

FILE

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3/27/2011

PUCO

Todd Snitchler, Chairman
180 E. Broad Street
Columbus Oh 43215

Case # 10-176

Dear Mr. Snitchler

I am an "ALL ELECTRIC HOME OWNER" and retired.

I would have never agreed to First Energy's "all electric home discount program" if I had been told that they would have been able to withdraw it in the future. In fact when I questioned their representative about resale value he smiled and stated that the discount would make it easier to sell our home due to the low energy operating costs.

We built our home in 1975 to their specifications and accepted their recommendations on heating, cooking and water heating appliances. We limited the window space in our home which required a house plan change by the architect and insulated beyond what First Energy asked for. We paid a extra monthly charge for a "Time of Day usage Meter" to further reduce our electric bill by cooking, washing dishes, and laundering clothes after 8:00 PM and before 8:00AM. Not very convenient.

There were other choice for our heating and cooking requirements including natural gas, but the electric company convinced us to use electricity. One thing I do remember is their representative chuckling about the cost of electricity never reaching 2 cents per KW. While the cost of the equipment to use other heating and cooking fuels would have been nominal during construction, the cost to convert to other fuels now would cost us around 50,000 dollars and would not be as environmentally friendly.

Our home has been devaluated tremendously thanks to the removal of our "All Electric Home Discounts". Without the discount we kept our thermostats set between 55 & 62 degrees in the winter. Since we do not have central air conditioning we only run the bedroom window air conditioner when it is too unbearably hot to sleep. What a fine way to spend your golden years. We trusted First Energy and we trusted PUCO to protect us.

For 35 years we put up with the inconvenience of Glass Panel heating, First Energy's heating system recommendation, to receive their discount. To minimize hot water loss we had 2 electric hot water tanks installed, one to service each end of the house, their recommendation also. Now that I am retired PUCO has allowed the discount to be withdrawn? Why? The agreement was between First Energy and myself. I thought the

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Public Utility Commission of Ohio was formed to protect us, the consumer, from the natural monopolies of utilities. If I enter in to a contract and after years of enjoying the benefits and then it turns sour, I am stuck with it why doesn't that apply to First Energy?

An article approximately 3 years ago in the Plain Dealer newspaper about First Energy and a home builder, I believe it was Bob Schmidt Homes, stated that First Energy was extending the "All Electric Home Discount" to the homes he had under construction.

The discount would no longer apply to any more new homes but existing homes with the discount would be *grandfather*. What changed?

My God, people plan their lives around what cost will be for their living conditions and adjust accordingly. It's tough enough in this economy and worst when you are retired like my wife and I. Believe me, if I had known, and it seemed to be a well kept secret that the discount was going to be eliminated I would have sold my house and moved to a state that is much more friendly to Seniors. Better still, I would have not chosen electricity for my heating fuel when we built the house.

Just what am I supposed to do? I couldn't sell my house if I wanted to, not now. Who would buy it with those high electric bills. My understanding was that the discount was applied to the house? I would have to give it away after 35 years.

Please tell me what am I supposed to do now? I can't afford the electric bills without the discount, can't sell my house, the one I worked most of my life for and can't afford to convert to another fuel. Being retired, 70 years old, my choices are my prescriptions, food or the electric and house tax bills.

First Energy sent us an estimated bill for January 2010. They estimated our usage at 2000 KWH. The lowest amount of electricity we have ever used is 2800 KWH and for January we average around 6000 KWH . If they can't keep records as simple as that how can we trust any of their figures?

If I sound frustrated its because I am, 9/11 and the cancellation of orders that followed put the company I worked for out of business. There was not much of a market for a 61 year old engineer whose experience was in a very mature field. I had offers that would require my family to relocate to other states, but this was home and the operating cost of the our house was reasonable so I accepted jobs that paid less then half of what I used to make. My 401K's lost 46 % of their value so I rolled them over to IRA's @ 5.1 % interest for 5 years.

If we could get by until I was 65 then I could retire and live on Social Security and the interest from the IRA's. Well the economy really tanked and interest rates are so low we have to draw principle not just interest to live on and that won't last very long.

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With First Energy breaking the promises they made to us to build an all electric home we are in trouble. Please make First Energy keep the commitment they made to us by permanently reinstating the All Electric Home discount and keeping the discount tied to the house. With the possibility of my electric bill tripling I am afraid of losing everything I have worked for all my life.

Robert E. Robertson