

SB 94: Consumer Utility Council (CUC)

Legislative Rubric from Science for Georgia

[SB 94](#) would create the Office of the Consumers' Utility Counsel (CUC) to represent consumers in matters before the Public Service Commission (PSC) or other agencies concerning public utilities. The PSC is the entity that approves the rates that Georgia Power charges their customers. This body is supposed to be elected – [but elections have been on pause due to representation law suits](#). In the meantime, the PSC has [allowed multiple rate increases](#). A CUC used to exist in Georgia but was mothballed in the late 2000's due to budget constraints.

Criteria	Variables			
Impact Who is going to be impacted? Is it equitable? List stakeholders & opinions.	Negative		Positive	
	This bill would create a dedicated entity meant to advocate for consumers when it comes to utility-related matters. This will provide Georgia residents with stronger representation when it comes to utility related issues, such as lowering utility rates and implementing consumer-friendly policies. A similar counsel currently exists in Ohio working on behalf of the consumers.			
Reach Does it reach its target audience?	0 - No impact on target audience.	1 - Impacts narrow segment.	2 - Impacts majority; exceptions.	3 - Impacts entire target audience
	The goal of this bill is to advocate on behalf of consumers of Georgia utilities.			
Scientific Merit Does it utilize scientific research accurately?	YES - this does follow scientific research accurately. Here's why....		NO - this does not present scientific research accurately.	
	Yes, this bill follows science because it is created on behalf of consumers' rights. Similar counsels already exist to represent consumers in different states.			
Financial Feasibility Is it financially feasible? or does this have burdensome finances (higher taxes, future costs, etc)?	0 - Extremely high costs	1 - Expensive but can be done	2 - Slight	3 - No financial burden
	This bill requires funding to be allocated for the director's compensation. Compensation will be determined by the governor so specific finances cannot be determined currently. However, the bill also requires that certain employees of the Public Service Commission assist the new director, preventing the need for additional employees. Bill sponsors are currently exploring funding mechanisms.			
Political Feasibility Level of opposition and partisan disagreement.	0 - Majority disagreed, regardless of party.	1 – Split along party lines	2 - Minimal Opposition	3 - Complete consensus (zero to five 'Nays').
	This bill has 23 sponsors in the Senate, comprised of both Democrats and Republicans. Last year, a similar bill passed the Senate with no opposition, but was held up in the House.			

Measurable Metrics? We recommend looking at these 3 metrics. Is the data available or being measured?	0 - no data	1 - some data / not accessible	2 - most data / somewhat accessible	3 - complete transparency
	<p>The bill provides for no metrics to measure progress. Some suggested metrics, that could be kept by advocacy groups and watchdogs are: customer opinion polls, rate increase and size, and if new power generation is via sustainable sources.</p>			