

CONSUMER PROTECTION BOARD

MISSION

The Consumer Protection Board (CPB) was created to protect the rights of the State's consumers. The CPB represents consumers in utility rate cases and related proceedings; advises the Governor on consumer issues; helps draft legislation that protects consumers; handles consumer complaints and promotes consumer education.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The Consumer Protection Board consists of two units: Utility Intervention and Consumer Advocacy. The Utility Intervention Unit is staffed by attorneys and experts in the field of economics, engineering, finance, and accounting. The Advocacy Unit employs specialists in the field of consumer law, complaint handling, consumer education, and research. The CPB is located in Albany, with satellite offices in Rochester and New York City. For 1999-2000 the Consumer Protection Board will have a workforce of 32.

FISCAL BACKGROUND AND BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Consumer Protection Board is financed primarily from an assessment on utility companies operating within the State. The assessment provides 76 percent of CPB's funding and State tax dollars from the General Fund provides 16 percent. The balance of the Consumer Protection Board's funding is derived from the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA), which will reimburse CPB for its activities related to LIPA's customers.

The Executive Budget recommends approximately \$2.8 million for the Consumer Protection Board for 1999-2000 including over \$442,000 in General Fund support and \$2.3 million in funding provided from utilities.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Utility Intervention Unit is responsible for representing residential and commercial customers in rate proceedings before the Public Service Commission (PSC). The Board participates in proceedings involving telephone, electric, gas and water utilities as well as generic proceedings to formulate regulation to protect the interests of consumers as the various industries work toward deregulation. These are on-going proceedings to shape the future of regulation. The Board's participation in these proceedings offers the consumers' perspective and assists regulators in developing policies that balance the interests of all parties. A sample of the on-going proceedings include telephone as local service opens to competition, and metering and other issues for gas and electric as incumbent utilities are no longer the sole service provider. Proceedings dealing with the divestiture of assets are conducted on an individual utility basis as the need arises.

In addition, during 1999 many of the State's utilities are required to greatly expand the amount of electricity subject to competition. Many of these issues will require efforts to educate the public so that they may make informed decisions. The Board will undertake outreach activities relative to natural gas and telephone in conjunction with PSC activities in those areas, which will be similar to our efforts in electricity.

The Consumer Advocacy Unit mediates disputes between consumers and businesses, analyzes legislation affecting consumers, investigates consumer-related issues, and conducts education programs. The Consumer Advocacy Unit received over 9,100 complaints and inquiries during 1998, a 38 percent increase over 1997.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

ALL FUNDS APPROPRIATIONS

Category	Available 1998-99	Appropriations Recommended 1999-00	Change	Reappropriations Recommended 1999-00
State Operations	\$2,813,100	\$2,791,400	-\$21,700	. . . .
Aid To Localities . . . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .
Capital Projects . . . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .
Total	\$2,813,100	\$2,791,400	-\$21,700	. . . .

ALL FUND TYPES LEVELS OF EMPLOYMENT BY PROGRAM ANNUAL SALARIED POSITIONS

Program	Available 1998-99	1999-00 Recommended Average Fill Level			Change
		Personal Service (Regular)	Maintenance Undistributed	Total Recommended 1999-00	
Consumer Protection					
General Fund	7	7	. . . .	7	. . . .
Utility Intervention					
Special Revenue Funds — Other	25	25	. . . .	25	. . . .
Total	32	32	. . . .	32	. . . .

STATE OPERATIONS ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY FUND TYPE APPROPRIATIONS

Fund Type	Available 1998-99	Recommended 1999-00	Change
General Fund	\$413,500	\$442,500	+ \$29,000
Special Revenue Funds — Other	2,399,600	2,348,900	-50,700
Total	\$2,813,100	\$2,791,400	-\$21,700

STATE OPERATIONS ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY PROGRAM APPROPRIATIONS

Program	Available 1998-99	Recommended 1999-00	Change
Consumer Protection			
General Fund	\$413,500	\$442,500	+ \$29,000
Utility Intervention			
Special Revenue Funds — Other	2,399,600	2,348,900	-50,700
Total	\$2,813,100	\$2,791,400	-\$21,700

STATE OPERATIONS — GENERAL FUND SUMMARY OF PERSONAL SERVICE APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES 1999-00 RECOMMENDED

Program	Total Personal Service		Personal Service Regular (Annual Salaried)	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Consumer Protection	\$299,600	+ \$29,000	\$299,600	+ \$29,000
Total	\$299,600	+ \$29,000	\$299,600	+ \$29,000

CONSUMER PROTECTION

**STATE OPERATIONS — GENERAL FUND
SUMMARY OF NONPERSONAL SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE UNDISTRIBUTED
APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES
1999-00 RECOMMENDED**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Supplies and Materials</u>
		<u>Change</u>	<u>Amount</u>
			<u>Change</u>
Consumer Protection	\$142,900	. . . .	\$13,000
Total	<u>\$142,900</u>	<u>. . . .</u>	<u>\$13,000</u>

<u>Program</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Travel</u>	<u>Contractual Services</u>
		<u>Change</u>	<u>Amount</u>
			<u>Change</u>
Consumer Protection	\$24,500	. . . .	\$97,400
Total	<u>\$24,500</u>	<u>. . . .</u>	<u>\$97,400</u>

<u>Program</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Equipment</u>
		<u>Change</u>
Consumer Protection	\$8,000	. . . .
Total	<u>\$8,000</u>	<u>. . . .</u>

**STATE OPERATIONS — OTHER THAN GENERAL FUND
SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES
1999-00 RECOMMENDED**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Personal Service</u>
		<u>Change</u>	<u>Amount</u>
			<u>Change</u>
Utility Intervention	\$2,348,900	-\$50,700	\$1,547,400
Total	<u>\$2,348,900</u>	<u>-\$50,700</u>	<u>\$1,547,400</u>

<u>Program</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Nonpersonal Service</u>	<u>Maintenance Undistributed</u>
		<u>Change</u>	<u>Amount</u>
			<u>Change</u>
Utility Intervention	\$791,500	-\$13,900	\$10,000
Total	<u>\$791,500</u>	<u>-\$13,900</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>