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BEFORE

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THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

PUCO

In the Matter of the)
Application of Ohio Edison) CASE NOS.
Company, The Cleveland) 07-551-EL-AIR
Electric Illuminating Company) 07-552-EL-ATA
and The Toledo Edison Company) 07-553-EL-AAM
for Authority to Increase) 07-554-EL-UNC
Rates for Distribution)
Service, Modify Certain)
Accounting Practices and for)
Tariff Approvals.)

ORIGINAL

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BE IT REMEMBERED, that upon the hearing of the above-entitled matter, held at the Oliver R. Ocasek Government Center, First Floor Auditorium, 161 South High Street, Akron, Ohio, before Janet K. Stoneking, Attorney Examiner, and commencing on Wednesday, the 5th day of March 2008, at 1:31 o'clock p.m., at which time the following proceedings were had.

1 **APPEARANCES:**

2 On Behalf of the Public Utilities Commission
3 Of Ohio:

4 PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

5 BY: Janet K. Stoneking, Attorney Examiner
6 180 East Broad Street
7 Columbus, Ohio 43215
8 614/644-8166

9 On Behalf of Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

10 OFFICE OF THE OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL

11 BY: Rick Reese
12 Assistant Consumers' Counsel
13 10 West Broad Street, Suite 1800
14 Columbus, Ohio 43215-3485
15 614/466-8574

16 On Behalf of the Applicants:

17 FIRSTENERGY

18 BY: Arthur E. Korkosz, Senior Attorney
19 76 South Main Street
20 Akron, Ohio 44308
21 330/384-5849

22 **ALSO PRESENT:** Robert Boxler, Christopher
23 Adams, Effie Stewart, Jim Iona, Tom Weise, Edith
24 Chase and Larry C. Stewart

25

1 **MS. STONEKING:** The Public
2 Utilities Commission of Ohio has assigned for
3 public hearing at this time and place Case
4 Numbers 07-551-EL-AIR, Case 07-552-EL-ATA, Case
5 Number 07-553-EL-AAM, and Case Number
6 07-554-EL-UNC, being titled "In the Matter of
7 the Application of Ohio Edison Company, The
8 Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company and The
9 Toledo Edison Company for Authority to Increase
10 Rates for Distribution Service, Modify Certain
11 Accounting Practices and for Tariff Approvals."

12 As I mentioned before we went on the
13 record, my name is Janet Stoneking and I will be
14 conducting the hearing today. Also present
15 today from the Public Utilities Commission are
16 two representatives from the Commission's
17 Service Monitoring and Enforcement department.
18 The two gentlemen, Lee and Lawrence, standing in
19 the back. If you have any questions about your
20 utility bills other than the rate increase, you
21 may see them to ask questions.

22 We also have representatives from one
23 of the FirstEnergy companies, Ohio Edison, that
24 can address questions, other than the rate
25 increase, with us. And if you'll raise your

1 hands, okay, you can feel free to talk to them.

2 And we also have two folks from the
3 Office of Consumers' Counsel to also address
4 residential utility questions. And I believe --
5 are they in the room now? Yes. Over there.
6 (Indicating.)

7 Okay. First before I explain a
8 little more about the case, I would like to take
9 appearances from the attorneys that are here
10 today. I'll start first with the FirstEnergy
11 counsel.

12 **MR. KORKOSZ:** Thank you, Your
13 Honor. On behalf of the Applicants, Arthur E.
14 Korkosz.

15 **MS. STONEKING:** And from the Office
16 of Ohio Consumers' Counsel?

17 **MR. REESE:** Thank you, Your
18 Honor. On behalf of the residential customers
19 of the FirstEnergy companies and the Ohio
20 Consumers' Counsel, Janine Migden-Ostrander, I'm
21 Rick Reese, Assistant Consumers' Counsel.

22 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you. Now, in
23 addition to the Company and the Office of
24 Consumers' Counsel, there are other parties who
25 have intervened in the case. And just to let

1 you know, those interveners are the City of
2 Cleveland, the Citizens Coalition made up of
3 three groups, the Consumers for Fair Utility
4 Rates, the Empowerment Center of Greater
5 Cleveland and the Neighborhood Environmental
6 Coalition.

7 In addition, also intervening was the
8 Northwest Ohio Aggregation Coalition, the Kroger
9 Company, Constellation NewEnergy, Industrial
10 Energy Users-Ohio, the Ohio Energy Group, Ohio
11 Home Builders, the Ohio Manufacturers'
12 Association, Ohio Partners for Affordable
13 Energy, Ohio Schools Council and Nucor Steel
14 Marion, Incorporated. Each of these parties
15 will represent their various constituents in
16 this distribution rate case.

17 Now, the start of this rate case was
18 on June 7th, 2007 when Ohio Edison Company, The
19 Toledo Edison Company and The Cleveland Electric
20 Illuminating Company, that I jointly will refer
21 to as FirstEnergy, filed applications with the
22 Public Utilities Commission to each increase
23 their electric distribution rates.

24 Now, through each of the companies'
25 applications they're seeking a rate increase

1 that would generate the following additional
2 revenue for each distribution company. For
3 Cleveland Electric Illuminating, they're seeking
4 between 100 -- excuse me, approximately
5 \$108,598,923 of additional revenue; Ohio Edison
6 Company is requesting approximately \$160,762,886
7 of additional revenue; and The Toledo Edison
8 Company is seeking approval for approximately
9 \$70,539,796 of additional revenue.

10 Now, as part of the rate case, the
11 staff of the Public Utilities Commission
12 inspects portions of the companies' plants and
13 equipment, they interviewed company personnel
14 and government officials, they reviewed company
15 records and performed analysis of the data,
16 including financial information collected from
17 the companies.

18 The Commission's staff then prepared
19 and filed a staff report for each of the
20 electric distribution utility companies on
21 December 4th, 2007. The staff reports each
22 summarized the staffs' findings regarding each
23 company's financial situation and service
24 performance and sets forth the staffs'
25 recommendations in each case, which among other

1 things, recommends the following revenue
2 increase ranges for each company.

3 For The Cleveland Electric
4 Illuminating Company, a recommendation of an
5 increase range between \$22,678,561 and
6 \$29,807,558; for the Ohio Edison Company, a
7 revenue increase range of between \$56,162,093
8 and \$64,701,390; and for The Toledo Edison
9 Company, an increase range between \$34,924,693
10 and \$37,823,225.

11 Also in this case there will be 12
12 local public hearings. The first of which is
13 being held here today. The evidentiary hearing,
14 which is the other part of the case, began on
15 January 29th at the Commission offices in
16 Columbus. The purpose of the evidentiary
17 hearing was to allow the companies, the staff
18 and each of the interveners to present witnesses
19 and evidence in support of each of their
20 positions in the case.

21 The purpose of this afternoon's
22 hearing here is that the Commission wants to
23 hear the public comments regarding Ohio Edison's
24 rate increase. We won't be hearing from the
25 companies or the staff or the interveners this

1 afternoon at the hearing. This is your
2 opportunity to let the Commission know what you
3 think about the company's rate increase.

4 When you arrived, you had the
5 opportunity to sign in at the door outside the
6 room. If you missed that opportunity, you can
7 still sign up to testify by simply approaching
8 one of the PUCO staff members at the back of the
9 room.

10 I will be taking witnesses in the
11 order that they signed up. I will be calling
12 witnesses forward who wish to give statements
13 for the record. Now, before you begin your
14 statement, I will ask for your name and your
15 address. Your testimony will be considered a
16 part of the official record in this case and
17 will be reviewed by the Commissioners before
18 they make their final decisions.

19 Before presenting your testimony, you
20 will be required to either swear or affirm that
21 your testimony is the truth. And as you'll
22 notice, we also have a court reporter here and
23 she will be recording your testimony for the
24 Commissioners to review.

25 Should you decide after we're calling

1 people to testify that you no longer want to
2 testify, then just let me know that you want to
3 pass. Once you've finished your testimony, or
4 if you're just in attendance to observe the
5 hearing, you may leave at any time that you
6 would like.

7 Do you have any questions about the
8 process that I've described? One last thing I
9 want to mention is if you've prepared a written
10 statement, it would be helpful if you could give
11 a copy of that written statement to the court
12 reporter as you finish your testimony.

13 The Commission appreciates you taking
14 the time to come today to make a public
15 statement. We would like for you to focus your
16 comments on the rate increase; and as I
17 mentioned before, if you have any questions
18 about your utility service, feel free to talk to
19 the Commission staff or the electric company
20 staff or the OCC, they're here, about any other
21 issues.

22 At this time I will begin calling
23 witnesses forward. When you're called forward,
24 please state your name, first and last, and
25 spell it for the record and also provide your

1 address.

2 Robert Boxler? Yes, if you'll come
3 up here, please. Raise your right hand, please.

4 **MR. BOXLER:** (Witness complies
5 with the request.)

6 (Thereupon, Mr. Boxler was sworn by
7 Ms. Stoneking.)

8 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you. You can
9 use the microphone there.

10 **MR. BOXLER:** My name is Robert
11 Boxler, R-o-b-e-r-t, B-o-x-l-e-r. I am here
12 representing the Akron Public Schools today. My
13 business address for the Akron Public Schools is
14 the Administration Building, 70 North Broadway,
15 Akron, Ohio 44308. I'm the program manager for
16 energy, environmental health and safety.

17 We are appreciative of the support
18 FirstEnergy has provided in the past with the
19 Energy for Education Programs and we thank them
20 for their strong support. The dollars saved
21 from this program allowed us to keep money in
22 the classroom.

23 I want to thank the Commission for
24 allowing me to explain how an electric increase
25 will impact the education of our children. As

1 you know, school funding is a major issue in our
2 state. Any increase in the cost of basic
3 services will take dollars away from other
4 budget items.

5 In the Akron Public Schools, we've
6 been making budget cuts over the past six years
7 and have tried to make cuts that would not
8 impact the classroom. We are now at the point
9 that any budget increase will impact the
10 classroom. The Akron School District's average
11 annual electric bill is \$3.8 million. The loss
12 of the Energy for Education Program will
13 automatically increase our electrical cost 13.4
14 percent, or approximately \$509,000. Any
15 distribution or generation rate increase will
16 cost even more.

17 Ohio Schools Council analysis
18 concludes that the average distribution rate
19 increase is approximately 40 to 50 percent.
20 This could cost our district an additional half
21 million dollars for a total annual increase of
22 \$1 million. \$1 million means the loss of 20
23 teachers.

24 Our School District cannot absorb
25 this level of increase. We hope the Commission

1 would be sympathetic towards schools and look at
2 us as a distinct group, worthy of the school
3 rates or other considerations which have been in
4 effect.

5 Thank you again for taking the time
6 to listen to our concerns about the rate
7 increase and its impact on the education of our
8 children.

9 MS. STONEKING: Thank you for your
10 testimony. Christopher Adams? Please raise
11 your right hand.

12 MR. ADAMS: (Witness complies
13 with the request.)

14 (Thereupon, Mr. Adams was sworn by
15 Ms. Stoneking.)

16 MS. STONEKING: Thank you. Please
17 go ahead.

18 MR. ADAMS: Hello, everybody.
19 My name is Christopher Adams. I'm the
20 Treasurer/CFO of Mogadore Local School District.
21 The address is 1 South Cleveland Avenue,
22 Mogadore, Ohio 44260. I'm representing --
23 Akron's here representing the largest school
24 district in Summit County; I'm obviously
25 representing the smallest school district in

1 Summit County.

2 I would like to thank the Commission,
3 too, for allowing me to explain the impact that
4 these rates are going to cause our small
5 district located right outside of Akron.

6 As you know, school funding in Ohio
7 is currently in a -- is a mess, to be very
8 blunt. The Governor recently announced that the
9 Ohio Department of Education is going to have to
10 reduce its budget approximately a hundred
11 million dollars in the next few years, which
12 will invariably trickle down to every school
13 district in the State of Ohio.

14 The Ohio Schools Council, which
15 represents us, and our current electricity
16 program, estimates for Mogadore, which is --
17 Mogadore, again, is the smallest district with
18 approximately 900 students, it will impact us
19 approximately \$40,000, and this is on the low
20 side. I've been very conservative. \$40,000
21 doesn't sound like a lot, but for Mogadore that
22 represents curriculum books for approximately 4
23 or 5 classrooms for next year.

24 Eighty-five percent of school budgets
25 represent wages and benefits. So basically

1 treasurers around the state can only control
2 approximately fifteen to twenty percent of our
3 budget. Everything else is contractual. So
4 fifteen to twenty percent of our budget, which
5 electric's involved in it, gas, professional
6 development, curriculum books, that's the
7 source. So we can basically control fifteen to
8 twenty percent of our budget. So \$40,000 for
9 our -- my small budget will have a dramatic
10 impact.

11 Like Akron, I do want to recognize
12 the program that FirstEnergy and the school
13 districts have been involved in. It has been
14 very beneficial to all of our budgets and we
15 appreciate that.

16 And on behalf of the Mogadore Local
17 School District and the taxpayers, we -- I am
18 requesting that -- that the Commission and
19 FirstEnergy look to continue the energy program
20 that's currently in place or to take into
21 consideration the funding for schools and maybe
22 make us a sidebar conversation so the impact
23 won't be so dramatic effective next year. Thank
24 you very much.

25 MS. STONEKING: Thank you for your

1 testimony. Effie Stewart? Would you please
2 raise your right hand?

3 **MS. STEWART:** (Witness complies
4 with the request.)

5 (Thereupon, Ms. Stewart was sworn by
6 Ms. Stoneking.)

7 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you. Would
8 you please state and spell your name for the
9 record and then give your address?

10 **MS. STEWART:** Effie Stewart.
11 That's E-f-f-i-e, S-t-e-w-a-r-t. 562 Howe
12 Street, that's 44307 Akron.

13 Good afternoon. I jotted down a few
14 things. As you well know what's happening in
15 the State of Ohio, and plus the Akron area, I'm
16 here to speak on behalf of the citizens; the
17 ones that are able to speak and the ones that
18 are not able to speak; the ones that's employed
19 and as well as the unemployed.

20 The Akron area has one of the worst
21 foreclosure rates in the nation. This was
22 reported in the "Beacon Journal." After a 12
23 percent annual decline in area home sales for
24 all of Ohioans and due to foreclosure, I can,
25 too, understand why you need an increase with

1 the loss of the homes for utility purposes from
2 the electric company. Seeking a rate increase
3 to generate additional revenue for your company,
4 I can understand that, but what about the poor
5 and the middle class that is between a rock and
6 a hard place?

7 And I'm speaking for these families
8 that agree, these things have been affecting on
9 their guidelines that have been proposed, the
10 new guidelines that are stemming from two-family
11 incomes are the single families and single
12 class. That has put families in a category
13 where they can't even get HEAP or to get help at
14 all. Some of these people are having hard times
15 with foreclosures and bankruptcies that's on the
16 rise.

17 People that's on Disability or Social
18 Security, they're having problems to decide
19 whether to get gas or electric or food. The
20 changes that have been made in the HEAP, where
21 you can no longer use Social Security, you have
22 to use that as an income, when you did get some
23 sort of guarantee that you wouldn't have to have
24 your electric cut off, now things have changed.

25 Our resident population has changed.

1 We've lost over 900,000 people in Akron or
2 Summit County and lost taxes in the city because
3 of foreclosures for homeowners as well. And in
4 the rural, metropolitan and the urban areas, we
5 have more people than ever going bankrupt.

6 Almost every other house in my
7 community is vacant. Police protection is slim.
8 Sewage and water is talking about being sold.
9 These are the things that we're going through in
10 the community and an increase at this time would
11 effect us drastically. Gas also is talking
12 about going up. The home gas, the heating.

13 I'm just here for you to really take
14 consideration of what I'm saying that how these
15 things are going to affect us drastically for
16 another increase.

17 FirstEnergy, you have delivered, but
18 right now an increase would be kind of
19 devastating with everything that's going on in
20 Ohio. And I know you read the papers, you see
21 how things are going as well. So this is all I
22 have to say. Thank you.

23 MS. STONEKING: Thank you for your
24 testimony. Jim Iona? Would you please raise
25 your right hand?

1 **MR. IONA:** (Witness complies
2 with the request.)

3 (Thereupon, Mr. Iona was sworn by
4 Ms. Stoneking.)

5 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you. Would
6 you please spell and state your name for the
7 court reporter?

8 **MR. IONA:** Sure. Jim Iona,
9 spelled I-o-n-a. My address is 70 West Avenue,
10 Tallmadge, Ohio 44278. I'm here today
11 representing the North Akron Chamber of
12 Commerce; the chamber of commerce that
13 represents over 285 businesses and individuals
14 in the greater Akron area.

15 And like many things, timing is
16 everything when I heard about this rate
17 proposal. In northeast Ohio we're facing a
18 recession, whether they admit it or not.
19 Money's tight. My background, I'm a real estate
20 broker. I am in individual's homes and
21 businesses on a daily basis and I hear the
22 complaints through my chamber and my business of
23 the dollar's stretched to the maximum. People
24 cannot afford an increase with utilities.
25 Business is down.

1 Like the lady so eloquently gave the
2 statistics, which I won't bore you with, but
3 everybody knows, foreclosure is a major problem.
4 The housing industry, people are overmortgaged.
5 Mortgages are coming due the next year with
6 interest only loans when these people are going
7 to have problems. There's going to be bailouts.
8 There's not a lot of money for an electric
9 increase at this time. I think it's pretty
10 clearcut and dry.

11 I think they deserve one, but not in
12 the immediate year to year and a half like
13 they're asking for. But in a nutshell, my
14 concern is that with all the other costs, it's
15 just going to put people in a deeper hole that
16 we don't need to be in in northeastern Ohio.

17 I don't know about other areas. All
18 I can speak to is this area. I'm a lifelong
19 resident. And with the gas company needing
20 increases, and like she said the sewer and water
21 department and everything else, I think it's
22 just going to be too much of a burden on
23 businesses that I'm concerned about and the
24 individuals.

25 Because if the individuals are taxed

1 to death and the utility cost is high, they're
2 not going to have money to spend at the local
3 businesses that we're representing. So it's a
4 catch 22.

5 I think this proposal is, like I
6 said, that -- we say location, location,
7 location in real estate when you're buying and
8 selling. Timing, timing, timing. This is the
9 wrong time for any type of an increase for
10 electric. Thank you.

11 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you for your
12 testimony. Tom Weise?

13 (Thereupon, Mr. Weise was sworn by
14 Ms. Stoneking.)

15 **MS. STONEKING:** Please state and
16 spell your name for the record.

17 **MR. WEISE:** My name is Tom
18 Weise, W-e-i-s-e. I represent the Skipper Group
19 and various companies that it owns and operates,
20 specifically Tell Companies, Limited, 388 South
21 Main Street, here in Akron.

22 The Skipper Group is a commercial
23 real estate developer. We own, primarily,
24 office buildings in and around the Akron area,
25 Summit, Medina and Portage counties.

1 The reason I'm here today, we have
2 already been hit by a rate increase. We have
3 one significant building down the street, 388
4 South Main Street. It's known as the AES
5 building; the half-a million square foot former
6 BF Goodrich Tire Factory. We renovated that in
7 1995 into a Class A office building. It's a \$40
8 million asset, where at one time it was a
9 liability that the City of Akron could not get
10 rid of.

11 One of the reasons that that building
12 was successful is due to the fact that we took a
13 lot of steps to make that a green building.
14 Back in '95 we were ahead of the curve, so to
15 speak, in terms of being environmentally
16 friendly; and we spent a lot of money putting in
17 a system, an all-electric system, to heat and
18 cool that building which takes advantage of a
19 special rate that Ohio Edison made available to
20 us called the Rate 22 Program.

21 Essentially they sold us electricity
22 for four cents per kilowatt-hour for eight
23 months out of the year, during the heating
24 season. That system has been very efficient and
25 it's been very cost effective and Edison has

1 made money utilizing that system. They're
2 selling us power at profit during the season
3 which they sell less power. During the cooling
4 months when everybody's running their air
5 conditioners, we pay full price.

6 It was effective January 1st of '07
7 when Edison tripled our rate. They brought them
8 up to the full market rate that everyone else
9 pays downtown during the heating season. And
10 the only notice that we received, we had to go
11 back in the records and look, was a little blurb
12 on one of our monthly invoices that said,
13 "Effective January 1 of '07 certain rate
14 programs," and it didn't specify what, but
15 "certain rate programs" were going to expire for
16 certain customers.

17 Well, shame on us for not catching
18 that little blurb, but we didn't, and our rates
19 for new customers have tripled. And what I'm
20 specifically objecting to is how they define
21 "new customers." The building, which I
22 mentioned, is a multi-tenant building. I think
23 we have 15 or 16 different tenants. And Edison
24 considers every single tenant in that building
25 as a new -- as an individual customer. They do

1 each have their own set of meters.

2 When I have a change in tenants, if a
3 tenant moves out -- Tenant A moves out and
4 Tenant B moves in, that is a new customer in
5 Edison's mind. And that new customer bears this
6 rate which is now three times higher than what
7 the previous tenant had.

8 Well, you can imagine what that does
9 to my ability to lease that space. That
10 building is unique. It has some unique
11 features, some of which make it attractive, some
12 of which make it not as attractive. And this
13 rate increase has made us -- put us at a
14 competitive disadvantage with the rest of our
15 peers in the downtown Akron area, and at the end
16 of the day has taken a lot of equity out of our
17 pockets just because that money has to come
18 either from us or from our tenant and it makes
19 the building that much less attractive.

20 The building has not been a stellar
21 financial performer. And this is -- the type of
22 system we have is not one we would have put in
23 had that rate program not been available. We
24 did so with the understanding that Edison would
25 make that available to us indefinitely and now

1 they are pulling that rug out from under us and
2 we have no recourse.

3 I spent a lot of time on the phone
4 with their representatives, gotten absolutely
5 nowhere, and they say that their hands are tied.
6 They can't treat one customer different from
7 another. That may be true, but, like I say, my
8 only recourse or ability to protest is to come
9 to PUCO which I'm doing here today.

10 I don't know where all this fits in
11 with other proposed rate changes and increases
12 that you all here are contemplating. Edison has
13 told me that further changes are expected
14 January 1st of '09. Again, I don't know what
15 all that entails.

16 And I should also mention that the
17 AES building is actually one of three that we
18 have on this rate program, so we're being
19 affected greatly. They're creating a
20 disincentive for developers like us to create
21 green buildings, putting these systems in which
22 are very, very efficient, near a hundred percent
23 efficient and really on the cutting edge in
24 terms of environmentally friendly, and I think
25 it's sad in a way.

1 The bottom line, our analysis is that
2 the reason we're doing this is because the price
3 of natural gas, as has been alluded to, has
4 risen so significantly, Edison doesn't have to
5 lower their rates to be competitive. They can
6 charge, what they will say is the full retail
7 price, the 10, 11, 12 cents per kilowatt-hour,
8 and know they're not going to lose customers to
9 Dominion East Ohio in this market.

10 I can't fault them. I know that
11 their objective is to make a profit, but at the
12 same time we need to protect our financial
13 interests and that of our tenants. And we're
14 trying to, with these couple of buildings, make
15 sure that we maintain them as profitable assets.
16 Thank you.

17 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 Is there anyone else that hasn't
20 signed up that would like to testify? Please
21 see the gentleman in the back and add your name
22 to the form, please. Edith Chase?

23 (Thereupon, Ms. Chase was sworn by
24 Ms. Stoneking.)

25 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you. Please

1 state and then spell your name for the record
2 and your address.

3 **MS. CHASE:** Edith Chase,
4 C-h-a-s-e. 5731 Caranor Drive, that's Kent,
5 Ohio 44240. And I came just basically with a
6 question, because in the legal notice in the
7 newspaper the last item was "The appropriate
8 level of funding for customer energy efficiency
9 programs and demand side management programs."

10 And this is what I think is very
11 important in helping all of us control our
12 costs, and I would appreciate more information.
13 Thank you.

14 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you.
15 Ms. Chase, there's someone here from the utility
16 company that will be able to talk to you. Okay?

17 **MS. CHASE:** Oh, good.

18 **MS. STONEKING:** Sir, did you sign
19 up?

20 **MR. STEWART:** Yes, I did.

21 **MS. STONEKING:** Okay. Would you
22 please come forward?

23 (Thereupon, Mr. Stewart was sworn by
24 Ms. Stoneking

25 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you. Please

1 state and spell your name for the record and
2 your address.

3 **MR. STEWART:** Thank you. Good
4 evening, also. My name is Larry C. Stewart,
5 L-a-r-r-y, C, S-t-e-w-a-r-t. I live at 562
6 Howe, H-o-w-e, Street, Akron 44307. I just want
7 to thank the utility companies that have their
8 representatives here to listen at the consumers'
9 needs and the consumers' desires.

10 Now, as it's been stated before, and
11 I don't want to go repeating something that
12 somebody else has said, but, you know, sometimes
13 just hearing from John Q. Public maybe corporate
14 America might get a better sense of what's being
15 said.

16 I don't live on the hill. I live
17 under the hill. And, you know, things grow from
18 the bottom up, not from the top down. But
19 anyways, we do have a problem here in this
20 country. And as consumers -- now, I'm --
21 somebody said earlier about being disabled,
22 retirement -- retired, well, that fits me.

23 And when I -- that hit me, I was
24 thrown into the ranks of the unemployable, but I
25 am maintaining the best that I can with what

1 I've been given. And I hope that all the
2 representatives here from these various
3 companies, which is doing a real good job at
4 providing this city and county and the state,
5 maybe country with valuable resources, gas,
6 natural gas, electricity and all of the things
7 that we need, I really appreciate that.

8 And with that being said, I hope that
9 our concerns as citizens which -- it seems like
10 every day we're getting buried and there's no
11 resurrection for us. And I hope that what we're
12 saying will be taken under at least
13 consideration by these -- by corporate America
14 that's being represented here. Because we are
15 facing a situation that -- I don't know, maybe
16 the next year, maybe the next ten years or maybe
17 never, but we're all facing something. Whether
18 it's the food prices, we go to the grocery
19 store, what we was paying for milk last year has
20 almost tripled.

21 Now, I understand that everything
22 that eats corn is going up. And I'm going to
23 try to say this in a nice way. Corn liquor is
24 what they're using now as an alternative. I
25 think they call it flex fuel for automobiles.

1 But everybody can't trade up to those kind of
2 cars.

3 And we're all struggling in this
4 city. To sum it all up in a nutshell, we're all
5 in this together. Whether we are poor, in the
6 middle or at the very bottom. And I have been
7 somewhere in the good middle, but like so many
8 of us I find myself in a position that I don't
9 feel comfortable with.

10 But so many of us is down here and we
11 got to buy this electricity, the gas and
12 everything else that's being provided to us.
13 And I just wanted to thank, again, the
14 representatives from these various companies
15 which is part of corporate America for giving us
16 a chance to speak on what we're feeling about
17 what's effecting us before you make your final
18 decision. Thank you.

19 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you for your
20 testimony.

21 **MR. STEWART:** You're welcome.

22 **MS. STONEKING:** Is there anyone
23 else here that would like to testify that's not
24 spoken?

25 Okay. Let's go off the record for a

1 few minutes and then see if anyone else comes.
2 We'll take a break for about 15 or 20 minutes.

3 (Thereupon, a recess was taken.)

4 **MS. STONEKING:** It's approximately
5 2:28 in the afternoon and we do not have any
6 additional witnesses who have signed up to
7 testify at this point even though I tried hard
8 to get someone to be brave enough to do that.

9 So based on that, we'll adjourn this
10 hearing. And the testimony that was presented
11 today will be submitted as part of the record.
12 Thank you.

13 (Thereupon, the proceedings were
14 concluded at 2:28 o'clock p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF OHIO,)
) SS:
SUMMIT COUNTY,)

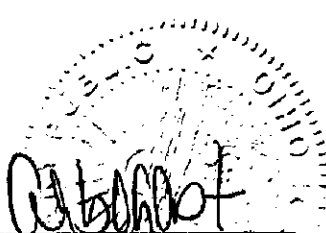
I, Christina A. Arbogast, a Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of Ohio, duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that these proceedings were taken by me and reduced to Stenotypy, afterwards prepared and produced by means of Computer-Aided Transcription and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcription of the proceedings so taken as aforesaid.

I do further certify that these proceedings were taken at the time and place in the foregoing caption specified.

I do further certify that I am not a relative, employee of or attorney for any party or counsel, or otherwise financially interested in this action.

I do further certify that I am not, nor is the court reporting firm with which I am affiliated, under a contract as defined in Civil Rule 28(D).

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office at Akron, Ohio on this 6th day of March, 2008.


Christina A. Arbogast
Christina A. Arbogast, RPR

My commission expires December 7, 2010.

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A				
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