



ILLINOIS
COMMERCE
COMMISSION

CONSUMER SERVICES DIVISION
2008 ANNUAL REPORT



ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

Consumer Services Division

www.icc.illinois.gov

2008 Annual Report

ANNUAL REPORT

CONSUMER SERVICES DIVISION 2008

ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Consumer Services Division (CSD) of the Illinois Commerce Commission provides the agency's principal contact with utility ratepayers throughout the State of Illinois. Utility customers are connected to an experienced team of CSD counselors who work exclusively to field questions about utility service and resolve their issues. Consumers are also served through recorded information about a number of utility topics. CSD's integration of its Automated Complaint Tracking System (ACTS) and Automated Call Distribution System (ACD) allow for our staff to efficiently track the types of inquiries and complaints that were received and how they were resolved, monitor resolution times, and identify trends by investigating consumer complaints.

In addition to managing consumer contact, CSD staff participates in consumer education efforts, rulemakings, certification cases, informal investigations into industry practices, and formal cases before the Commission. This report delivers a continued introduction to our operations as well as a descriptive overview of CSD and an annual review of our consumer contact information.

In 2008, CSD assisted more than 28,900 consumers with questions and complaints, the majority of which focused on energy issues. Approximately, 24,400 complaints and inquiries were received by phone while another 4,500 consumers contacted the division via alternative methods including our online complaint system, letters and email.

The Consumer Services Division would like to thank you for your interest and express our commitment to continue to provide quality services in assisting and educating Illinois consumers. CSD will also continue to develop and implement innovative solutions for providing utility related consumer services to the State of Illinois.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter A. Muntaner".

Peter A. Muntaner
Director



CONSUMER EDUCATION/COMPLAINT ACTIVITY

The Commission's Consumer Services Division (CSD) is the agency's principle contact with the utility consumers in the state. CSD is uniquely positioned to provide important information to the Commission. Our Staff consists of management; administrative support; consumer counselors, whose primary responsibility is to interface with consumers; and members involved in consumer programs, which includes consumer education, development of rules, carrier/supplier certification, and compliance issues.

Dialog with consumers, utilities, and service providers allow us to provide useful information to other divisions within the Commission and to the Commissioners concerning issues that develop. On an informal basis, CSD contacts regulated utilities and alternative gas and electric suppliers when issues of compliance and potential problems are raised by trends identified through consumer contacts.



The role of Consumer Services as educator increases as the regulated utility industry changes, particularly as competition develops. CSD responds to consumer questions about regulations, services and products. In assisting consumers, Program Staff and Consumer Counselors reference laws, Commission orders, company tariffs, new services and products, marketing and consumer opinions on regulatory issues. CSD has the important responsibility of helping consumers understand choices.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

Counselor Staff answers consumer inquiries regarding customer rights and responsibilities, Commission programs and rules, telecommunication carrier options and alternative energy supplier options.



CONSUMER EDUCATION/COMPLAINT ACTIVITY

PUBLIC COMMENTS

A new law that took effect in August, 2007 required the Commission to provide a web site and a toll-free telephone number to accept comments from Illinois residents regarding any matter under the auspices of the Commission or before the Commission. All public comments and suggestions received are reported by staff to the full Commission prior to all relevant votes of the Commission. The Consumer Services Division records all public comments submitted by telephone and reviews all comments submitted electronically. CSD received 2,339 Public Comments in 2008 of which 1,089 were posted via the ICC website, 1,221 were received via the telephone, and 29 from letters and electronic mail.

To File a Public Comment

ICC toll-free number 800-524-0795

ICC Website: www.icc.illinois.gov

NON-PUBLIC CONSUMER COMMENTS

Contacts are recorded as “consumer opinion” when a consumer expresses an opinion but does not want the opinion made available to the public. Observations and opinions regarding utilities include cost of service, rate case protests, utility policy and practices, customer service issues, location of transmission lines, and utility service territories. Consumers also comment on issues related to alternative suppliers.



CONSUMER EDUCATION/COMPLAINT ACTIVITY RESOLVING DISPUTES

In addition to education, a primary responsibility of CSD is to provide assistance to consumers in the resolution of informal complaints and disputes with regulated utilities and other entities. Informal complaints, as the designation implies, are those handled by Staff, not formally considered by the Commission, and which do not result in an order by the Commission. The formal complaint process, which requires Commission action, is available when complaints cannot be satisfactorily resolved through Staff intervention.

The following is a description of methods used by counselors in addressing complaints and inquiries.

Three-Way Calling

Three-Way Calling is a process which permits a direct interface with the company while the consumer is still on the phone. Certain problems and requests for assistance are well suited to this type of resolution. These include requests for payment arrangements, payment extensions, final notice prior to disconnection, repairs, medical certificates and billing issues that can be resolved during the initial contact. This method increases efficiency and, in most cases, results in a high degree of customer satisfaction. In 2008, more than 9,300 complaints were handled in this manner.

Investigative Complaints

Using the Investigative Complaints method, counselors notify the company of an informal complaint filed by the customer with the Illinois Commerce Commission. The company must investigate the complaint and typically contacts the customer during the investigation. The company is required to furnish a report of the outcome along with supporting documentation. The counselor reviews the report to ensure that the company's action complies with Commission rules. CSD Staff may call on other divisions to provide answers to technical questions, getting advice from engineers, economists and financial experts. After review, the counselor contacts the consumer with an explanation of the results. In 2008, more than 10,700 complaints were handled in this manner.



CONSUMER EDUCATION/COMPLAINT ACTIVITY DISTRIBUTING CALLS, RECORDING, AND TRACKING DATA

Automated Call Distribution System (ACD)

The Consumer Services Division uses an Automated Call Distribution system (ACD) to connect callers to a counselor for assistance with their problem or inquiry. In addition consumers are offered recorded informational messages on a variety of topics. The ACD was upgraded in June 2008 to improve the consumer experience and enhance system performance. Calls from TTYs are routed to counselors via Textnet, an interactive computer application. Monitoring, tracking, and reporting capabilities help management determine appropriate levels of staffing, facilitate scheduling, assist in training counselors, and identifying the needs of consumers.



Automated Complaint Tracking System (ACTS)

The ACD is integrated with Consumer Services' Automated Complaint Tracking System (ACTS), a computerized complaint tracking system that provides an accurate and readily available record of consumer contacts. Using ACTS, complaints are identified in such general categories as billing, credit and deposits, rates, service and termination; they are also identified in very specific terms. Our reporting capabilities allow flexibility in searching the records created in individual cases and compiling data. Reporting functions allow us to track information, identify problems and analyze trends. ACTS also received an upgrade in 2008 to include advanced search capabilities and enhance system performance.



CONSUMER EDUCATION/COMPLAINT ACTIVITY DISTRIBUTING CALLS, RECORDING, AND TRACKING DATA

e-ACTS

In 2008, the Consumer Services Division introduced e-ACTS, a Web-Based electronic interface for utility companies to utilize in responding to complaints. With e-ACTS, a utility can view the status of its complaints, verify its responses to complaints that have been received by CSD, and submit information in a centralized location. Utility companies have provided positive feedback regarding its implementation.

Consumer Services Online

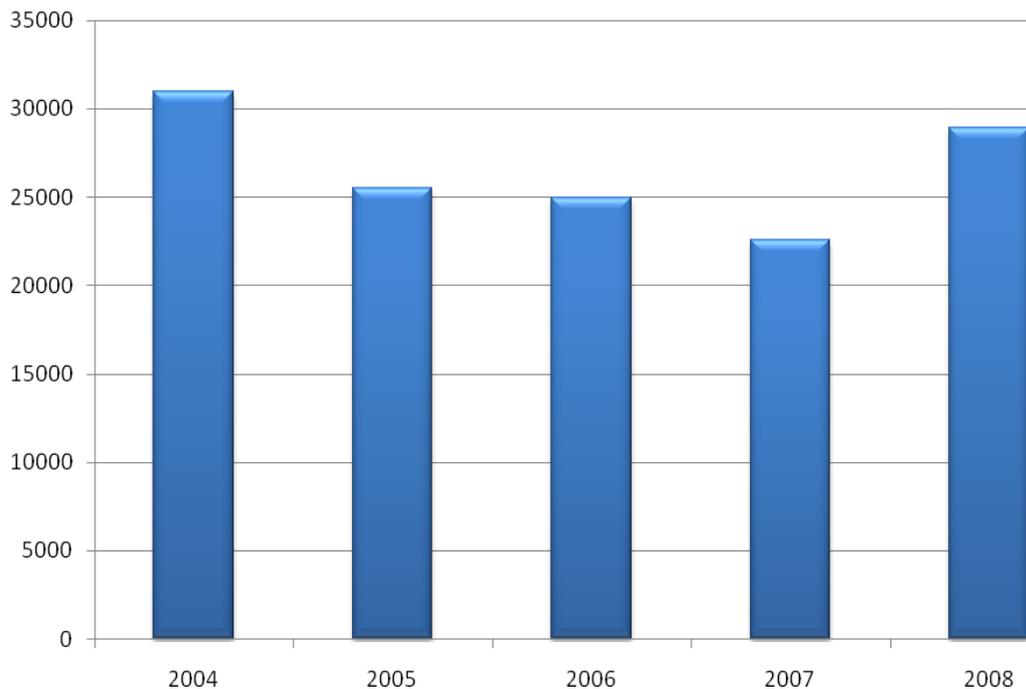
Through its online complaint system and e-mail address, CSD receives contacts from consumers concerned with a wide variety of non-emergency issues. Instructions advise consumers with a service related emergency to contact CSD by telephone. Electronic access to CSD provides a useful alternative to traditional mail and the toll free telephone hotline. Our records indicate that 3,347 consumer contacts were received electronically during 2008.





INFORMAL CONSUMER CONTACT DATA

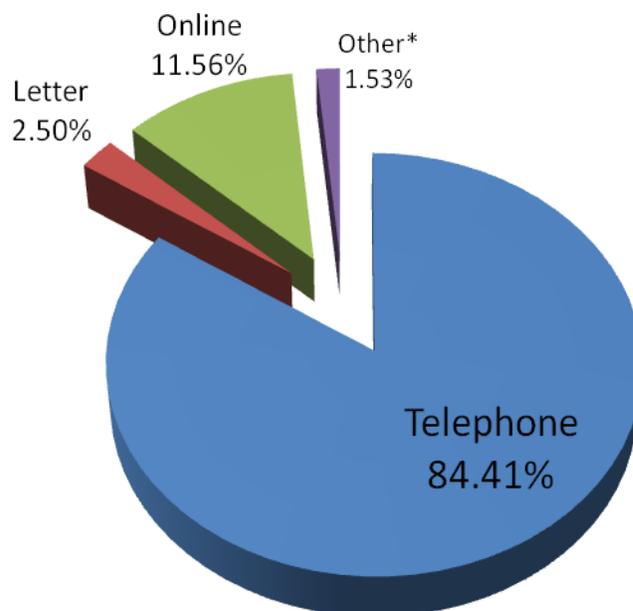
Counselors record informal inquiries, complaints, and opinions from consumers. Customer opinions and consumer education inquiries are typically answered during the initial contact. Based upon the nature of the problem, the counselor determines if there is a need for investigation requiring contact with the company.



During 2008, CSD Staff recorded 28,948 contacts. The graph depicts the number of consumer contacts received from 2004 through 2008.



INFORMAL CONSUMER CONTACT DATA ORIGIN OF CONTACTS

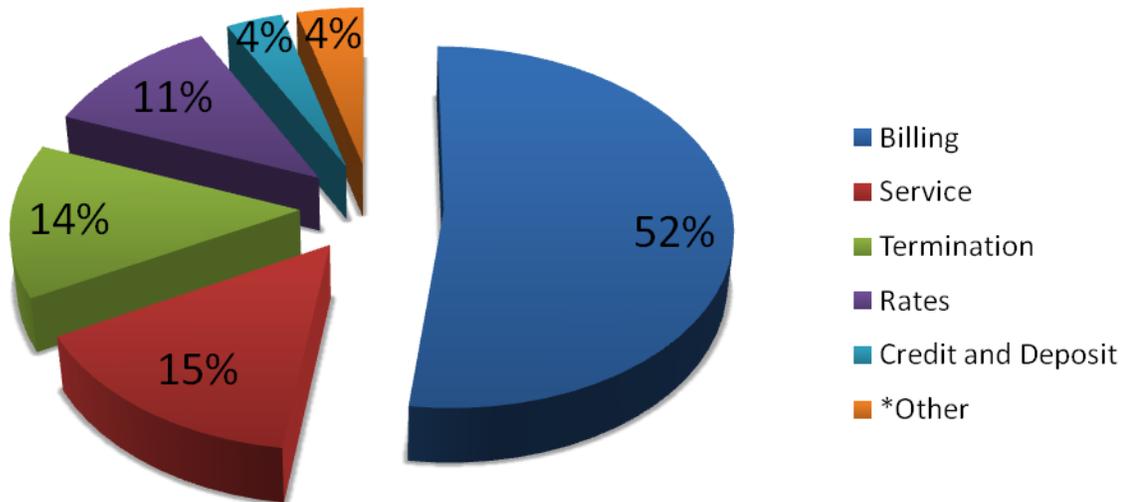


Most of the 28,948 cases recorded (84.41%) began with a telephone call to our toll-free number.

*Other contacts include those made via fax, teletypewriter and referrals.



INFORMAL CONSUMER CONTACT DATA PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION



***Includes issue-oriented contacts**

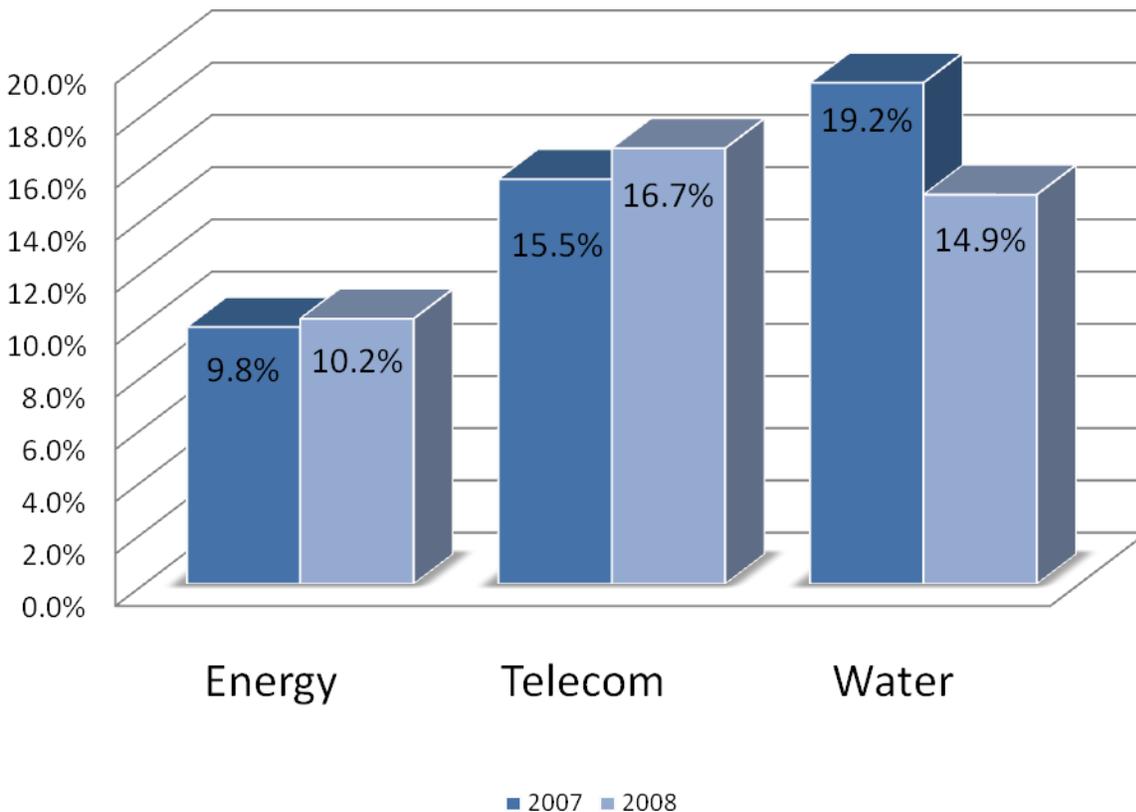
The graph above represents the total number of consumer contacts that were opened during 2008, categorized by problem type. These general categories include billing, credit and deposit, rates, service, termination and other. This graph illustrates that 52% of the contacts opened related to the consumer's bill.



INFORMAL CONSUMER CONTACT DATA JUSTIFIED COMPLAINTS

Counselors evaluate cases to determine if correct procedures were followed by the company in responding to the consumer’s complaint prior to CSD intervention. A case is justified when, in the counselor’s judgment, the company did not handle the dispute properly or effectively, or in handling the dispute, the company violated rules, regulations, orders, tariffs, or policy. Cases that are evaluated are those in which contact with the company is initiated and include 3-way and investigative cases. The following graph compares 2007 and 2008 percentages of complaints that were justified by industry type.

Number of Justified Complaints





FORMAL COMPLAINT DATA

MEDIATION

By law mediation is available to consumers to resolve telecommunication disputes. Effective July 1, 2001, residential consumers or business consumers with fewer than 20 lines have the right to request mediation when they have been unable to reach resolution through the informal complaint process. Telecommunication carriers are required to participate in mediation. The process must be completed within 45 days. If the parties are unable to reach agreement or after 45 days, whichever comes first, the consumer may file a formal complaint with the Commission. In 20 cases, consumers expressed an interest in pursuing their complaints through mediation; Staff notified the Commission's Chief Clerk to send a letter informing the consumer how to proceed.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS



If a resolution is not reached through the informal process (including mediation), the consumer may file for a formal hearing. After the fully completed and notarized forms are submitted to the Commission, a hearing is scheduled. An Administrative Law Judge presides over the case in a manner similar to a court proceeding, considers testimony presented, reviews evidence and makes a recommendation to the Commission which renders a decision.

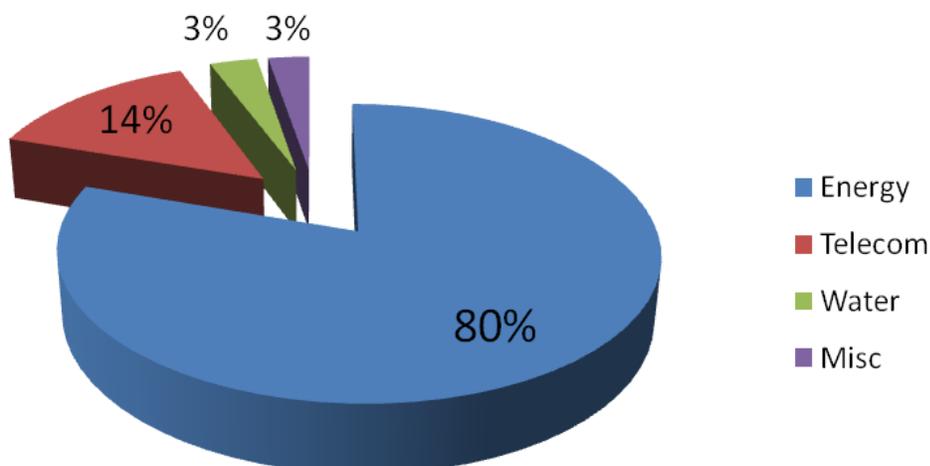
The Consumer Services Division makes every effort to achieve resolution of disputes between consumers and utilities in the informal process. Of the 28,862 contacts from consumers closed during 2008, 306 consumers requested formal complaint forms and 61 formal hearings were actually docketed. Of the docketed cases, 19 were dismissed by the Commission, 41 are still pending and 1 request was upheld.



REVIEW OF CONSUMER CONTACT DATA

This section addresses and highlights trends in the numbers and types of consumer contact for each industry. CSD categorizes the consumer contacts it receives according to the following industries: telephone, energy, water and sewer and miscellaneous.

2008 Consumer Contact by Utility Type



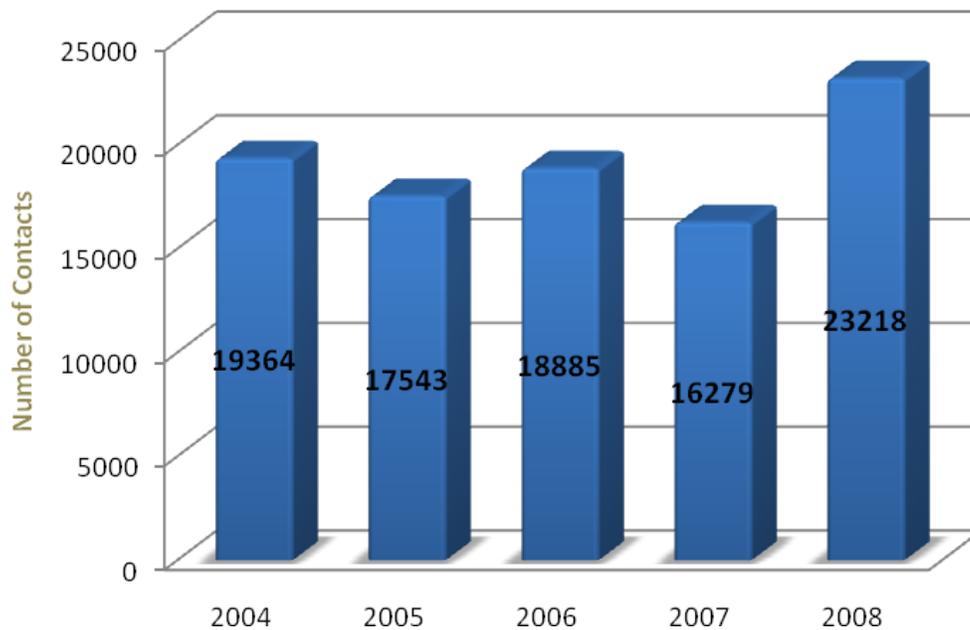
Combining gas and electric cases results in 80% of the total contacts attributed to the energy industry. Telephone contacts comprise 14% of the total number received during 2008. The miscellaneous category includes companies that were not specified and contacts that included more than one type of utility. The water and sewer industry accounts for 3% of the consumer contacts.



ENERGY INDUSTRY

Contacts included in the “Energy Industry” category are those concerning companies that provide only electric service, companies that provide only gas service and companies that provide both gas and electric service.

Energy Industry Contacts



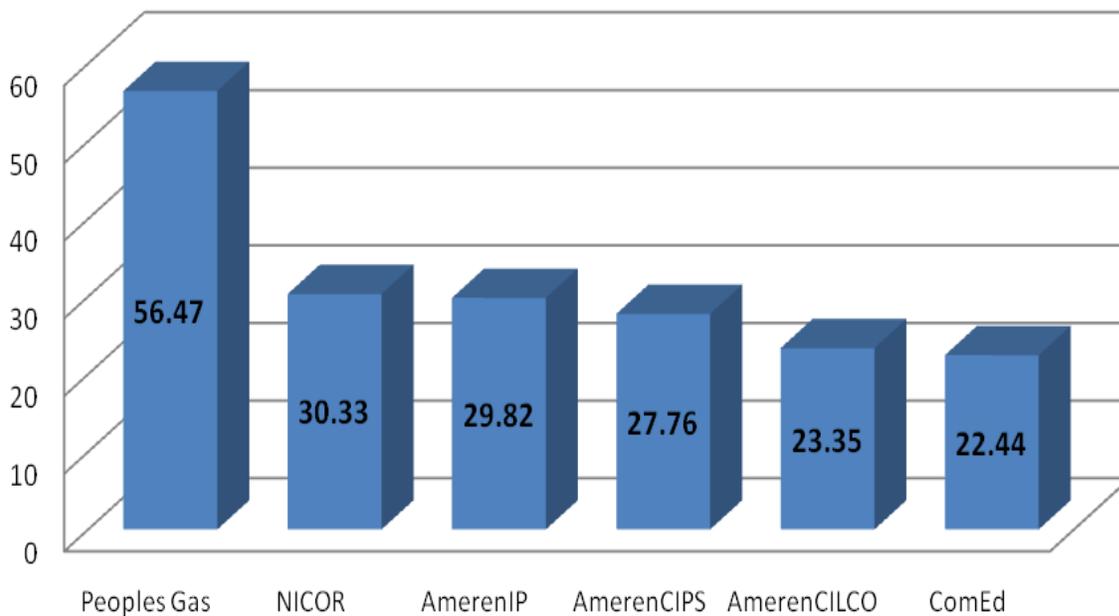
The graph above illustrates the number of consumer contacts that were received each year by CSD for the electric and gas companies from 2004 through 2008. The contrast in the number of contacts between 2007 and 2008 can be attributed to rate increases following the end of the electric restructuring transition period. During the course of rate relief settlement negotiations, in 2007, major electric companies did not disconnect customers for non-payment, which directly attributes to fewer contacts to CSD. In addition, large utilities that distribute both gas and electric service did not disconnect gas customers for non-payment during the same period, further decreasing contacts with CSD on that issue. Reasons for the increased numbers in 2008 include resumption of service disconnections and the need for assistance in establishing payment arrangements. Also a factor in the increased numbers for 2008 is a recent legislative requirement that the Commission develop procedures to record public comments regarding docketed proceedings. CSD recorded 2,339 public comments in 2008, primarily in response to utility rate increase proposals.



ENERGY INDUSTRY

2008 Consumer Contacts per 10,000 Customers

Consumer Contacts per 10,000 Customers



The graph above illustrates the number of consumer contacts received per 10,000 customers for the major companies in the energy industry. Peoples Gas led in the number of contacts per 10,000 customers which is consistent with the high percentage of uncollectibles experienced by Peoples Gas and the access challenges in Peoples' service territory.



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ENERGY INDUSTRY

2008 Energy Consumer Contacts for Smaller Electric and Gas Companies

Company	Customers*	Contacts
North Shore	151,300	285
Atmos Energy	22,900	24
MidAmerican	84,500	18
Illinois Gas	9,800	9
Mt. Carmel	5,600	6

*Estimated Number

The contact volume for electric and gas companies with less than 160,000 customers is shown in the chart above, beginning with the utility with the largest volume of contacts.



ENERGY INDUSTRY

Justified Complaints

Counselors evaluate cases to determine if correct procedures were followed by the company in responding to the consumer’s complaint prior to CSD intervention. A case is justified when, in the counselor’s judgment, the company did not handle the dispute properly or effectively, or in handling the dispute, the company violated rules, regulations, orders, tariffs, or policy. The following table compares the energy companies’ justified complaints of 2007 to those in 2008. Only energy companies with more than 50 complaints are included in the table. The companies are listed in descending order, beginning with the company that has the largest percentage of justified complaints in 2008.

	2007 Complaints			2008 Complaints		
	Justified	Total	Percent Justified	Justified	Total	Percent Justified
Nicor	345	3,058	11%	657	4,878	13%
North Shore	9	128	7%	22	230	10%
ComEd	418	4,116	10%	525	5,599	9%
AmerenCIPS	6	220	3%	23	337	7%
Peoples Gas	321	3,411	9%	267	3,618	7%
AmerenIP	33	456	7%	44	680	6%
AmerenCILCO	12	142	8%	10	199	5%



ENERGY INDUSTRY

Response Time

The following table shows a comparison of the average response time for energy companies during 2007 and 2008. Response time is the number of days the utility takes to respond to CSD investigative complaints. The companies shown are those that received 50 or more investigative complaints during 2008. Investigative complaints are those, which are not suited to or are not resolved through 3-way calling and are presented to the utility for investigation. The companies are listed alphabetically.

	2007 Response Time (in Days)	2008 Response Time (in Days)	Change in Days (2007 to 2008)
AmerenCILCO	11.1	11.6	.5
AmerenCIPS	10.5	22.6	12.1
AmerenIP	14.0	21.7	7.7
ComEd	14.1	19.1	5
Nicor	9.9	17.8	7.9
North Shore	10.9	11.0	.1
Peoples Gas	10.1	13.0	2.9

Increases in response time can be attributed to an increase in the volume of complaints received in 2008, specifically in contacts regarding termination of service and consumers seeking payment arrangements. CSD developed a reporting mechanism which provided utilities information about their open complaints and pursued strategies for reducing the response time. In addition, CSD introduced e-ACTS, a web based version of ACTS that allows utilities to track and respond to open complaints. CSD will continue to maximize the capabilities of e-ACTS through the expansion of its implementation and the use of best practices.



ENERGY INDUSTRY

General Code Comparison

Consumer Contacts are first categorized in one of six general problem types. At the time of closing, more specific codes are added. The table below compares the general categories of the total number of energy contacts that were closed during 2007 and 2008.

Comparison of General Categories – 2007 and 2008

	2007	2008
Billing	8,468	11,042
Termination	1,915	3,895
Rates	1,377	3,123
Service	2,077	2,588
Credit and Deposit	807	996
Other	635	722

The contrast in the number of termination contacts between 2007 and 2008 can be attributed to rate increases following the end of the electric restructuring transition period. During the course of rate relief settlement negotiations, in 2007, major electric companies did not disconnect customers for non-payment, which directly contributes to fewer contacts to CSD. In addition, large utilities that distribute both gas and electric service did not disconnect gas customers for non-payment during the same period, further decreasing contacts with CSD on that issue. Reasons for the increased numbers in 2008 include resumption of service disconnections and need for assistance in establishing payment arrangements which is coded as billing as a general field. Also, a factor in the increased number of rate contacts for 2008 is a recent legislative requirement that the Commission develop procedures to record public comments regarding docketed proceedings. CSD recorded 2,339 public comments in 2008, primarily in response to utility rate increase proposals.



ENERGY INDUSTRY

Detailed Reason for Contact

The tables below illustrate the breakdown of the most common issues raised by consumers. As the counselors close complaints, they are categorized by the general headings of billing, service, rates, etc. They are then further broken down into intermediate coding and more specific complaint classification. The following tables identify the most common of the specific categories. CSD closed 22,366 Energy contacts in 2008.

BILLING	CONTACTS
Payment Arrangements	5,463
Responsibility for Account	1,413
Meter – estimates and makeup bills	1,088
Usage/Consumption	1,064

CREDIT/DEPOSIT	CONTACTS
Deposit Requirement	577
Service Denial	248
Deposit Amount/Conditions	126

RATES	CONTACTS
Proposed Rate Change	2,815
Opinion- Rate in Effect	215



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ENERGY INDUSTRY

Detailed Reason for Contact (Continued)

SERVICE	CONTACTS
Timeliness of Reconnection or Disconnection	851
Timeliness- General	817
Conduct of Personnel	320
Interruptions	171

TERMINATION – SEEKING RECONNECTION	CONTACTS
Seeks Assistance	3,001
Medical Certificate	341

OTHER	CONTACTS
Other	614



ENERGY INDUSTRY

Supplier Choice

Residential Electric Supplier Choice

Since May 2002, residential customers have been eligible to choose their electric supplier. Electric public utilities have the necessary tariffs and systems in place to provide delivery services. Although at the end of 2008 four residential suppliers had been granted approval to provide service, suppliers had not begun marketing their services to residential customers. Recent legislation requires certain electric utilities to offer consolidated billing and to purchase supplier receivables. When fully implemented, this may provide suppliers additional incentives to market their services to residential customers. The Commission maintains a consumer education web site at: www.icc.illinois.gov/pluginillinois



Residential Natural Gas Supplier Choice

Unlike the electric industry, which by law restructured the state's electric industry to promote customer choice and create a competitive marketplace, natural gas supplier choice is not mandated. Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas voluntarily offer programs that allow their residential customers to choose their gas supplier. Customer participation is also voluntary; eligible customers are free to choose an alternative gas supplier or remain with the utility and receive bundled (delivery and supply) gas service.

The Commission has approved the choice programs and the utility tariffs that state the terms and conditions of the service. The Commission also required utilities offering residential choice to develop consumer education material. The tariffs governing suppliers include standards of conduct for participating alternative suppliers.

After the choice programs began, Article XIX was added to the Public Utilities Act. Under this law, alternative gas suppliers offering service to residential and small commercial retail customers are required to be certified by the Commission. In addition to certification, the law also provides for consumer protections and Commission oversight including consumer complaints. During 2008, legislation was proposed by the ICC to strengthen consumer protections.

Nicor gas reports that approximately 222,500 residential customers participated in the Customer Select Program during 2008. Peoples Gas indicates that approximately 44,800 residential customers participated in their Choices For You Program. North Shore Gas reports approximately 7,400 residential customers participating. A list of certified suppliers and other information can be found on the Commission's web site: www.icc.illinois.gov



ENERGY INDUSTRY

2008 Consumer Contacts for Alternative Gas Suppliers

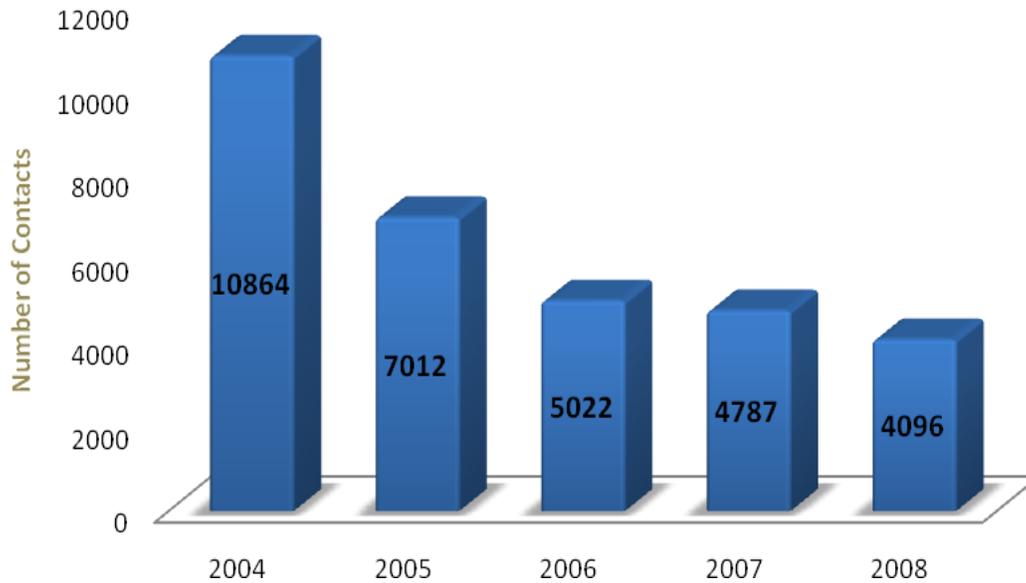
Company	Contacts
US Energy Savings Corp.	453
Santanna	95
Prairie Point/Nicor Advanced Energy	68
Interstate Gas Supply	41
Spark Energy Gas, LP	32
Integritys Energy Services, Inc.	26
Dominion Retail	11
MxEnergy	7
Peoples Energy Services	5
Ambit Energy	2
Direct Energy	2

The chart above shows the number of contacts regarding alternative gas suppliers recorded by CSD during 2008. These contacts concerning residential consumers include inquiries and complaints. Complaints included such issues as failure to abide by the terms of the agreement or contract, unauthorized customer switch (slamming), protests regarding supplier marketing methods, misleading marketing practices, and early termination penalties. Inquiries include questions about Commission rules, the utility choice programs through which suppliers offered their services to customers and whether the alternative supplier is authorized to provide service. Consumer complaints, particularly those pertaining to allegations of misleading marketing practices, are a source of concern that have invited scrutiny from the Commission, consumer advocates, and legislators. Consumer protection legislation to address these concerns was initiated by the Commission and signed into law by the Governor on April 10, 2009.



TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

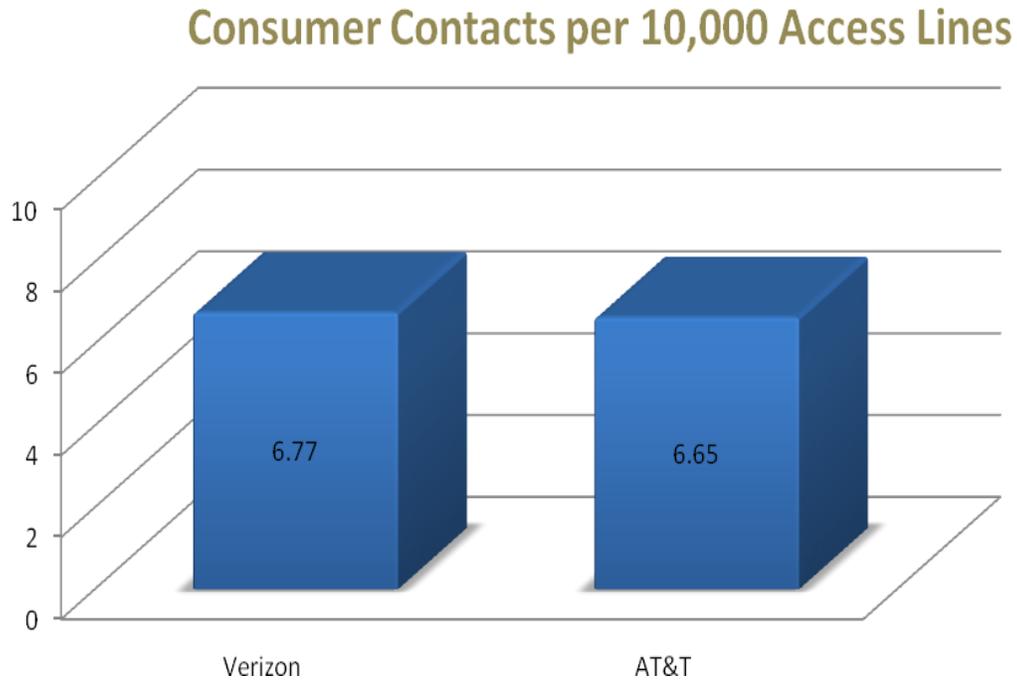
Telecommunications Industry Contacts



The graph above shows the number of consumer contacts concerning the telecommunications industry that were received each year by CSD from 2004 through 2008.



TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY
2008 Consumer Contacts per 10,000 Customers



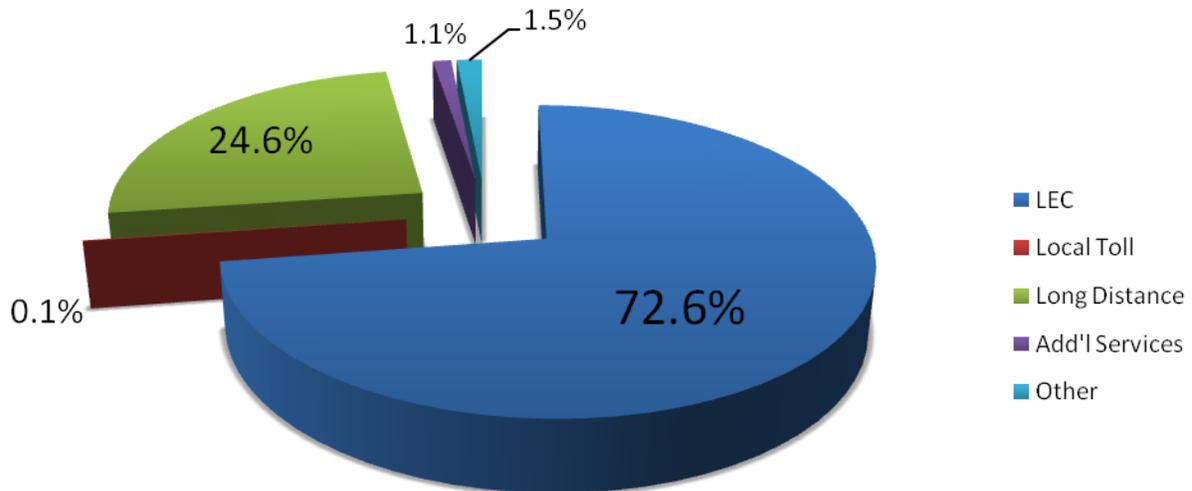
The graph above illustrates the number of contacts per 10,000 access lines that were received for major local exchange carriers for 2008. Access lines include the number of residential and business phone lines used.



TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Consumer Contact by Company Type

2008 Telecommunications
Consumer Contact by Company Type



Definitions for the above graph:

LEC – Local Exchange Carrier – a company that provides local exchange service

Local Toll – local calls that are made to locations outside the local exchange boundary, but within the Market Service Area (MSA) otherwise known as the Local Access Transport Area (LATA)

Long Distance – a company that provides service between LATAs

Provider of Additional Services – a company that provides services such as Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), voice mail and calling cards

Other – Includes services such as cellular/mobile and customer-owned pay telephones



TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Justified Complaints

Counselors evaluate cases to determine if correct procedures were followed by the company in responding to the consumer’s complaint prior to CSD intervention. A case is justified when, in the counselor’s judgment, the company did not handle the dispute properly or effectively, or in handling the dispute, the company violated rules, regulations, orders, tariffs, or policy. The tables on the following page compare the telecommunications carriers’ justified complaints closed in 2007 to those closed in 2008. The charts are divided by the type of service provided: local exchange carriers and those that provide long distance service.

The Local Exchange Carrier chart includes those companies that received 50 or more investigative complaints during 2008. The Long Distance Carrier chart includes companies that received 30 or more investigative complaints. Investigative complaints are those that are not suited to or are not resolved through 3-way calling and are presented to the utility for investigation. The carriers are listed in descending order beginning with the company that had the largest percentage of justified complaints in 2008.

Local Exchange Carriers

	2007 Complaints			2008 Complaints		
	Justified	Total	Percent Justified	Justified	Total	Percent Justified
Verizon	98	265	37%	55	248	22%
Frontier*	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	67	18%
MCI	19	149	13%	11	77	14%
AT&T	191	1,685	11%	183	1,560	12%
Sage	11	86	13%	1	56	2%

*less than 50 complaints in 2007

Long Distance Carriers

	2007 Complaints			2008 Complaints		
	Justified	Total	Percent Justified	Justified	Total	Percent Justified
Verizon*	n/a	n/a	n/a	16	31	52%
AT&T	54	399	14%	150	626	24%
MCI	2	30	7%	5	33	15%

*less than 30 complaints in 2007



TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Response Time

The following tables compare the average response time for telecommunications carriers during 2008. Response time is the number of days the utility takes to respond to CSD. The Local Exchange Carrier table includes those companies that received 50 or more investigative complaints during 2008. The Long Distance Carrier table includes companies that received 25 or more investigative complaints. Investigative complaints are those, which are not suited to or are not resolved through 3-way calling and are presented to the utility for investigation. The carriers are listed alphabetically.

Local Exchange Carriers

	2007 Response Time (in Days)	2008 Response Time (in Days)	Change in Days (2007 to 2008)
AT&T	11.87	11.7	-.17
Frontier*	n/a	10.1	n/a
MCI	10.88	11.0	.12
Verizon	12.08	10.1	-1.98

*less than 50 complaints in 2007

Long Distance Carriers

	2007 Response Time (in Days)	2008 Response Time (in Days)	Change in Days (2007 to 2008)
AT&T	12.04	12.9	.86
MCI	10.33	11.8	1.47
Verizon*	n/a	14.9	n/a

*less than 25 complaints in 2007



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TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

General Code Comparison

Consumer Contacts are first categorized in one of six general problem types. At the time of closing, more specific codes are added. The following table compares the number of telecommunications contacts in each of the general categories for the contacts that were closed during 2007 and 2008. Billing continues to be the most frequently identified issue.

Comparison of General Categories – 2007 and 2008

	2007	2008
Billing	2,495	2,113
Service	1,455	1,268
Termination	277	184
Rates	111	91
Credit and Deposit	41	42
Other	296	338



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TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Detailed Reason for Contact

The tables below illustrate the breakdown of the most common issues raised by consumers. As the counselors close complaints, they are categorized by the general headings of billing, service, rates, etc. They are then further broken down into intermediate coding and more specific complaint classification. The following tables identify the most common of the specific categories. CSD closed 4,036 Telecommunications contacts in 2008.

BILLING	CONTACTS
Accuracy- General	339
Payment- General	244
Responsibility for Account	227
Bill for Feature Not Ordered	208
Dispute- Rate Classification/Plan	206
Disputed Bill by Other Company	200
Payment Arrangements	187
Bill Statement	183
Usage/Consumption	129

CREDIT/DEPOSIT	CONTACTS
Deposit Amount/Conditions	31



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TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Detailed Reason for Contact (Continued)

RATES	CONTACTS
Rate Inquiry	40
Rate Structure	30

SERVICE	CONTACTS
Timeliness of Performed Work	527
Quality	242
Conduct of Personnel/Reps	181
Availability of Features & Equipment	124
Service Interruptions	99

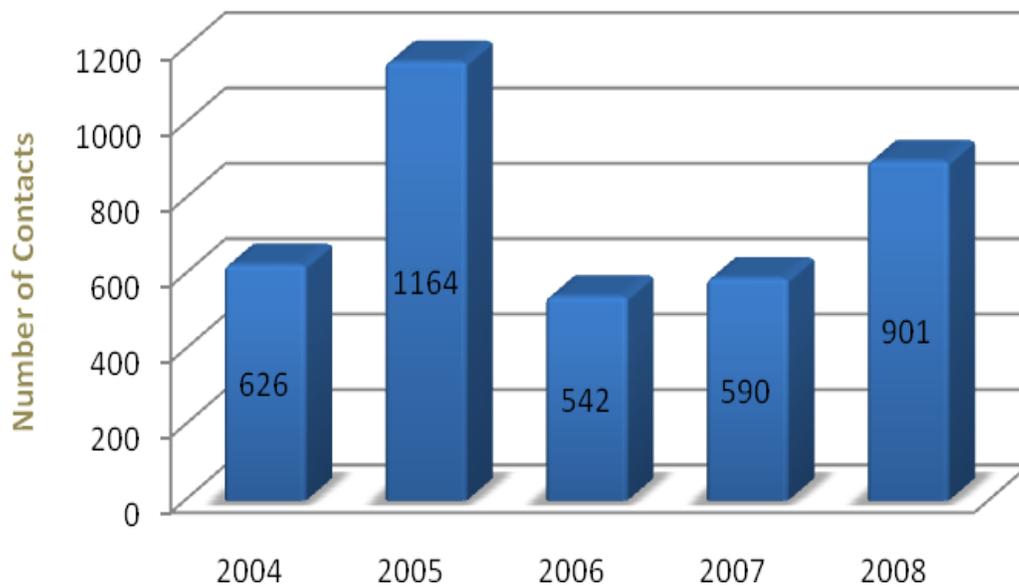
TERMINATION/SEEKING RECONNECTION	CONTACTS
Seeks Assistance	120

OTHER	CONTACTS
Other	280



WATER & SEWER INDUSTRY

Water and Sewer Industry Contacts

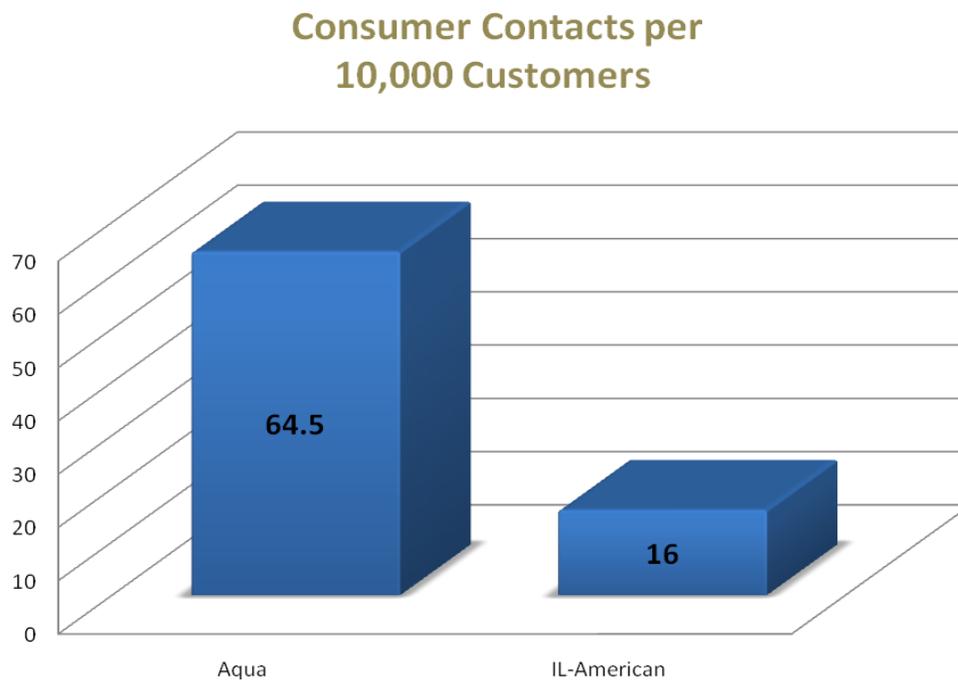


The graph above illustrates the number of consumer contacts that were received each year by CSD for the water and sewer industry from 2004 through 2008. The Water and Sewer Industry experienced a significant increase in contacts regarding termination and consumers seeking payment arrangements which accounts for approximately 81% of the difference between 2007 and 2008.



WATER & SEWER INDUSTRY

2008 Consumer Contacts per 10,000 Customers



The graph above shows the number of consumer contacts per 10,000 customers that were received for the major companies in the water and sewer industry for 2008. Aqua led in the number of contacts per 10,000 customers with a majority of their contacts being issues concerning termination, customers seeking payment arrangements, estimated bills and user consumption. Customers seeking payment arrangement and termination contacts accounted for approximately 37% of all of Aqua's 2008 contacts. In addition, contacts regarding user consumption and estimated bills accounted for another 23% of all contacts which can be attributed to Aqua's implementation of a new billing system.



WATER & SEWER INDUSTRY

Response Time

The table below shows a comparison of the average response time for those water and sewer utilities that received 20 or more investigative complaints during 2008. Response time is the number of days the utility takes to respond to CSD. Investigative complaints are those, which are not suited to or are not resolved through three-way calling and are presented to the utility for investigation.

	2007 Response Time (in Days)	2008 Response Time (in Days)	Change in Days (2007 to 2008)
AQUA	19.7	15.8	-3.9
Illinois-American	5.5	7.24	1.74

General Code Comparison

Consumer Contacts are first categorized in one of six general problem types. At the time of closing, more specific codes are added. The following table compares the number of water and sewer contacts in each of the general categories for the consumer contacts that were closed during 2007 and 2008.

Comparison of General Categories – 2007 and 2008

	2007	2008
Billing	302	479
Termination	68	162
Rates	104	109
Service	90	84
Credit and Deposit	4	12
Other	19	49



WATER & SEWER INDUSTRY

Detailed Reason for Contact

The tables below illustrate the breakdown of the most common issues raised by consumers. As the counselors close complaints, they are categorized by the general headings of billing, service, rates, etc. They are then further broken down into intermediate coding and more specific complaint classification. The following tables identify the most common of the specific categories. CSD closed 895 Water and Sewer contacts in 2008.

BILLING	CONTACTS
Usage/Consumption	125
Payment Arrangements	106
Accuracy	98

CREDIT and DEPOSIT	CONTACTS
Service Denial	10

RATES	CONTACTS
Proposed Rate Change	77



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WATER & SEWER INDUSTRY

Detailed Reason for Contact (Continued)

SERVICE	CONTACTS
Timeliness of Performed Service	55
Conduct of Personnel	10

TERMINATION	CONTACTS
Seeks Assistance	100

OTHER	CONTACTS
Other	42



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

CONSUMER OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Staff develops consumer information that can be accessed through the Commission's web site or can be mailed to consumers. Our Staff is available to conduct meetings associated with rate increase requests of small water companies when community interest is demonstrated. To keep abreast of consumer issues and concerns, CSD Staff is represented on the Chicago Energy Council; the Department of Healthcare and Family Services' Policy Advisory Council and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs.

REORGANIZATION AND MERGERS

Where Commission approval for reorganization and mergers is required, Consumer Services Staff members participate both informally and when necessary through the formal process. Participation by CSD Staff helps ensure that quality customer service is maintained and that communications to customers are stated in plain language and style to minimize customer confusion especially with respect to any changes or decisions customers might be required to make.

REVIEW OF SALES MARKETING AND CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION

Statements concerning prices, terms and conditions of service must disclose information accurately and adequately. Written information adequately disclosing prices, terms and conditions must be provided before switching a customer. Formally, at the Commission's direction and informally CSD Staff reviews sales and marketing materials and when appropriate makes recommendations to correct deficiencies and improve material. When directed by the Commission, Staff has reviewed sales and marketing materials in telecommunications and alternative gas supplier cases and in complaint cases filed by telecommunications carriers.

In addition to reviewing materials, CSD Staff investigates sales practices such as the unauthorized change of carrier or supplier (slamming).



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

RULEMAKING

During 2008 Staff continued efforts to rewrite 83 Illinois Administrative Code Part 280 that establishes procedures for gas, electric, water, sewer utilities governing eligibility for service, deposits, payment practices and discontinuance of service.

During 2008 Staff participated in promulgating rules to implement Section 16-115C of the Public Utilities Act. This new law requires the Commission to adopt licensing and code of conduct rules for “agents, brokers and consultants” (generally called “ABCs”) that operate in a competitive retail electric market environment.

Also during 2008 in cooperation with the Commission’s Telecommunications Division, CSD Staff participated in a review of rules applicable to Telecommunications Carriers in Illinois. Following the review, Telecom Division Staff notified the Commission of its intent to conduct workshops and take other steps to initiate rulemaking to revise and update six administrative rules. CSD Staff will participate as appropriate in certain rulemakings.

CSD Staff also participated in cases involving requests for waiver of certain provisions in existing rules. In considering whether to grant a waiver, the Commission must find that the provision is not statutorily mandated, that no party will be injured, and whether the provision of the rule could be unnecessarily burdensome. The role of CSD Staff in these proceedings is to help ensure that the waiver does not remove important consumer protections.

CERTIFICATION CASES

In 2008, CSD Staff participated in the docketed certification proceeding of an Alternative Gas Supplier seeking to serve residential and small commercial retail customers. In this case, CSD addressed consumer protections and marketing practices.



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

COMPLAINT CASES

During 2008 CSD Staff participated by filing testimony in a formal complaint case filed by Citizens Utility Board, Citizens Action and AARP against U.S. Energy Savings Corp. alleging violations of the Alternative Gas Supplier Law. The case is pending.

LEGISLATION

During 2008, CSD Staff participated in drafting language to amend the Alternative Gas Supplier Law to impose more stringent certifications requirements, strengthen consumer protections, expand Commission oversight, and expand consumer education efforts. The legislation, Senate Bill 171, was approved by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Pat Quinn on April 10, 2009. It is Public Act 95-1051.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

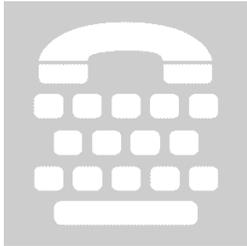
Electric Restructuring

In designing the law that restructures the electricity industry in Illinois, lawmakers recognized that consumers would need meaningful information allowing them to evaluate goods and services offered by new marketers and sellers. The law required the Commission to implement and maintain a consumer education program to provide residential and small commercial retail customers with information to help them understand their service options in a competitive electric services market, as well as their rights and responsibilities. The Commission maintains a consumer education web site at: www.icc.illinois.gov/pluginillinois





PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES



CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Assistive Telecommunications Equipment Distribution and Telecommunications Relay Service

Through a program designed by the Commission telecommunications carriers provide assistive telecommunications equipment to persons with hearing and speech disabilities or organizations whose primary purpose is serving persons with hearing and/or speech disabilities. The telecommunications carriers also provide a telecommunications relay service (TRS), which links people using assistive equipment and people who use a standard telephone. A Commission approved surcharge is assessed on each subscriber line to offset the costs incurred by the telecommunications carriers.

The distribution program and relay center are administered by the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation (ITAC), a not-for-profit corporation that includes all the telecommunications carriers in Illinois. An Advisory Council comprised of 7 members who are participants of the distribution program and TRS users provides input to ITAC as well as to the Commission Staff Liaison.



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Universal Telephone Service Assistance Program (UTSAP) Lifeline and Link-Up Programs

The FCC requires states to implement Link Up and Lifeline Programs to ensure the delivery of affordable telecommunications service to all Americans, including low-income consumers.

Link Up is a federally funded program that assists households by paying 50% (up to \$30) of the cost of installing local telephone service in their principal place of residence. Lifeline is a federally funded program that provides assistance with the monthly charge for local telephone service.

The Universal Telephone Service Assistance Program (“UTSAP”), funded by voluntary contributions from Illinois telephone consumers, provides supplemental assistance to individuals who receive assistance from the Link Up and Lifeline Programs. The amount of supplemental assistance is reviewed on an annual basis by the Commission according to the level of voluntary contributions.

UTSAP is administered by a not-for-profit group, Universal Telephone Assistance Corporation (UTAC). The UTAC Board of Directors has nine members consisting of five representatives from local exchange companies, two members representing ratepayers, and two members representing low-income consumers.

The Illinois Commerce Commission determines the amount and form of supplemental assistance to be provided by the Illinois local exchange carriers to each eligible subscriber or eligible new subscriber under the Universal Telephone Service Assistance Program. Voluntary contributions to the program during 2008 were nearly \$551,000.



www.linkupillinois.org



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

The Energy Assistance Act provides for a Policy Advisory Council consisting of 20 members who advise the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services on the administration of the Illinois Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). A member of CSD staff is a member of the Policy Advisory Council. The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services administers the program through thirty-five agencies that operate in all Illinois counties. Financial assistance is available to low income households in Illinois for energy bills. A household is eligible if its income is at or below 150% of the federal poverty guideline. Funding for the program comes from two sources. One source is a federal government block grant through the Department of Health and Human Services. Beginning in January 1998, state funding has been made available as a result of a surcharge, which is added to the electric, and gas bills of all customers of investor owned utilities. Electric cooperatives, municipally owned gas, and electric systems have a choice of whether to assess the surcharge. If the charge is not assessed, the customers do not benefit from the assistance. The amounts, which are collected, are added to the federal LIHEAP funds. A portion of LIHEAP funds is also used for weatherization and program administration. Information about LIHEAP is available at www.LIHEAP.illinois.gov

Illinois Restricted Call Registry

Illinois law adopts the National Do-Not-Call Registry, which is managed by the Federal Trade Commission, giving Illinois consumers the benefit of being included in both state and national registries with the convenience of free one-step enrollment. Illinois residential subscribers can register their telephone numbers by Internet or telephone according to methods established by the FTC. Since its inception, more than 7,569,000 registrations have been submitted by Illinois consumers. More information about the Illinois Restricted Call Registry is available on the Commission's web site.



PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

The Illinois Commerce Commission has developed a series of publications for consumer education and outreach. Following is a listing of those, which may be of interest to both utility consumers and individuals needing information about the Commission. Printed copies may be requested by calling our Consumer Services toll free number 1 800-524-0795. This and other information is available through the Commission's web site at:

www.icc.illinois.gov

Consumer Issues and Assistance: describes the services provided by the Consumer Services Division.

Your Quick Reference Guide to Preparing for a Formal Complaint Hearing: is a consumer's "how-to" guide for preparing for a formal complaint hearing with topics such as: setting the hearing date, obtaining witnesses, supplying the necessary documentation, following the hearing procedures, accepting or appealing the Commission's decision, and filing for a rehearing.

ENERGY and WATER/SEWER

InfoPac: Offers consumers practical information pertaining to rules for electric, gas, and water/sewer utilities in an easy-to-read format. The topics covered in this brochure address consumers' rights and responsibilities with regard to: utility bills; payment plans for service; disconnecting service; reconnecting service; deposits for service; and resolving utility problems.

Understanding Natural Gas Prices: provides an explanation of why prices fluctuate, what charges are regulated, and some energy saving tips.

Bill of Rights for Water and Sewer Customers: provides information regarding rights pertaining to rates, billing and payment, make-up bills, disconnection of service, and dispute procedures.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Smart Shoppers Guide to Using Phones Away from Home: is a postcard that provides the maximum rates per minute for intrastate calls and the maximum surcharges for making operator-assisted calls. In addition, it explains what consumers can do if they have been overcharged. This is updated annually based on the approved rates.



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HOW TO REACH CSD

Our Staff of Consumer Counselors is available to assist consumers with questions or complaints regarding utility service from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

- Toll Free Hotline number is: 1-800-524-0795 (calls initiated within Illinois)
- Toll Free TTY number is: 1-800-858-9277 (calls initiated within Illinois)
- Our facsimile line is: 217-524-6859
- Our mailing address is: 527 East Capitol Avenue, Springfield, Illinois 62701
- Consumer complaints and public comments can be placed online at: www.icc.illinois.gov
- Consumers initiating calls from outside of Illinois, utilities and others with an interest in Illinois regulations may contact the ICC's Consumer Services Division at: 217-782-2024.