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FEB 16 2010

February 10, 2010

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

INVESTIGATION
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

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I am writing in concerns of a change in policy by the First Energy Electric Company here in northeast Ohio. The change was the cancelation of a fixed rate policy for home owners who elected to build all electric homes. At the time of construction or purchase of a new home, First Energy offered an option that if you built or bought a new home and elected to make it an all electric home, you would be given a fixed rate on your electric bill for what was implied to be for the time that you maintained residence in that home.

Along with building or purchasing an all electric home was the commitment of the home owner to allow First Energy to install power regulation modules into the home which would allow First Energy to turn off or limit the amount of electric you could use at peak times to aid them during high demand periods. These power regulation modules could turn off your dryer, washer or other items that require high electrical draws upon the system. Thus, during peak hours of demand First Energy could limit the home owner's electrical use and protect itself during these times.

Now First Energy has without formal notification or considerate thought revoked this offer to its customers. First Energy will tell you they gave notification through their monthly billing system. This notification was a small line of print within the multiple pages of billing. First Energy has as much as doubled the rates to these committed and long time devoted home owners who planned their life's direction for future costs and utilities expenses around this offer to guard themselves against hardships at a later time in life. Not only did First Energy never in a professional manor inform the customer this fixed rate plan was to be revoked, First Energy never informed the customer the power regulation equipment had been shut off. First Energy attempted to "slide" the policy cancellation through the customer with little fanfare and notice so customer concerns could not be voiced. It worked!!!!


Due to the commitment I made for the construction of an all electric house, I made decisions based on having a fixed rate that was offered by First Energy knowing that future change to another system would be a costly and difficult one. Conversion to another system requiring a furnace or other such heat source requires heating ductwork, return air duct work, utility floor space, equipment investment and the installation or storage of a heating fuel. Then there is the removal of the electrical heating units currently installed within the home. For furnace driven heating systems, duct work is normally run in the floor and exhaust vents at the floor or bottom of the wall. With a slab home this adds to the cost and difficulty of converting to an optional system.

The electric company knows they have the customer trapped and alternative options are not for the most part feasible. First Energy offered, initiated and promoted this fixed rate policy knowing this would insure them a customer with a lifetime of commitment. First Energy had the resources, data and information required to know the business decision they were making. We as customers live with "estimate" billings month after month not knowing if we are over paying or not. This estimated over payment provides a means for First Energy to obtain financial gain from their committed customer. Over bill and prosper from interest gained from customer over payment. Again it works!!!

All I am asking is a company be held to their commitment just like we the customers have been committed to them. To change our mind costs us money, for First Energy to change their mind makes them money. How hard of a decision do you think that was at their last board meeting?

Sincerely lifelong trapped customer,


Del Stamm

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Technician  Date Processed MAR 10 2010