



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## Fiscal Years 2023 to 2026

Revised July 1, 2022

### *Our mission:*

- *Determine fair, just, reasonable and nondiscriminatory rates and utility practices for electric, gas, telephone and water consumers.*
- *Ensure the delivery of safe, reliable and efficient utility services.*
- *Regulate the public utilities to secure and promote the general safety, health and public welfare.*
- *Ensure safe operation of intrastate pipelines.*
- *Ensure the safe transportation of hazardous materials by the railroads.*
- *Ensure the public safety at railroad grade crossings and public streets, roads or highways.*



## INTRODUCTION

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission (hereafter Commission) was established by the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Idaho Legislature and was organized on May 8, 1913. The Commission's statutory authorities are set out in Idaho Code, Titles 61 and 62.

The Commission oversees the intrastate operation of investor-owned electric, gas, water, and telecommunications utilities. The Commission does not regulate publicly owned, municipal or cooperative utilities. The Commission also does not regulate cable TV companies, cellular telecommunication carriers or paging companies.

For much of the last 100 years, public utility regulation has been based on the theory of a “regulatory compact” between utilities and regulators: In return for an exclusive franchise granted by regulators, utilities agree to serve all those requesting service; and in return for agreeing to invest capital in plant and facilities, utilities are given a reasonable opportunity to earn a fair return on that capital. Changes in law and technology are dramatically affecting the industries we regulate, opening the door to more competitors and enabling the establishment of more competitive markets.

The Commission also oversees rail and pipeline safety programs.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Commission serves the citizens and utilities of Idaho by ensuring that the rates and policies established for utility services are fair, just, reasonable and nondiscriminatory; utility services are delivered safely, reliably, and efficiently; and pipelines and rail carriers operate safely within the state.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

**VISION:** The Commission balances the interests of Idaho jurisdictional utilities and their customers. The Commission is uniquely situated to act on behalf of public utility ratepayers in establishing a proactive regulatory environment that encourages development and dispatch of cost-effective energy resources in an increasingly changing environment. However, implementing regulatory actions to accommodate the legitimate interests of both ratepayers and utilities requires a delicate balance between costs allowed for scientific advancements in generation and costs to the Idaho economy.

## ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

**Program Goal** - The Administration Division manages all information received, handled or published by the Commission; it informs the public of its actions and decisions; it maintains a website with an electronic database of Commission cases and other information; it provides fiscal, personnel, information technology, and administrative support services to the Commission as a whole; and it supports the Legislative and Executive branches with analysis and information on utility, pipeline and railroad matters.

**Program Objective 1** - Manage and coordinate the administrative activities of the Commission efficiently and effectively as well as facilitate the efficient management of cases being considered by the Commission.

**Annual Performance Measures:**

Number of cases older than a year that are closed during the fiscal year.

**Annual Performance Targets:**

Close 20% of all cases older than one year.

**External Factors:**

The Commission has no control over the number of cases filed. While it makes every effort to close all cases in a timely manner, the judicial process requires adequate time for public comment, discovery, investigation, presentation of evidence, receiving testimony and deliberation.

## UTILITIES DIVISION

**Program Goal** - Ensure that the citizens of Idaho are charged just, fair, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory rates for utility commodities and that utility services are delivered safely, reliably and efficiently.

**Program Objective 1** – Perform audits and investigations of utilities for compliance with Commission orders and regulations.

**Annual Performance Measures:**

Number of comprehensive audits completed.

Number of utility annual reports reviewed.

**Annual Performance Target:**

Conduct seven comprehensive audits of utilities.

Conduct 20 annual report reviews of utilities.

**External Factors:**

The Commission has no control over the number of rate cases filed in a fiscal year. Funding and manpower limits the number of audits. The availability of qualified auditors, engineers and analysts to fill personnel vacancies impacts operations. Reviews may produce results requiring additional time and resources to resolve.

**Program Objective 2** – Investigate and resolve complaints from customers. Respond to inquiries regarding regulated utilities.

**Annual Performance Measures:**

Number of formal complaints received by Commission.

Number of informal complaints received by Commission.

Number of inquiries received by Commission.

Average number of days needed to respond to inquiries and resolve informal complaints.

**Annual Performance Target:**

Respond to inquiries and resolve informal complaints within an average of 10 business days.

**External Factors:**

The Commission has no control over the number of inquiries or complaints received in a fiscal year. Funding for resources limits the number of investigators to handle inquiries and complaints.

## **PIPELINE SAFETY SECTION**

**Program Goal** - Serve the citizens of Idaho by ensuring the safe transportation of natural gas shipped in intrastate pipelines. This is accomplished by monitoring the compliance of jurisdictional operators with state and federal regulations.

**Program Objective 1** – Conduct on-site visits of gas system operators’ facilities and conduct audits and inspections to ensure compliance with state and federal pipeline safety regulations.

**Annual Performance Measures:**

Number of inspection units audited.

Number of inspection days completed.

**Annual Performance Targets:**

14 inspection units audited.

275 inspection days completed.

**External Factors:**

Availability of funds, weather, and operator schedules.

**Program Objective 2** – Conduct on-site inspections of gas system operator records, maintenance, construction, training, integrity management, incident, operator qualification and damage prevention activities to ensure all areas of natural gas transportation are conducted in a safe manner.

**Annual Performance Measures:**

Number of inspection types audited.

**Annual Performance Targets:**

Perform inspection of predetermined operational aspects of each operator each calendar year.

**External Factors:**

Availability of funds, weather, and operator schedules.

**Program Objective 3** – Conduct follow-up investigation of all natural gas operator reportable accidents and incidents to ensure corrective action is taken and the operator is in compliance with state and federal regulations.

**Annual Performance Measures:**

Number of reportable accidents and incidents.

**Annual Performance Targets:**

Conduct investigation follow-up of all reportable accidents and incidents.

**External Factors:**

Availability of funds, weather, and operator schedules.

## **RAIL SECTION**

**Program Goal** - Serve the citizens of Idaho by ensuring that carriers comply with state and federal safety regulations regarding crossings, clearances and the carriage of hazardous materials. The Commission will also determine whether or not it is in the public interest to represent the state in various rail line abandonment cases before the Surface Transportation Board.

**Program Objective 1** - Inspect rail crossings and clearances for compliance with rules and regulations based on complaints and accident investigations.

**Annual Performance Measures:**

Number of rail crossings and clearances inspected based on complaints, applications, and

accidents.

**Annual Performance Targets:**

Investigate all rail crossing complaints within 30 days, and accidents within 180 days

**External Factors:**

Number of complaints, number of accidents, availability of funds, weather, and operator schedules.