

**BEFORE
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

| | | |
|--|---|------------------------|
| In the Matter of the Complaint of Orwell |) | |
| Natural Gas Company, |) | |
| |) | |
| Complainant, |) | |
| |) | |
| v. |) | Case No. 15-475-GA-CSS |
| |) | |
| Orwell-Trumbull Pipeline Company, |) | |
| LLC, |) | |
| |) | |
| Respondent. |) | |

**MOTION TO INTERVENE
BY
THE OFFICE OF THE OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL**

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel ("OCC") moves to intervene in this case where the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("PUCO") will investigate allegations that Orwell-Trumbull threatened to shut-off service to Orwell, due to an alleged need to move the Orwell-Trumbull pipeline or for maintenance.¹ Shut off of transportation service from Orwell-Trumbull to Orwell, would mean that the health, safety and welfare of Orwell's residential customers could be negatively impacted because customers might not have access to natural gas. Although Orwell-Trumbull filed a Statement on April 3, 2015 that the matter has been resolved,² the Utility disputed that claim in an April 17, 2015 Response. The Utility's Response indicates that the dispute remains ripe for PUCO review. Accordingly

¹ See Orwell Complaint at General Allegations 9 (March 9, 2015).

² See Orwell-Trumbull Memorandum and Statement (April 3, 2015).

OCC is moving to intervene on behalf of all the 7,500 residential utility customers of Orwell.

The reasons the PUCO should grant OCC's Motion are further set forth in the attached

Memorandum in Support.

Respectfully submitted,

BRUCE J. WESTON
OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL

/s/ Joseph P. Serio

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MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

This case is important to the residential customers of Orwell because the PUCO will investigate a dispute between Orwell and its related pipeline, Orwell-Trumbull, that could negatively impact service to some residential customers. Specifically, the PUCO will review allegations that Orwell-Trumbull threatened shut off service to the portion of the Orwell distribution system fed off of Vrooman Road in Lake County.³ The Utility noted concern that such action would leave 13 customers served by that portion of the distribution system without natural gas service in violation of R.C. 4929.22.⁴

OCC is concerned that customers have necessary and adequate gas service -- including “minimum service quality, safety and reliability.” This is of particular importance for customers, especially those who rely on natural gas for home heating. And Orwell under the law (R.C. 4905.22) is required to “furnish necessary and adequate

³ See Orwell Complaint at General Allegation 9 (March 9, 2015).

⁴ See Orwell Complaint at General Allegation 14 and Count One at item 17 and 18 (March 9, 2015), and Orwell Response to Orwell Trumbull at 2 (April 17, 2015).

service and facilities” and the facilities must be “adequate and in all respect just and reasonable.” OCC has authority under law to represent the interests of all the 7,500 residential utility customers of Orwell pursuant to R.C. Chapter 4911.

R.C. 4903.221 provides, in part, that any person “who may be adversely affected” by a PUCO proceeding is entitled to seek intervention in that proceeding. The interests of Orwell’s residential GCR customers may be “adversely affected” by this case if the customers are unrepresented. In this case the PUCO will be investigating a complaint that Orwell-Trumbull threatened to shut off service to a portion of Orwell’s distribution system. This could leave some residential GCR customers without service. The on-going dispute over whether this issue has been resolved means that this element of the intervention standard in R.C. 4903.221 is satisfied.

R.C. 4903.221(B) requires the PUCO to consider the following criteria in ruling on motions to intervene:

- (1) The nature and extent of the prospective intervenor’s interest;
- (2) The legal position advanced by the prospective intervenor and its probable relation to the merits of the case;
- (3) Whether the intervention by the prospective intervenor will unduly prolong or delay the proceeding; and
- (4) Whether the prospective intervenor will significantly contribute to the full development and equitable resolution of the factual issues.

First, the nature and extent of OCC’s interest is representing the residential customers of Orwell in this case involving issues related to the Utility’s ability to supply necessary and adequate (i.e. uninterrupted service) service to its customers on a long-term basis. This interest is different than that of any other party and especially different than

that of the Utility or the Pipeline whose advocacy includes the financial interest of stockholders.

Second, OCC's advocacy for residential customers will include advancing the position that the service to residential GCR customers should continue uninterrupted and that customers receive the service they have paid for. Any interruption of service or failure to find a permanent resolution to the issue could imperil residential customers' health, safety and welfare. Customers are entitled to necessary and adequate service under the law that is in all respects just and reasonable. OCC's position is therefore directly related to the merits of this case that is pending before the PUCO.

Third, OCC's intervention will not unduly prolong or delay the proceedings. OCC, with its longstanding expertise and experience in PUCO proceedings, will duly allow for the efficient processing of the case with consideration of the public interest.

Fourth, OCC's intervention will significantly contribute to the full development and equitable resolution of the factual issues. OCC will obtain and develop information that the PUCO should consider for equitably and lawfully deciding the case in the public interest.

OCC also satisfies the intervention criteria in the Ohio Administrative Code (which are subordinate to the criteria that OCC satisfies in the Ohio Revised Code). To intervene, a party should have a "real and substantial interest" according to Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-11(A)(2). As the advocate for residential utility customers, OCC has a very real and substantial interest in this case where there are issues related to a utility's ability to supply necessary and adequate (i.e. uninterrupted service) service to its customers. These issues could have a direct impact on health and safety of customers.

In addition, OCC meets the criteria of Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-11(B)(1)-(4). These criteria mirror the statutory criteria in R.C. 4903.221(B) that OCC already has addressed and that OCC satisfies.

Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-11(B)(5) states that the PUCO shall consider “The extent to which the person’s interest is represented by existing parties.” While OCC does not concede the lawfulness of this criterion, OCC satisfies this criterion in that it uniquely has been designated as the state representative of the interests of Ohio’s residential utility customers. That interest is different from, and not represented by, any other entity in Ohio.

Moreover, the Supreme Court of Ohio confirmed OCC’s right to intervene in PUCO proceedings, in deciding two appeals in which OCC claimed the PUCO erred by denying its interventions. The Court found that the PUCO abused its discretion in denying OCC’s interventions and that OCC should have been granted intervention in both proceedings.⁵

OCC meets the criteria set forth in R.C. 4903.221, Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-11, and the precedent established by the Supreme Court of Ohio for intervention. On behalf of Ohio residential customers, the PUCO should grant OCC’s Motion to Intervene.

⁵ See *Ohio Consumers’ Counsel v. Pub. Util. Comm.*, 111 Ohio St.3d 384, 2006-Ohio-5853, ¶¶13-20.

Respectfully submitted,

BRUCE J. WESTON
OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL

/s/ Joseph P. Serio

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of this *Motion to Intervene* was served on the persons stated below *via* electronic transmission, this 29th day of April 2015.

/s/ Joseph P. Serio

Joseph P. Serio

Assistant Consumers' Counsel

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This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on

4/29/2015 12:07:22 PM

in

Case No(s). 15-0475-GA-CSS

Summary: Motion Motion to Intervene by the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel electronically filed by Patti Mallarnee on behalf of Serio, Joseph P.