

**FAX**  
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*Via Federal Express  
and Facsimile (614-466-0313)*

May 13, 2009

Ms. Renee J. Jenkins  
Director, Administration Department  
Secretary to the Commission  
Docketing Division  
The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43215-3793

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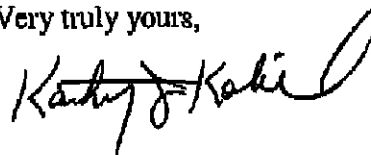
Dear Ms. Jenkins:

Re: *Testimony of Alan P. Rehbein  
Dane L. Mazzitti v. Ohio Edison Company  
Case No. 08-1146-EL-CSS*

Enclosed for filing, please find the original and twelve (12) copies of the pre-filed testimony of Alan P. Rehbein, an expert in the above-referenced case. Please file the enclosed testimony, time-stamping the two extras and returning them to the undersigned in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Please contact me if you have any questions concerning this matter.

Very truly yours,



kag  
Enclosures  
cc: Parties of Record

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**BEFORE THE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

**Dane L. Mazzitti,**

Complainant,

**VS.**

Ohio Edison Company,

**Respondent.**

CASE NO. 08-1146-EL-CSS

**TESTIMONY OF ALAN P. REHBEIN**

1 Q. Please state your name for the record.

2 A. My name is Alan P. Rehbein.

3

4 Q. By whom are you employed and in what capacity?

5 A. I am a contracted Forestry Specialist who is assigned to Ohio Edison through  
6 Davey Resource Group, a subsidiary of Davey Tree Expert Company.

7

**8 Q. As a contracted Forestry Specialist, what are some of your duties?**

9 A. I basically have the same duties as a forestry specialist employed by Ohio Edison  
10 Company, which include, among others, (i) scheduling the tree trimming projects  
11 performed by tree trimming companies hired by Ohio Edison for such work;  
12 (ii) performing quality checks to ensure that tree trimming was done in  
13 accordance with Ohio Edison standards, which follow those established by the  
14 Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and the American National Standards

1 Institute ("ANST"); (iii) performing line inspections to ensure that all branches  
2 have been cleared from all circuits as planned; and (iv) coordinating forestry work  
3 during storm restoration.  
4

5 **Q. How long have you held this position?**

6 **A. I have held my current position since August, 2008. However I have held various**  
7 **other positions that involved Ohio Edison work since 1992.**  
8

9 **Q. Would you please describe your work experience and training.**

10 **A. I have more than 25 years in the utility forestry area, holding jobs ranging from**  
11 **tree trimmer, to tree trimmer supervisor, to forestry specialist. I obtained my ISA**  
12 **[International Society of Arboriculture] certification as a utility forestry specialist**  
13 **in February, 2008, and my ISA Certification as an arborist in September, 2007,**  
14 **both of which required me to pass extensive tests and further requires me to**  
15 **participate in 20 hours of outside training per year.**  
16

17 **Q. Are you familiar with the trees located on the border of Mr. Mazzitti's**  
18 **property at 2563 Choctaw Drive, in London Ohio?**

19 **A. Yes, I am.**  
20

21 **Q. Please describe the trees.**

22 **A. There is a line of evergreen trees that runs approximately 75 feet from Choctaw**  
23 **Drive to the back of Mr. Mazzitti's property. This line of trees forms a border**  
24 **between Mr. Mazzitti's property and his neighbor's property. In fact,**

1 Mr. Mazzitti has represented that some of these trees are on his neighbor's  
2 property. These trees have grown in many instances to between 3 and 6 feet  
3 above the primary electric wire that also runs along the tree line. Attached to my  
4 testimony as Exhibits APR-1 and APR-2 are pictures of the tree branches in  
5 relationship to these wires which were taken last fall. As you can see, in many  
6 instances the branches are touching the electric line.

7  
8 Q. Please describe the distribution system that serves this area.

9 A. As indicated on attached Exhibit APR-3, which is a drawing of the distribution  
10 system around Mr. Mazzitti's property, the main distribution line runs along  
11 Choctaw Drive. That line is the middle line on APR-3. A tap line extends  
12 between 2563 and 2567, which is the line at issue in this proceeding. This line  
13 serves Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Piecenski, Mr. Mazzitti's neighbors, at  
14 2567 Choctaw Drive.

15  
16 Q. How is the tap line configured?

17 A. As you can see on Exhibits APR-1 and APR-2 there are two wires showing as  
18 part of the tap line. In reality, however, there is a third wire, which you cannot  
19 see on these exhibits. The top wire is the primary line, which carries up to  
20 12,500 volts. The other line that you can see is the neutral ground wire. And the  
21 third line, which is not readily visible on these exhibits is a phone/cable line that  
22 carries telephone and/or cable signal. This line is located approximately 2-3 feet  
23 below the neutral.

1 Q. Is the line that serves Mr. Mazzitti's neighbors a "feeder line" or "drop"  
2 line?

3 A. If you are referring to a feeder line or drop line as meaning one that brings the  
4 electricity into the home, no, it is not. As I indicated before, it is a 12.5 kV  
5 primary distribution line. At the end of this line is a drop line that delivers  
6 electricity to the Piccenski's home. The voltage is stepped down at the  
7 transformer indicated on Exhibit APR-3 as 140GJ-136.

8  
9 Q. Do you know when this distribution line was installed?

10 A. According to Ohio Edison's records, this particular line was installed in 1972.  
11

12 Q. Have the trees that are tangled in this distribution line ever been trimmed  
13 before?

14 A. Yes, they have. The last time the trees were trimmed was in April, 2004.  
15

16 Q. Does this distribution line serve Mr. Mazzitti?

17 A. No. It only serves the Piccenskis. Mr. Mazzitti is served off the main line on  
18 Choctaw Drive.  
19

20 Q. Is this distribution line given a high priority during storm restoration or  
21 another major outage?

22 A. No. Absent a live wire causing it to be given top priority, this particular line  
23 would be given one of the lowest priorities.

1 Q. Why is that?

2 A. Generally, in situations with numerous outages such as during a major storm,  
3 Ohio Edison prioritizes projects first addressing dangerous situations involving  
4 live wires, second medical situations and then wires based on the number of  
5 customers affected by the outage. Because this line only serves the Piecenski's  
6 home, it would be assigned a very low priority.

7

8 Q. Has Mr. Mazzitti's neighbors objected to the trimming of these trees?

9 A. As far as I know, no they have not. In fact, whenever the Company intends to  
10 trim trees in an area, representatives of the Company go door to door explaining  
11 what the Company plans to do. If a person is home, we try to obtain verbal  
12 authority. If not, a door card, along with an explanation of how the Company  
13 intends to trim the trees, is left behind and the customer then checks whether they  
14 agree to the tree trimming as described, and signs the card. A copy of a door card  
15 is attached to my testimony as Exhibit APR-4.

16

17 The Company keeps a log of customer responses. As indicated in the log attached  
18 to my testimony as APR-5, the Company started to notify customers in  
19 Mr. Mazzitti's neighborhood in late June, 2008. The log indicates that the  
20 Piecenskis (2567 Choctaw Drive) authorized the Company to trim the trees as  
21 needed.

22

1 Q. Do you have a returned card from the Piecenskis?

2 A. No. After the Company representative left the card on the door, he saw  
3 Mrs. Piecenski in the yard mowing the lawn. He explained to her what the  
4 Company's trimming plans were and she provided verbal authorization to  
5 proceed. And on August 28, 2008, I was meeting with Mr. Mazzitti. While I was  
6 there, I noticed a lightning arrestor was damaged on the transformer that serves  
7 the Piecenskis. While I was investigating this matter, I had the opportunity to talk  
8 to Mrs. Piecenski and her daughter, who were painting a shed in the back yard.  
9 At that time, I again explained that we would be trimming the trees along the tree  
10 line and that it would require a short power outage. Mrs. Piecenski appreciated  
11 the warning and voiced no objections over the Company's tree trimming plans.  
12 Because the Company received two verbal authorizations to proceed, we did not  
13 follow up on the door card.

14

15 Q. Why is it necessary to trim these trees?

16 A. With the wires in such close proximity to the electric wires, and in some cases  
17 touching them, it creates a dangerous situation and jeopardizes the integrity of  
18 Ohio Edison's distribution system.

19

20 Q. Why are these conditions dangerous?

21 A. These conditions create several dangerous situations. First, if the tree is touching  
22 the primary line while someone is touching the tree, there is a distinct possibility  
23 that the individual will be shocked and could possibly be electrocuted under  
24 certain conditions. This potential becomes greater the closer the individual is to

1 the wires when touching the tree. Because these are evergreen trees, which  
2 provide good branches for climbing, it increases the chances for such an outcome  
3 if children play in the trees. Such a situation occurred several years ago when a  
4 young boy was killed while climbing an evergreen tree.

5  
6 In fact, the tree trimming contractor that will be performing the work on these  
7 trees informed me that the safety concerns are so great in this instance that they  
8 will require the tap line to be de-energized while the trees are being trimmed.

9  
10 Contact with the wires also creates a fire hazard. When trees touch the wires, an  
11 arc can occur which, if it does not immediately start a fire, starts to kill the living  
12 cells in the branch, thus drying it out and eventually killing it. The drier these  
13 branches become the greater the chance of fire.

14  
15 **Q. How do these conditions jeopardize the integrity of Ohio Edison's system?**

16 **A.** If a branch touches both a primary and neutral line at the same time, it creates a  
17 situation that could blow a fuse. As indicated on Exhibit APR-6, which is a tri-  
18 fold brochure that explains Ohio Edison's tree trimming program, there are  
19 approximately 10,000 tree-related distribution outages that occur annually on  
20 FirstEnergy's system. Trends over the past five years have shown that, on  
21 average, 25 percent of FirstEnergy's customers can expect to have an outage  
22 caused by trees coming in contact with power lines. The duration of these  
23 outages leaves customers without electricity for an average of approximately  
24 5 hours. By maintaining a tree trimming cycle and keeping branches out of the



1 wires, there will be fewer outages, resulting in enhanced customer service, safer  
2 conditions and minimal outage costs to customers.

3

4 **Q. Does Ohio Edison have a standard tree trimming cycle?**

5 **A.** Yes, it does, which is part of the Company's vegetation management plan. Under  
6 this plan, the Company is required to prune, control or remove vegetation  
7 "approximately every four years, or as required, to maintain reliability and access,  
8 make repairs, or restore service." The pruning must be performed in compliance  
9 with the ANSI Standards "Pruning, Repairing, Maintaining, and Removing Trees,  
10 and Cutting Brush – Safety Requirements" (Z133.1) and "Standards for Tree Care  
11 Operations" (A-300), as well as the requirements of the Occupational Safety and  
12 Health Administration.

13

14 **Q. How does Ohio Edison intend to remedy the situation at the Mazzitti**  
15 **property?**

16 **A.** Once this case is over and assuming the Commission authorizes the Company to  
17 proceed, Ohio Edison will send a tree trimming crew to Mr. Mazzitti's property.  
18 The trees along the tree line will be trimmed consistent with the Company's  
19 vegetation management plan. Based on this plan, the evergreen trees will be  
20 trimmed to provide a clearance of ten feet from the primary wire. This generally  
21 equates to four years of growth for this type of evergreen.

1 Q. Are there any other trees that will need to be trimmed?

2 A. Yes. There is a silver maple tree at the rear of the property that has grown to a  
3 point that some of its branches are encroaching into the trim zone around the  
4 wires. Therefore, while we are trimming at this location, we will need to trim this  
5 tree as well.  
6

7 Q. Please describe how this tree will be trimmed.

8 A. A silver maple tree is a fast growing tree that needs to be pruned at least fifteen  
9 feet away from conductors. This distance generally represents four years of  
10 growth for this type of tree. ANSI A-300 states that branches should be cut to  
11 laterals, or the parent branch, and not at a pre-established clearing limit. So  
12 depending on how the tree has grown, this may result in slightly more than fifteen  
13 feet clearance for some branches.  
14

15 Q. Are the trees along Mr. Mazzitti's property the only trees in the area that the  
16 Company intends to trim?

17 A. No. Mr. Mazzitti's property is located within a development known as Choctaw  
18 Lake. Because this development has numerous trees in the area, the tree trimming  
19 crews have been trimming trees throughout this development since about  
20 September, 2008. In fact, all tree trimming in this development is virtually  
21 complete, except for the Mazzitti project and one other customer who has refused  
22 to authorize us to proceed.  
23

1   **Q.**    Will the trimming done on the trees located on the border of Mr. Mazzitti's  
2           property be trimmed any differently than those trimmed at other locations  
3           within the development?

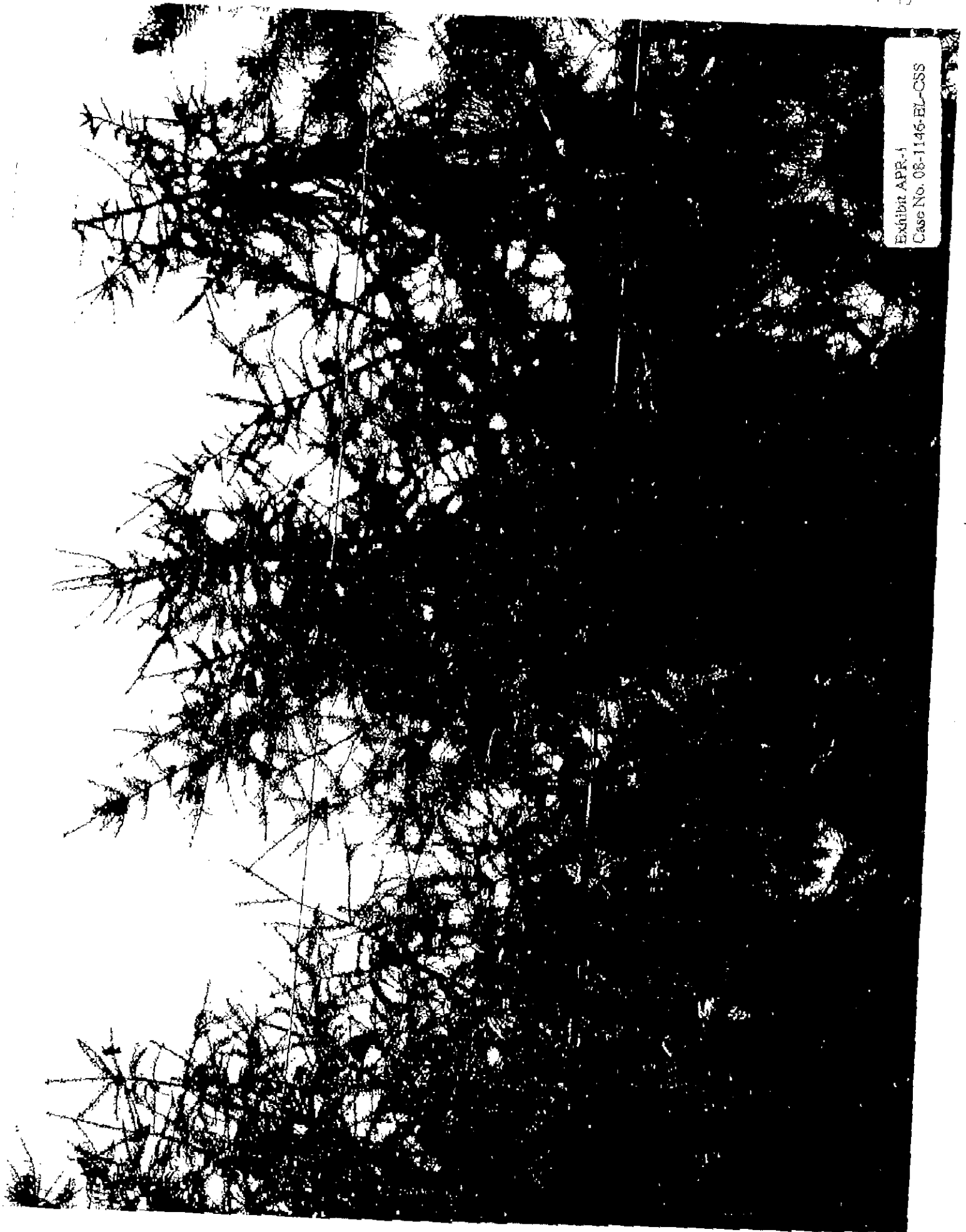
4   **A.**    No. Absent unusual circumstances, Ohio Edison follows the standard process set  
5           forth in its vegetation management plan.

6

7   **Q.**    Does this conclude your direct testimony?

8   **A.**    Yes, it does.

Exhibit APR-1  
Case No. 08-1146-EL-CSS



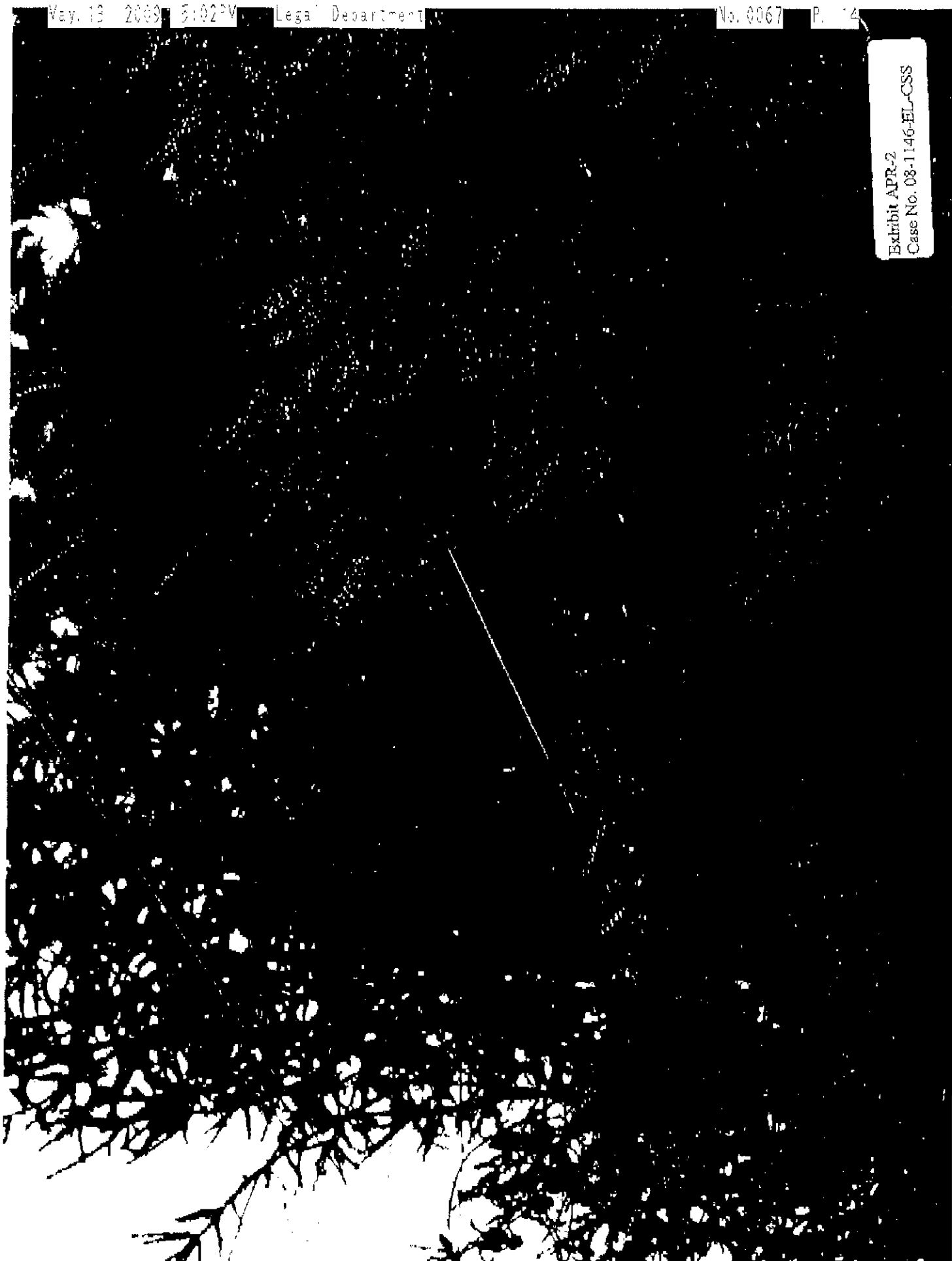
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P. 14

Exhibit APR-2  
Case No. 08-1146-EL-CSS





WOOD GREATER THAN 4" IN DIAMETER  
WILL BE CUT IN MANAGEABLE LENGTHS.  
BRUSH WILL BE CHIPPED.

- \_\_\_\_\_ I acknowledge the need to provide tree clearance to the power lines by trimming, as necessary, the tree/trees on my property.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I grant permission to remove the tree/trees from under/aside of the power lines on my property as requested or marked.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I grant permission for stumps and brush to be treated with a safe E.P.A. approved herbicide.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I grant permission to remove tree species 6" to 8" and less in diameter growing under or within 15 feet either side of the power line...

Owner's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CIRCUIT \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

# SORRY TO HAVE MISSED YOU

## YOUR TREES COULD CAUSE A POWER OUTAGE

Dear Customer:

Some of the trees on your property near our power line require tree clearance. Maintaining proper tree clearance from the power lines is absolutely necessary to ensure safe and reliable electric service.

Nelson Tree Service has been contracted by Ohio Edison to perform this work.

Please complete and sign the reverse side of this form as applicable and hang it on the door knob. We will pick it up tomorrow.

All necessary work will be done without expense to the property owner.

Thanks for your cooperation!

The Forestry Staff of  
**Nelson Tree Service**

Telephone: **(937) 327-1220**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Tree Clearance Permission

(Over)

6-25-08

MAP #11

LONDON

PKT #2

Number of spots needing work on this sheet

Average length per spot feet

STREET: W. Choctaw Dr. (Choctaw Lakes)

①

M/S	House #	C/P	TRIM	REM.	BRUSH	NOTES
	2553	C	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed
	2554					W. Choctaw Dr. Manual
	2561	P	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed
	2563	WCP				W. Choctaw Dr. Remove 2 silver maple trees marked with red X chip all brush & leave woods maintainable length's manual tap on another sheet
	2567	C	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed manual work is on another sheet
	2575	C	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed
	2579	C	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed
	2581	P	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed
	2582	C	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed
	2584	C	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed
	2582					W. Choctaw Dr. Refusal
	2599	C	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed
	2605	P	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed
	2607	C	X			W. Choctaw Dr. Trim As Needed





## Trees and Power Lines Don't Mix

Approximately 10,000 tree-related distribution outages occur annually on the FirstEnergy System throughout Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

- Trends over the past five years have shown that on average, 25 percent of FirstEnergy's operating companies' customers can expect to have an outage caused by trees contacting power lines each year.
- The duration of outages caused by trees on average resulted in customers being without power for approximately five hours.

## Enhanced Vegetation Management Gets Results

Experience has shown that enhanced vegetation management helps reduce the number and length of electric service interruptions.

FirstEnergy operating companies are committed to continuous improvement activities in order to achieve the highest level of customer satisfaction, especially when it involves service reliability.

For the tenth consecutive year, FirstEnergy was named a Tree Line USA Utility by the National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters. The award recognizes utilities that promote the dual goals of dependable utility service and abundant, healthy trees along America's streets and highways. Award-winning companies demonstrate excellence in tree care, training and public education.

For additional information about FirstEnergy's vegetation management practices, go to [www.firstenergycorp.com](http://www.firstenergycorp.com). Select the Operating Company then click on "Safety" and look for the "Maintaining Trees" or "Selecting the Right Tree" links.

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Penelec • Met-Ed • Jersey Central Power & Light

## Enhanced Vegetation Management Program

Exhibit APR-6  
Case No. 08-1146-FT-JCSS

## Balancing Reliability and Aesthetics

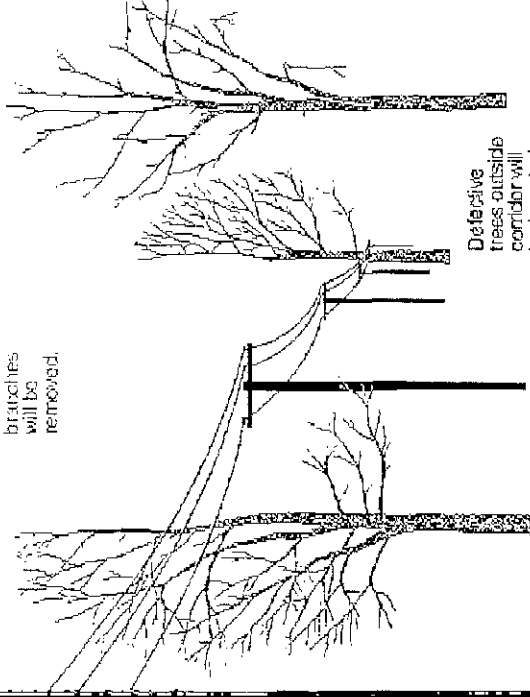
Electric industry experts agree that trees impacting electric facilities are a leading cause of power outages.

Despite our on-going vegetation management efforts, research has determined that overhanging branches above the wires and dead or defective trees falling from outside the distribution corridor continue to be a major cause of power outages.

Because the branches or trees fall from above, extensive damage is caused to the poles, wires and other equipment which extends restoration time.



Overhead branches will be removed.



Defective trees outside corridor will be targeted for removal.

## Commitment to Improving Reliability

FirstEnergy is committed to improving customer service reliability by enhancing our vegetation management program to remove overhanging branches and defective trees outside the corridor before they cause an outage.

In a pilot program FirstEnergy tested in Pennsylvania, removal of these branches resulted in a 90 percent reduction in the number of tree-related outages.

The Enhanced Vegetation Management Program includes removing:

- More overhanging branches than in prior pruning cycles.
- Trees that have branches overhanging distribution facilities.
- Dead and defective trees that could fall from outside the corridor onto the power lines.

## Customer Notification is Important

Property owners will be notified before any work begins – either in person, by telephone, or with a door card. If personal notification is not made, a customer will be asked to contact the company representative of the company. This will ensure that the property owner understands and has an opportunity to ask questions regarding the necessary work.

There are instances – such as emergency storm restoration efforts – where work may be completed without notifying the property owner advance. This occurs on a limited basis and only as a result of an emergency storm situation.

After a tree is pruned or removed, small tree limbs and branches are chipped and hauled away. However, there are instances – such as emergency restoration efforts after a storm – that the clean up of tree limbs and wood remains the responsibility of the property owner.


The anticipated benefits of this Enhanced Vegetation Management Program include:

- Reducing the number of tree-related outages
- Reducing the severity of damage to the electric infrastructure
- Eliminating potential safety hazards.



**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY** that a copy of the pre-filed expert testimony of Alan P. Rehbein was served upon Dane L. Mazzitti, 7365 Christie Chapel Road, Dublin, OH 43017, by regular U.S. Mail, postage prepaid, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2009.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathy J. Kolich, Esquire