

Riverbanks Zoo and Gardens Solar Installation

ORS DEPARTMENTS

- Administration
- Audit
- Broadband, Communications, and Safety
- Energy Office
- Information Services
- Legal
- Utility Rates and Services

SOUTH CAROLINA

OFFICE OF REGULATORY STAFF

The ORS represents consumers of investor-owned utilities (utilities) in South Carolina before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC). The PSC is the state agency that sets utilities' rates. The ORS must look at the impact to the consumer and utilities' continued investment in reliable and high-quality services.

The ORS participates in matters before the PSC for electric, natural gas, transportation, water and wastewater utilities, and most telecommunications providers. The ORS is automatically part of rate requests that go before the PSC and also participates in cases arising from the Utility Facility Siting Act. This Act requires PSC certification before any electric utility begins construction of any "major facility," which is defined as electric generation facilities and transmission lines with a voltage of 125 kilovolts or more.

The ORS audits, inspects, and examines electric cooperatives, investor-owned utilities, and Santee Cooper.

The ORS administers the leasing program for solar panels in South Carolina and implements Consumer Protection Regulations related to solar leasing.



ORS Consumer Services staff member shares information with consumers at an event.

CONSUMER SERVICES

The ORS serves as a mediator between consumers and utilities in South Carolina, as well as between consumers and the electric cooperatives. Consumer Services resolves a vast majority of complaints through an informal investigation process, avoiding a more costly formal hearing at the PSC. Through consumer education, Consumer Services helps consumers make educated choices and understand their rights and obligations.

SAFETY

The ORS shares oversight with federal agencies for railroad and natural gas pipeline safety in South Carolina.

The ORS serves as the contact for assisting utilities in the restoration of energy systems during an emergency or disaster and providing information to the SC Emergency Management Division.

The ORS works closely with electric and natural gas utilities as well as fuel suppliers to see that 1) their energy supply is maintained 2) damages are repaired and 3) services are restored as quickly as possible.



ORS Pipeline Safety staff member inspects a natural gas pipeline.

TRANSPORTATION

The ORS has regulatory oversight of the licensing – including enforcement of insurance and rates – of motor carriers of:

- Passengers (including taxis, charter buses, limousines, non-emergency medical transportation, and transportation network carriers such as Uber and Lyft)
- Household Goods Movers within South Carolina

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Department oversees the South Carolina Universal Service Fund that provides financial support for telecommunications services. The ORS also manages the Dual Party Relay Fund that provides communications access to the deaf, hearing- and speech-impaired.



ORS Communications staff member films a video to share with consumers.

ENERGY OFFICE

The Energy Office serves as the main energy-planning organization for South Carolina. The goal of the Energy Office is to advance South Carolina's energy strategy and policy through education and outreach.

The Energy Office promotes the efficient use of all energy sources. In addition, the Energy Office encourages energy efficiency, renewable energy, and clean transportation through a broad range of initiatives.



ORS Energy Office staff member discusses energy efficiency with a student at a local STEAM Festival.

BROADBAND OFFICE

The Broadband Office serves as the central broadband planning body. The Broadband Office coordinates with federal, state, regional, local, and private entities, to the extent practicable, to engage in the continued deployment of broadband in the state.

1401 Main Street, Suite 900
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 737-0800

ORS.SC.GOV