

CONSUMER ADVOCATE
Donald M. Kreis

ASSISTANT CONSUMER ADVOCATE
Pradip K. Chattopadhyay

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE



FEB 24 2016 1:00 PM

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OFFICE OF CONSUMER ADVOCATE

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Concord, N.H. 03301-2429

Website:
www.oca.nh.gov

February 24, 2016

Her Excellency, Governor Margaret Wood Hassan
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, NH 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

The Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) requests **RETROACTIVE** authority to continue its membership and participation in the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA), Vendor # 171638, for the period of January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016, for an amount of \$3,656.00. Funding is 100% Other Funds (Utilities Assessments).

Funding is available in account, Organizational Dues, as follows:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>FY 2016</u>
Office of Consumer Advocate 02-81-81-812010-28160000-026-500251	Membership Fees	\$3,656.00

EXPLANATION

The role of state consumer advocates is to represent the interests of residential consumers of public utility services. With increasing competition and industry deregulation, state consumer advocates shift their focus to consumer protections, including service quality, reliability, consumer education and price stability. NASUCA is a national organization which brings together the expertise and experience of all the member states' consumer advocates. This request is **RETROACTIVE** because the initial invoice was received after January 1, 2016. A copy of the invoice is attached for your review.

Listed below are answers to standard questions required for Governor and Council organization dues and membership approval submissions:

- 1. How long has this organization been in existence and how long has this agency been a member of this organization?** NASUCA was formed in May 1979. The OCA has been a member since at least 1996.
- 2. Is there any other organization which provides the same or similar benefits which your agency belongs to?** There is no other organization that provides the same or similar benefits to the OCA.
- 3. How many other states belong to this organization and is your agency the sole New Hampshire state agency that is a member?** This is a national organization of 44 consumer

G&C Cover Letter
G&C 03/09/16
Initials *DKC*
Date *2/18/16*
Page 1 of 2

advocates in 40 states, Barbados and the District of Columbia. The OCA is the sole New Hampshire agency member.

4. **How is the dues structure established? (Standard fee for all states, based on population, based on other criteria, etc.)** The dues structure is based on a two-component formula using a flat fee of \$600.00 and a factor 0.00394, applied to the agency's approved budget. Please see attached formula page from NASUCA.
5. **What benefit does the state receive from participating in this membership?** NASUCA provides current nationwide information on utility regulatory topics, from a consumer perspective, through participation in committees, monthly teleconferences and semi-annual meetings. NASUCA adopts policy positions on issues of national importance to utility customers; the OCA participates in the development of these positions.
6. **Are training or educational/ research materials included in the membership? If so, is the cost included? Explain in detail.** NASUCA holds member conferences on utility regulatory concerns of special interest to consumer advocates. There are also regular webinars and conference calls.
7. **Is the membership required to receive any federal grants or required in order to receive or participate in licensing or certification exams? Explain.** No. Membership in NASUCA is not required in order to receive federal grants or participate in licensing or certification exams.
8. **Is there any travel included with this membership fee? Explain in detail any travel to include the number of employees involved, the number of trips, destination if known and purposes of membership supported trips.** No. However, grants are sometimes available for conference/meeting participation.
9. **Which state agency employees are directly involved with this organization? (Indicate if they are members, voting members, committee members, and/or officers of the organization?)** The Consumer Advocate, Donald M. Kreis participates in the NASUCA "Head of Office" forum and will serve on the Consumer Protection and Distributed Energy Resources committees; the Assistant Consumer Advocate, Dr. Pradip K. Chattopadhyay, will serve on the Electric Committee; the Finance Director, James J. Brennan, serves on the Gas and Electric committees, and Staff Attorney Nicholas Cicale will serve on the Electric and Water committees.
10. **Explain in detail any negative impact to the State if the Agency did not belong to this organization.** It is through NASUCA that the OCA keeps up to date on how the utility consumer protections are implemented in different states and how issues of regional and national importance are being addressed. The OCA learns via NASUCA whether positions taken by New Hampshire utilities are consistent with best practices from a consumer perspective. The OCA's effectiveness is increased through exchanging ideas and information with its counterpart agencies in other states.

Your consideration of our request is appreciated.

Respectfully,



Donald M. Kreis
Consumer Advocate

Attachments- NASUCA Invoice
Dues Structure

G&C Cover Letter

G&C 03/09/16

Initials *DMK*

Date *2/13/16*

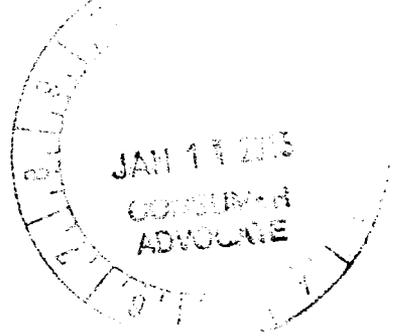
Page 2 of 2



REC'D

FEB 1 2016

NEW
UTILITIES CO.



January 7, 2016
Ms. Susan Chamberlin
Office of the Consumer Advocate
21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 18
Concord, NH 03301-5141

Dear Ms. Chamberlin:

At the NASUCA Annual meeting held in Austin, Texas in November 2015, the membership approved its annual budget and 2016 dues. The annual dues assessment was increased 5% to 0.3974%, with a minimum assessment for full member offices of \$993 and a maximum assessment of \$10,597.00. There is also an across-the-board \$600 assessment to full member offices for the financing of the Federal Regulatory Advocacy Fund.

Attached is an invoice for 2016, along with instructions for calculating your NASUCA dues for 2016. Please review and remit your payment accordingly. **Please note that payments should be sent to the NASUCA office directly.**

If you have any questions concerning your calculation, please contact David Springe, NASUCA Executive Director at 785-550-7606 or david.springe@nasuca.org

Thank you for your continued support of NASUCA and its activities on behalf of consumers.

Sincerely yours,

Elin Swanson Katz (CT)
NASUCA Treasurer



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF STATE UTILITY
CONSUMER ADVOCATES

NASUCA

2016 INVOICE: NASUCA FULL MEMBER

January 8, 2016

**Bill to: Ms. Susan Chamberlin
Office of the Consumer Advocate
21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 18
Concord, NH 03301-5141**

NASUCA Annual Assessment
January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016

Projected 2016 Office Budget (Used to Compute Annual Assessment)

\$ 769,000

2016 Assessment Rate: 0.3974% (See attached explanation)

Variable Amount:	\$ <u>3,056.00</u>
Flat Fee: Federal Advocacy Fund	+ \$600.00
Total Amount Due:	\$ <u>3,656.00</u>

Make checks payable to: NASUCA, payable in U.S. funds only

Mail checks to:

Nicole Haslup
Deputy Director
NASUCA
8380 Colesville Road, Suite 101
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

(If you pay electronically, please send Nicole an email to let her know a hard copy check will not be submitted. Email Nicole at NASUCA@NASUCA.org)

**ASSESSMENT DUES FORMULA
2016 NASUCA MEMBERSHIP ASSESSMENT**

Instructions:

To the best of your ability, determine your agency's 2016 calendar year budget or appropriation for utility consumer advocacy operations. If you do not have your 2016 office budget, you may use your prior year's budget as a proxy.

Select and apply the formula for computing your 2016 membership assessment (*see below*).

Complete the enclosed invoice, listing the amount due and the budget or appropriation amount used to compute your assessment.

Send the following to Nicole Haslup, Deputy Director, at the NASUCA Office:

- 1) Completed invoice.
- 2) A check payable to "NASUCA"; Payable only in U.S. funds.
(If you pay electronically, please send Nicole an email to let her know a hard copy check will not be submitted. Email Nicole at NASUCA@NASUCA.org)

Questions? Contact David Springe at 785-550-7606 or david.springe@nasuca.org

**NASUCA Membership Assessment
Dues Formula**

Full Members: The Dues formula for full members will be a two-part calculation. First there is a variable dues component set at 0.3974% of your budget **with a minimum dues assessment of \$993 and a maximum of \$10,597**. The second portion is a \$600 flat fee charged to each full member office to finance NASUCA's Federal Regulatory Advocacy Fund. Example: If your budget is \$850,000, then dues are as follows:

Variable Component:	$\$850,000 \times .003974 =$	\$3,377.90
Flat fee:		<u>\$ 600.00</u>
Total Dues =		\$3,977.90

Associate Members: Dues for associate members are 0.3179% of budget (20% less than full members), with a **minimum of \$993**. Associate membership is not available to offices that qualify for full membership.

Affiliate Members: Dues for affiliate (non-voting) members are 0.278% of budget (30% less than full members), with a **minimum of \$557 per year**. Affiliate membership is not available to offices that qualify for full membership.