

FILE

OHIO CONFERENCE of NAACP

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

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June 18, 2007

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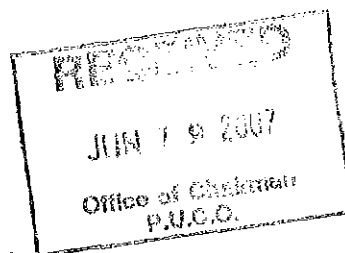
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PUCO Commissioners
Public Utility Commission of Ohio
180 E. Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215



Dear Chairman Schriber and Commission Members,

We have become increasingly aware of an issue before the Commission related to the use and charges associated with Natural Gas Risers. We consider this an important issue of public safety. As the President of the Ohio Conference NAACP, representing over 53 cities and surrounding areas within the state of Ohio, we would like to support the global solution proposed by Columbia Gas of Ohio.

On behalf of our members, we ask you to approve this plan as soon as possible. It fairly addresses concerns raised in regards to natural gas risers and equally important, addresses the related issues that have been brought to light by the safety survey currently being conducted.

The estimated cost to replace a riser can range from a few hundreds dollars to more than a thousand; and with any rush to fix a specific identified issue (hail storms and floods), putting some controls on this process will only further enhance the customers physical as well as financial safety. In addition, the safety survey reveals that leaks on other customer-owned pipes not part of the riser, such as the main service line.

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These repairs come with an up-front cost of thousands of dollars. In the state of Ohio, this financial burden falls on the buildings owners, they must fix leaks determined to be an immediate danger before gas service is restored. Some customers, such as landlords or other multi-unit owners, may choose to pass the risk on to others. And some customers will just choose to take the risk that a leak will not occur despite the danger to them and their neighbors.

The Columbia Gas proposal appears to be the best method for increasing public safety statewide and eliminating an immediate financial burden on thousands of Ohioans, including low-income, senior citizens and renters. The plan would promote a higher level of public safety; eliminate out-of-pocket costs for consumers now and in the future and would bring Ohio in line with 49 other states by placing the management of all repairs associated with this issue and any future service line maintenance problems squarely on the shoulders of the utility, in effect, a comprehensive universal protection plan for ALL customers. No one, regardless of their economic status, will be left out in terms of future cost protection.

The Struggle Continues,



Sybil Edwards-McNabb

CC: Governor Ted Strickland