



Information Management and Access Project (InfoMAP) **“Providing Consumers and Utilities with 21st Century Services and Electronic Filing”**

Introduction

- The Pennsylvania PUC is dealing with complex 21st century utility issues and markets, but our case-management technology remains in the 20th century while other agencies continue to advance. We need the General Assembly’s approval of funding for upgrading systems to continue to serve the public interest efficiently and effectively.
- The PUC’s case-management system includes mainframe-based COBOL applications developed internally in 1978 and is very difficult to support due to the declining number of technicians for such applications.

The Proposal

- The Pennsylvania PUC’s 2005-06 budget request includes \$3.85 million for a \$6.6 million two-year Information Management and Access Project (InfoMAP), which was originally proposed last year. With the current level of funding approved under the 2004-05 budget (\$660,000), InfoMAP would be funded over 10 years. In order to move forward as planned, the PUC needs funding over a two-year period.
- The proposed InfoMAP would provide a single point of entry, through www.puc.state.pa.us, for utilities, the public and consumers to submit and access information, initiate transactions, and conduct business. It would permit electronic filing of documents and provide electronic access to filings.
- InfoMAP would bring savings in time and money, greater efficiency, easier access to the Commission by consumers and utilities, and a greater return on state investment.
- The PUC is focused on rates, reliability and choice to protect the public interest, promote economic development and preserve the environment. InfoMAP would help us to do that by enhancing our efficiency and by giving us the ability to receive and share documents electronically.

The Situation

- The Commission received, docketed, tracked and filed more than 93,000 documents in 2004, compared to about 21,000 documents 20 years ago. The documents may be hundreds of pages in length, with multiple copies required, which need to be distributed to staff members in various Commission bureaus.
- The Commission needs a system which will provide up-to-date case status information along with managed workflow and efficient information exchange.
- Various independent applications are in use throughout the PUC, resulting in redundant data entry, as well as the inability to share and update information.
- The current system is very cumbersome for users to navigate, update and share information; the PUC is still dependent on hard copies and manual processes; and providing public access is difficult.

The Solution

- With the support of the General Assembly and the Governor, the PUC intends to develop a new Information Management and Access Project that would:
 - ✓ Move the Commission's dependence on "hard-copy" files to electronic files.
 - ✓ Improve the flow of documents filed by consumers and utilities.
 - ✓ Allow up-to-date case status information.
 - ✓ Create efficient information exchange.
 - ✓ Supersede many redundant reporting and tracking systems.
 - ✓ Accept and distribute documents electronically.
 - ✓ Ultimately allow utilities to make online payments.
 - ✓ Be based on successful systems in place at the Missouri and Connecticut PUCs, and at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and Federal Communications Commission.

Who Benefits?

- Conservative estimates show annual savings in the millions to utilities collectively, resulting from electronic filings, tracking and e-payments.
- Projections show annual savings of nearly \$500,000 to the Commission, primarily due to the elimination of the Commission's share of a data warehouse contract, but also resulting from increased staff efficiency and reduced paper costs. A similar project in Missouri led to a 60 percent reduction in paper-based activity and a 25 percent productivity gain.
- PUC employees would enjoy easier work flow and access to forms.
- Similar to access at other state and federal agencies, practitioners and consumers could make electronic filings, and documents could be distributed electronically throughout the Commission.
- Consumers would receive information faster and more easily.

Who Pays for It?

- Proposed additional funding for Fiscal Year 2005-06, over levels approved last year, would increase assessments to utilities by approximately 7 percent. This impact per utility would range from less than \$100 to over \$300,000, with half of utilities paying \$25 or less and the other half paying more than \$25. The average for all utilities would be approximately \$700 in the first year.

Who Develops It?

- If funding is approved, the Commission will issue a Request for Proposal to attract a vendor who can most economically build the system to meet the needs of the Commission, as well as the expectations of consumers, utilities, practitioners and others doing business with the Commission.
- The Commission welcomes input from all stakeholders in designing this new system.