



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 11, 2024

TO: Consumer Protection Commission

FROM: Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Department of Cable and Consumer Services

DS

RLM

SUBJECT: Consumer Protection Commission Meeting for June 18, 2024

Please find attached the Consumer Protection Commission meeting packet. The next scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. in Conference Room 232** of the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia.

Please RSVP with your attendance to Susan Jones by **COB on Monday, June 17, 2024**, at Susan.Jones@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-5877.

cc: Amanda K. Kastl, Director, Consumer Services Division
Department of Cable and Consumer Services

Susan C. Jones, Branch Manager
Consumer Affairs Branch



**FAIRFAX COUNTY
CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMISSION
June 18, 2024 AGENDA**

Call to Order by the Chairperson (7:30 PM)

Remote Participation Motions

Minutes

- Approval of the draft May 21, 2024, meeting minutes

Report of the Director

Old Business

New Business

- Office of Public Affairs Presentation

Commissioner Matters

Report of the Chairperson

General Interest

- Consumer Protection Commission Calendar
- Consumer Protection Commission Membership
- Consumer Affairs Statistics
- Community Outreach
- Consumer Resources

Minutes of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission

May 21, 2024

7:30 PM
Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Chairperson Kratovil, presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Belkowitz, Kharat, Kirk,
Kratovil, Springer, Roark

Absent:

Commissioners: Gasimov, Gulakowski,
Rosier, Svab

Staff:

Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Cable and Consumer Services
Amanda K. Kastl, Division Director
Consumer Services Division
John Burton, Assistant County Attorney
Office of the County Attorney
Susan C. Jones, Branch Manager
Consumer Affairs Branch
Carl Newcomb, Branch Manager
Regulation and Licensing Branch
Melissa Pickham, Consumer Specialist II
Consumer Affairs Branch
Christine Reedy, Consumer Specialist II
Consumer Affairs Branch

Guests:

Kyle Summers, Representative
Old Dominion Transportation Group

Lily Z, County Resident

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Commissioner Kratovil.

Minutes

Commissioner Belkowitz requested that the draft minutes of the April 16, 2024, meeting be amended from raised concerns about squatting to “inquiring about squatting”. Chairperson Kratovil moved to accept the April 16, 2024, minutes, as amended. Commissioner Kirk seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted unanimously 6-0-0.

Report of the Director

Division Director Kastl introduced staff in attendance at the meeting. Division Director Kastl informed the Commissioners that the Board of Supervisors adopted the FY 2025 budget.

Commissioner Matters

Commissioner Kirk had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Belkowitz discussed the impacts of social media in the Fairfax County Public Schools based on his experience as a Special Education Attorney. A discussion ensued about the dangers of cyber bullying in the school system. Commissioner Belkowitz stated he attended an event at which Consumer Affairs Branch staff were present.

Commissioner Springer had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Kharat had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Roark had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Chairperson Kratovil informed the Commission that the Outreach Committee would create a flyer to explain what the CPC is and how they want to represent themselves. The Outreach Committee was developing a one-page flyer on the door-to-door solicitation and how consumers should respond to those situations. Chairperson Kratovil encouraged the Commissioners to think of opportunities for the committees to improve outreach.

New Business

1. Public Hearing on Proposed Amendments to Fairfax County Code Section 84.1-6-3

Rates, fares and charges established. Chairperson Kratovil called the public hearing to order and read the Statement of Commission Responsibility.

All hearings or other public proceedings conducted by the Commission shall be conducted in an informal manner. The Commission shall have the discretion to admit all evidence which may be of probative value even if that evidence is not in accord with formal rules of legal practice and procedure. Applicants and appellants may appear, either by personal appearance, legal counsel, or other representation, to present argument and evidence on their behalf. In addition, the Commission may establish rules of procedure for the conduct of hearings which are consistent with law. Any interested party may record all public proceedings of any hearing in any manner which will not impede the orderly conduct of the hearing.

Chairperson Kratovil provided the hearing introduction as allowed under Fairfax County Code Section 84.1-6-2, which was that the Fairfax County taxicab industry has filed a petition for changes in rates, fares or charges. The petition for Fairfax County taxicab fare increase was submitted by Fairfax County taxicab holders on February 22, 2024. The Commission is now holding a public hearing on proposed amendments to Fairfax County Code Section 84.1-6-3.

Kyle Summers, Manager, Old Dominion Transportation Group provided the rate change proponent presentation. He spoke regarding the requested increases for taxicab rates in Fairfax County. He explained that the increases would benefit the drivers and encourage additional taxi drivers to drive in Fairfax County due to the competition from Uber and Lyft.

Rebecca L. Makely, Director, Department of Cable and Consumer Services provided the County presentation of the 2024 Taxicab Analysis which included an overview of taxicab certificates in Fairfax County, Fairfax County Code, Certificate Holder petition, Fairfax County Taxicab Industry Price Index, taxicab rates and charges, sample taxicab billing, comparison of taxicab rates in local jurisdictions, taxicab surcharge history, local gasoline price trends, summary, and staff recommendations.

A discussion ensued regarding the current waiting time for each additional 61 seconds of waiting time vs. the Certificate Holder petition for a waiting time for each additional 60 seconds of waiting time and the necessary code changes, the impact of COVID 19 on the taxicab industry, whether the increase requested is adequate to cover the costs, and whether any taxicab rate change would require cost to be incurred by the drivers to upgrade their meters.

Director Makely provided a staff recommendation to accept the Certificate Holder Petition.

Chairperson Kratovil made the motion for the Consumer Protection Commission to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve proposed amendments to Fairfax County Code Section 84.1-6-3, Rates, fares, and charges in accordance with the Certificate Holder's Petition as outlined below:

- First one-sixth of a mile or fraction thereof from \$3.50 to \$4.00
- Each subsequent one-sixth of a mile or fraction thereof from \$0.36 to \$0.40
- Waiting time-For each 60 seconds of waiting time from \$0.36 to \$0.40

Commissioner Kirk seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously 6-0-0.

2. Committee Resolution Change. Chairperson Kratovil proposed a change to the Resolution approved by the CPC on October 17, 2023, to update quorum requirements for the Community Engagement Committee and the Financial Fraud and Scams Committee meetings. Chairperson Kratovil moved that the CPC adopt the changes to the Amended and Restated Resolution establishing the committees as presented. Commissioners Springer and Kirk seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously, 6-0-0.

Old Business

There was no old business before the Commission.

Chairperson Kratovil made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Kirk seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:36 P.M.

CPC Calendar

Consumer Protection Commission

2024 Planning Calendar

June 18, 2024

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| January 23 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Election of Officers• 2024 Items of Interest• Committees' Resolution |
| February 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorization to Advertise A Public Hearing to be held on March 19, 2024, 7:30 p.m. on Proposed Amendments to Fairfax County Code Section 84.1-6-3, Rates, fares, and charges established.• Fraud Presentation by Fairfax County Police Department Financial Crime Unit |
| March 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communications Policy and Regulation Division Presentation |
| April 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorization to Advertise A Public Hearing to be held on May 21, 2024, 7:30 p.m. on Proposed Amendments to Fairfax County Code Section 84.1-6-3, Rates, fares, and charges established. |
| May 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Hearing on Proposed Amendments to Fairfax County Code Section 84.1-6-3, Rates, fares, and charges established. |
| June 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Office of Public Affairs Presentation |
| July 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FY 2024 Annual Report Review |
| August 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |
| September 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |
| October 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |
| November 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nominations of Officers |
| December 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• |

CPC Membership

Commissioners

Fairfax County Resident #1
Jacqueline Rosier (Secretary)
Appt. Expires 7/31/2025

Fairfax County Resident #2
Michael J. Roark
Appt. Expires 7/31/2026

Fairfax County Resident #3
Jason J. Kratovil (Chairperson)
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #4
Dennis D. Kirk
Appt. Expires 7/31/2025

Fairfax County Resident #5
Vacant

Fairfax County Resident #6
Vacant

Fairfax County Resident #7
Pratik J. Kharat
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #8
Harold G. Belkowitz
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #9
Vacant

Fairfax County Resident #10
Josef Gasimov
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #11
Paul Svab
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #12
Denis Gulakowski (Vice-Chairperson)
Appt. Expires 7/31/ 2024

Fairfax County Resident #13
Maurice B. Springer
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Staff

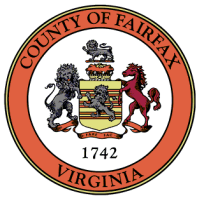
Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Department of Cable and Consumer Services
703-324-5947
Rebecca.Makely@fairfaxcounty.gov

Amanda K. Kastl, Director
Consumer Services Division
703-324-2639
Amanda.Kastl@fairfaxcounty.gov

Susan C. Jones, Branch Manager
Consumer Affairs Branch
703-324-5877
Susan.Jones@fairfaxcounty.gov

Main Number 703-222-8435, TTY 711
Fax Number 703-653-1310
consumer@fairfaxcounty.gov

Consumer Affairs Statistics



Department of Cable and Consumer Services
Consumer Affairs Branch
Monthly Summary Statistics

5/1/2024 Through 5/31/2024

	Current Month		Fiscal YR to Date	
Cases Received	65		715	
Cases Closed	96		698	
Resolved	66	69%	482	69%
Unresolved	7	7%	44	6%
Referred	5	5%	35	5%
Legal	2	2%	11	2%
Other	16	17%	126	18%
Advice Inquiries Closed	435		4014	
Amount Reclaimed	\$132,756.17		\$591,024.44	

Top Complaint Types

Tenant-Landlord	55%
Housing Services	7%
Retail Stores	7%
Automotive	5%
Professional Services	5%
Others	21%

Community Outreach

Outreach Event Calendar June 2024

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	# of Guests	Event Time	Staff
6/14/2024	Consumer Connection Security and Exchange Commission	Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook		11:00 a.m. - 11:17 a.m.	SCJ
6/15/2024	Gum Springs Family Reunion and Celebration	Martin Luther King Jr. Park 8115 Fordson Road Alexandria, VA		11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	SCJ CR
6/18/2024	Funeral Planning	ServiceSource (Virtual) 10467 White Granite Drive Oakton, VA		10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	CR
6/21/2024	Consumer Booth	RCC Hunters Woods 2310 Colts Neck Road Reston, VA		4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	CR

Consumer Resources

Resource Items

Fairfax County Department of Cable and Consumer Services

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer>

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/csd/consumer>

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyconsumer/>

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Day (March 7, 2024)

<https://youtu.be/V0aTen7FSaI>

NCPW Full Consumer Affairs Day

<https://youtu.be/bIVVg6HxDtA>

Introduction, Proclamation, and Consumer Affairs 101

<https://youtu.be/C2j81gW4le4>

Tenant and Landlords: Understanding Your Lease

<https://youtu.be/4b3UdRAJRRM>

Tenant and Landlords: Maintenance Issues

<https://youtu.be/cxo2hN9oU4Y>

Medical Billing

<https://youtu.be/09gBP6d-zug>

Vehicle Purchase and Maintenance Issues

<https://youtu.be/0xzFcOMTFVY>

Scams and How to Protect Yourself

Consumer Connection: Consumer Protection Pool Regulation (May 13, 2024)

<https://fb.watch/sCLKvC5055/>

Information Items

What to do if your online love interest offers to teach you how to invest your money ([more](#))

Phone Scam Alert ([more](#))

Watch out for toll collection impersonation scams ([more](#))

FCC Enforcement Bureau issues first of its kind Consumer Communications Information Services Threat ([more](#))

What to do if your online love interest offers to teach you how to invest your money

By Colleen Tressler, Division of Consumer and Business Education
June 10, 2024

No one thinks their online love interest is going to scam them, but scammers are good at what they do. They establish an emotional connection with you so you're more likely to believe that they're an expert in [cryptocurrency](#) investing, for example. But that online love interest is a scammer. People have lost tens of thousands — sometimes millions — of dollars to [romance scammers](#).

This all starts with someone contacting you — seemingly at random — on social media. But they've done their homework, checking out your profile and other information on the platform. That helps them say the right things to build a relationship...and before you know it, your new friend is talking money. They want to help you invest your money in the crypto markets, or they say they can teach you how to do it. You might think they have your financial well-being in mind, but they don't. They only care about their own financial well-being.

No matter what they say, if someone you meet online says they want to help you invest in [cryptocurrency](#), it's an [investment scam](#). Know this:

- **Scammers promise big profits.** They might say they've made money this way before and that you will too, but it's a lie. No one can guarantee profits in any investment.
- **Scammers say there's no risk.** But all investments have risks, including investments in the crypto markets.
- **Scammers say they can help you learn to invest.** They'll say they can teach you investment tricks, but they're really leading you to a scam investment opportunity. You will lose the money you "invest."
- **Scammers tell you how to send the money.** Scammers want your money quickly, so they'll steer you to [gift cards](#), [payment apps](#) like Apple Pay, CashApp, PayPal, and Zelle, [money wiring](#) companies, or even [cryptocurrency](#). But only scammers insist you send money this way.

If you think someone you met on social media is a scammer, cut off contact. Tell the social media platform, and then tell the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/whocomplaint). Share this post in your socials to alert your followers of this scam.

Phone Scam Alert

Alert:

Thu, 06/06/2024 - 10:00 am

Circuit Court

⚠️ ALERT: Please be aware of a phone scam where individuals are impersonating officers of the court, specifically clerks in the Fairfax Circuit Court. They may solicit payment for supposed fines or legal fees and threaten legal action if payment is not made. Remember, legitimate court officials would never ask for immediate payment over the phone. If you receive such a call, do not provide any personal information or payment details. Instead, hang up and report the incident to the local authorities or contact the Clerk's office at (703) 246-4111. Stay vigilant and help spread awareness to prevent others from falling victim to this scam.

Watch out for toll collection impersonation scams

in [Fraud Alerts](#) /by [Fraud.org staff](#)

A number of government agencies have been warning consumers about a sharp rise in phishing attacks centered around fake toll charges. The FBI alone [received](#) over 2,000 complaints related to the surge in fake toll scams within a one-month period. Many state attorneys general and toll authorities have received similar spikes in reports as well.

The fraud hinges on impersonation, with the scammers posing as toll collectors and sending text messages claiming that the recipient owes money for unpaid tolls. Reported messages have said that the individual owes around \$12 but can be hit with a \$50 late fee. The texts then include a web link taking the target to what appears to be an authentic site for paying tolls.

Like other phishing attempts, this scam aims to deceive recipients into providing personal information to the fraudsters. Criminals can then use this data to commit identity theft and gain access to the individual's online accounts. Additionally, if the target responds to the phishing attempt, this signals that the recipient phone number is live, which can result in a greater number of scams targeted to that (now verified) number.

Keep the following tips in mind to protect yourself from these phishing attacks:

- Do not respond to the message or click on any links. Clicking on web links or attachments can make your device vulnerable to malware and jeopardize your personal data, in addition to signaling to scammers that there is a live target associated with the receiving phone number or email.
- Check your local toll operator's website. Impersonated authorities will often put a warning on their site with resources and methods to help consumers distinguish the legitimate agency from scammers. If you do owe a toll, this is where you would make a payment.
- Look for mistakes in the message. Some states like Michigan have toll bridges and tunnels, but not toll roads. Scammers may also spell the names of toll collection agencies incorrectly. Inconsistencies like these are red flags that the message is not authentic.

- Report the message to law enforcement. The [FBI](#), the [FTC](#), and state attorneys general rely on reports of fraud to track trends, pursue the criminals, and compensate victims when possible.
- Report the message as junk to your phone carrier. This can be done with your phone's built in "report junk" button or by forwarding the message to 7726 (SPAM). This allows your phone carrier to better detect and block fraudulent messages on its network. Using the built in "report junk" button often deletes the message from your phone, so this should be done last.

Media Contact:
MediaRelations@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

FCC ENFORCEMENT BUREAU ISSUES FIRST OF ITS KIND CONSUMER COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION SERVICES THREAT (C-CIST) CLASSIFICATION FOR REPEAT ROBOCALL BAD ACTOR

***C-CIST Classification for ‘Royal Tiger’ Group Will Assist International Regulatory
Counterparts and Law Enforcement Partners with Tracking Bad Actors and Help
Industry Better Utilize ‘Know Your Customer’ Protocols***

WASHINGTON, May 13, 2024—The FCC’s Enforcement Bureau today, for the first time, officially classified a group of entities and individuals persistently facilitating robocall campaigns, aimed at defrauding and harming consumers, as a Consumer Communications Information Services Threat (C-CIST) to empower its international anti-robocall fighting partners with another way to identify known threats before they reach U.S. networks. Building upon its recent “Spring Cleaning” initiative and enforcement actions combatting calls that facilitated the misuse of generative artificial intelligence (AI) voice-cloning technology, the C-CIST classification will be an additional tool that allows the Bureau to formally name threat actors that are repeatedly using U.S. communications networks to perpetuate the most harmful, illegal schemes against consumers. These perpetrators commonly attempt to use multiple companies, opaque and convoluted corporate structures, shifting addresses, and other tactics, techniques, and procedures to evade consequences for illegal activities and continue profiting at the expense of consumers. The C-CIST classification will also provide industry stakeholders with information to enhance their “Know Your Customer” and “Know Your Upstream Provider” processes.

In a Public Notice released today, the Bureau classified a group of individuals and entities it is identifying as “Royal Tiger” as the first designated C-CIST. Royal Tiger and its associates operate in India, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. The companies located in the United States are: PZ Telecommunication LLC, Illum Telecommunication Limited, and One Eye LLC, all of which are led by an individual named “Prince Jashvantlal Anand” and his associate “Kaushal Bhavsar.” Royal Tiger has persisted in transmitting illegal robocall traffic aimed at defrauding consumers, resulting in numerous enforcement actions by the Bureau, the Federal Trade Commission, and our law enforcement partners. In addition to these U.S. entities, Anand is associated with companies in the United Kingdom and India, and appears to maintain residences in the United Arab Emirates and India. Anand has used the alias “Frank Murphy” in furtherance of Royal Tiger’s schemes. Bhavsar appears to maintain a residence in India and, according to FCC records, previously maintained a presence in Delaware through One Eye LLC.

“No matter where they originally come from, junk robocalls designed to defraud or harm consumers need to end. We continue to look for new ways to fight these illegal scams,” **said FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel.** “When we identify repeat offenders, we will be sure to keep using every tool we have to stop this junk from reaching consumers and causing them harm.”

“As our investigative targets use more and more sophisticated and clandestine means such as generative AI voice-cloning technology and ‘spoofing’ to obtain sensitive data and defraud consumers, the C-CIST classification tool will allow us to better coordinate with our state, federal, and global regulatory and law enforcement partners to take on these bad actors,” **said Loyaan A. Egal, Chief of the Enforcement Bureau and Chair of the Privacy and Data Protection Task Force**, before elaborating, “the C-CIST designation of Royal Tiger, and similar future designations, will assist industry stakeholders in better protecting their customers and their privacy.”

“We can’t keep playing whack-a-mole to shut down bad actors who keep creating new companies so they can spam us with robocalls. I’m grateful to the FCC for being a close partner in our efforts to put a stop to these nuisance calls,” **said North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein, the founder of the state attorneys general Anti-Robocall Multistate Litigation Task Force**.

Classifying an individual or entity—or a network of individuals and entities—as a C-CIST ensures that these threat actors are readily detected and blocked from perpetuating further unlawful schemes that harm consumers and compromise communications information services consumers rely on. In particular, this information will provide industry stakeholders—the first line of defense against harmful traffic—with information to fortify their “Know Your Customer” and “Know Your Upstream Provider” processes.

The Bureau classifies a party as a C-CIST when the party’s misconduct—in either nature or scope—poses a significant threat to consumer trust in the integrity of communications information services. The Bureau applies this classification to heighten awareness of these threat actors among our domestic and international regulatory and law enforcement partners, as well as industry stakeholders.

Many of the fraudulent calls Royal Tiger placed impersonated government agencies, banks, and utility companies. Other calls pertained to purported credit card interest rate reduction offers and purchase authorizations for orders purportedly placed by the called party. Impersonation calls are particularly nefarious because they can result in substantial financial loss and erode public trust in the telecommunications network.

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Media Relations: (202) 418-0500 / ASL: (844) 432-2275 / www.fcc.gov

*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*