

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
1325 G STREET, N.W., SUITE 800
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005**

ORDER

February 18, 2026

FORMAL CASE NO. 1185, IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF THE OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE’S COUNSEL FOR AN INVESTIGATION INTO POTOMAC ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY’S RESTORATION OF ELECTRIC SERVICE IN WARDS 2, 3, 4, AND 6, Order No. 22793

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By this Order, the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia (“Commission”) grants the Office of the People’s Counsel for the District of Columbia’s (“OPC” or “Office”) Motion to expand the investigation to the entire city regarding Potomac Electric Power Company’s (“Pepco”) general outage/restoration practices, with particular attention to the outage experiences in Wards 2, 3, 4 and 6.

II. BACKGROUND

2. It is undisputed that residents of Wards 3 and 4 experienced a power outage between August 1 - 2, 2025.¹ On September 24, 2025, OPC filed a Petition for Investigation into damages allegedly incurred by multiple residents from power surges following the restoration of power. Given the unusual magnitude of the alleged damages, we opened an investigation into this matter.² Customers in Wards 2 and 6 have since raised similar concerns over outages and OPC filed the instant motion to expand the investigation to the entire city with particular attention to outages in Wards 2 and 6.³ On December 1, 2025, Pepco filed a Reply to OPC’s Motion, arguing that the Motion to Amend should be denied.⁴

¹ *Service Outage 2025-01-E*, Potomac Electric Power Company’s Non-Major Customer Outage Report for August 2, 2025, filed August 5, 2025.

² *Formal Case No. 1185, In The Matter Of The Petition Of The Office Of The People’s Counsel For An Investigation Into Potomac Electric Power Company’s Restoration Of Electric Service In Wards 2, 3, 4, And 6 (“Formal Case No. 1185”)*, Order No. 22728, rel. October 22, 2025.

³ *Formal Case No. 1185*, Motion of the Office of the People’s Counsel for the District of Columbia to Amend the Granted Investigation to Encompass the Entire City with Particular Attention to Outages in Wards 2 and 6 at 1, filed November 19, 2025 (“OPC Motion”).

⁴ *Formal Case No. 1185*, Potomac Electric Power Company’s Reply to the Office of the People’s Counsel’s Motion to Amend, filed December 1, 2025 (“Pepco Reply”).

III. DISCUSSION

A. OPC MOTION TO AMEND INVESTIGATION

3. In the Motion to expand the investigation to encompass the entire District of Columbia, OPC states that it has learned of service interruptions in Wards 2 and 6 that raise similar problems to those in Wards 3 and 4.⁵ According to OPC, a growing pattern of events suggests the possibility of broader systemic deficiencies in Pepco's infrastructure management, service restoration process, and communication protocols.⁶ OPC argues that system reliability failures require comprehensive data collection and analysis to develop effective remedies.⁷ OPC asks that Pepco be required to provide detailed service interruption reports for Wards 2 and 6, copies of all root-cause analyses completed for both major and non-major "blue sky" outages, records for all scheduled and unscheduled maintenance activities related to the distribution system in both Wards, and all documentation, notifications, and public-facing materials associated with customer communications, outage notifications, and system update reporting associated with Wards 2 and 6.⁸

B. PEPCO'S REPLY

4. Pepco opposes OPC's Motion on two grounds. First, Pepco explains that OPC makes general allegations, but fails to explain why outages that have occurred in calendar year 2025 bear any relationship to the single outage for which the Commission opened the investigation.⁹ Pepco argues that the Commission has just begun its investigation and has made no findings of fact or conclusion.¹⁰ Pepco argues that the August 1-2 Outage affecting Wards 3 and 4 was an outage caused by a tree outside Pepco's right-of-way falling on Feeder 14896 (an overhead feeder), resulting in multiple downed poles and wires; Pepco began restoration efforts approximately one hour after the outage, after the area was made safe. Pepco asserts that OPC has failed to establish any connection from this outage to the ones that occurred on the underground system in Wards 2 and 6.¹¹

⁵ OPC Motion at 2. Additionally, three Councilmembers have weighed in on this matter. On October 23, 2025, Councilmember Brooke Pinto held a public roundtable entitled "Power Outage Emergency Planning and Response and Recent Significant Power Outage Incidents." Councilmember Janeese Lewis George filed a letter in support of OPC's Petition on October 24, 2025. Councilmember Charles Allen attended a Ward 6 community meeting on January 24, 2026.

⁶ OPC Motion at 3.

⁷ OPC Motion at 3.

⁸ OPC Motion at 4.

⁹ Pepco Reply at 2.

¹⁰ Pepco Reply at 2.

¹¹ Pepco Reply at 3.

5. Second, Pepco argues that, absent two large-duration underground outages in 2025, Pepco's reliability metrics align with those of previous years, and that it is on pace to meet Commission reliability standards.¹² Pepco states that reliability metrics were established by the Commission in April 2022 and that Pepco has consistently met and exceeded the reliability standards, including the System Average Interruption Duration Index ("SAIDI") and the System Average Interruption Frequency Index ("SAIFI").¹³ Pepco states that in 2024, its SAIDI was 0.54 hours, below the 1.00-hour threshold, and its SAIFI was 0.27, below the 0.55-outage threshold.¹⁴ Pepco states that, even including the two underground outages, it is on pace to meet the standard in 2025 with a SAIDI of 0.83 hours and a SAIFI of 0.32.¹⁵

IV. DECISION

6. Although outages could be handled as routine quality of service matters under our existing rules, due to the nature of the damages affecting air conditioning systems, digital thermostats, wall ovens, microwaves, wall sockets, smart meters, televisions, and cable boxes, along with the total costs that are falling on customers, we think an investigation is warranted to determine whether there is a systemic problem that needs to be addressed immediately. While Pepco emphasizes the absence of a direct causal link, the Commission's statutory mandate under D.C. Code §§ 1-204.93, 34-301, and 34-1101 is to ensure safe, adequate, and reliable service for all residents. These laws give the Commission broad authority to supervise utilities, investigate service quality and restoration practices, and order improvements when needed to protect the public interest. Because repeated outages and restoration issues raise systemic reliability concerns, even when overall metrics appear satisfactory, a broader review is necessary to confirm that Pepco's operational practices and outage response meet these statutory obligations. Patterns of outages and voltage fluctuations reported across multiple wards, combined with documented consumer harm and Council of the District of Columbia concern, warrant a broader inquiry. Pepco's reliance on SAIDI and SAIFI averages does not negate localized failures or procedural deficiencies that can significantly impact public safety and consumer confidence. A broader review is necessary to determine whether Pepco's operational practices, asset management, and outage response meet the Commission's reliability standards. Moreover, the Commission has a duty to address systemic reliability concerns, not just isolated events. Even when overall metrics appear satisfactory, repeated outages and voltage irregularities suggest potential weaknesses in infrastructure management and restoration protocols. Public confidence in electric service depends on consistent performance across all neighborhoods, and the Commission must act to ensure that Pepco's practices align with statutory obligations and protect the public interest.

7. Accordingly, the Commission grants OPC's Motion to Amend Order No. 22728. The scope of *Formal Case No. 1185* is expanded to include outages and restorations occurring from January 1, 2025, through February 18, 2026, including those affecting Wards 2 and 6. The

¹² Pepco Reply at 3-4.

¹³ Pepco Reply at 3-4.

¹⁴ Pepco Reply at 4.

¹⁵ Pepco Reply at 4.

Commission will review the causes, restoration practices, and communication issues associated with these outages to ensure a comprehensive assessment of Pepco's reliability and performance across the District. Granting OPC's motion will allow the Commission to examine Pepco's reliability performance, restoration practices, customer communications, and claims process District-wide, consistent with the Commission's statutory authority and public interest obligations.

8. To facilitate the Commission's investigation, the Commission has included as Attachment A to this Order a set of questions directed to Pepco and OPC. Pepco and OPC are directed to file written responses to these questions within thirty (30) days of the date of this Order.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

9. The Office of the People's Counsel for the District of Columbia's Motion to Amend the Investigation is **GRANTED**;

10. The scope of *Formal Case No. 1185* is expanded to include outages and restoration performance from January 1, 2025, through February 18, 2026; and

11. The Potomac Electric Power Company and the Office of the People's Counsel for the District of Columbia are **DIRECTED** to file written responses to the questions listed in Attachment A within thirty (30) days of the date of this Order.

A TRUE COPY:

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMISSION:



CHIEF CLERK:

**BRINDA WESTBROOK-SEDGWICK
COMMISSION SECRETARY**

Attachment A – Questions for Investigation

This attachment provides targeted questions to guide the expanded investigation in *Formal Case No. 1185*. These questions are intended to ensure a comprehensive review of Pepco's reliability, restoration practices, customer communications, and claims processes, as well as OPC's assessment of consumer impacts and systemic issues.

Questions for Pepco

1. Provide detailed outage reports for outages that took place on August 1-2, 2025, in Wards 3 and 4, outages in March and July of 2025 in Ward 2 and, February and October of 2025 and January of 2026 in Ward 6, including date, time, duration, cause, feeder linked to the outage, and number of customers affected.
2. For the following questions please provide the requested information for the outages identified above:
 - a. Describe the restoration process for each outage, including steps taken to isolate and repair faults, restoration timelines, and any deviations from standard procedures.
 - b. Identify preventive maintenance or reliability improvement projects scheduled or completed in these wards prior to the outages. Were any projects deferred or canceled? Explain why.
 - c. Were there any post-outage review processes? If so, please explain how outage findings are incorporated into future system planning or reliability improvements.
 - d. Describe the protection scheme, such as distribution automation devices (relays, reclosers, sectionalizers), in place on the affected feeder(s) in the above wards.
 - e. Did the existing protection scheme operate the way it was intended? If not, explain why not.
 - f. Explain how customers were notified during these outages. Provide copies of outage notifications and customer updates.
 - g. Provide data on voltage fluctuations recorded (including system monitoring from SCADA or AMI voltage logs) before, during, and after these outages, including any deviations from normal operating ranges, causes of the voltage fluctuations, and describe measures taken to mitigate damage to customer equipment.
 - h. Explain how voltage quality is monitored and evaluated during outage and restoration conditions.
 - i. Indicate the total number of claims filed for each outage event, the number approved or denied, and the reasons for denial.
 - j. Confirm whether Pepco repair crews informed customers that the August 1–2 surge was related to equipment problems rather than external causes. Provide any internal investigation or notes on this issue.
3. Submit copies of root-cause analyses for major outages and any lessons learned reports prepared by Pepco.
4. Detail Pepco's communication protocols during extended outages, including escalation procedures and coordination with District agencies.
5. Explain Pepco's policy for communicating outage causes to customers. Provide any internal guidance or training materials given to field crews regarding what to communicate during outages.

Questions for OPC

1. Summarize complaints or reports received from customers for outages that took place on August 1-2, 2025, in Wards 3 and 4, outages in March and July of 2025 in Ward 2 and, February and October 2025 and January 2026 in Ward 6, including common themes such as restoration delays, voltage issues, and communication gaps.
2. For the following questions please provide the requested information for the outages identified above:
 - a. Provide details of community meetings, ANC resolutions, or Council of the District of Columbia hearings related to these outages, and identify key recommendations or concerns raised.
 - b. Summarize statements from customers at community meetings.
 - c. Based on OPC's review, do these statements suggest inconsistencies between Pepco's official position and what customers were told in the field? Provide examples.
 - d. Identify any patterns in claims denials and whether customers were informed of the reasons for denial.
3. Based on OPC's review, what patterns suggest systemic reliability or communication deficiencies? Include any analysis of feeder-level or substation-level trends.
4. Identify specific consumer protection issues observed during these outages, including claims processing and compensation for damaged equipment.
5. Recommend any additional data or reporting requirements that would assist the Commission in evaluating Pepco's performance and improving reliability.
6. Provide OPC's recommendations for improving transparency in Pepco's claims process and communication during outages.

COMMISSION ACTION

FORMAL CASE NO. 1185, IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF THE OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL FOR AN INVESTIGATION INTO POTOMAC ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY'S RESTORATION OF ELECTRIC SERVICE IN WARDS 2, 3, 4, AND 6,

Date 2/18/26 Formal Case No. 1185 Tariff No. _____ Order No. 22793

	Approve Initial & Date	Dissent Initial & Date	Abstain Initial & Date
Chairman Emile Thompson	<u>ET/DJ 2/18/26</u>	_____	_____
Commissioner Richard A. Beverly	<u>RB/DJ 2/18/26</u>	_____	_____
Commissioner Ted Trabue	<u>TT/DJ 2/18/26</u>	_____	_____

Certification of Action

Dionne Joemah
General/Deputy General Counsel

Brian Edmonds
OGC Counsel/Staff