

News Release

State Corporation Commission
Division of Information Resources



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Contact: Ken Schrad
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Date: January 7, 2019
For Immediate Release

SCC APPROVES VOLUNTARY 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY OFFERING BY APPALACHIAN POWER COMPANY

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has approved a proposal allowing Appalachian Power Company (APCo) customers voluntarily to purchase electric energy provided 100 percent from sources of renewable energy.

Virginia law permits a Virginia utility company to design a rate that participating customers may choose to pay to receive all their power from a mix of renewable resources. As designed, the rate would charge a premium of \$4.25 a month above the standard rate of an average residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity.

Applying applicable Virginia laws, the Commission approved the voluntary renewable energy rider and found that:

- The participating customer is receiving a product that is provided 100 percent from renewable energy.
- The tariff includes safeguards that hold harmless customers who choose not to participate.
- The rate is reasonable for the purposes of the renewable energy product that is being supplied.

The Commission previously had rejected two other proposals from APCo for a 100 percent renewable energy tariff. The order of approval in this case notes that, unlike the prior requests, this proposal ensures that APCo will supply 100 percent renewable energy as defined by statute. And, the rate is reasonable for customers who voluntarily elect such service.

[Case Number PUR-2017-00179](#)
[Order Approving Tariff](#)

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Contact: Paul Brockwell Jr.
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Date: January 10, 2019
For Immediate Release

SCC SETS SCHEDULE TO CONSIDER DOMINION RATE ADJUSTMENT REQUEST

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) will hold a hearing to consider a request by Dominion Energy Virginia for a new rate adjustment clause aimed at recovering costs incurred to comply with state and federal environmental regulations.

The rate adjustment clause, designated Rider E, proposes a revenue requirement of \$113.6 million during the 2019 rate year (Nov. 1, 2019-Oct. 30, 2020) to fund environmental projects at four of the company's power stations.

According to the company, this rider would increase the monthly bill of a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours per month by approximately \$2.15.

A public hearing is scheduled for June 11, 2019, at 10 a.m. The hearing will be held in the SCC's courtroom on the second floor of the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street in downtown Richmond. Anyone wishing to offer public comment at the hearing should arrive early and notify the SCC bailiff.

Written comments on the case are due by June 4, 2019. Anyone wishing to submit written comments may do so by mailing them to the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. Please refer to case number PUR-2018- 00195.

Members of the public who wish to comment electronically may do so via the SCC's website at <http://scc.virginia.gov/case/PublicComments.aspx>. Find case number PUR-2018-00195, and hit the "Submit Comments" button for that specific case.

Case Number [PUR-2018-00195](#) Dominion Energy Virginia Rider E request

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Contact: Ken Schrad
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Date: January 17, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC APPROVES CYBER AND PHYSICAL SECURITY PROVISIONS OF DOMINION'S GRID TRANSFORMATION PLAN; DENIES OTHER PARTS BASED ON HIGH COSTS TO CUSTOMERS AND LACK OF BENEFITS

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has approved the cyber and physical security provisions of a proposed grid transformation plan submitted by Dominion Energy Virginia (Dominion). The SCC denied other provisions of the plan that were unsupported by the evidence or where the Commission determined the high costs to customers outweighed any proven benefits.

As presented, Dominion's 10-year plan was projected to cost approximately \$6 billion, including financing, to be recovered from its customers. In this proceeding, Dominion sought approval for the first three-year phase of the plan, which had a total cost of approximately \$1.5 billion, including financing. The parts of the plan the SCC approved will cost \$154.5 million to be recovered for the first phase. The parts the SCC denied would have cost \$1.34 billion for the first phase and \$5.07 billion in total.

In its final order, the Commission said, "Dominion's proposed plan is expensive, so it is important that Dominion's customers receive adequate benefit for the costs they will bear in their monthly bills."

With respect to the denied elements, the SCC agreed with the Consumer Counsel of the Office of Attorney General, which argued, "the plan as filed is significantly lacking in detail..." The SCC also agreed with a witness for environmental groups who testified, "As a complete package, the ... plan is not cost-effective and will result in an economic loss for all customers."

The Commission stated, "While we find the plan elements related to cyber and physical security are well-conceived, well-supported and cost-effective, we find that the remaining plan elements, which will cost customers hundreds of millions of dollars, are not."

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One of the costlier elements of the plan that the SCC denied was advanced metering infrastructure, known as smart meters. The Sierra Club, Environmental Respondents and Consumer Counsel all opposed Dominion's smart meter proposal as not cost-effective. The SCC agreed with an environmental-group witness who testified, "...without a well-reasoned plan, this expensive equipment could ... provide little to no benefit to customers."

Other elements of the plan that were denied included, among other things, grid hardening provisions which involved replacing and rebuilding certain primary electricity line segments. Consumer Counsel and environmental groups all opposed these plan elements as not providing sufficient benefit for their large cost. The Commission agreed.

The Commission's denial of certain elements of the plan was "without prejudice." Dominion is free to seek approval for an amended or better supported plan in the future if the company chooses to do so.

Case Number PUR-2018-00100

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Contact: Ken Schrad
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Date: January 24, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Approves Dominion Solar Projects with Performance Guarantees to Protect Customers

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has approved a petition from Dominion Energy Virginia (Dominion) to build and own two solar generation projects.

As a condition of its approval, however, the SCC required a 20-year performance guarantee to protect Dominion’s customers from the risk of underperformance by the solar generators, which would drive up the costs to customers.

Dominion has proposed to charge customers for the costs of the projects through a rate adjustment clause, or separate rider, on customers’ bills. The power generated by the solar projects will be associated with renewable energy certificates (RECs) that will be purchased by Facebook’s new facility in the Richmond area. The revenue from the RECs will offset the cost to Dominion’s customers charged through the rider.

The SCC contrasted the financial structure of these projects with a Dominion solar project the Commission approved just a few months ago, in which Dominion will purchase the solar power from a third-party vendor through a contract. “With the [purchased-power] model [demonstrated in the Water Strider solar project] ... performance risks are typically borne by the third-party vendor, not by customers. With a self-build option as proposed in this petition, Dominion’s customers bear both the performance and financial risks. Dominion bears little of either.”

The SCC further noted that: “From an economic standpoint, a solar project such as this one has two distinct advantages: there is no fuel-cost risk and there is no carbon-cost risk. Solar, however, under the present state of technology is intermittent and non-dispatchable, so the economic risk is significantly related to its performance at generating electrical power. Simply put, as performance falls short, the cost [to customers] goes up.”

(more)

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The Commission found that for Dominion's customers to break even on these projects, the solar facilities must produce a collective capacity factor – the time generating power – of at least 25 percent. Yet, evidence in the record showed that the actual capacity factors of other solar generators in Virginia have been below 20 percent.

The Commission pointed out that customers would bear the costs of underperformance in two ways: customers would have to make up the shortfall in REC revenues from Facebook and customers would bear the costs of energy purchases necessary to make up the shortfall.

To protect Dominion's customers, the Commission conditioned its approval of these projects on a performance guarantee. The key conditions required by the Commission are:

- Dominion must guarantee a collective capacity factor performance of at least 25 percent. In any year in which performance falls below 25 percent, Dominion will bear the additional costs, not customers.
- The period of the guarantee is 20 years. The Commission pointed out that by the end of the 20-year period more than 75 percent of the costs of the projects will have already been paid through the rider, thus customers are protected from the bulk of the projects' costs.
- Any claim of "force majeure" to explain underperformance will be limited to truly extraordinary events such as hurricanes, not just vagaries in weather.

Dominion must accept these conditions to proceed with construction of the solar facilities. During the hearing Dominion proposed a seven-year guarantee.

[Case Number PUR-2018-00101](#)

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Contact: Paul Brockwell Jr.
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Date: February 25, 2019
For Immediate Release

SCC Joins Effort Seeking Federal Help to Address National Railroad Safety Issue

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission’s Division of Utility and Railroad Safety is joining a national effort to seek federal help on the growing safety issue of blocked railroad crossings.

“Today it is not uncommon to receive complaints from Virginia’s businesses and citizens of blocked crossings measured in hours, not minutes,” said Steve Bradley, director of the Division of Utility and Railroad Safety. “Blocked crossings can cause dangerous delays for police, fire, and other emergency responders, hinder basic mobility, and impede commerce. These scenarios pose a risk of serious injury, or worse.”

Virginia is one of 35 states with laws or regulations limiting the amount of time trains may block crossings. These time periods typically range from five to 20 minutes. Railroad companies have contested such rules on the grounds of federal pre-emption.

The Association of State Railroad Safety Managers is urging the adoption of federal regulations to limit the amount of time a train may block a highway-rail grade crossing. The association recently circulated a resolution calling for federal legislation requiring the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to prescribe regulations making it unlawful for trains to block highway-rail grade crossings for longer than a specified period unless the train is stopped for mechanical or emergency reasons.

No federal regulations regarding the duration of blocked crossings currently exist. Many communities and businesses are impacted frequently by blocked crossings. The problem worsens as rail and highway traffic grows.

Virginians who experience issues are encouraged to report them to the Division of Utility and Railroad Safety at varailsafety@scc.virginia.gov. The Division works with the Federal Railroad Administration to ensure the safe operation of railroads in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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Date: February 25, 2019

For Immediate Release

To Protect Small Captive Customers, SCC Denies Walmart's Request to Leave Electric Utility Systems

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has rejected Walmart's request for permission to leave the utility systems of Dominion Energy Virginia (Dominion) and Appalachian Power Company (APCo) to obtain electric power supply for its retail stores throughout Virginia from third-party suppliers.

The Commission found that if Walmart, a large-demand customer, left the utilities' systems, the remaining Dominion and APCo customers who do not have the legal right to leave and seek lower rates would be harmed by the resulting shifting of costs to captive customers. Such captives represent the vast majority of both utilities' customers and include residential and small businesses.

Based on the record developed in this case, if Walmart's request to leave was granted, the costs shifted to remaining captive customers is estimated at \$65 million for Dominion customers and \$4 million for APCo customers over the next 10 years. The loss of Walmart's demand would cause, for remaining customers, a net increase in other costs, including rate adjustment clauses and base rates, and a possible decrease in rate refunds otherwise due to customers.

The Commission also considered Walmart's application in the context of the past ten years of rising rates for captive customers of Dominion and APCo. Over this time, the monthly bills for APCo residential customers have increased by \$48, or 73 percent, and for Dominion residential customers by \$26, or 29 percent. And, the Commission noted the likelihood of future rate increases stating, "Additional bill increases are expected as utilities incur new costs under the mandates of Senate Bill 966."

Enacted by the 2018 session of the Virginia General Assembly, Senate Bill 966 also contained a provision that automatically granted certain large-demand customers of Dominion the right to a two percent rate cut, a rate cut that was not available to residential and small-business customers, and that will result in cost-shifting to small-demand customers.

(more)

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The Commission said, “In conclusion, given the context of a decade of rising rates and the likelihood of even higher rates in the future, we do not find it consistent with the public interest for captive customers who do not have the legal ability to obtain lower rates – predominantly residential and small business – to suffer from the cost-shifting identified [in this case] by enabling a large-demand customer to seek its power supply elsewhere...”

A provision of Virginia law mandates that a single customer with more than five megawatts of demand can leave the utility system and purchase power from a third-party vendor. Another provision of law allows, subject to the Commission’s discretion, an applicant such as Walmart to aggregate the demand from many retail stores to reach the threshold. Walmart had applied under this provision, and the Commission used its legal discretion to deny Walmart’s petition.

Case Numbers [PUR-2017-00173](#) & [PUR-2017-00174](#)

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Contact: Katha Treanor
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Date: March 4, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Offers National Consumer Protection Week Reminders

RICHMOND – Whether you are shopping for insurance or a loan or comparing credit cards or investment products, the more you know, the better when it comes to getting the biggest bang for your buck. The State Corporation Commission (SCC) encourages Virginians to take charge of their financial future by knowing how to protect their interests and where to turn for help if a problem occurs.

National Consumer Protection Week, which runs from March 3-9, 2019, is an opportunity for consumers to gain a better understanding of their rights and options when it comes to spending – and saving – their money. During this week, the Federal Trade Commission and other federal, state and local agencies and organizations, including the SCC, promote consumer awareness about making sound financial decisions and avoiding identity theft and fraud.

The SCC reminds Virginians that it stands ready year-round to answer inquiries, handle complaints and provide information and assistance regarding industry sectors over which it has regulatory responsibility. Those sectors include insurance companies and agents, state-chartered financial institutions, investment firms and their representatives, retail franchises and investor-owned utilities providing electric, natural gas, water, sewer and telecommunications services.

The SCC offers numerous consumer guides and other information on a variety of topics. Its specially trained staff can assist Virginians in making informed choices and submitting a complaint if they are not satisfied with the responses they receive from regulated entities.

Among the ways the SCC can help consumers are assisting consumers in handling complaints or disputes with regulated companies, such as when their insurance company improperly denies a claim; or they receive improper charges as part of a loan transaction or securities offering; or ensuring that utilities provide reliable service and respond promptly to customer billing issues, and much more.

(more)

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The SCC encourages consumers to shop around and compare prices and terms; thoroughly evaluate any offer; keep written records of all transactions; find products and services that suit your particular needs; review statements and bills regularly; learn to spot scams, and verify that an individual or company is properly licensed or registered.

If a problem arises, the SCC urges consumers to try to resolve it with the regulated individual or company first. Consumers can contact the appropriate SCC division by phone, mail or email (using the online complaint) form if they still are not satisfied. The complaint process and forms are available by going to the SCC website at www.scc.virginia.gov and clicking on the appropriate division. To contact the SCC by phone, call toll-free (in Virginia) at 1-800-552-7945 or in Richmond, call:

- Bureau of Insurance – 804-371-9741
- Bureau of Financial Institutions – 804-371-9657
- Division of Securities and Retail Franchising – 804-371-9051
- Division of Public Utility Regulation – 804-371-9611
- Office of the Clerk – 804-371-9733
- Division of Information Resources – 804-371-9141

In the event the SCC does not have regulatory authority over a particular firm, individual, product or transaction, its staff will assist consumers by referring them to the appropriate local, state or federal authority for assistance. These may include the Attorney General's Office, local consumer protection office, law enforcement agencies, Better Business Bureau or the Federal Trade Commission's toll-free helpline at 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357).

To learn more about National Consumer Protection Week, visit <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/>.

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Contact: Ken Schrad
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Date: March 4, 2019

For Immediate Release

West Takes Oath of Office; Becomes 35th SCC Commissioner

RICHMOND – **Patricia L. West** was sworn in today as the 35th commissioner of the State Corporation Commission (SCC). West fills the remaining term of James C. Dimitri who retired from the Commission last year.

West previously served as a judge on the Virginia Beach Circuit Court for 12 years (2000-2012) and as a Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court judge in Virginia Beach for three years (1997-2000). She also served as Virginia's Secretary of Public Safety from 1996-1997 and as the Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice from 1994-1996.

Following her tenure as a judge, West became an associate dean at the Regent University School of Law from 2015-2019 and served as the Chief Deputy Attorney General in the Office of the Attorney General from 2012-2014.

The other two SCC commissioners are **Judith Williams Jagdmann**, the current chair, and **Mark C. Christie**.

Established in 1902, the SCC's authority encompasses utilities, insurance, state-chartered financial institutions, securities, retail franchising, railroad safety, and underground utility damage prevention. The Commission also serves as the Commonwealth's central filing office for all Virginia and foreign corporations, limited liability companies, general and limited partnerships, and business trusts that are authorized to transact business in Virginia.

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Date: March 8, 2019

For Immediate Release

Rate Reductions Coming April 1 for Customers of Virginia's Two Largest Electric Companies

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has ordered a reduction in the rates of Dominion Energy Virginia and Appalachian Power Company on April 1. The reduction and forthcoming rate credits continues a directive of the Commission issued in January 2018 that ensures customers receive the benefits of the corporate tax cut contained in federal tax legislation passed by Congress in December 2017.

The federal corporate income tax rate was reduced from 35% to 21% effective January 1, 2018. A week later, on January 8, the SCC ordered the companies to preserve the savings from this tax cut for the benefit of their customers.

Last July, in response to legislation passed by the 2018 Virginia General Assembly, Dominion Energy Virginia reduced rates by \$125 million, on an interim basis subject to further Commission review.

Because of the same legislation, Appalachian Power reduced rates by \$50 million last July, also subject to further review. And, in November, Appalachian Power applied certain Federal tax savings as an offset to the revenue generated by the portion of the monthly bill that pays for the fuel used to generate electricity.

Since then, each company submitted additional filings with the Commission to make certain the tax savings are properly calculated and reflected in base rates as of April 1, 2019.

Dominion Energy Virginia's base rates are being reduced by \$182.5 million, or \$57.5 million more than the interim rate reduction last July. Appalachian Power's base rates are being reduced by \$80.1 million, or \$30.1 million more than last July.

(more)

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Each company will be providing a one-time credit to customers to account for the difference in rates between the January 1, 2018 effective date of the Federal tax reduction and March 31, 2019, the last day of interim rates.

Dominion Energy Virginia must provide the one-time credit by July 1, 2019. Appalachian Power Company must provide the one-time credit by October 1, 2019.

[Case number PUR-2018-00054](#) – Appalachian Power Company federal tax rate reduction

[Case number PUR-2018-00055](#) – Dominion Energy Virginia federal tax rate reduction

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Contact: Paul Brockwell Jr.
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Date: March 13, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC to Hold Hearing in Norton on Kentucky Utilities Fuel Rate Increase

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has scheduled a public hearing in Norton, on May 23, 2019, to receive public comment in a case involving a fuel rate increase requested by Kentucky Utilities Company, doing business in Virginia as Old Dominion Power Company. The fuel rate is the portion of the electric bill that pays for the cost of fuel used to generate electricity and power purchased from other utilities and power producers.

The hearing will begin at 6 p.m. at the City of Norton Municipal Building, 628 Virginia Avenue N.W. The hearing will resume in Richmond on June 12, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. The hearing will be held in the SCC's courtroom on the second floor of the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street in downtown Richmond. Persons wishing to comment at either hearing should arrive early and notify the SCC bailiff.

The revised fuel rate of 2.643 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) will go into effect on an interim basis beginning on April 1, 2019. The proposed fuel rate represents an increase of \$4.03 per month for a residential customer using 1,000 kWh per month.

Written comments on the request are due June 5, 2019, and may be sent to the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission's Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. Please refer to case number PUR-2019-00029.

People desiring to submit comments electronically may do so via the SCC's website at scc.virginia.gov/case. Click on the "Public Comments/Notices" link, find the comment box for case number PUR-2019-00029, and hit the "Submit Comments" button.

Case Number PUR-2019-00029 – Application of Kentucky Utilities Company to revise its fuel factor

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Contact: Ken Schrad
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Date: March 15, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC to Allow Public to Comment on Pending Long-term Care Insurance Premium Increase Requests

Richmond – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) will allow the public to comment on numerous premium rate increase requests pertaining to long-term care insurance issued in Virginia. Currently, approximately 25 insurance companies have filed premium increase requests for as many as 60 different long-term care insurance plans.

Over the past two years, the SCC's Bureau of Insurance has received multiple requests from insurance carriers to increase premiums for long-term care insurance policies. In 2017, the Bureau approved 17 requests.

Long-term care insurance covers costs experienced by policyholders when going to a nursing home, being in an assisted living center, or receiving in-home care. These costs have risen dramatically over the years and covered individuals are receiving such care for longer periods than projected.

Many of the premium increase requests involve policies purchased many years ago. Currently, there are only about a dozen companies that continue to sell long-term care insurance.

In general, long-term care insurance premium increases are the result of projected claim costs being much higher than originally anticipated at the time the policy was issued. As a result, insurance carriers have sought premium increases to ensure that sufficient funds are available to pay claims over the life of the contracts.

Given the substantial and ongoing nature of premium rate increases associated with long-term care insurance, the Commission will receive presentations from certain insurance carriers on Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 10 a.m. in a Commission courtroom on the second floor of the Tyler Building at 1300 East Main Street in downtown Richmond.

(more)

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The Commission will also receive comments from the public at that presentation. Persons desiring to provide oral comments need to appear at 9:45 a.m. and sign in with the Commission bailiff.

Written comments may also be submitted in advance of the May presentation. The due date is April 22, 2019. Correspondence may be sent to the Clerk of the Commission, Document Control Center, PO Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia, 23218. All comments must refer to case number INS-2019-00041.

Written comments may also be submitted electronically via the SCC website at <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/case>.

[Case Number INS-2019-00041](#)

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Date: April 1, 2019

For Immediate Release

April is National Safe Digging Month The SCC Reminds the Public to “Dig with C.A.R.E.”

RICHMOND – April brings a surge in outdoor work that often includes digging. The State Corporation Commission (SCC) recognizes April as National Safe Digging Month, encouraging individuals and companies to “Dig with C.A.R.E.”

“Regardless of where you are, there is a high probability that underground utility lines are nearby, providing vital services and commodities that we depend on every day. Protecting this infrastructure from damage is a shared responsibility,” said Frank Hudik of the SCC’s Division of Utility and Railroad Safety.

Whether it is a homeowner planting a tree or erecting a fence, or a professional contractor building a highway or a strip mall, preventing damage to underground utility lines when digging or demolishing is a must. Anytime you dig or demolish on a property, you could damage an underground utility line. Doing so can have far-reaching consequences.

Help keep Virginia’s underground utility infrastructure damage-free and our communities safe. “Dig with C.A.R.E.!” C.A.R.E. means:

- C**all 811 before you dig.
- A**llow the required time for marking.
- R**espect and protect the marks.
- E**xcavate carefully.

There is no cost to notify Virginia 811 (VA811) when you call or go online at va811.com to request the marking of underground utility lines.

VA811 can be reached by phone Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., except on legal state and national holidays. An emergency notification service by phone is available 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, as is online service for most digging projects.

(More)

During the process of marking underground utility lines, locators mark the approximate horizontal location of the underground utility line on the ground to within two feet of either side of the underground utility line using paint stakes or flags. This area is commonly referred as the tolerance zone. Any person digging or demolishing within the tolerance zone, must take all reasonable steps necessary to properly protect, support and backfill underground utility lines such as, but not limited to, hand digging to expose the extremities of all utility lines and not using mechanized equipment within two feet of their extremities.

In the event of any damage to, or dislocation or disturbance of any underground utility line including its accessories, covering and coating, immediately notify the operator of the underground utility line. If a damage, dislocation or disturbance results in an emergency, take immediate steps reasonably calculated to safeguard life, health and property.

If there is an escape of any flammable, toxic, hazardous or corrosive gas or liquid, promptly report the damage by calling 911.

To learn more about Virginia's damage prevention program, contact the SCC Division of Utility and Railroad Safety at 804-371-9980 or visit the Division's website at www.scc.virginia.gov/urs/mutility/index.aspx.

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Date: April 15, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Urges Virginians to Do Their Homework Before Investing with Robo-Advisers

RICHMOND – In our increasingly fast-paced and high-tech world, more and more investors are turning to robo-advisers to help them with their investing decisions. The State Corporation Commission’s (SCC) Division of Securities and Retail Franchising encourages Virginians to do their homework *before* investing with a robo-adviser, just as they would before investing with a human advisor.

A robo-adviser, also known as an automated investment advisor or digital advice platform, is an electronic platform that uses computer algorithms to provide automated financial planning services to clients based on such things as goals, risk tolerance and investment horizon. Robo-advisers typically come with lower fees than human investment advisers and require lower minimum investments. Easy-to-use smartphone apps and online portals make setting up an account with a robo-adviser convenient and quick, which also contributes to their increasing popularity.

Robo-advisers are relatively new to the investing landscape. “Robo-advisers may offer an easy and low-cost alternative to human financial professionals. However, they cannot calm investor jitters in times of market turmoil and may not be able to offer advice on how to adjust your portfolio to account for market fluctuations or special circumstances in your life,” said Ronald W. Thomas, director of the SCC’s Division of Securities and Retail Franchising.

Investment product offerings, fees, levels of service and overall approach can vary from one robo-adviser to the next. Thus, Thomas encourages Virginians to make sure they fully understand how a particular robo-adviser works *before* they invest. Thomas also urges investors to check the registration and disciplinary history of the firm offering robo-adviser services, research the company and its management and read online customer reviews.

To learn more, call the SCC’s Division of Securities and Retail Franchising in Richmond at 804-371-9051 or toll-free (in Virginia) at 1-800-552-7945. You may also visit the

(more)

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division's website at www.scc.virginia.gov/srf/ or the North American Securities Administrators Association's website at www.nasaa.org/47577/informed-investor-advisory-robo-advisers.

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News Release

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Contact: Andy Farmer
Phone: 804-371-9141
Email: Andy.Farmer@scc.virginia.gov

Date: May 2, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Approves Efficiency Programs Proposed by Dominion Energy; Extends Current Appalachian Power Programs

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has approved a package of 11 new energy efficiency and demand response programs requested by Dominion Energy Virginia to run for a five-year period beginning July 1, 2019. In another order, the Commission approved an updated rate adjustment clause to cover the costs of Appalachian Power’s current energy efficiency and demand response programs for the rate year July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.

The Dominion package of programs includes six residential and five non-residential programs with an estimated cost of \$225.8 million. In the Appalachian Power case, the SCC approved a revenue requirement of \$5.68 million for the company’s energy efficiency and demand response portfolio for the 2019 rate year. The company was not requesting the SCC’s approval of any new programs in this case.

The Commission directed both companies to file in every future energy efficiency and demand side management (DSM) rate adjustment clause proceeding evidence of the actual energy savings achieved as a result of each specific program for which cost recovery is sought, along with revised cost-benefit tests that incorporate actual Virginia energy savings and cost data.

The SCC stated that the information will be relevant to at least two foreseeable issues. The first issue is identifying the true cost-effectiveness of DSM programs, which will enable the SCC to determine which programs should be expanded in scope and budget to maximize the reductions in energy usage, which ones are least effective and should have their budgets shifted to more effective programs; and which ones are not cost-effective and should be discontinued. The second issue is evaluating any claim by Dominion and Appalachian to cost recovery for lost revenues.

Case Number PUR-2018-00118 – Appalachian Power – Order Approving Rate Adjustment Clause

Case Number PUR-2018-00168 – Dominion Energy Virginia – Order Approving Programs and Rate Adjustment Clauses

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Contact: Katha Treanor
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Date: May 13, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Encourages Virginians to Beware of Cross-Selling When Investing

RICHMOND – It is not uncommon for representatives of banks and investment firms to recommend financial products and services such as investment products to their clients. By cross-selling, financial professionals encourage investors to purchase securities related to their original investment. In some cases, these representatives may try to capitalize on a pre-existing positive relationship with a client to induce them to increase their investments or invest in a new product.

When done properly, this marketing technique can be lucrative for the firms and their representatives and can sometimes make sense for the client. While the practice is legal, it can backfire for consumers, particularly if a representative tries to push a product outside of their scope of knowledge or an unregistered securities product.

Ron Thomas, director of the State Corporation Commission’s Division of Securities and Retail Franchising, urges Virginians to take appropriate precautions whenever they invest. “In some cases, cross-selling may be mutually beneficial to financial firms and their clients. It allows these firms to inform clients about the range of financial products and services available,” he said. “At its worst, this common sales technique can mislead clients into acting against their best interests.”

Whenever investing, Thomas cautions Virginians to beware of unsolicited investment offers, aggressive sales tactics and promises of high returns with little or no risk. He encourages investors to protect their financial interests by asking questions and getting details about any investment offer in writing. Find out how the investment will generate returns, the time frame for payout, any associated costs and how your financial professional will be compensated. “Make sure an investment and the person offering it are registered and the investment suits your particular needs,” Thomas said.

To learn more, contact the SCC Division of Securities and Retail Franchising at 804-371-9051 or toll-free in Virginia at 1-800-552-7945. You may also visit the division’s website at www.scc.virginia.gov/srf/index.aspx or the North American Securities Administrators Association’s website at <http://www.nasaa.org/47635/informed-investor-advisory-cross-selling/>.

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Contact: Katha Treanor
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Date: May 21, 2019

For Immediate Release

Free Policy Locator Tool Helps Virginians Secure More Than \$15.7 Million in Lost Benefits

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission’s (SCC) Bureau of Insurance encourages Virginians in search of lost or misplaced life insurance policies and annuity contracts to use the free Life Insurance Policy Locator offered by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC).

“Since the launch of the policy locator tool in November 2016, more than 1,000 Virginians have already recovered millions of dollars to which they were entitled,” said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. “Using secure technology, the service enables consumers to obtain money that was promised to them through life insurance and annuity contracts,” he said.

Thousands of consumers nationwide have benefited from this tool, which has matched more than 36,500 beneficiaries with lost or misplaced life insurance policies or annuities totaling more than \$528 million. So far in Virginia, 1,141 consumers have recovered more than \$15.7 million using this service.

Here’s how the Policy Locator works:

- Beneficiaries, executors or legal representatives of a deceased person may submit a search request form to the NAIC by going to the SCC Bureau of Insurance website at <https://www.scc.virginia.gov/boi/cons/index.aspx> or to the NAIC website at <http://locator.naic.org>. Requests are encrypted and secured to maintain confidentiality.
- Using the information submitted, the NAIC asks participating companies to search their records to determine whether they have a life insurance policy or annuity contract in the name of the deceased.
- Participating companies that have policy information are asked to respond to the requester if the requester is the designated beneficiary or is authorized to receive information. Neither insurance companies nor agents should assess a fee to anyone making a request through the service.

(more)

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To facilitate your search for a policy, the Bureau of Insurance recommends trying to determine which insurance company issued the policy; which agent or broker sold the policy or whether the policy was purchased through an employer, union or association. You will need some personal details about the insured individual, including the individual's full name (as well as the maiden name for a married individual), Social Security number and the state where the policy was purchased. To claim a life insurance benefit, you will also need a copy of the death certificate.

Under Virginia law, life insurance companies that know that a policyholder has died but cannot locate the beneficiaries of the policy are required to turn over the benefits of the policy to the state's unclaimed property office if the benefits are not claimed after a certain number of years. If you know the state in which a life insurance policy was written, check with that state's insurance department or the office that handles unclaimed property.

To avoid lost policies, the Bureau of Insurance encourages Virginians to keep beneficiary information up-to-date; alert beneficiaries of the policy and provide them with the name of the insurance agent and the company that issued the policy; place a current copy of the life insurance policy in a safe and accessible place with wills and estate documents, and ask the insurance company for an annual policy statement if one is not provided.

For questions or additional information about the policy locator and other life and health insurance matters, contact the Consumer Services Section of the Virginia Bureau of Insurance Life and Health Division toll-free at 1-877-310-6560 or visit www.scc.virginia.gov/boi.

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Contact: Paul Brockwell Jr.
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Date: May 29, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Sets Local Hearings for 757 Area Code Relief

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has set four local hearings in August to receive public comments on a proposed solution for resolving the exhaustion of available phone numbers in the 757 area code.

The North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA), filed an application with the SCC to begin the exhaust relief planning process. According to NANPA, subscriber growth and the expanding number of devices requiring phone numbers eventually exhausts the numbers available within an area code. The 757 area code was created in 1996, splitting off from the 804 area code which was nearing exhaustion at that time.

In this case, NANPA is recommending an all-services overlay as the solution for 757 area code exhaust. Under this plan, a new area code would be assigned to the existing 757 area code region once all available numbers are exhausted. Those who currently have a 757 area code number would experience no area code change. Although the proposed plan would require 10-digit dialing for local calls, it is the least disruptive option.

To allow for ample public opportunities to comment, the SCC has scheduled the following public hearings to receive comments from residents in the affected area code:

- August 12, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Room at the Southampton County Administration Building, 26022 Administration Center Dr., Courtland, Virginia 23837
- August 20, 2019, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., in the Board of Supervisors Room of the James City County Government Center, Building F, 101 Mounts Bay Rd., Williamsburg, Virginia 23185
- August 21, 2019, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., in Chesapeake City Council Chambers at the City Hall Building, 306 Cedar Rd., Chesapeake, Virginia 23322
- August 22, 2019, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., Board of Supervisors Chambers in the Accomack County Administration Building, 23296 Courthouse Ave., Accomac, Virginia 23301

The hearing will continue in Richmond on September 17, 2019, at 10 a.m. in the Commission's second-floor courtroom located in the Tyler Building at 1300 East Main Street.

- more -

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Any person wishing to comment at any of the hearings should arrive early and sign in with the SCC bailiff. The SCC will webcast an audio stream of the Richmond hearing. Instructions for listening to the proceeding can be found online at www.scc.virginia.gov/case/webcast.aspx.

Written comments on the case must be submitted by September 10, 2019, and be sent to the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23219-2118. Please refer to case number PUR-2019-00059 when commenting. Individuals may also submit comments online at www.scc.virginia.gov/case/PublicComments.aspx. Find case number PUR-2019-00059, and click on the “Submit Comments” button for this case.

For more information about this case, the Division of Public Utility Regulation has posted [frequently asked questions](#) related to area code exhaust and solutions.

Case Number PUR-2019-00059 – Ex Parte: In the matter of the Commission’s investigation into exhaust relief for the 757 area code



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

757 Area Code Exhaust Relief

Case No. PUR-2019-00059

On April 4, 2019, the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) filed notice with the SCC that the 757 area code in southeastern Virginia is on track to exhaust all available numbers during the fourth quarter of 2021. The application seeks to determine how to alleviate the exhaust issue. Information below includes links to case documents as well as frequently asked questions that help to explain an area code exhaust, the Commission's involvement, what relief options exist, and how the process will work after the SCC investigates and makes a decision.

[Order Appointing Hearing Examiner](#), April 24, 2019

What is area code exhaust?

When an existing area code, such as 757, nears the assignment of all available phone numbers. In short, we are running out of available numbers under the 757 area code.

What happens when we are close to an area code exhaust?

The NANPA contacts the Commission and industry to begin the relief planning process. The relief planning process for the 757 area code exhaust began in December 2018. It can take up to 36 months for the entire process to conclude and a new area code to be implemented.

How are the numbering resources being depleted in area code 757?

Subscriber growth and expansion of services requiring phone numbers eventually exhaust the numbering resources available within an area code. Every cellular provider (this includes tablet devices with cellular service), wireline provider, alarm service provider, and voice over the internet (VoIP) phone service provider is assigned numbers from those available in an area.

Who decides to change my area code?

The Telecommunication Act of 1996 gave the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) jurisdiction over the telephone numbering plan in the United States. From this authority, the FCC established the NANPA. However, the FCC delegated authority to state regulatory commissions to resolve matters involving implementing new area codes. The actual assignment of any new area code comes from the NANPA.

What are the options to relieve the 757 area code exhaust situation?

The most common two options are:

- A **geographic split**: This would carve the existing 757 area code zone into two separate areas. One region would retain the 757 area code and the other would convert to a newly assigned second area code.
- An **all-services overlay**: This would superimpose a newly assigned area code over the area currently covered by the existing 757 area code. The entire current 757 area would then be covered by both the 757 area code and the newly assigned area code.

What are the pros and cons of each option?

Geographic Split

Pros:

- Maintains 7-digit dialing in area that remains in the 757 area code

Cons:

- Half of the current area covered by the 757 area code would have to change their phone numbers
- Financial impact to businesses in new area code
- Customers would need to update family, friends, and business associates with new area code and phone number information
- Requires a longer implementation time by industry and is more costly

All-Services Overlay

Pros:

- All existing customers would retain the current 757 area code
- Less confusion and easier education process
- Less financial impact on businesses
- Does not split cities or counties into separate area codes
- Moves customers to universal 10-digit dialing
- Minimizes call routing issues, especially with ported numbers

Cons:

- Local calls would require 10-digit dialing
- Customers would have to reprogram auto-dialing equipment
- Cost to update signage and printed material from 7-digit to 10-digit

If the Commission decides on a geographic split, would existing customers in the newly assigned area code be required to change their phone number?

Yes.

How would an all-services overlay affect customer dialing habits?

Under an all-services overlay, 10-digit dialing would be a requirement. In a contiguous geographic area where only one area code exists, that area code is assumed to be part of the phone number by default. Number 555-1234, for example, is assigned to only one unique account in a geographic boundary assigned to that single area code. Where two or more area codes are assigned within the same geographic area, the area code cannot be assumed. Using the same example, 555-1234 could be assigned to two separate users; one in each of the two area codes. Therefore, additional information (dialing the area code) is required to correctly route calls to the intended call recipient. While this does require the dialing of three additional digits, with today's technology, most of our devices store a majority of our contact information. Therefore, there will be very little change for most individuals.

How has Virginia handled this issue in the past?

In 1996, the 804 area code went through a geographic split, and the 757 area code was first established. On November 23, 1998, the Commission approved an all services overlay which added the 571 area code to the established 703 area code in northern Virginia (Case No. PUC-1996-00161). December 1, 2000, saw the Commission approve a geographic split as the relief method for the 804 area code (Case No. PUC-1999-00159); the western section of the then current 804 area code was assigned a new area code, 434, while the eastern section, including metropolitan Richmond, kept the 804 area code. While the Commission has approved both options, it should be noted that there has not been a geographic split implemented in the United States since 2006 (in New Mexico).

Once the Commission makes a decision, what happens?

A Final Order will be issued by the Commission that also approves or modifies the requested schedule for implementing the approved plan. Education will be provided in the 757 area by both the NANPA and the Commission.

How can I comment on the issues raised by this case (Case No. PUR-2019-00059)?

There are different ways to file comments on this case with the Commission. An Order for Notice and Comment in Case No. PUR-2019-00059, will be issued by the Commission providing notice to the public along with a period of time when comments can be filed in the case (instructions are provided). In addition, comments can be mailed directly to Joel H. Peck, Clerk, State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. Interested persons desiring to submit comments electronically may do so by following the instructions on the Commission's website: <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/case/PublicComments.aspx>. Any comments should refer to Case No. PUR-2019-00059, to ensure the comments are recorded in the correct proceeding at the Commission.

Who can I contact with any questions?

If you have questions during the processing of Case No. PUR-2019-00059, contact Nicole Mansfield at 804-371-9613, or Sheree King at 804-371-9707. Both can also be reached via the Commission's toll-free number (within Virginia) at 1-800-552-7945. Select Option 4 for the Division of Public Utility Regulation and ask for Nicole or Sheree.

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Contact: Ken Schrad
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Email: Ken.Schrad@scc.virginia.gov

Date: May 30, 2019

For Immediate Release

To Protect Small Captive Customers, SCC Denies Costco's Request to Leave Electric Utility System

Richmond – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has denied an application by Costco to leave the utility system of Dominion Energy Virginia and obtain the combined electric power needs of its retail stores from a third-party supplier.

As it ruled in a recent order denying a similar request by Walmart, the Commission found that if Costco, a large customer, left Dominion's system, the remaining customers who do not have the legal right to leave and seek lower rates would be harmed by the resulting shifting of costs to captive customers. Captives include residential and small businesses which comprise most of Dominion's customers.

Costco had argued that Dominion's rate structure was unfair. During the case, Costco stated that it sought to leave Dominion's system, "... based on Dominion's piling on of rate adjustment clauses [(‘RACs’)], and [their] significant impact ...” Costco also said, “under the current statutory structure Dominion has been over-earning on its frozen base rates for a number of years,” and “it is enormously frustrating that an incumbent utility has an incentive to keep what [Costco views] as the customer's money.” Costco also stated that “Dominion's piling on of excessive costs ... was the motivation for the Costco Petition.” Costco further stated that, “Costco is also seeking to avoid the anticipated future rate increases” from “the huge potential cost impact if Dominion elects to fully implement the Grid Transformation and Security Act [Senate Bill 966 from the 2018 General Assembly Session].”

The SCC said that it “respects the economic and business goals reflected in Costco's pleadings and testimony,” but that “if Costco believes that the current statutory structure for setting vertically-integrated electric utility rates results in unreasonable or unnecessarily high rates, its potential for recourse may be found through the legislative process.”

The SCC continued, “... [G]iven the context of a decade of rising rates and the likelihood of even higher rates in the future, the Commission does not find it consistent with the public interest for ... captive customers – predominantly residential and small business – to experience the

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cost-shifting identified herein by enabling a larger commercial customer to seek its power supply elsewhere through aggregation.”

The Commission concluded, “This Commission will not allow small customers who cannot escape [Dominion’s rate] structure, predominantly small businesses and residential customers, to be further burdened by the identified cost-shifting that will occur if larger customers like Costco choose to seek better deals for themselves outside of Dominion's system.”

[Case Number PUR-2018-00088](#) – Petition of Costco Wholesale Corporation

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Contact: Ken Schrad
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Email: Ken.Schrad@scc.virginia.gov

Date: May 31, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Approves New State-Chartered Bank - Trustar Bank; First New State Bank in a Decade

Richmond – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has approved Trustar Bank as a state-chartered bank. The Northern Virginia startup bank is the first to be formed under Virginia state banking law since 2008.

Trustar Bank, located in Great Falls, Virginia, becomes the 54th state-chartered bank regulated by the SCC’s Bureau of Financial Institutions. Commissioner of Financial Institutions E. Joseph Face Jr., says, “Virginia banks are the economic backbones of the communities they serve.” He added, “The formation of a new bank in Virginia is a testament to the strength of our banking sector and regulatory environment. Virginians should be encouraged to see new banks once again being formed in the Commonwealth.”

Under a dual regulatory system, banks have the option to be state chartered or chartered by federal banking authorities. Virginia state-chartered banks are subject to regular examinations by the bureau for safety and soundness, consumer protection and local economic growth.

State and federal regulators collaborate to best supervise banks. Federal regulators provide a framework to manage systemic banking issues. State regulators construct supervision based on their local knowledge, authority and focus.

In evaluating the bank’s charter application received February 19, 2019, the Commission considered the quality of the bank’s directorate and management team, the adequacy of the proposed capital structure and whether the public interest would be served by the proposed banking facility.

The Commission’s approval requires the bank to secure deposit insurance from the Federal Depository Insurance Corporation (FDIC) before opening for business. FDIC insurance covers all types of deposits received at an insured bank. The standard insurance amount is \$250,000 per depositor, per insured bank, for each account ownership category.

[Order Granting Authority](#)

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Contact: Katha Treanor
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Email: Katha.Treanor@scc.virginia.gov

Date: May 31, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC's Bureau of Insurance Encourages Virginians to Prepare Now for Hurricane Season

RICHMOND – The Atlantic hurricane season has not yet begun and already we have had our first named storm for 2019. The State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Bureau of Insurance encourages Virginians to review your insurance policies now to make sure you have the coverage you need if a hurricane or other disaster strikes.

Hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30 each year. Once a hurricane develops in the Atlantic, it will be difficult to find an insurance company willing to write related coverage until the storm threat passes.

"Take steps now to protect yourself and your property in the event of a hurricane," said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. "Make sure your disaster preparedness checklist includes insurance. Know what your policy does and does not cover. Contact your insurance agent or company or the Bureau of Insurance if you have questions."

Even areas hundreds of miles from the coast can experience floods and other damage caused by hurricanes' high winds and torrential rains. Most hurricane damage comes from flooding, not high winds. Even minor floods can cause extensive damage to your home, business or belongings.

Homeowners insurance policies issued in Virginia typically do not provide coverage for damage to your home and belongings due to floods, surface water or storm surges. However, the federal government does sell insurance for direct flood and flood-related damage to homeowners, renters and businesses in eligible communities through its National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). In most cases, there is a 30-day waiting period for a new flood insurance policy to take effect. To learn more about this program, contact your insurance agent or the NFIP at 1-800-427-4661 or visit www.floodsmart.gov. Since some private insurers also offer their own flood policies, you can also check with your insurance agent about the availability of a private flood insurance policy. In either case, ask whether your flood policy provides coverage for your personal property.

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Some homeowners policies contain a special deductible for wind or hurricane losses. These deductibles are applied separately from any other deductible on the homeowners policy. Some insurance companies automatically include a wind or hurricane deductible, while others offer this deductible at the policyholder's option. Wind or hurricane deductibles may be written as a flat amount, such as \$1,000, or they may be applied to the loss as a percentage of the insurance coverage on the dwelling. Remember that the deductible is the amount that you are responsible for paying before the insurance company pays its portion of a claim.

The Bureau encourages policyholders to prepare a complete inventory of their personal property including photographs, videotapes and serial numbers. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners' free smartphone app – myHOME Scr.APP.book – can facilitate this process. Keep your insurance policies and home inventory in a safe place.

If your property is damaged by a hurricane, contact your insurance agent or company as soon as possible. Make any necessary emergency repairs and take reasonable steps to prevent further damage to your property. Make a list of all damage to your property and include photographs, notes and repair-related receipts.

If you must evacuate, know the name of your insurance company and take your homeowners, auto and other insurance policies and your home inventory with you or make sure you have saved these important documents electronically. The policies will contain your policy numbers and the phone numbers of your insurance companies in case you have questions or need to file a claim.

The Bureau of Insurance offers free consumer guides for homeowners and commercial property owners with information about what to do when a disaster strikes. These and many other consumer insurance guides are available at www.scc.virginia.gov/boi.

The Bureau's specially trained staff stand ready to assist consumers with their insurance-related questions and concerns. For more information, contact the Consumer Services Section of the Bureau's Property and Casualty Division toll-free at 1-877-310-6560 or in Richmond at 804-371-9185. The mailing address for the Bureau of Insurance is P.O. Box 1157, Richmond, Virginia 23218.

For additional emergency preparedness information relating to hurricanes and other types of disasters and hazards, visit www.vaemergency.gov.

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Contact: Ken Schrad
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Date: June 6, 2019

For Immediate Release

State Corporation Commission Seeks to Protect Consumers from Surprise Medical Bills

Richmond - The State Corporation Commission (“SCC”) is proposing a protection for Virginia consumers enrolled in managed care health insurance plans to guard against surprise bills from medical providers for amounts not covered by their plan. The practice is known as balance billing.

When a patient enters a hospital or other medical facility that is in the patient’s health-plan network, the patient assumes that costs other than co-pays, coinsurance and deductibles will be covered by the patient’s insurance plan. In-network providers, through a negotiated contract with the health plan, agree to accept health plan payments that are typically discounted.

When using a facility that is part of the plan’s network of providers however, certain medical procedures may be administered by an out-of-network provider. Balance billing occurs when out-of-network providers directly bill the patient for the provider’s full charges beyond the amount covered by the insurance plan. It is not unusual for a patient to receive surprise bills for hundreds or thousands of dollars.

The SCC’s Bureau of Insurance is proposing a regulation requiring managed care health insurance plans that the SCC regulates under Virginia insurance law to require an advance notice provision in every contract with in-network facilities. As proposed, the regulation will require any hospital or medical facility in the health plan’s network to give notice prior to admission or registration informing the patient when he or she may be treated and billed by an out-of-network provider.

The notice must be sufficiently timely to allow patients to either decline the receipt of services from an out-of-network provider at the facility or contact the health plan to seek and change to another available in-network facility. The option only applies to non-emergency services.

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Under the proposed regulation, medical facilities that fail to provide this notice – not the patient – would be financially responsible for any costs from out-of-network providers that exceed the cost to the patient of in-network services.

The Commission is seeking written comments on the proposal until August 9, 2019. Comments and requests for a hearing may be sent to the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23219-2118. Please refer to case number INS-2019-00081 when commenting.

Comments may be submitted online via the SCC website at www.scc.virginia.gov/case/PublicComments.aspx. Find case number INS-2019-00081, and click on the “Submit Comments” button for this case.

The proposed effective date of the regulation is October 1, 2019. Health plans would be required to seek to amend their contracts with hospitals and other facilities within 90 days of the effective date.

[Case number INS-2019-00081](#)

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Contact: Katha Treanor
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Date: June 20, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Reminds Virginians that Disability Insurance Can Provide Income Protection if You Cannot Work Due to Accident or Illness

RICHMOND – Many Americans may consider their home, car or precious heirlooms their most valuable assets, but what about the ability to work and earn a living? Illness or accidents can render you disabled in an instant. In fact, according to the Social Security Administration, more than one in four of today’s 20-year-olds will become disabled before they reach retirement age. If that happens to you, how long could you and your family go without a paycheck and maintain your lifestyle?

The State Corporation Commission’s (SCC) Bureau of Insurance reminds Virginians that disability insurance can provide income protection when you cannot perform your job duties or earn a salary due to an injury or illness not related to your job.

There are two types of disability insurance – short-term and long-term. Short-term disability may occur due to pregnancy, certain injuries and joint disorders. Short-term disability insurance will typically replace a portion of the policyholder’s salary for three to six months. Among the most common causes of long-term disability are cancer, heart disease and back injury. Long-term insurance coverage will generally begin six months after the disability begins and can last for years or even until retirement age.

“For most people, income protection is vital to your overall financial wellness,” said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. “Disability insurance can help mitigate your risk of financial disaster by protecting you against loss of income due to accidents or illness. We protect our other assets such as homes and cars – why not our income?”

White encourages Virginians to shop around for disability insurance and compare products and prices. Among the key factors that may impact your premium costs are occupation and job duties, gender, health history, benefit period (the length of time for which an insurer will pay for a disability), waiting period (the amount of time you must be disabled before a benefit is payable) and policy provisions (for instance, a policy that pays for both total and partial disability will be costlier than one that pays only for total disability).

(more)

“Make sure you understand all provisions of the policies you are comparing,” White said. “Contact the insurance company, agent or Virginia Bureau of Insurance if you have questions.”

If you are considering purchasing long-term disability insurance, determine beforehand how much income you need to meet critical financial obligations such as rent or mortgage payments, food, car payments and fuel, utilities, other loans, insurance premiums, credit card debt, children’s education and health care expenses not covered by insurance. Also consider any other non-salary sources of income including investments and resources such as employer-provided sick leave and how long they will last if you become disabled and cannot work. Factor in as well whether you have existing disability insurance through your current job and consider what it covers and for how long.

When comparing disability insurance policies, make sure you understand how the company defines disability, the types of disabilities covered, the amount of benefits the company will pay and for how long, waiting periods before coverage kicks in, length of coverage, renewability and inflation protection, among other things.

No matter what type of insurance you are purchasing, make sure the company and agent are licensed and the company is in good standing. For questions or additional information, contact the Bureau of Insurance Life and Health Division in Richmond at 804-371-9691 or toll-free at 1-877-310-6560. You may also visit the Bureau’s website at www.scc.virginia.gov/boi/index.aspx or the National Association of Insurance Commissioners’ website at [www.naic.org/documents/consumer alert simplifying complications disability insurance.htm](http://www.naic.org/documents/consumer_alert_simplifying_complications_disability_insurance.htm).

###

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Contact: Ken Schrad
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Date: June 27, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Approves Dominion Energy Virginia Revised IRP; Warns of Increased Monthly Bills to Customers

Richmond - The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has approved the revised Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) filed by Dominion Energy Virginia. Last December, the SCC rejected Dominion's original 2018 plan giving the company 90 days to revise it.

An IRP is the utility's plan for the capital investments that it believes are necessary to provide reliable electricity service to its customers over the next 15 years (2019 to 2033).

While the SCC said that Dominion's revised plan met the minimum filing requirements of Virginia law, it also warned that the IRP "may significantly understate the costs facing Dominion's customers."

The IRP includes a true least-cost plan as a benchmark for providing a reliable supply of electrical power. As ordered by the Commission, Dominion also showed the additional costs of the various legislative mandates contained in Senate Bill 966 passed by the 2018 General Assembly. And, evidence was presented at an SCC hearing in May on the capital spending plans that Dominion presented to Wall Street analysts earlier this Spring.

The evidence demonstrated that the Senate Bill 966 mandates will cost customers more than \$6 billion in extra costs above the least-cost plan, not including lifetime financing costs.

The evidence also showed that the capital spending plans Dominion presented to Wall Street analysts on March 25, 2019 included approximately \$12.1 billion in capital investment to be paid for by Virginia customers, the majority of which is eligible to be recovered through separate bill riders called rate adjustment clauses.

These costs will have an impact on the rates customers will pay in their monthly bills over the next five years and beyond. By December 31, 2023, the estimated monthly increase will be \$29.37 for the average residential customer.

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The Commission recognized that Dominion believes this monthly bill impact will be mitigated by lower fuel costs and other factors. However, the Commission noted that the \$29.37 monthly bill increase does not include the monthly bill impact of several billion dollars of costs for the 2019 coal ash removal legislation that will be recovered from customers.

The Commission stated, “In sum, we approve Dominion’s IRP as legally sufficient, and we recognize the appropriateness of spending on capital projects when need is proven by factual evidence in actual cases. We do not, however, express approval in this Final Order of the magnitude or specifics of Dominion’s future spending plans, the costs of which will significantly impact millions of residential and business customers in the monthly bills they must pay for power.”

Virginia law now requires the company to submit an IRP every three years. The new schedule begins with Dominion’s next plan to be filed in May of 2020.

[Case number PUR-2018-00065](#)

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Date: August 1, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC's Bureau of Insurance Suggests Businesses Plan Now for Disasters

RICHMOND – Natural disasters can take a huge toll on businesses and sidetrack the best laid plans and projections. In fact, an estimated 40 percent of businesses do not reopen after a disaster, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Another 25 percent fail within one year following a disaster.

No business or individual is immune to disasters. Even disasters far away can impact your business by disrupting supply chains and communications. Small businesses are particularly vulnerable when it comes to natural disasters since they often have fewer resources, locations and employees to help them become operational again.

The State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Bureau of Insurance (Bureau) strongly suggests that small businesses review their insurance coverage regularly and adjust it, as needed, when considering their insurance needs, including the possibility of a natural disaster. Know what your policies cover and how much you will need to make repairs and pay creditors, employees and yourself in the event of a disaster. "How you plan for, and deal with, disasters can determine whether your business survives," said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. "Having the right insurance coverage and keeping it updated regularly is a must when preparing for the unexpected."

Businesses should determine whether additional or separate coverages are needed. For example, standard business insurance policies typically do not cover damage from certain types of disasters, such as floods and earthquakes, and separate coverage may be needed. Similarly, businesses may need to buy separate automobile insurance for cars and other vehicles because standard business policies cover only real property. Another option to consider is business interruption insurance, which covers the loss of income that a business suffers after a disaster.

(more)

Other things small-business owners can do protect their employees, property and operations include the following:

- Determine whether the business is located in an area at high risk of certain disasters, such as floods or fires.
- Develop a business continuity plan and practice it with employees. Make sure the plan includes employee contact information, backup vendors or suppliers and a temporary relocation site.
- Develop a system for how you will communicate and procedures for work processes and payroll. Keep in mind that employees might be working from different locations and that internet and other critical business services might not be working normally.
- Have disaster provisions at the workplace, along with evacuation maps and a working radio to hear instructions from local authorities.
- Store in a safe place any records your insurance provider will need to see after an emergency.
- Back up all personal and company data on a regular basis to help ensure you are prepared in case information is lost during a disaster.
- During a disaster, depending on the risks, ask employees to shelter in place or evacuate immediately.
- After a disaster strikes your business, contact your insurance agent immediately and ask what information is needed to file a claim.

The Bureau of Insurance offers free guides specifically geared to businesses. For more information, contact the Consumer Services Section of the Bureau of Insurance Property and Casualty Division toll-free at 1-877-310-6560 or in Richmond at 804-371-9185 or visit <https://www.scc.virginia.gov/boi/index.aspx>.

For additional emergency preparedness information relating to disasters visit www.vaemergency.gov.

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Date: August 5, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Schedules Hearings to Consider Kentucky Utilities Proposed Electric Rate Increase

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) will hold a hearing in Norton in October to receive public testimony on an electric base rate increase requested by Kentucky Utilities Company, doing business in Virginia as Old Dominion Power Company.

According to the company, the proposed rate increase would raise the monthly bill of a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours per month by \$23.45, from \$109.54 to \$132.99, an increase of 21.41 percent.

The company states that the need for a base rate increase is caused by capital investments for generation projects as well as planned improvements on its transmission and distribution network.

A public hearing is scheduled in Norton on October 2, 2019, beginning at 4 p.m. and reconvening at 7 p.m. in the Norton City Council Chambers, 618 Virginia Avenue, NW. The hearing will resume in Richmond on January 22, 2020, beginning at 10 a.m. in the SCC's courtroom on the second floor of the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street. Persons wishing to comment at any of the hearings should arrive early and notify the SCC bailiff.

Written comments may be sent by January 15, 2020, to the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. Please refer to case number PUR-2019-00060.

Persons desiring to submit comments electronically may do so at the SCC's website at www.scc.virginia.gov/case. Click on the PUBLIC COMMENTS/NOTICES link, find the comment box for case number PUR-2019-00060, and hit the SUBMIT COMMENTS button.

Case Number [PUR-2019-00060](http://www.scc.virginia.gov/case) – Application of Kentucky Utilities Company for an adjustment of electric base rates

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Date: August 5, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Approves, In Part, New Rate Rider for Dominion Energy Virginia for Recovery of Environmental Regulation Costs

Richmond – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has approved a new rate rider for Dominion Energy Virginia to recover a portion of costs spent to meet state and federal environmental regulations. Known as Rider E, the rate adjustment clause will take effect on or before November 1, 2019.

Since 2007, Virginia’s two largest electric companies generally recover the cost of providing service, plus a reasonable return, through three bill components – base rates, a fuel charge, and rate adjustment clauses, also known as rate riders. The approval of Rider E means there are now 15 riders, including the fuel rate, paid by residential customers of Dominion Energy Virginia.

Initially, Rider E will pay for certain environmental projects, including cleaner disposal of coal ash, at several coal-fired power plants – Mount Storm Power Station in West Virginia, Clover Power Station in Halifax County and two units in Chesterfield County (5 & 6).

The Commission denied recovery of environmental costs for two other Chesterfield units (3 & 4). The Commission found that “Dominion has not established that the cost incurred ... was reasonable and prudent at the time such cost was incurred.” The record showed the company made the decision in June 2015 to invest approximately \$18 million in long-term environmental compliance for units it expected to retire or retrofit within five years.

The two Chesterfield units were placed into cold storage in December 2018 and permanently retired in March 2019. The Commission said the investment was for units “... not providing benefits to retail customers. In addition, because these units are retired, the investment is not currently necessary to comply with federal regulations.”

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The Commission's final order establishes the method for recovering approved environmental expenses. The company has been directed to calculate and file its Rider E tariff within 30 days.

[Case Number PUR-2018-00195](#)

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Date: August 9, 2019
For Immediate Release

The SCC Reminds Everyone to Contact Virginia 811 *Before* You Dig

RICHMOND – August 11 is the recognized day in Virginia to remind everyone the importance of always contacting Virginia 811 before you dig. Help keep Virginia’s underground utility infrastructure damage-free and our communities, business districts and environment safe by taking this important first step.

Contacting Virginia 811 (VA811) is simple; there is no cost, and there are two convenient ways to do so: you can call 811 or go online at va811.com and request that underground utility lines are located and marked. VA811 is open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., except on legal state and national holidays. An emergency notification service is available 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

Remember to contact VA 811 before you dig and Dig with C.A.R.E!

C.A.R.E. means:

Call 811 before you dig.

Allow the required time for marking.

Respect and protect the marks.

Excavate carefully.

To learn more about “Digging with C.A.R.E.” and Virginia’s damage prevention program, contact the SCC’s Division of Utility and Railroad Safety at (804) 371-9980; or visit <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/urs/mutility/index.aspx>.

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Contact: Ken Schrad
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Date: August 14, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Sets Hearing on Proposed Insurance Regulation Designed To Protect Consumers from Surprise Medical Bills

Richmond – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) will hold a hearing on Thursday, September 12 to receive additional comments on a proposed regulation to protect Virginia consumers enrolled in managed care plans from receiving surprise medical bills.

The practice is known as balance billing. It occurs when patients receive bills directly from medical service providers who are not part of the managed care plan's network of providers.

Since early June, the Commission has received dozens of written comments on the proposed regulation, including requests for a hearing. The hearing will be held at 10 a.m. in the Commission's courtroom on the second floor of the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street in downtown Richmond. Any person wishing to speak about the proposed regulation is encouraged to arrive early and sign in with the Commission bailiff. The case number is [INS-2019-00081](#).

As proposed, managed care health insurance plans regulated by the SCC's Bureau of Insurance would be directed to include a provision in every contract with in-network facilities. The provision shall require any hospital or medical facility in the health plan's network to give notice prior to admission or registration if the patient could be treated and billed by an out-of-network provider.

The notice must be sufficiently timely to allow patients to either decline the receipt of services from an out-of-network provider at the facility or contact the health plan to seek and change to another available in-network facility. As proposed, the option only applies to non-emergency services.

Under the proposed regulation, medical facilities that fail to provide this notice – not the patient – would be financially responsible for any costs from out-of-network providers that exceed the cost to the patient of in-network services.

View [Order Scheduling Hearing](#)

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Date: August 28, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Urges Virginia Investors to Be Wary of Contracts for Difference

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission encourages Virginia investors to be cautious if approached by an individual or company that claims to trade in contracts for difference (CFD).

A CFD is an alternative to traditional financial instruments used to speculate on financial markets. It is a type of derivative contract between a buyer and a seller where the parties to the contract speculate on what the price of an underlying asset will be at a specific time. If the value of the asset increases at contract time, the seller pays the buyer the difference. If the value of the asset falls at contract time, the buyer pays the seller the difference.

CFDs are typically available only to very high net worth and experienced individuals or institutional investors. They are not traded on major exchanges, but trade over-the-counter through a network of brokers. CFDs allow investors to trade the price movement of many securities including exchange-traded funds, stock indices, and commodity futures. CFDs use leverage or margin allowing investors to put up a small percentage of the trade. Even when purchased through the most reputable dealer, CFDs are extremely risky and you could lose some, all or more than your initial investment.

State securities regulators are concerned that CFDs may be marketed to retail investors by scammers looking to make a quick profit. Ron Thomas, director of the SCC's Division of Securities and Retail Franchising, encourages Virginians to be wary of any investment opportunity that sounds exotic or too good to be true. "Before making any financial decisions, ask questions, do your homework and make sure an investment and the person offering it are licensed or registered," he said.

As with any investment opportunity, Thomas recommends that investors consider the following:

- Remain cautious of opportunities promising high returns with little or no risk.
- Be skeptical of unsolicited emails, letters or phone calls and high-pressure sales tactics involving investment opportunities.
- Be wary of complex investments and offers that you do not understand.

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- Get details of any investment offer in writing.
- Exercise caution if asked to wire money offshore.

For questions about investments and the people offering them, contact the SCC Division of Securities and Retail Franchising at 804-371-9051 or toll-free in Virginia at 1-800-552-7945. You may also visit the division's website at www.scc.virginia.gov/srf/index.aspx. To learn more about contracts for difference, visit the North American Securities Administrators Association's website at <https://www.nasaa.org/52192/informed-investor-advisory-contracts-for-difference/>.

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Date: August 30, 2019
For Immediate Release

SCC Encourages Virginians to Review Their Property Coverage Before a Hurricane or Other Disaster Strikes

RICHMOND – As Hurricane Dorian churns toward Florida, the State Corporation Commission’s (SCC) Bureau of Insurance reminds Virginians that late August to early October is often the most dangerous and active time for tropical storm activity. Plan now and make certain you are properly insured *before* disaster strikes.

Hurricane season officially runs from June 1 to November 30. Even areas hundreds of miles from the coast can be impacted by the high winds, heavy rains and flooding that accompany hurricanes and tropical storms. It will be difficult to get related coverage once a hurricane develops in the Atlantic so whether you are a homeowner, renter or business, review your coverage now and make any necessary changes.

“Don’t wait until it’s too late to protect yourself and your property from a hurricane or other natural disaster. Take steps now to protect yourself physically and financially,” said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. “Know your risk and make sure you have the coverage you need before a storm begins to brew.”

The Bureau encourages Virginians to talk to your insurance agent or company if you have questions about what is and is not covered, how to reduce property damage and what to do if damage does occur.

Most homeowners and renters insurance policies do not cover losses due to flooding. Talk to your insurance agent about flood insurance or visit the National Flood Insurance Program’s website at www.floodsmart.gov to learn more about protecting your home or business from damage due to floods, surface water or storm surge. There is typically a 30-day waiting period for a new flood insurance policy to take effect.

Create a detailed inventory list with photos, videos and serial numbers of your belongings. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) offers a free smartphone app –

(more)

myHOME Scr.APP.book – to facilitate this process. Place your insurance policies and inventory in a safe place and take them with you if you must evacuate. These records will contain your policy numbers and the phone numbers of your insurance companies in case you have questions or need to file a claim.

If your property is damaged by a hurricane, contact your insurance agent or insurance company as soon as possible. To protect your property from any further damage, make necessary emergency repairs. Document all damage to your property and include photographs, notes and repair-related receipts.

The Bureau also encourages policyholders to consider the following:

- **Does your homeowners policy contain a special deductible for wind or hurricane losses?** These deductibles are applied separately from any other deductible on a homeowners policy and may be written as a flat amount, such as \$1,000, or applied to a loss as a percentage of the insurance coverage on the dwelling.
- **Does your homeowners policy provide coverage for such things as sewer backup?** Most homeowners policies do not provide coverage for sewer backup, but policyholders may purchase additional coverage for this.
- **Are vehicles covered in the event of a hurricane or windstorm?** If you have other-than-collision coverage (often referred to as “comprehensive”) for your vehicle under your automobile policy, your vehicles generally will be covered for flood and wind damage.

The Bureau of Insurance has specially trained staff who can assist consumers with their insurance-related questions and concerns. To learn more, contact the Bureau of Insurance Property and Casualty Division toll-free at 1-877-310-6560 or in Richmond at (804) 371-9185. The Bureau also offers free consumer guides for homeowners and commercial property owners with information about what to do when a disaster strikes. These are available on the new disaster readiness section of its website at <https://www.scc.virginia.gov/boi/disaster.aspx>.

For additional emergency preparedness information relating to hurricanes and other types of disasters, visit the Virginia Department of Emergency Management website at www.vaemergency.gov/.

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Date: September 5, 2019
For Immediate Release

SCC Offers Tips for Virginia Investors Considering Initial Loan Procurements

RICHMOND – Companies using blockchain technology need to raise capital just like any other company. One way these companies have raised capital is through initial coin offerings (ICOs), which require the new company to create tokens that can be sold to investors and used for the development of new projects and innovations.

As an alternative to ICOs, however, initial loan procurements (ILPs) are an increasingly popular crowdfunding method for companies looking to attract investment capital for blockchain projects. ILPs appeal to investors interested in blockchain technology, but who are wary of the volatility and other risks of ICOs.

As with any investment opportunity, the State Corporation Commission (SCC) reminds Virginians to investigate an ILP offering *before* they invest. “Protect yourself financially by knowing the risks and how an offering works before you invest your hard-earned money. Understand how you will be paid and any legal or tax implications,” said Ron Thomas, director of the SCC’s Division of Securities and Retail Franchising.

Investors interested in ILP offerings should understand how they work and how they are different from ICOs. An ILP allows borrowers and creditors to enter into loan agreements through smart contracts stored on a blockchain. These contracts cannot be altered and provide a level of security lacking with ICOs. Instead of receiving tokens as with an ICO, an ILP investor lends money to the company that agrees to pay the loan back at an agreed time under the contract. With ILPs, investments are tied to the company’s repayment of the loan and an investor is entitled to returns in the form of interest on capital invested. ILPs purport to be less volatile and speculative than ICOs, where investors hope that the tokens they receive will maintain or increase in value over time.

For questions about investment products and companies that may be regulated, contact the SCC Division of Securities and Retail Franchising at 804-371-9051 or toll-free in Virginia at 1-800-552-7945. You may also visit the division’s website at www.scc.virginia.gov/srf/. To learn more about initial loan procurements, visit the North American Securities Administrators Association’s website at www.nasaa.org/51590/informed-investor-advisory-initial-loan-procurement/?qoid=investor-advisories.

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Date: September 10, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Offers National Life Insurance Awareness Month Reminders

RICHMOND – During Life Insurance Awareness Month, the State Corporation Commission’s (SCC) Bureau of Insurance reminds Virginians that there are many things to consider when protecting your loved ones financially with life insurance.

“Life insurance is an important decision when considering your family’s financial future,” said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. “Examine your existing financial resources, debts and other liabilities, and your family’s needs and goals. Shop around and compare prices and coverage.”

If you already have life insurance, review it regularly and update your policy and beneficiaries so that your coverage keeps pace with your changing situation. Life events such as a birth, divorce, remarriage, a new mortgage or new job may trigger a need to update your life insurance policy.

When determining whether to purchase life insurance, consider your existing resources. Does your spouse work? Do you have any sources of income other than salary? Do you have life insurance through your job? Consider the financial obligations that may fall to family members if you die, such as a mortgage, business expenses, car loan or student loan. Also consider short- and long-term goals such as providing care for a loved one, your spouse’s retirement or your children’s education.

Understand the types of life insurance available – term life or permanent – and how benefits are paid if something happens to you. Term life insurance offers death benefit protection for a specific period of time. Benefits are paid only if the policyholder dies within the policy term. Term policies generally have lower premiums, but premiums may increase as you age or at the end of a specific “term.” Term policies do not build cash value, but some permanent life insurance policies such as whole life, adjustable/universal life or variable life insurance do. Permanent policies cover the insured for their entire life as long as premiums are paid when due.

Life insurance can do more than protect your spouse and dependents after your death. Some policies contain benefits that you can use during your lifetime. For example, a policyholder might be able to use the cash value accumulated in a permanent life insurance policy to pay for education, retirement or emergencies.

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What you pay for coverage (premiums) depends largely on the type of policy you choose, your health status, age, gender, occupation, family health history and lifestyle. Factors that may affect whether you can obtain coverage and the premium you are required to pay, include: pre-existing and/or chronic health problems such as diabetes, heart disease or cancer; poor health habits such as smoking and excessive drinking; your driving record, and whether you engage in dangerous or risky activities such as rock climbing, motorcycle riding, sky diving, horseback riding or skiing.

The Bureau encourages Virginians to compare premiums, coverage and claims service when considering life insurance options. Contact the Bureau of Insurance in Richmond at 804-371-9741 or toll-free at 1-877-310-6560 to make sure the company or individual offering the coverage is licensed and in good standing. You may also visit the Bureau's website at <https://www.scc.virginia.gov/boi/pubs/lifeguide.pdf> for a free copy of the Virginia Life Insurance Consumer Guide.

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Date: September 20, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Offers Rail Safety Week Reminders

Richmond - Every three hours in the United States, a pedestrian or vehicle is hit by a train. During Rail Safety Week September 23-29, 2019, the State Corporation Commission (SCC) reminds Virginians to stay alert and always practice safe behavior around railroad tracks and trains.

A joint effort of Operation Lifesaver in the U.S. and Canada, Rail Safety Week is designed to raise awareness and highlight the importance of rail safety education. The goals of the effort include reducing collisions, fatalities, and injuries at highway rail crossings and preventing trespassing on or near railroad tracks.

Upon the SCC's creation in 1902, railroad regulation was one of the original areas of responsibility assigned to it by the Virginia Constitution. Today, the Railroad Regulation section of the SCC's Division of Utilities and Railroad Safety works closely with the Federal Railroad Administration to ensure the safe operation of railroads within Virginia. The Division of Utilities and Railroad Safety investigates citizen complaints of blocked rail crossings; conducts accident investigations; and performs railroad track bridge, rail car, and locomotive inspections. Its oversight includes two major railroads, nine short line railroads, and more than 6,700 miles of track.

Renée Salmon, Operations and Rail Safety Manager of the Division of Utilities and Railroad Safety said, "As the Commission's Rail Safety Manager, I look forward to further expanding our rail safety outreach program. Rail Safety Week is an integral part of that outreach."

The SCC offers Virginians the following rail safety tips:

- **Be aware.** Trains do not always follow set schedules. They can approach from either direction of the tracks at any time. When you are near train tracks, stay alert and remain a comfortable distance away even if you think trains aren't coming.

- **Trains have the right of way.** To avoid collisions, yield to trains because they cannot yield to you. Even if you think you have time to cross railroad tracks, trains travel faster than they appear. Err on the side of caution. Before crossing, wait until the train passes, the warning gates rise, and lights signal to proceed.
- **Always obey train crossing signals.** Although you may not see a train coming, never cross when there is an active warning, such as flashing lights or a lowered arm, at a railroad crossing. Trains can be quiet and move more quickly than you expect. Do not risk your life by assuming that you can make it across the tracks before a train arrives.
- **Cross tracks ONLY at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings.** Never play, stop, or walk on the tracks.

For more information, visit the SCC Division of Utilities and Railroad Safety website at <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/urs/rr/> or call 804-371-9980 or go to Operation Lifesaver's website at www.Oli.org.

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Date: October 7, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Sets Schedule to Consider Grid Transformation Projects Proposed by Dominion Energy Virginia

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has scheduled a January hearing to consider a plan for electric distribution grid transformation projects proposed by Dominion Energy Virginia. The company filed its petition for plan approval on September 30, 2019.

In its petition, the company states that the proposed grid technologies and grid hardening projects will improve service reliability and support the integration of distributed energy resources. This three-year phase of the plan is estimated to cost \$517.6 million in capital investment and \$83.2 million in operations and maintenance expense. Overall, the 10-year plan is estimated to cost \$2.8 billion in capital investment and approximately \$480 million in operations and maintenance expense.

One component of the plan proposes to fully deploy advanced metering infrastructure across Dominion's service territory over the next six years. This includes smart meters at all customer locations. As proposed, customers will have the option to decline a smart meter. However, doing so would involve a one-time opt out fee of \$84.53 and an on-going monthly fee of \$29.20. The fees are intended to recover the costs of a customer opting out of smart meter installation.

The public hearing is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on Monday, January 27, 2020. The hearing will be held in the Commission's second floor courtroom of the Tyler Building at 1300 East Main Street in downtown Richmond. Any person wishing to testify should appear prior to the hearing and sign in with the Commission bailiff.

Written public comments on the proposed plan are due by Tuesday, January 21, 2020. They may be sent to the Clerk of the Commission, Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond Virginia 23218-2118. All comments should refer to case number PUR-2019-00154. Comments may be submitted electronically at the SCC's website: www.scc.virginia.gov/case. Click on the public comments/notices link and then the submit comments button for this specific case.

[Case Number PUR-2019-00154](#)

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Date: October 11, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Offers Tips to Virginians Attending Free Investment Seminars

RICHMOND – Many Virginians are familiar with unsolicited invitations to attend seminars that promise a free meal at an upscale restaurant along with investment and money management strategies. The seminars, which frequently target seniors, often claim to teach attendees how to secure their retirement, earn excellent returns on investments, eliminate market risk and reduce or avoid taxes.

A recent survey sponsored by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners and the research firm Caravan found that one in five Americans has attended such an event. Of those, 41 percent reported purchasing a product or service. Among 18- to 34-year-olds, the number jumps to 58 percent.

“Insurance and other financial products are important when planning for your financial future,” said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. However, he encourages consumers to evaluate any financial product thoroughly and beware of one-size-fits-all marketing programs. “Make sure you understand the products being offered and you are comfortable that they suit your particular needs and goals.”

The State Corporation Commission (SCC) encourages Virginians to do their homework before and after attending an investment seminar. Ronald W. Thomas, the SCC’s Director of Securities & Retail Franchising, offers the following tips:

- **Prepare for a high-pressure sales pitch.** Most people who attend a free meal seminar feel pressured to purchase something or to provide personal information. A free meal does not commit you to anything. Don’t be pressured into making on-the-spot decisions about any investment opportunity or opening an account. Don’t commit to purchasing a product if you don’t understand the product, cannot get details in writing, the presenter comes on too strong, or you want to shop around.
- **Make sure the products offered are right for you.** Know yourself and how much risk you are comfortable taking. Ask questions and take the time to thoroughly assess any opportunities presented to make sure they fit your needs. What’s right for one person may not be suitable for someone else.

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- **Personal information is valuable.** The information you provide to register for a seminar may be sold to other people intent on selling you other products or investments. Make sure you understand how the sponsor of the event may use your information and whether you may receive follow-up contacts from the seminar sponsor, presenters or others.
- **Ask if the presenter and products offered during a seminar are licensed or registered.** Investors can find out more about presenters and products by asking the sponsor, conducting research using online resources, or contacting the SCC's Securities Division or the SCC's Bureau of Insurance.
- **If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.** All investments carry some degree of risk and many investments cannot guarantee a particular return. Investigate and verify any financial product and the potential risks and rewards.

In Virginia, insurance companies and agents are required to follow particular guidelines and make specific disclosures when presenting certain products, such as annuities, to consumers. The same holds true for securities broker-dealers and investment advisors and their agents and representatives when matching customers with investment products.

For questions or complaints regarding insurance companies, agents or products, Virginians can contact the SCC's Bureau of Insurance in Richmond at 804-371-9741 or toll-free (nationwide) at 1-877-310-6560 or visit www.scc.virginia.gov/boi. For questions about securities-related products and the people offering them, contact the SCC's Division of Securities and Retail Franchising in Richmond at 804-371-9051 or toll-free (in Virginia) at 1-800-552-7945 or visit www.scc.virginia.gov/srf.

The Caravan survey was conducted online by Engine among a demographically representative U.S. sample of 1,003 adults comprising 501 men and 502 women 18 years of age and older. This survey was live on July 25-28, 2019. Raw data are weighted by age, sex, geographic region, race and education to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population 18 and older.

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Date: October 29, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Urges Virginians to Do Their Homework When Shopping for Health Insurance

RICHMOND – Many Virginians will soon shop for coverage during the open enrollment period for the 2020 health insurance marketplace under the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). The open enrollment period runs from November 1 – December 15, 2019. After this date, consumers may only buy ACA plans if special enrollment conditions apply to them. So don't miss your chance to purchase the coverage you need.

Whether you are thinking about changing health insurance plans or purchasing new coverage, the State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Bureau of Insurance encourages Virginians to review their health insurance needs and thoroughly explore all their options.

"Not all health plans are the same, and some are not insurance," said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. He encourages Virginians to protect themselves when shopping for health insurance by fully understanding the coverage, costs and protections before they sign up for any health plan. "Understand enrollment periods, what ACA-compliant plans must cover and where to turn for legitimate information. If you have questions, the Bureau of Insurance can help."

Consumer protection laws govern some types of health coverage, such as plans purchased through an employer or through the federal health insurance marketplace. Other types of plans, such as a health care sharing ministry (HCSM) and discount plans, might be less expensive than health insurance plans subject to the ACA, but they are not insurance and do not offer the same protections as ACA-compliant plans.

Short-term, limited-duration (STLD) health insurance plans are not available through the health insurance marketplace, but they are regulated health insurance plans. While they may, in some cases, be less expensive than plans offered through the health insurance marketplace, they often cover less than ACA-compliant marketplace plans, may deny eligibility for coverage or exclude services because of pre-existing conditions, and may apply dollar limits on the amount they will pay.

Before signing up for any health insurance plan, the Bureau of Insurance encourages Virginians to carefully consider what health care services you and your family will need. Consumers should:

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- Find out whether anticipated services are covered, and any limits on coverage under each health care coverage option they are considering.
- Check to see if their doctors and any medications consumers and their families need is covered by the plan being considered.
- Pay careful attention to monthly premiums, as well as costs that coincide with using health services, such as co-pays, co-insurance and deductibles.

Especially during open enrollment, please keep the following in mind:

- Do not provide personal information or agree to send money in response to unsolicited calls or emails.
- Ask for details of any health plan in writing – including cost and coverage – and make sure you understand what you are purchasing.
- In Virginia, www.healthcare.gov is the official website to buy ACA plans.
- For a list of companies recognized in Virginia as selling short-term, limited-duration plans, go to www.scc.virginia.gov/boi/pubs/stldplans.pdf.
- To verify that an insurance agent, agency or company is licensed in Virginia, visit the Bureau's website at www.scc.virginia.gov/boi/ConsumerInquiry/default.aspx.
- The open enrollment period for the 2020 health insurance marketplace under the ACA ends December 15, 2019. Anyone contacting you to sell individual health insurance plans through an "enrollment period" outside of that is not selling an ACA-compliant policy.
- Be wary of telemarketers from the "national enrollment center," "national healthcare center," or other official-sounding name. The federal government will not call to sell you health insurance.
- Look for a disclosure indicating whether the health plan complies with the ACA.

For more information, contact the Virginia Bureau of Insurance toll-free at 1-877-310-6560 or online at www.scc.virginia.gov/boi or see www.scc.virginia.gov/boi/pubs/HthAlts19.pdf. Use the tool at www.scc.virginia.gov/boi/pubs/hlthplan_compare.pdf to compare plans.

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Date: November 18, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC's Bureau of Insurance Advises Virginians Regarding Insurance Coverage for Floods

RICHMOND – Although the Atlantic Hurricane season ends November 30, the State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Bureau of Insurance reminds Virginians that it doesn't take a hurricane to cause flooding. Heavy rains, saturated soil, melting snow and ice, broken dams and a lack of vegetation due to wildfires or other causes are just a few factors that can contribute to flooding.

A recent survey commissioned by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) found that about half of Americans don't know that homeowners insurance does *not* cover damage or loss caused by a flood event. The survey, conducted online by The Harris Poll among more than 2,000 U.S. adults age 18 and older, found that 31 percent of Americans incorrectly think damage or loss caused by a flood event is covered by homeowners insurance and 21 percent are not sure if the damage or loss is covered.

The Bureau of Insurance cautions Virginians that floods can happen anywhere and anytime. "It only takes a few inches of water to cause major damage to your home and its contents," said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. He encourages Virginians to assess their flood risk and protect themselves financially *before* the waters start to rise. "Flood insurance is one of the best ways you can help yourself recover financially from a flood, but you have to plan ahead," he said.

If you live in a floodplain near a river, or if you live near the coast, it is important to consider purchasing separate flood insurance for your home. Keep in mind that even low-risk communities can experience flooding.

Although homeowners insurance policies issued in Virginia typically do not provide coverage for damage to your home and belongings due to floods, the federal government does sell insurance for direct flood and flood-related damage through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). This federally-backed flood insurance is available to homeowners, renters and business owners and offers separate coverage for structures and contents. There is generally a 30-day waiting period before a new flood insurance policy takes effect.

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For more information about flood insurance, contact your insurance agent or the NFIP at 1-800-427-4661 or visit www.floodsmart.gov. Since some private insurers also offer their own flood policies, you can check with your insurance agent about the availability of a private flood insurance policy. In either case, ask whether your flood policy provides coverage for your personal property.

Unlike homeowners insurance, auto insurance generally covers damage caused by flooding. However, the policyholder must have other-than-collision (also known as comprehensive) coverage on their vehicle. This coverage pays for damage to a vehicle from such things as fire, water, hail, vandalism, glass breakage, wind and falling objects.

Among the many publications offered by the SCC's Bureau of Insurance are consumer guides regarding homeowners and auto insurance and disaster-related property insurance claims. For copies of the guides or answers to your insurance questions, contact the Bureau of Insurance Property and Casualty Consumer Services Section by calling 804-371-9185 in Richmond or toll-free at 1-877-310-6560. Copies of the consumer insurance guides are also available on the Bureau's website at <https://www.scc.virginia.gov/boi/index.aspx>.

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Date: November 20, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Encourages Virginians to Avoid Falling Victim to Affinity Fraud

RICHMOND – Investigate before you invest, even if you are dealing with someone you know. That’s the advice the State Corporation Commission’s (SCC) Division of Securities and Retail Franchising offers Virginia investors.

The SCC encourages Virginians to avoid becoming victims of affinity fraud by thoroughly researching any investment opportunity as well as the person offering it, no matter how well you know them or how trustworthy they seem.

Affinity fraud refers to investment scams that take advantage of a person’s membership or participation in an identifiable group, such as religious or ethnic groups, professional organizations, online forums or anywhere people gather around a shared belief, interest or goal. Affinity fraud can occur at places of worship, within immigrant or ethnic communities, at social clubs and elsewhere.

“Don’t let blind trust in someone leave you empty-handed when it comes to your investments,” said SCC Securities Division Director Ron Thomas. “Do your homework, even if an investment opportunity is offered by a long-time member or leader at your church, community group or social circle.”

People who promote affinity scams frequently are – or pretend to be – members of a particular group. They exploit the relationships and trust among group members, using it to convince members to invest in potentially fraudulent investment schemes or business projects for their personal benefit. In many cases, they enlist respected leaders from within the group to spread the word about an investment opportunity by convincing them that the investment is legitimate.

Thomas offers the following tips to help investors avoid affinity fraud and other investment schemes:

- **Use caution when approached about an investment offered to you through your affiliation with a group or organization.**
- **Understand that almost all investments carry some degree of risk.** Weigh risks versus rewards when considering an investment and don’t fall for promises of risk-free opportunities or guaranteed returns.

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- **Don't feel pressured to act quickly.** Beware of “can't miss” or limited-time opportunities and make sure you understand where your money is going before you invest.
- **Be aware that fraudsters are increasingly targeting groups through e-mail spams.** Be wary of unsolicited e-mails from someone you don't know offering too-good-to-be-true investment opportunities.
- **Rely on research rather than personal feelings.** Trust but verify an investment opportunity by asking questions, getting information in writing and making sure the investment and the person offering it are properly registered. In Virginia, you can do this by contacting the SCC Division of Securities and Retail Franchising at 804-371-9051 or toll-free (in Virginia) at 1-800-552-7945 or visiting its website at <https://www.scc.virginia.gov/srf/index.aspx>.

To learn more, contact the SCC Division of Securities and Retail Franchising or visit the North American Securities Administrators Association's website at <https://www.nasaa.org/53154/informed-investor-advisory-affinity-fraud/?qoid=investor-advisories>.

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Date: November 21, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Rejects Dominion's Proposed Rate of Profit; Cuts Request from 10.75% to 9.2%

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has rejected a proposal from Dominion Energy Virginia to set its future rate of return on equity at 10.75 percent. Instead, the SCC approved a rate of 9.2 percent.

The return on equity is effectively the allowed profit that Dominion's shareholders receive on their investment in Dominion's equity.

The return on equity set by the Commission impacts two major components of the monthly electric bill paid by customers. It will be used in future rate adjustment clause cases. Through these rate riders, Dominion collects from its customers the costs of various capital projects, including the authorized profit on those capital expenditures.

In an annual report to the General Assembly last August, the SCC reported that Dominion is planning new capital expenditures of more than \$12 billion between 2019 and 2023. If the capital expenditures are approved by the Commission, Dominion is eligible to collect a return on equity on the projects through its Virginia customers' rates.

For illustration, on \$12 billion of capital expenditures recovered over 25 years (a minimum recovery period for recent capital projects), a 155-basis point difference in rate of return (the difference between 10.75 percent and 9.2 percent) could cost customers an additional \$1.4 billion.

Secondly, the return on equity will be used during the 2021 review of Dominion's earnings on base rates for years 2017 through 2020, under applicable state law.

In rejecting Dominion's requested return on equity (ROE) of 10.75 percent, the Commission said that the proposed profit "represents neither the actual cost of equity in the marketplace nor a reasonable ROE for [Dominion]. Nor is Dominion's proposed ROE of 10.75% consistent with the public interest."

In contrast, the Commission found that a return of 9.2 percent was "consistent with the public interest" and "reasonably balances the interests of [Dominion], its customers, and its investors."

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Date: November 22, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Sets Local Hearing for 540 Area Code Relief

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has set three local hearings in March 2020 to receive public comments on a proposed solution for resolving the exhaustion of available phone numbers in the 540 area code.

The federal regulatory authority responsible for resolving area code exhaustion, the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA), has recently filed an application with the SCC to begin the relief planning process. According to NANPA, subscriber growth and the expanding number of devices requiring phone numbers will exhaust the numbers available in this area code in 2022. The 540 area code was created in 1996, splitting off from the 804 area code which was nearing exhaustion at that time.

The solutions being considered for resolving the area code exhaustion include:

An all-services overlay: This would superimpose a newly assigned area code over the area currently covered by the existing 540 area code. The entire current 540 area would then be covered by both the 540 area code and the newly assigned area code.

A geographic split: This would carve the existing 540 area code zone into two separate areas. One region would retain the 540 area code and the other would convert to a newly assigned second area code.

A 540 and 434 overlay, or a 540 and 276 overlay: In both options, the current 434 area code area OR the current 276 area code area would be “combined” with the current 540 area code area. If approved, the near exhausted 540 area would be combined with areas in either the 434 or 276 area code. Then those numbers would be assigned in areas of both 540 and 434; or the 540 and 276.

To allow for ample public opportunities to comment, the SCC has scheduled the following public hearings to receive comments from residents in the affected area code:

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- March 3, 2020, at 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., in the Roanoke City Council Chambers, Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue, S.W., Room 450, Roanoke
- March 4, 2020, at 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., in the Rockingham County Administration Center, Board of Supervisors Meeting Room, 20 E. Gay Street, Harrisonburg
- March 5, 2020, at 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., in the Warren County General District Court, Courthouse Square, 1 East Main Street, Front Royal

The hearing will continue in Richmond on May 6, 2020, at 10 a.m., in the Commission's second-floor courtroom located in the Tyler Building at 1300 East Main Street.

Any person wishing to comment at any of the hearings should arrive early and sign in with the SCC bailiff. The SCC will webcast an audio stream of the Richmond hearing. Instructions for listening to the proceeding can be found online at www.scc.virginia.gov/case/webcast.aspx.

Written comments on the case must be submitted by April 29, 2020, and be sent to the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23219-2118. Please refer to case number PUR-2019-00148 when commenting. Individuals may also submit comments online at www.scc.virginia.gov/case/PublicComments.aspx. Find case number PUR-2019-00148, and click on the "Submit Comments" button for this case.

For more information about this case, the Division of Public Utility Regulation has posted [frequently asked questions](#) related to area code exhaust and solutions.

Case Number [PUR-2019-00148](#) – Ex Parte: In the matter of the Commission's investigation into exhaust relief for the 540 area code.

ADVISORY: Please register online at www.scc.virginia.gov/newsrel/

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Date: December 2, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC to Launch New Online Business Filing System December 9th; 690,000 Business Entities Being Notified

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) will be launching a new online electronic business filing system on Monday, December 9. Letters to nearly 690,000 business entities and approximately 320,000 registered agents who serve those entities are being sent this week by the Clerk’s Office of SCC.

These important letters, coming in a light blue envelope, contain key information needed to use the new system.

The enhanced Clerk’s Information System (CIS) will expand online services available to customers who file documents and pay fees associated with business entities formed or registered under Virginia law. The improvements will offer confidence to all SCC Clerk’s Office customers that they can form and maintain their businesses using a secure, user-friendly system.

The new system will require the use of a personal identification number (PIN) to complete several types of transactions. The letters being mailed this week include the six-character identifier that is assigned to each business entity or to a registered agent. PIN-based identity management protocols will help ensure that only authorized users can file and update records. The letters are being sent to each entity’s registered office address on record with the Clerk’s Office.

It is important to keep this PIN in a safe and secure manner and have it readily available to file documents that change or update information on record with the Clerk’s Office.

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Upon launch of the new CIS on Monday, December 9, persons needing to use the system, aside for those just searching for information, will have to create a user account. This includes the nearly 751,000 people who have accounts in the existing system known as SCC eFile.

Holders of a user account can form new entities, pay annual fees, obtain certificates of good standing or fact of existence, file Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) statements, and perform other services without the need of a PIN. Again, the PIN is only required to change and update information in the CIS. For example, the PIN will be needed to file a corporate annual report with director and officer changes.

The Clerk's Office is prepared to answer questions regarding PIN assignment and the account creation process. Information is available online at scc.virginia.gov/clk. Or, call 1-866-538-1929 during normal working hours.

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Date: December 11, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Launches New System for Business Entities and UCC Filings; Time for 700,000 Potential Users to Create Their Accounts

Richmond – A new online electronic filing system for nearly 690,000 business entities is now available on the website of the Clerk’s Office of the State Corporation Commission (SCC) www.scc.virginia.gov/clk. The enhanced Clerk’s Information System (CIS) will allow most filings, submissions and payments to be completed online in a secure and safe manner; and will offer improved search capabilities for the public.

There are three levels of access:

- 1) Public access to search business entity and Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) records requires no user account.
- 2) User account access to form new entities, pay annual fees, and obtain certificates of good standing or fact of existence, and file UCC statements.
- 3) User account and personal identification number (PIN) access. PINs were distributed last week. PINs are needed for a business entity to file documents that change or update information on record at the Clerk’s Office. This includes filing a corporate annual report with officer or director changes.

More than 750,000 individuals held accounts in the old system known as SCC eFile. Those accounts are no longer active. To use the new CIS, users will need to create a new account. Account information will be verified by a third-party identity management service. Upon verification, a user account will be established.

Clerk of the Commission Joel H. Peck, says, “The launch of the new CIS is the culmination of a monumental project. The new system is one of the first in the country to implement this level of security.” He adds, “It will help ensure that users throughout the Commonwealth and the country can manage business and UCC filings securely and efficiently in Virginia.”

The Clerk’s Office is prepared to answer questions regarding the account creation process and PIN assignments. Information is available online at www.scc.virginia.gov/clk. Or, call 804-371-9733 or toll-free in Virginia 866-722-2551 during normal working hours. Call volume is expected to be heavy. If your matter is not time sensitive, consider calling again in a few days.



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Date: December 17, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Reminds Virginians to Prepare for the Holiday Season by Reviewing Their Insurance Coverage

RICHMOND – Although the holidays for many are filled with food, fun, friends and goodwill, they also bring an array of hazards that can impact your insurance coverage. Stolen presents, slip-and-falls on icy walkways and blazes caused by flickering candles, overloaded outlets and holiday cooking mishaps are just a few.

The State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Bureau of Insurance reminds Virginians to make sure their holiday to-do list includes checking with their insurance agent or company to ensure they have the insurance coverage they need in the event of an illness, theft or mishap.

“Whether you are at home or on the road, don't let a lack of insurance coverage dampen your holidays financially,” said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. “Plan now for holiday hazards and minimize their financial damage by ensuring your insurance coverage is up-to-date.”

Use extra caution to keep your home, vehicle, other belongings and personal information safe during the holidays. Know how much your auto and homeowners insurance will cover if someone steals gifts, decorations or other items from your vehicle, home or yard. Know, too, what type of insurance you need in the event your special holiday meal or decorative candles go up in flames; your undercooked turkey sends guests to the hospital, or frozen pipes burst causing water damage while you're away. Understand any deductibles or coverage limits that may apply.

Make an early New Year's resolution to update your home inventory. This will help you ensure your homeowners or renter's policy provides enough coverage for your belongings. Separate coverage may be needed for high-cost items such as jewelry, art or electronics. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners' free smartphone app — myHome Scr.APP.book — makes creating a home inventory quick and easy. This app is available through iTunes and Google Play.

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If you are planning a holiday trip, find out what your health insurance will cover if you get sick and end up in an urgent care facility or hospital while you are out of state or out of the country. Remember to take with you on your trip health insurance information such as identification cards and contact details for all family members.

Whether you are dashing around town in search of the perfect gift or driving hundreds of miles to visit friends and family, keep in mind that holiday driving can be a challenge with distracted drivers and severe winter weather. Before you head out the door, make sure your auto insurance policy meets your specific needs. Check your liability limits to ensure you have adequate protection against injury or damage if you are involved in an accident during the hectic holiday rush. Keep your insurance company's contact information and a copy of your insurance card with you when you drive and know what to do if an accident occurs.

If you plan to ski, snowboard, use a snowmobile or plow snow during the winter season, ask your insurance company or agent if you are adequately covered.

For information about a variety of insurance-related topics, contact the Virginia Bureau of Insurance in Richmond at (804) 371-9741 or toll-free at 1-877-310-6560 or visit its website at www.scc.virginia.gov/boi. Additional information also may be found on the InsureU portion of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners website at www.insureuonline.org.

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Date: December 19, 2019

For Immediate Release

SCC Sets Workers' Compensation Premium Level Adjustments

RICHMOND – The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has approved revisions to the premium levels charged for workers' compensation insurance in Virginia. Workers' compensation insurance provides medical care and wage replacement benefits to injured workers. Almost all Virginia employers are required to provide the coverage to their employees.

The National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) sought the revisions. The changes approved by the SCC will decrease the overall premium level for the industrial, federal, surface and underground coal mine classifications in the voluntary market and assigned risk plan.

The parties to the case collaboratively considered many factors affecting the overall decreases in premium level needed for workers' compensation insurance in Virginia, which resulted in more favorable changes for Virginia employers in this year's application. All employers may not see a premium decrease because many factors go into the final premium such as the employer's actual loss experience; however, the majority of employers will see some premium relief.

The changes will become effective April 1, 2020, for new and renewal workers' compensation policies, as follows:

Class	Voluntary Market Loss Costs	Assigned Risk Rates
Industrial	-10.7%	-8.4%
"F" (Federal)	- 1.2%	-11.0%
Coal Mines (Surface)	-16.7%	-22.9%
Coal Mines (Underground)	-10.9%	-18.2%

(more)

NCCI, a Florida-based rate service organization, represents insurance companies licensed to write workers' compensation insurance in Virginia.

Virginia's workers' compensation rates remain among the lowest in the country.

[Case number INS-2019-00080](#)