

# Get Connected

RCA Consumer e-News  
Summer 2019

Regulatory Commission of Alaska | Consumer Protection & Information Section  
701 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 300, Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
Tel: (907) 276-6222 | 1-800-390-2782 (outside Anchorage) | TTY: 7-1-1 | [rca.alaska.gov](http://rca.alaska.gov)

## Utility Filings & RCA Proceedings

Keep up to date on all regulatory actions by visiting the Regulatory Commission of Alaska's (RCA) [website](#). Here are some of the utility filings and RCA hearings scheduled so far this year.

### TA311-4 RCA Approved ENSTAR's Annual Gas Cost Adjustment.

ENSTAR Natural Gas Company, a Division of SEMCO Energy Inc. (ENSTAR) filed its annual Gas Cost Adjustment (GCA) for the period of July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020. The GCA is a volumetric charge that reflects the price ENSTAR customers pay for gas based on ENSTAR gas supply agreements previously approved by the RCA. Under the new GCA calculation, ENSTAR estimates that all customers will see an annualized 6.4% increase compared to the 2018-2019 GCA rate. Residential customers will see an increase of approximately \$7.38 on an average monthly bill.

### TA312-4 ENSTAR's Annual Revision to Fees and Allowances for New Service Connections, Meters, and Line Extensions.

The RCA is accepting comments through June 28, 2019, on ENSTAR's annual revision to fees and allowances for new service connections, meters, and line extensions. If approved, the new fees and allowances will be effective for the calendar year 2020.

### Dockets U-19-005/U-19-006 Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU) Rate Changes.

The RCA has scheduled an evidentiary hearing on AWWU rate changes filed under TA163-122 and TA164-126. The hearing will begin at 9 a.m. on December 5, 2019, and continuing as necessary through December 13, 2019.

### Docket U-19-014 ENSTAR's Homer Extension Surcharge Methodology.

The RCA has scheduled an evidentiary hearing on ENSTAR's Homer Extension Surcharge filed under TA310-4. The hearing will begin at 9 a.m. on July 29, 2019, and continuing as necessary through August 7, 2019.

### Dockets U-18-102/U-19-020/U-19-021 Acquisition of the Municipality of Anchorage's Municipal Light & Power Department (ML&P).

The RCA has scheduled an evidentiary hearing on the ML&P acquisition and other related dockets. The hearing will begin at 9 a.m., on August 27, 2019, and continuing as necessary through September 17, 2019.



## Important Links

[Public Notices & Comments](#)

[Pending Utility Dockets](#)

[Hearings, Public Meetings & Tariff Action Meetings](#)

[Certificates and Tariffs](#)

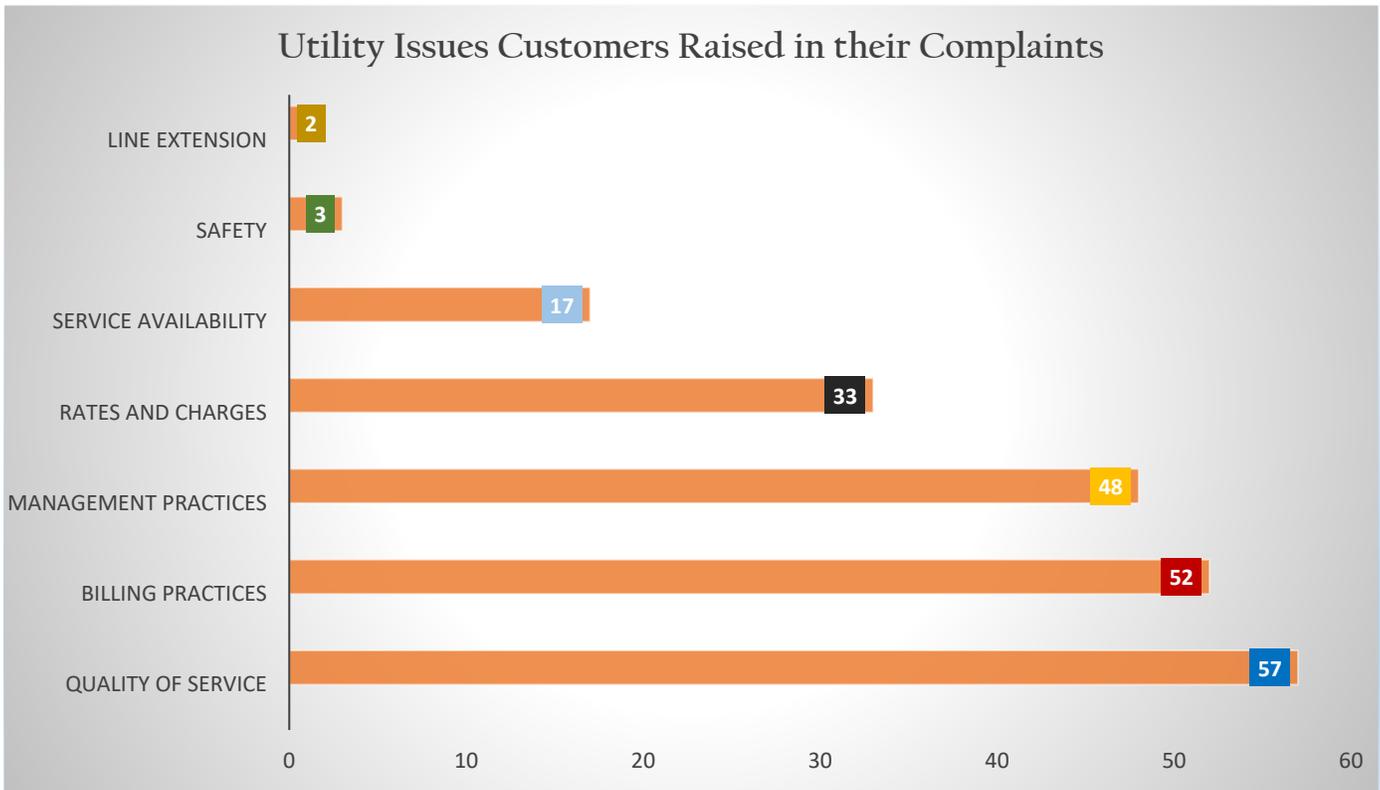
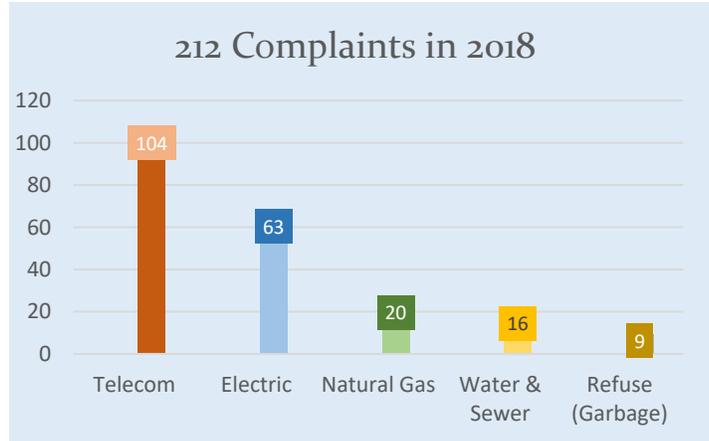
[Filing a Complaint](#)

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Get Connected is a quarterly newsletter published by the RCA Consumer Protection & Information Section. To subscribe, email [cp.mail@alaska.gov](mailto:cp.mail@alaska.gov).

## Consumer Complaints by the Numbers

- In calendar year 2018, the RCA Consumer Protection and Information Section received 212 consumer complaints – an increase of 92 complaints over 2017.
- 192 complaints were resolved in 30 days or less.
- 35 customers with billing disputes received either a refund or credit on their accounts, totaling \$20,745.



# TRASH Talk

## Garbage Bear Season

This past few years, Alaskans have seen an increase in bears foraging through garbage cans. Garbage is extremely attractive to bears! In the Municipality of Anchorage, the Assembly recently passed an ordinance that requires residents to keep garbage away from bears. Among those laws include: bear-resistant containers can go out for trash pickup no more than 12 hours before the day of pickup, with all other containers going out the morning of collection; residents can only leave plastic bags outside and out of a bin if the bags contain just “rubbish,” defined as solid wastes that won’t become rotten such as tin cans and glass; and trash bins must be brought in by 9 p.m. First-time violators will be fined a \$100 fee, and the fines would grow with subsequent violations.



**So take responsibility for your safety and others' and encourage your neighbors to do the same.**

✓ Store garbage and animal feed inside a secure building, garage, or shed.



✓ Garbage should always be kept in a bear-resistant trash container.

✓ If you have curbside pickup, do not take the trash out the night before the scheduled pick up.



✓ Keep a clean playground or camp.

✓ Keep all food resources out of reach of bears.

## TRASH Talk (cont.)

### Disposing Household Hazardous Waste

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) is any unwanted household product labeled as flammable, toxic, corrosive, or reactive. The most common products include paints, thinners, anti-freeze, motor oil, lawn chemicals, fluorescent lamps and bulbs, batteries, and household cleaners. These items should not be disposed in your regular trash bins. Improper disposal of these products is not only illegal, but also unsafe. Check with your local environmental, health, or solid waste agency for HHW.



### Disposal Fee Surcharge Increase for Alaska Waste Customers in the Mat-Su Borough

On June 19, 2019, the Alaska Waste Mat-Su LLC d/b/a Alaska Waste sought approval of a 5% increase to its disposal fee surcharge for all residential refuse collection services in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. According to the tariff filing ([TA87-731](#)), the increase results from the new disposal fees at the landfill facilities recently approved by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly. If the RCA approves Alaska Waste's request, the Disposal Fee Surcharge effective July 1, 2019, will change from 9.17% to 14.17%, or as follows:

<u>Cart Size</u>	<u>Disposal Fee Surcharge</u>
32 Gal Cart	\$6.17
64 Gal Cart	\$8.62
96 Gal Cart	\$13.63
96 Gal Bear Cart	\$13.63
Can/Bag Service	\$1.33

This surcharge is a pass-through charge and does not impact the utility's revenue. For more information, see [TA87-731](#).

#### STAY SAFE from SCAMMERS

Never let anyone come into your home to check electrical wiring, natural gas pipes, water pipes, or appliances unless you have scheduled an appointment or have reported a problem.

##### How to Identify a Utility Employee

Photo ID Badge: Utility workers' clothing may vary, but all employees carry badges. Ask to see identification.

Utility vehicle. Utility workers generally drive a vehicle that shows the utility name and logo.

Call your utility. If you are still unsure, you may contact the utility to verify the employee and their field work.



## Commissioner Robert M. Pickett Elected as the RCA Chairman

During the public meeting held on June 12, 2019, Commissioner Bob Pickett was unanimously elected as the Chairman of the RCA. Commissioner Pickett will be responsible for the administrative functions of the RCA and will preside over the commission for a one-year term that begins July 1, 2019. Commissioner Pickett previously served as Chairman for fiscal years 2009 through 2011, fiscal year 2015, and from March 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017.

## Utility Shutoffs



A utility may terminate service when:

- ✓ A past due bill owed by the customer remains unpaid.
- ✓ The customer has broken a payment arrangement.
- ✓ The customer tampered with utility service, committed fraud and abuse, or violated any of the terms and conditions of the utility's tariff.
- ✓ The customer continues to refuse to provide the utility with reasonable access to its meter, equipment, or property.



Utility service cannot be shut off for non-payment on a Friday or a day immediately preceding a holiday. The utility must give notice of shutoff for non-payment. Shutoff can be avoided when the customer either pays the past due bill in full or enters into a deferred payment agreement with the utility. If the payment agreement is broken, the utility does not have to enter into another agreement.

For more information, see [3 AAC 52.450](#), Disconnection of Services.

Utility customers who are unable to resolve complaints with their utility company may file an informal complaint with the RCA's Consumer Protection & Information Section. Click here to [File a Complaint](#) or contact a consumer protection officer at (907) 276-6222, toll free at 1-800-390-2782, or via email at [cp.mail@alaska.gov](mailto:cp.mail@alaska.gov).

### Need assistance?

Whether you need housing, utility assistance, food, job support, or disaster assistance, help is available by dialing 2-1-1.

The Alaska 2-1-1 is your one-stop resource for finding help in your community.

It's free, confidential, and available in almost any language.



**DIAL 2-1-1**  
or 1-800-478-2221



**EMAIL**  
[Alaska211@ak.org](mailto:Alaska211@ak.org)