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PUCO

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Docketing Division
180 East Broad St.
Columbus OH 43215-3793

RE: First Energy case number 10-0176-EL-ATA
Please docket for case

My husband and I live in an all-electric home. Seven years ago we made a decision to spend \$16,000 converting our home to an efficient geo-thermal heating and cooling system for budgetary reasons. My husband has been laid off 4 times in the last seven years by two different companies and lost all his benefits. He hasn't had a pay increase in more than 15 years. I was downsized out of my job and medical benefits eight years ago and because of that my income has decreased by more than half. We saw the recession coming and wanted the all-electric discount offered by the electric company so that we could tighten our belt. During this process, First Energy never told us that the all-electric discounted rate was temporary.

My husband and I are in our fifties and have college educations. We do not live a lavish life style because we know that our income is never going to increase for the rest of our lives, even if we are lucky enough to be employed. There are no frills at our house. Because of this, we are able to purchase our own health insurance that is not a small amount of money per month. Now we face a monthly electric bill that is significantly more than our health insurance. In addition, the value of our home has been destroyed.

Last January our bill jumped from \$392. to \$757. for about the same kWh usage. When I called the electric company they blamed it on the PUCO. They also pointed out that we did have some discount left and that we should be happy because our bill should have been over \$1000. They also accused us of using too much electricity and that they would send us a brochure on how to conserve electricity. What? Our thermostat is already set on a very chilly 67 degrees. Apparently they expected us to crank it down some more and put on a third pair of socks. When I called the PUCO, I was told by Mike that that's the way it is, too bad for us, and that we could expect another 500% increase shortly. Now that I look back on it, that was a very interesting statement made by Mike about the additional 500% increase coming shortly. It suspiciously sounds like he already knew about the ESP that would be ramroded through by the PUCO in August.

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Over the last year, several things have become apparent to me. The all-electric homeowners are being victimized and soaked in more ways than one. It is clear to me after attending town hall meetings and hearings and listening to contractors and former electric company employees speak, that the electric company promised a discounted rate, never saying in the last 40 years that the offer was temporary. They even went so far as to woo contractors into building homes in that fashion using monetary bribes. When we received our all-electric rate, we were never told that it would be for a limited amount of time. I have also found out that the electric company purposely designed their rate structure, with the blessing of the PUCO, so that the more electricity used, the higher the price of that electricity would be. I believe it is called an inclined rate structure. Totally opposite of what the rest of the business world uses. How clever of the electric company, but then they can do that because they have a monopoly on something none of us can do without and they also have the unquestioned blessing of the PUCO backing them up.

It has also become clear to me that the PUCO has been a willing partner in this fleecing of the residential customers, and especially the all-electric customers. In multiple places on the PUCO web site, the mission statement is written "to assure all residential and business customers access to adequate, safe, and reliable services at fair prices, while facilitating an environment that provides competitive choices." So far, I fail to see where the PUCO has followed that mission statement in any of the recent dealings with First Energy and residential customers. Starting with the light bulb scam, then blindly allowing First Energy to renege on contracts with all-electric customers, causing our monthly bills to skyrocket us into financial disasters. And most recently the PUCO's total disregard of any of the testimony of the residential customers, our state legislators and the OCC in regard to the ESP of this past summer. The last time I checked we don't have any competitive electric choices and the electric company is still a monopoly despite what it says on fancy paper. I am particularly alarmed at what the PUCO may apparently believe is a "fair price" for all-electric homeowners. To me, \$1,000 monthly bills while enduring a thermostat set at 67 degrees and still facing financial disaster and a home with a value that has been reduced to basically nothing is anything but fair.

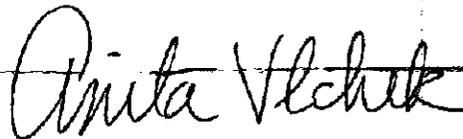
Clearly the PUCO has failed to do its job in regard to the residential customers. It certainly appears that the PUCO has no regard what-so-ever for the residential customers. Of course, it is First Energy that supplies your paychecks and not the residential customers, lending more credibility to my observation that the PUCO is more than willing to sacrifice and rape the residential customers so that First Energy can have whatever it demands for itself.

I have now heard several PUCO committee members say that this all-electric problem is complex and that there are several solutions available that will satisfy both First Energy and the all-electric customers. I would have to disagree. To me, this issue is not complex at all. It's very simple. Based on testimony that I

heard in the town hall meetings and hearings, there is only one solution. Do the right thing!

I would urge the PUCO to reinstate the discounted electric rate for the all-electric homes. Permanently. First Energy should not be allowed to break its contracts with all-electric homeowners at all. Period. Phasing out our all-electric rate over several years is not acceptable either. All-electric customers will still face financial hardships trying to pay high and ever increasing monthly bills and our home values will still plummet. Furthermore, First Energy should not be allowed to force other residential customers to pay for this discount. This is First Energy's contractual responsibility, nobody else's. They worked hard to create the all-electric customer pool, therefore it is their problem. I would like to point out to the PUCO, that this is a very serious amount of money for the all-electric homeowners. But for First Energy, this amount of money is just a drop in the bucket. After all, they managed to find billions of dollars just lying around last year that they used to buy another company. I'd say first Energy is not hurting for money since they have, in fact, a guaranteed monthly income from every man-made structure there is. That's a pretty sweet deal for any business.

At a town hall meeting here this past spring, I asked Mr. Steven Lesser who pays his salary. When he admitted it was the electric company, the room erupted. Mr. Lesser looked me straight in the face and said, "I resent your inference." I did not respond to that statement at that time, but I would like to now. Given what I have learned in the last seven months as to the operation of the PUCO, I would like to say, "If the shoe fits...." I dare the PUCO to prove me wrong, that this whole business doesn't stink of closed-door corruption at the expense of residential customers. Yes, I am very angry that I have been made to beg for my life for the better part of a whole year. And I am very suspicious about what is really going on between First Energy and the PUCO committee members.



Anita Vlchek