

**BEFORE
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

In the Matter of the Application of Aqua)
Ohio, Inc. to Increase Its Rates and) Case No. 16-0907-WW-AIR
Charges for Its Waterworks Service.)

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

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel ("OCC") moves to intervene¹ in this case where Aqua Ohio, Inc. ("Aqua" or "Company") seeks an overall 9.2% increase in the rates that its customers pay for water service.² OCC is filing on behalf of all the residential utility customers of Aqua located in its Lake Erie and Masury Service divisions and all areas formerly served by the Ohio American Water Company.³ The reasons the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("Commission" or "PUCO") should grant OCC's Motion are further set forth in the attached Memorandum in Support.

¹ See R.C. Chapter 4911, R.C. 4903.221 and Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-11.

² PFN Exhibit 2B, Notice of Intent to File an Application for an Increase in Rates (April 28, 2016).

³ Aqua's application will cover all residential utility customers in the Lake Erie Division, the Masury Division, and all areas formerly served by Mohawk Utilities, Inc., Tomahawk Utilities, Inc., and the Ohio American Water Company. The application will not impact residential utility customers in the Stark Division and Struthers Divisions. Notice of Intent to File an Application for an Increase in Rates (April 28, 2016).

Respectfully submitted,

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OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL

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MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

On April 28, 2016, Aqua filed a Notice of Intent to File an Application for an Increase in Rates. In its filing, Aqua proposes a 9.2% overall increase in the rates that its customers pay for water service.⁴ OCC has authority under law to represent the interests of all the residential utility customers of Aqua, 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 Ohio’s residential customers may be “adversely affected” by this case, especially if the customers were unrepresented in a proceeding that will directly affect the amount that they will pay for water service. Thus, this element of the intervention standard in R.C. 4903.221 is satisfied.

R.C. 4903.221(B) requires the Commission 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 PFN Exhibit 2B, Notice of Intent to File an Application for an Increase in Rates (April 28, 2016).

- (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 Aqua. This interest is different than that of any other party and especially different than that of the utility whose advocacy includes the financial interest of stockholders.

Second, OCC's advocacy for residential customers will include advancing the position that the rates that Aqua's customers pay for water service should be no more than what is reasonable and lawful under Ohio law, for service that is adequate under Ohio law. OCC's position is therefore directly related to the merits of this case that is pending before the PUCO, the authority with regulatory control of public utilities' rates and service quality in Ohio.

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 the proposed overall rate increase, if

approved, will substantially increase the water bills for some of Aqua's residential 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 Commission 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 Commission 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 (2006).

Respectfully submitted,

BRUCE J. WESTON (0016973)
OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL

/s/ Ajay Kumar

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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 1st day of June 2016.

/s/ Ajay Kumar

Ajay Kumar

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Summary: Motion Motion to Intervene by The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel electronically filed by Ms. Jamie Williams on behalf of Kumar, Ajay Mr.