -

- OCA represents interests of consumers and the public in all proceedings before the Iowa Utilities Board to ensure rates, charges, regulations and practices are consistent with statutory requirements, and in any other court where legal action is in the public interest



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STATUTORY FUNCTIONS cont -

- OCA is to investigate the legality of all rates, charges, rules, regulations and practices of all companies under the jurisdiction of the IUB, and institute proceedings before the IUB or court to correct any illegality



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REASONABLY ADEQUATE SERVICE AT JUST AND REASONABLE RATES -

- Iowa law provides terms and conditions for extending, maintaining, and discontinuing regulated utility service; and limits grounds for disconnection
- Cost based rates guide determination of reasonableness; a utility is allowed a reasonable opportunity to recover its prudently incurred capital and operating/maintenance expenses and capital investments + a reasonable return



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REASONABLY ADEQUATE SERVICE AT JUST AND REASONABLE RATES cont -

- Service requirements include energy efficiency and renewable energy programs for public gas and electric utilities
- OCA's Energy Efficiency collaboration engages policymakers and stakeholders in a process that seeks to educate, identify best practices, and pursue opportunities for cooperation, coordination and improvement in energy efficiency programs for Iowa consumers.

