

FILE



Hamilton County

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February 28, 2013

12-1682-EL-AIR

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215

12-1685-GA-AIR

Re: Proposed Duke Energy Rate Increase

Dear PUCO Commissioners:

I am addressing the Public Utilities Commission today to add my voice of opposition to the Duke Energy rate increase currently being considered. This letter is an expression of my views, as a Hamilton County Commissioner concerned for my fellow Duke Energy rate payers.

In these difficult economic times, county residents and local businesses are enduring the struggles that accompany long periods of stagnant income growth and rising expenses. The cost of living and doing business remain a primary concern and energy is an essential and significant expense.

Recently, I had the privilege of delivering Hamilton County's "state of the county" address to the Rotary Club of Cincinnati during their annual gathering in Downtown Cincinnati. In that address, I detailed to about 200 local business men and women the County's strategic plan for addressing the tough economic times faced by local governments.

In preparing for my presentation to the Rotary, my staff and I talked with a number of Hamilton County business owners (large and small), representatives of business-oriented groups as well as citizens simply trying to balance their daily household budgets.

A frequent message dominated the conversations: things seem to be getting better, but please do everything you can to help us keep our costs down until the economy turns the corner.

Our citizens have little flexibility to reduce energy consumption and must rely on their energy provider and the PUCO to maintain manageable rates. Higher energy costs require cuts to other areas of family and business budgets that have no room to absorb additional reductions.

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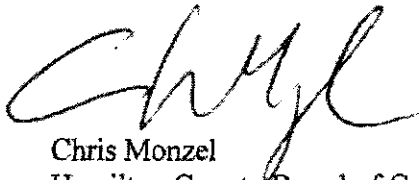
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PUCO

I acknowledge that Duke Energy is clearly striving to be a good corporate citizen and the Cincinnati office is an important employer in Southwest Ohio. Yet the bottom line for our businesses and residents is efficient service and competitive energy rates. This is not the time to stall a fragile economic recovery or to add the burden of additional costs associated with public works projects. Any costs associated with these public works projects should be maintained within the project and the municipality. Ratepayers and taxpayers deserve to know the true cost of a public works project. Embedding costs in Ohio energy bills obscures the actual costs associated with a specific project.

Please help Hamilton County navigate the delicate path to prosperity by rejecting the rate increase requested by the Duke Energy Company.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Monzel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" being more prominent than the last name "Monzel".

Chris Monzel
Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners