



UTC 101 – Vocab

Definitions for terms used in the UTC 101 Training Series.

Adjudication

The legal process of resolving a dispute or deciding a case.

Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA)

A 2019 state law that requires the state's electric utilities to fully transition to clean, renewable, and non-carbon-emitting resources by 2045.

Consumer-Owned Utility (COU)

A utility owned by a public group of consumers, like a cooperative. The UTC does not oversee consumer-owned utilities.

Cost-of-Service Regulation

The traditional method of utility regulation, where rate plans are calculated based on actual utility spending and investments regardless of performance.

Ex Parte Communications

A provision in the Administrative Procedures Act that bans the commissioners and judge from communicating, directly or indirectly, about any contested issue in the case with anyone participating in the case on behalf of an interested party. Parties often include UTC staff, company representatives, the Public Counsel Unit of the Attorney General's Office who represent customers, and other advocate groups.

General Rate Case

A regulatory proceeding to review a new tariff revision a utility files with the commission. A general rate case can take up to 11 months.

Investor-Owned Utility (IOU)

A utility owned by a group of private investors or shareholders. The UTC regulates investor-owned utilities.

Local Municipality/Local Government Utility

A utility owned by the local government, such as the city, or PUD. The UTC does not oversee local municipality utilities.

Open Meeting

A regular meeting held every other Thursday where the commission presides over smaller items. The public is invited to attend and comment.

Participatory Funding

A program where organizations representing energy utility customers can receive funding to participate in UTC proceedings.



Performance-Based Regulation

An alternative process of regulation that evaluates utility performance when establishing customer rates, including incentives and penalties.

Public Utility District (PUD)

A utility whose rates and services are authorized by a vote of the public. The UTC does not oversee PUDs.

Quasi-Judicial Agency

Unlike most state agencies, the commission often functions like a court of law. The commissioners serve as judges, and rule on cases brought before the commission.

Regulated Industry

An industry that the Washington State Legislature granted the UTC authority over.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

The laws of Washington state, generally passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the governor.

Tariff

A utility's schedule of rates or charges. Utilities must submit tariff changes to the UTC for approval.

Washington Administrative Code (WAC)

The rules developed by each agency on how to implement the state laws in the RCW. Rules provide more specific guidance on how to follow state laws.

Washington Administrative Procedures Act

State law governing how the commission and other similar agencies conduct adjudications.