

■ Mission

The mission of the Kansas Corporation Commission is to protect the public interest through impartial and efficient resolution of all jurisdictional issues. The agency shall regulate rates, service and safety of public utilities, common carriers, motor carriers, and regulate oil and gas production by protecting correlative rights and environmental resources.

■ Regulatory Authority

The Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) regulates five cornerstone industries in the Kansas economy. The Commission has the responsibility of ensuring that natural gas, electricity, telephone and transportation vendors provide safe, adequate and reliable services at reasonable rates. The Commission also has the mandate of assuring that oil and gas producers protect correlative rights and environmental resources.

The authority of the KCC is derived from KSA 74-601 to 74-631.

■ What is regulated & what is not

In the absence of competition, the KCC regulates public utilities, common carriers, motor carriers, and oil and gas producers. It does not regulate most electric cooperatives, water cooperatives, municipalities, wireless telephones, long distance phone services, cable companies or the internet.

■ History

The Kansas Commission was one of the first state regulatory bodies in the nation, established as the Railroad Commission in 1883 by the Kansas Legislature. The Railroad Commission had power and authority to regulate steam-operated railroads, express companies, sleeping car companies and inter-company electric lines. The members were elected by popular vote.

In 1911, the Kansas Legislature created a three member Public Utilities Commission to regulate telegraph and telephone companies, pipeline companies, common carriers, water, electric, gas and all power companies with the exception of those owned by municipalities. Members of this commission were appointed by the Governor.

The present regulatory body, The State Corporation Commission of the State of Kansas was established by the Legislature in 1933. Its jurisdiction was extended to include the regulation of motor carriers, gas conservation and supervision of plugging abandoned wells to protect fresh and useable water from pollution.

■ Structure & Organization

The three member Commission is appointed by the Governor with the approval of the Senate. Member serve staggered four-year terms. Law provides that no more than two of the three commissioners may belong to the same political party. Commissioners elect one of their colleagues as Chair. The Chair acts as agency head with input from the other members. The Commission acts independently as a quasi-judicial branch of the government with authority to render judgements and decisions on regulated utilities.

The work of the Commissioners is supported by the Divisions of Administration, Utilities, Conservation, Transportation and Energy.