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FILE

## Via Overnight Mail

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio PUCO Docketing 180 E. Broad Street, 10th Floor Columbus, Ohio 43215

BEFORE THE
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OHIO


In The Matter Of The Application : Case No.
Of Ohio Power Company For Approval of Its Electric Security Plan, And An Amendment To Its Corporate Separation Plan
-
: 08-918-EL-SSO

x

## 2008 DEC II AM $10: 13$

Washington, D.C.

Friday, December 5, 2008
Deposition of
CHARLES W. KING, called for examination by counsel for AEP Ohio Companies, pursuant to notice, at the Offices of Snavely King Mojoros O'Connor \& Bedell, Inc., Washington, D.C., commensing at 1:10 p.m., before Barbara A. Huber, Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia, when were present on behalf of the respective parties:

1 APPEARANCES:
2 On behalf of AEP Ohio Companies:

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On behalf of Ohio Energy Group: DAVID F. BOEHM, ESQUIRE (by phone) Boehm, Kurtz \& Lowry

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|  |  |  | Page 3 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 |  | CONTENTS |  |
| 2 | EXAMINATION BY: |  | PAGE |
| 3 | Mr Conway |  | 4 |
| 4 |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |
| 8 |  |  |  |
| 9 |  |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |
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7 21 Arthur 41 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR AEP OHIO

COMPANIES

BY MR. CONWAY:

Q This is Dan Conway. We are taking Mr. Charles W. King's deposition in lieu of his cross-examination testimony at the hearing. And the intention is to use the deposition transcript that we will get from this exercise as Mr. King's cross-examination testimony in the hearing because he is not able to attend the hearing that has been going on here in Columbus.

And, again, my name is Daniel R. Conway. I'm with the law firm of Porter Wright Morris \& I am an attorney for the AEP Ohio Companies, which

1 are called the Southern Power Company, and Ohio
2 Power Company, who have filed applications in Case
3 Numbers 08-917-EL-USD and Case Number
4 08-918-EL-USD, which in short are their electric

5 service plan applications. And we're about to
6 take Mr. King's testimony.

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copy of your prefiled direct testimony in this

21 you prepared or had prepared under your
Mr. King, if you can't hear me, or
Barbara if you can't hear me, please speak up and let me know, and I will try to fix it from our end.

Now, Mr. King, do you have with you a case?

A Yes, I do.
Q And did your counsel inform you that it's been marked for identification purposes as Ohio Energy Group Exhibit Number 4 ?

A Yes, he did.
Q And that testimony is your direct testimony in the cases that we just mentioned that supervision?

1

A Yes, it is.

Q And if you take a look at your testimony, Mr. King, can you tell me, are there any additions or corrections that you need to make to it?

A No, there are not.
Q And if Mr. Boehm were to ask you questions in your prefiled direct testimony today, would the answers that appear in that document be the same today?

A Yes, they would.
Q And those answers are true and accurate to the best of your knowledge and belief?

A Yes, they are.
Q Mr. King, I have a few questions about your comparable group construction. So if you could turn to I think about page 4 of your testimony.

A I have it.
Q My understanding is, Mr. King, that you constructed one comparable risk group by using the entire list of electric utilities in Value Line's

Washington, DC

1 data file, with the exception of one of them,

3 circumstances; is that right?
4
A That's correct. in your testimony is that you were left with a group; is that right?

A That's correct. your testimony, Exhibit GWK-1?

A Yes, they are. correct?

A That's correct. you also used -- strike that. A That's correct.

Q And a result of that what you described group of 64 electric utilities in that comparable

Q And those are listed on Schedule 1 of

Q And then you constructed a second comparable risk group of non-utilities; is that

Q And for the construction of that group,

For that group, you used the companies in the Value Line data file also; is that right?

Q And I think that you described how you

1 corrected the second group of comparable firms,

3 right?
4

5

A That's correct.
Q And my understanding is that you first eliminated electric, gas, and water utilities from the population; and that got it from, oh, some number down to about 5587 firms?

A That's correct.
Q And then you screened the remaining firms by applying a range of ratios of gross plant to revenue; is that right?

A That's correct.

Q And the range of those ratios you got the range from the electric utility groups' data; is that right?

A That's correct.
Q In any event, at that point you reduced the population of your second group; you reduced it down to 657 firms?

A Yeah, that's correct. No, I think it got to -- oh, yeah, that's right, 657, that's the

1 intermediate number, right.

2 Q And then, as I understand it, you then

3 eliminated smaller companies with a gross plant of

4 less than a billion dollars, to get down to the
$5 \quad 260$ figure; is that right?

6 A That's correct.

7 Q And your rationale for that adjustment

That's correct.

Q And that got you down to your 219 firms that comprise your second group of comparable firms, right?

A That's correct.

1 Q And those are listed on Schedule 2?

19 is choice; that is, customers may buy through the

21 majority as bundled retail service providers of
A That's right.
Q Can you tell, with regard to the first group, going back to the electric utilities comparable group --

A Yes.
Q -- how many of those 64 firms have a regulatory environment where all retail customers may shop for their generation service?

A You know, I cannot say. All those in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic states, California, and Texas unquestionably have that arrangement because they all have restructured so as to spin off the generating plants. I would have to look more carefully at the rules governing the rest of the utilities in the country to know whether there is no retail sales, or whether it's a mixed bag.

Michigan is a good example, where there utility, but the utility serves the overwhelming vertically integrated electricity.

10 the opportunity for retail -- for end-users to buy 11 through the utility and acquire their own 21 customers, and virtually no residential customers.

Q Is it your understanding or do you have an understanding about whether or not Michigan has recently changed its rules for switching for customers of the electric utilities in that state?

A Yes. But of course in 2007, which is the focus of this study, there was pretty much open choice. There is still choice, but I believe it's capped. And I haven't examined the legislation that carefully. But they did reign in generation.

Q And so customers of utilities in Michigan at this point do not have an unfettered right to shop for alternative generation service providers?

A Yes. Even when they did, it was a relatively small percentage that actually did that shopping. It was most of the industrial customers, a small proportion of commercial And that's the pattern everywhere where there is

1 retail choice.
2 Q But at this point in Michigan, it's your

3 understanding that electric utilities' customers
4 do no longer -- they no longer have a better
5 choice to switch?

A Well, those that already had switched I 7 think can continue to buy through the utility.

8 Q And with regard to the others?

10 is a cap. And I do not know the details of that

11 cap.

17 comparable group, you would then agree that some

19 switching is not permitted?

A Yes.
Q Okay. And you don't know how many of the firms in the group have that regulatory

1 environment, sitting here today?

19 CSP and Ohio Power that that utilities that don't
A No. It would be quite a research project to try and analyze each of these 64 firms.

Q And so you do not know how many of the 64 firms must allow their customers to shop, and then must take them back as a regulated and service offer rate?

A I do not. I can sort of check down and probably identify a lot of them, but -- simply by the states they operate in. But the answer to your question is no, I do not know the exact number.

Q Now, turning your attention to the Ohio situation.

Would you agree that retail choice, which we have in Ohio under SD 211, and the right of the customers to return to standard service offer at a regulated rate would create risks for have those regulatory rules do not face?

A I would agree.
Q Do you know whether any of the electric

1 utilities out of the 64 in your first comparable

13 Northwestern states, where we have -- continue to
14 have vertically integrated rate-based rate of

21 dollars to customers?
A Well, and Ohio is unique in that regard.

1 I would concede that. more severe test than the Ohio excess earnings

21 test.

1 test, is it typically initiated by the utilities 2 commission on an annual basis?

21 was because the data filed only had year-end equity quantities.

Q Is year-end book equity often higher than beginning-of-year book equity?

A Quite often. But the -- as long as the test is applied consistently, year-end equity return, it would be appropriate for both the derivation of the equity return and the application of that equity return to the Ohio utilities. In other words, it would be very unfair to use year-end equity return, and then apply it to your companies based on average year equity return. My rec --

Q Did you do any kind of analysis to determine whether or not the consequences using year-end book equity, rates of return on equity as opposed to beginning of the year -- I'm sorry. Scratch that question.

Did you do any kind of analysis that evaluated the impact of using year-end book equity as contrasted with beginning-of-year book equity in your calculations, the kind of calculations that you present?

A No, I did not, for the reasons I just

1 mentioned. As long as the derivation of the rate 2 of return is consistent with the application of 3 the rate of return, it is fair to the Ohio utilities. There's no particular reason to 5 believe that the Ohio utilities would have 6 significantly different ratios of year-end to 7 average year equity. And so I assume that it 8 would be fair to use year-end only.

11 me to go back to Value Line and obtain the 2006

13 could have done, but I think it would have been 14 highly costly, and certainly cumbersome, and would not have significantly improved the test.

Q You're not opposed to such an approach

17 then, I take it? Inatch the application of the equity standard.

21 Q And you would not be opposed to an

22 approach which consistently uses beginning-of-year

1 book equity?

21 all, let me focus on the second group, the

22 non-utility group.

Washington, DC beta measure for the Ohio utilities, because they all subsidiaries of AEP, and don't sell stock in the open markets.

Q But let me ask you a question, just a clarification question for me.

At line 14, you're asked a question: Can the 14.4 percent return on equity for the non-utility group be considered comparable to the Ohio AEP companies?

That's at lines 14 and 15.
And then at line 17 you answer the question: No, these companies are much riskier than the AEP Ohio Companies.

And then the following question is -I'm about to ask you a question about this now -you were asked the question: How can you adjust the non-utilities' average return to match the risk of the two Ohio utilities of AEP?

And then you explain for that purpose, you can use the beta, as generated by Value Line.

Do you see that?
A That's correct.
Q At this point, even though the question

1 on lines 19 and 20 indicates -- indicated to me 2 anyway -- that you are adjusting the non-utilities 3 average return to match the risk of the Ohio adjusting the non-utilities' average return to match the risk of the utility group?

A Yeah, I had to do that of necessity, because there is no beta measure for the two AEP Ohio utilities.

Q Okay. I'm not talking about matching it to the AEP Ohio beta. I'rn talking about -- or matching the non-utilities to the AEP Ohio at this point.

What I'm asking you is if what you're
16 doing in this step is matching the non-utilities'
17 average return to the --
A To the 64 utilities.

Q -- to the 64 utilities?
A That's correct.
21 Q Okay. There's another step further on down the line, to bring it back to the AEP Ohio

1 Companies, right?

A That's correct. That's an adjustment for capital structure, which has the affect of increasing the Ohio utilities' allowed return.

Q Thank you. All right.
But actually, but at the point that I am in your testimony, Mr. King, which is page 6, lines 22 through the end of the page, you are adjusting the non-utility group to synch it up with the electric utilities group, right?
A. That's correct.

Q And the Value Line betas that you used in this step of your exercise, those are levered betas, right?

A Yes.
Q And that means that they reflect a combination that there's a financial risk, correct?
A. That's correct.

Q In any event, you took the average of all the Value Line betas for the 219 non-utility group firms, which it was 1.08 , right?

A Yeah, right. But it -- but this is set forth on Schedule 4, as well.

Q But the difference between the two
14 average betas is . 19, correct?
A That's correct.
Q And then you multiplied that difference
17 by a risk premium measure, to come up with an
18 adjustment factor; is that right?
A That's correct.
Q And you subtracted that product from the
non-utilities --

A Return on equity.

1 Q -- which is your average ROE; and then

19 because of your opinion that -- or your conclusion

21 is greater than the average financial risk of the 64 non-utility groups, right?

20 group -Schedule 5. repeat that?

A Well, I think I adjusted both the non-utility and the utility groups for the difference in their leverage ratios relative to the two AEP Ohio utilities. That's done on

Q And I think you mentioned earlier that the result of that last adjustment was an upward one for the --

A No. I'm wrong. It reduced the -- their

Q Their -- I'm -- excuse me. Can you

A I think it reduced the ROE.
Q Whose ROE?
A I'm sorry. The return on equity indicated by each of the two utilities. I'm looking at the --

Q Well, let me just recap.
We had 14.14 percent for the non-utility

A Yes.
Q -- before the adjusting started?

And then you adjusted the return of the non-utility group so that it was more comparable to the utility group, right?

A Yes. Yeah, I'm wrong. It did increase the -- the rate of return.

Q Okay. So but at any rate, that first adjustment, you subtracted the 1.32 from the 14.14, right?

A Yeah. Right.
Q Okay. And then there's another adjustment that you make in order to reflect the fact that the AEP Ohio Companies' financial risk is greater than the average risk of the utility group, right?

A That's correct.
Q All right. And that added back some amount to the previous step. And by my review, the result was -- I'm searching for it here, but I'm not coming up with it.

A I'm sorry. Repeat again what you're trying to do. And I'll try and help you. Q Well, I'm trying to follow your method.

1 And we've gone over for the non-utility group. We

19 adjusted upward to 10.88 for Columbus Southern, went from 14.14. And then we subtracted 1.32.

A We got 12.82.

Q Right.

And then we had to add back something to account for the actual additional risk that the Ohio utilities faced compared to the average risk of the utility group, right?

A That's right. Because they had a lower equity ratio. And so the 12.82 went to 13.52 for that difference.

Q And that was for --

A That's for the non-utility group.

Q That was for CSP, correct?

And then --

A Well, that's right. CSP is 13.52. And

Ohio Power 13.54. They have very similar equity ratios. And on the utility side, the 10.68 is and 10.90 for Ohio Power.

Q Okay. I think I understand it now.

A The lines are lines 2 and 18 of

1 exhibit -- of Schedule 5. That's where you find 2 the comparison.

Q And then when you're done with all those steps to come up with the -- I guess I'll call them risk adjusted return for each group -- the utility group on the one hand and the non-utility group on the other hand -- you average those two results for each of the ohio companies; is that right?

A That's correct.
Q And the final result is --
A It's 12.20 for Columbus Southern, and 12.22 for Ohio Power. And those are in line 20 of Schedule 5.

Q Okay. And then let me go on. I have a few questions for you regarding your adder recommendation to come up with the benchmark for significantly excessive earnings.

A That's correct.
Q The adder is a total of 200 basis points?

A That's right.

Q And that is the sum of the FERC adders that are used by the FERC to encourage investment by utilities that major in innovative transmission lines and for participation in RTO's?

A Yes.
Q And just to be clear about it, Columbus Southern and OPCO, they participate at PJM. So they're in an RTO.

So under your approach, they get the benefit of the 50 basis points adder for that behavior, right?

A Yes. That's not particularly the reason I included it, but that is true.

MR. CONWAY: I'm all done.
Do you have any redirect?
MR. BOEHM: No. No redirect.
(Discussion off the record)
BY MR. CONWAY:

Q Mr. King, excuse me for having to go back on the record. I do have another question or two for you.

If you could turn to your Schedule 1 of

Exhibit 1.
A (Witness examined document). I have it.
Q And there's an average return on equity that shows up at the bottom right-hand corner of the page?

A Yes.
Q $\quad 10.68$ percent?
A That's correct.
Q And when you calculated the average, could you describe that?

Did you take -- and what I'm looking for is how you added and then applied a divisor to the column under return on equity.

A Well, that's what's done. But it's not that I did it. I used the Excel "average" command, which derives the mean. There is a separate command, which I could have used, to derive the median. I think I did. But I don't show it here because it was not significantly different than the mean. But the mean is the sum of the observations, divided by the number of observations.

1 Q Okay. So it's just a simple arithmetic
2 average?

3

4

A That's correct.
Q Okay. Which.then leads to the -- for me to the question: Did you consider conducting a return on equity or did you construct a return on equity that was calculated on a weighted basis, weighted for the amount of equity at --

A Well, I could have. But that would have distorted the results by exaggerating the affect of the largest of these utilities. I'm not sure that analytically that that's the appropriate approach. I can't tell you, though, whether it would be significantly different from the approach I used, which was a simple average of all of the utilities.

Q You said you're not sure -- I think you said you're not sure, but you didn't think that it would be appropriate to do that.

Is that what you said?
A That's correct.

Q Have you thought it through, or are you

1 just today thinking on it right here now and 2 coming to that conclusion? would lead to a distortion by understating what the average ought to be?

A Well, you can pick that up. But then there are other companies. Let's look at Exelon Corporation, which has $\$ 10$ billion in common equity, and a return of 26.94. That is a distortion in the other direction. The reason we use the simple mean is to watch out these extreme

1 and outlying results, so that we get an expression 2 of the overall return to the electric utility 3 industry, which is the --

Q Is there a -- I'm sorry. You weren't done. I'm sorry.

A I'm sorry. Well, I think I'm finished now.

Q Refresh my recollection, which I -actually, I don't have one, about where whether you used a size screen on the 64 utilities?

A No, I did not use a size screen on the 64 utilities. I used that only on the non-utilities.

Q Okay.
A I did throw out that one utility that had a negative return of 175 percent.

Q And I think you've already answered this question.

But you did not consider what would happen to the results of the Schedule 1 calculation as you had similarly to the non-utility groups, screened those utilities which

1. had equity accounts less than a billion dollars?

A Well, it wasn't equity that I screened
3 for, it was gross plant, which is a larger number.
Q Excuse me?
A And you're correct. I do not know what the result would be. But I'm just eyeballing these equity -- year-end equity numbers. And there's only a handful that would, I believe, have been eliminated.

Q Based on the billion dollar gross plant screen?

A Right. And I'm assuming gross plant would be at least twice the common equity number. It's probably even be more than that. Because common equity matches only a portion of the total asset value. A total asset value is computed not with gross plant, but with net plant.

Q Just a second.
You said there were a handful. Would
that be the --
MR. BOEHM: I'm sorry. A handful of
what, Dan?

Washington, DC MR. CONWAY: I'm sorry. BY MR. CONWAY:

A Yes, I understand. your Schedule 1? screened out.

It would be number 8 ?
A Number 8, Central Vermont. excuse me.

A 26 .
Q $\quad 26$ ?
A That's right.

Q Mr. King, this is Dan Conway again.

Q You said that if you had screened this group of 54 with the $\$ 1$ billion gross plant factor, that you thought it would screen out only a handful of the utilities that are reflected on

A That's correct. I can go down and identify the ones that I think would have been

Q Well, let me -- I was just doing that while I was taking a break. Let me see if I'm on

Q And it would be number 25 -- not 25

Q Okay. group?

Q And it would be number 34 ?
A That's right.
Q And it would be number 57?
A No, I don't think so. I suspect that
company, UlL Holdings, that's United Illuminating.
I bet they have more than a billion dollars in

A It would number 59, though.
Q 59. Okay.
A And then 62.
Q And then 62.
A Sounds like about five or six.
Q Okay. Would you agree with me, just looking at those, that the general tendency of the ROE's are that they're below average for the

A Well, UI -- no, we didn't say UIL. They are below the average.

Q Okay. So if you did screen those out, you would expect that the 10.68 percent figure would increase to some degree?

A It would be slightly higher, because we still would have 58 or 59 , maybe -- yeah, 58 or 59 utilities left.

MR. CONWAY: That's all I have. Thank you, very much.

6 MR. BOEHM: Thank you.

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC
I, BARBARA A. HUBER, CSR, the officer before whom the foregoing deposition was taken, do hereby certify that the witness whose testimony appears in the foregoing deposition was duly sworn by me; that the testimony of said witness was taken by me in stenotypy and thereafter reduced to print under my direction; that said deposition is a true record of the testimony given by said witness; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this deposition was taken; and, furthermore, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcone of this action.


In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern Power Company for Authority to Establish a Standard Service Offer Pursuant to R.C. § 4928.143
and
In the Matter of the Application of

Case No 08-918-EL-UNC

3 ) -
.
© Ohio Power Company

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
CHARLES W. KING
ON BEHALF OF
OHIO ENERGY GROUP

## SNAVELY KING MAJOROS O'CONNOR \& BEDEL, INC.

October 31, 2008

# DIRECT TESTIMONY OF CHARLES W. KING 

Q.. Please state your name, position and business address.
A. My name is Charles W. King. I am President of the economic consulting firm of Snavely King Majoros O'Connor \& Lee, Inc ("Snavely King'). My business address is $111114^{\text {th }}$ Street, N.W., Suite 300 , Washington, D.C. 20005
Q. Please describe Snavely King.
A. Snavely King, formerly Snavely, King \& Associates, Inc, was founded by the late Carl M. Snavely and myself in 1970 to conduct research on a consulting basis into the rates, revenues, costs and economic performance of regulated firms and industries. The firm has a professional staff of 12 economists, accountants, engineers and cost analysts. Most of its work involves the development, preparation and presentation of expert witness testimony before federal and state regulatory agencies. Over the course of its 38 -year history, members of the firm have participated in over 1000 proceedings before almost all of the state commissions and all Federal commissions that regulate the utilities or transportation industries.
Q. Have you prepared a summary of your qualifications and experience?
A. Yes. Attachment A is a summary of my qualifications and experience.
Q. Have you previonsly submitted testimony in regulatory proceedings?
A. Yes. Attachment B is a tabulation of my appearances as an expert witness before state and federal regulatory agencies.
Q. For whom are you appearing in this proceeding?
A. 1 am appearing on behalf of the Ohio Energy Group ("OEG"). The members of OEG who take service from Ohio Power or Columbus Southern Power are: AK Steel Corporation, ArcelorMittal USA, BP-Husky Refining, Brush Wellman, E.I.,

DuPont de Nemours \& Company, Ford Motor Company, GE A viation, Griffin Wheel, PPG Industres Inc, The Procter \& Gamble Co., Republic Engineered Products, Inc, Severstal Wheeling (formerly Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel), and Worthington Industries.
Q. What is the objective of your testimony?
A. The objective of my testimony is to recommend a methodology for inplementing the "significantly excessive earnings" test embodied in the Am. Substitute Senate Bill No. 221 ("S.B.221"). The significantly excessive earnings test is found in Section 4928.143(F) of the Revised Code of Ohio. Applied to 2007 data, the methodology 1 recommend results in thresholds for significantly excessive earnings as follows: Columbus Southern $14.20 \%$; Ohio Power $14.23 \%$.
Q. What does this section of S.B. 221 say?
A. Section (F) states as follows:

With regard to the provisions that are included in an electric security plan under this section, the commission shall consider, following the end of each annual period of the plan, if any such adjustments resulted in excessive earnings as measured by whether the earned return on common equity of the electric distribution utility is significantly in excess of the return on common equity that was eamed during the same period by publicly traded companies, including utilities, that face comparable business and financial risk, with such adjustments for capital structure as may be appropriate.
Q. In addition to meeting these statutory requirements, what other attributes should a "significantly excessive carnings" test have?
A. The test should be as simple and straghtforward as possible, while still being fair to the utities and their ratepayers. These criteria mean that the methodology for establishing the baseline return should be based on publicly available and clearly defined data, that it require a mimimum of judgnent or discretion, and that to the extent possible it should be equally applicable to all of the major electric utilities serving Ohio retail customers. Once the baselne is established, it necessary for the Commission to use its judgmen in setting the threshold over which earnings would be significantly excessive.
Q. How will you proced to develop a methodology that conforms to these criteria?
A. The language requires the identification of a group or groups of utilities and other companies that bear the same business and financial risk as the subject Ohio electric ptilities.: Pursuant to this requirement, I will identify two comparison groups, ane of utilities and the other of non-utilities. I will adjust the earned returns of each group to match the risks faced by the two AEP companies operating in Ohio. I will then average the utility and non-utility returns to derive a base line earned level of return. The final step is to apply an adder that describes the margin over this base line equity retum that should be allowed before the earnings are considered significantly excessive.

## Q. Have you identified utilities that are comparable to the AEP companies that provide retail electric service in Ohio?

A. Yes. The AEP companies - Columbus Southem and Ohio Power - are both vertically integrated companies whose generation, distribution and transmission facilities are regulated by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohzo ("PUCO") and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ("FERC"). Most of the publicly traded electric utility companies in the country conform to varying degrees to this pattem. Many still have their generation function regulated, but even those
companes often engage in off system sales at market based rates. For this reason I have used the entire list of electrie utifities, with one exception, in Value Line's Datafile. This list consists of 64 publicly traded companies
Q. What was the average return on equity of these companies during the most recent year?
A. Schedule 1 of my Exhibit (CWK-1) presents the net incone and the yearend equity amounts for each company for 2007 as reported in Value Line's Datafile. The average of the earned returns on equity for the 64 electric utilities is 10.68 percent.
Q. Have you identified non-utility companies that are comparable to the two AEP Ohio companies?
A. That is a more difficult task because non-utility companies are intrinsically different from utilities. None have franchised monopolies, and none have their eamings constrained or protected by rate base/rate-of-return regulation. However, the statute requires that an effort be made to find nom-utility companies that are as close to the subject. Ohio companies as possible. The earned returns of the resultant sample of companies can then be adjusted for any measurable differences in risk.

Accordingly, I began with the 5,688 companies that are found in the Value Line Datafile. 1 first eliminated the electric, gas and water utilities, which reduced the list to 5,587 companies. I then examined the capital intensity of the electric utilities and found that with only a handful of exceptions, the ratio of gross plant to revenue ranged between 1.2 and 5.0 . Using these parameters, I found that 657 non-utility companies fall within these limits.

[^0]1 then socight to eliminate small companies which, would have higher return requirements than utilities, and particularly AEP which has over $\$ 46$ bilion in gross plant Elimnating all companies with gross plant less than $\$ 1$ bilion reduced the list to 260 companies. Finally, had to eliminate any companies for which Value Line had not calculated a beta, since I proposed to use the beta measure as the test of relative isk. The final list came to 219 companies. Those companies are listed in Schedule 2 of my Exhibit No. $\qquad$ (CWK-1).
Q. What was the average return on equity of these non-utility companies?
A. The average return on year end 2007 equity of these companes was 14.14 percent?
Q. Can this return on equity be considered comparable to the Ohio AEP Companies?
A. No. These companies are much riskier than the AEP's Ohio utilities.
Q. How can you adjust the non-utilities' average return to match the risk of the two Ohio ntilities of AEP?
A. For this purpose, I use the "beta" measure as generated by Value Line. Beta is a measure of the co-variance of each stock with that of the overall stock market. The overall stock market's beta is 1.00 . To the extent that beta is greater than 1.00 , the stock displays greater volatility and higher risk than the market. Betas less than 1.00 indicate less volatility and lower risk. The beta reflects all forms of risk; so it is the one comprehensive mcasure of risk that is available for most traded stocks.

The betas for each of the 219 comparable non-utility companies are presented in column $H$ of Schedule 2 of Exhibit No. $\qquad$ (CWK-1). The average beta for the
entire group is 1.08 , reflecting the fact that these conpanies are, on average more risky than the average for the market.

In order to adjust for this higher level of risk, I identified the average beta of the electric utility comparison group. That average, shown in Column E of Schedule 3 of Exhibit $\mathrm{No} \quad(\mathrm{CWK}-1)$, is 89 , indicating a lower level of risk than the non-utility group.

On schedule 4 of my exhibit T adjust the average return for the 219 non-utility companies to reflect the much lower risk associated with utility operations. For this purpose, I use the Capital Asset Pricing Model, which applies the beta to a risk premium of stock returns over bond yields. While there are many measures. of the risk premium, the average historical risk premum between 1926 and 2008 has averaged about seven percent. ${ }^{2}$ Since we are measuring historical earned returns, this average is arguably appropriate for use as a risk adjustment. I apply the difference between the 1.08 beta of the non-utility group and the .89 beta of the utility group, which is 19 , to the seven percentage point risk premium to derive an adjustment of 132 basis points, or 1.32 percent. A reduction of 1.32 percent to the average non-utility earned return of 14.14 percent yields a riskadjusted return of 12.82 percent.
Q. You have now calculated the risk-adjusted equity returns of both the utilities and the non-utilities. Are there any further adjustments that need to be made?
A. Yes. There is one further adjustment that should be made, and that is to recognize the financial risk differences of the AEP Ohio companies relative to the utility and non-utility comparison groups. Columbus Southem has a ratio of equity to total capital of 47.3 percent, and Ohio Power has a ratio of 47.7 percent. Schedule 3 shows that the utility comparison group has a slightly less risky ratio of 49.2

[^1]percent, and Schedule 2 shows that the non-utility group's ratio is even less nsky at 51.7 percent.

On Schedule 5 of Exhibit No. $\qquad$ (CWK-1), 1 have adjusted both the utility and non-utility equity returns to recognize these differences in financial risk resulting from different capital structures. In both cases, I have computed a pre-tax retum on total capital using, as the cost of debt, the 7.31 percent September 2008 yield on Moody's Baa cotporate bonds as reported by the Federal Reserve. I have used the average equity percentage of the 64 electric utilities of 49.2 percent from Schedule 3, and the non-utility equity percentage of 57.1 percent from Schedule 2.

My adjustment recognizes the fact that the level of earned pre-tax net operating income is independent of the capital structure. On line 9 of Schedule 5,1 set the pre-tax return on capital at the levels of the 64 electric utilities ( $1.90 \%$ ) and the risk adjusted non-utility sample $(13.86 \%)$. I then derive the return on equity for each AEP company by subtracting the weighted debt cost (line 14) from the composite return on capital of each sample group (line 9). In tine 16, I de-weight the equity returns, and in line 18 I apply the companies tax factors to derive the return on equity for each AEP company based on the two samples of comparable companies. In line 20, I average those equity returns to derive the base line comparable return on year-end equity for each company. They are:

- Columbus Southern $12.20 \%$
- Ohio Power . $12.22 \%$
Q. What adder is appropriate to take these base line equity returns to the level of "significantly excessive?"
A. Here, it is necessary for the Commission to exercise its own judgment because there is no objective, generally accepted measure of a "significantly excessive return." I suggest the use of the adders that the FERC awards to encourage investment by utilities in major innovative transmission lines. FERC provides a

50 basis point adder for participation in Regional Transmission Otganizations and another adder of up to 150 basis points as an incentive for investment FERC apparently regards that these adders are fully sufficien to encourage nisk investments in transmission lines that must traverse difficult terrain and encounter siting resistance. Anything more would be significantly excessive:
Q. Using FERC's 200 basis point adder, what would be the threshold of "significantly excessive earnings" on common equity?
A. If we add 200 basis points to the base line returns on year-end equity, the thresholds of significantly excessive earnings are:

- Columbus Southern $\quad 14.20 \%$
- Ohio Power $\quad 14.22 \%$
Q. Are you recommending that the Commission adopt your methodology, but not these specific threshold numbers?
A. Yes. These threshold numbers are merely illustrative of the results that are derived from the methodology that I recommend. The first application of the significantly excessive earnings test will be in 2010 and based on earned returns in 2009. The numbers may be quite different then.
Q. With regard to the adder to the base line carned returns, why haven't you adopted the statistical confidence levels that the utilities' witnesses have recommended?
A. The use of statistical confidence ranges would limit any finding of excessive earnings to so few observations that the test would become a cipher. $A$ two-tailed 95 percent confidence interval would mean that only 2.5 percent of all observations in the sample company groups would be deemed to have excessive earnings. A 90 percent confidence interval would increase that proportion to five
percent. These intervals virtually ensure that no Ohio utility would ever be found to have experienced significantly excessive eamings.

Another objection to the use of set confidence intervals is that they "hard wire". the definition of significantly excessive earnings in a manner that provides the PUCO with little or no flexibility. As the testimony and exhibits of Dr. Makhija demonstrates, the application of a 95 percent confidence interval to utility and non-uility company equity returns can lead to a very high excessive earnings threshold based on 2007 data. But 2007 was a relatively prosperous year. It now appears that in 2009 , the first year that the significantly excessive earnings test is applied, eamings will probably be dramatically lower. The application of the Dr . Makhija's 95 percent confidence interval will likely resalt in a much tower threshold, one that could conceivably deprive the AEP companies of what would otherwise be judged adequate eannings. The Commission must retain the flexibility to adjust its excessive earnings test to reflect the circumstances of the day.
Q. Does this complete you testimony?
A. Yes. It does.

## Comparable Electric Utlilities <br> Return on Equity









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Schedule $s$

## Electric Utility Comparison Group Equity Percentages and Betas


schedule 4

## Comparable Nonutility Companies

 Risk Adjustment to Return on Equity



[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ That exception is the Evergreen Energy Co. which experienced a return on equity of $-175 \%$ in 2007

[^1]:    ${ }^{2}$ Stocks, Bonds, Bills and Inflation, 2008 Yearbook Ibbotson Associates

