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September 14, 2011

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
ATTN: Docketing Division
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Case No. 11-5028-GA-UNC, 11-5029-GA-AAM

Ohio Interfaith Power and Light, a project of the Ohio Council of Churches representing over 6000 member churches, expresses its' enthusiastic support for the Demand Side Management programs proposed by Columbia Gas of Ohio in the above case numbers.

Ohio Interfaith Power and Light (OHIPL) is a statewide organization with over 70 covenant congregations represented statewide and over 1200 individual contacts in our communications data base. Houses of worship are among the very least efficient buildings in the country, and so make good laboratories to test new energy efficiency technologies. Congregations are motivated to collaborate in this process in part because they have so much to gain, potentially, in energy and money savings. The U.S. EPA has made clear, there is as much floor space in the U.S. tied up in religious facilities as there is floor space in all the U.S. medical facilities, and 80 percent as much as in all the lodging facilities in the U.S. For this reason, U.S. EPA created an Energy Star building rating category for houses of worship, in hopes of capitalizing on this vast (and usually highly inefficient) building stock.

Columbia's programs will provide customers with substantial energy conservation benefits such as reduced natural gas bills as a result of participating in the proposed programs. The programs have the potential to save customers millions of dollars in energy costs over the life of the energy conservation measures.

In addition to lower bills, these programs also create/retain badly needed jobs for Ohioans, invest in products and services offered by businesses in Ohio, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions helping our members to be good stewards of creation. They also enhance conservation and energy efficiency as an energy resource in Ohio and improve the safety, health, durability, comfort and affordability of customers' homes and facilities thereby revitalizing and extending the useful life of our existing buildings and the communities where we live and serve.

We are working with interfaith communities around the state of Ohio to help them establish better energy use management. Without Columbia's programs, our organization could not afford to help our member congregations use our planet's limited resources effectively. We encourage the PUCO to approve these programs so that customers can enjoy the many benefits of good energy efficiency programs like Columbia's.

Sincerely,

Dr. Greg Hitzhusen, MDiv, PhD
Chairman,
Ohio Interfaith Power and Light

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