

FILE

14-1693-EL-RDR
14-1694-EL-AAM

Dear Chairman Andre T. Porter, COLUMBUS OH 431

I am a resident of Ohio and I am calling on you to help end the economic devastation and the life-threatening conditions that current utility policies are causing the people of our communities.

Low-income working people cannot afford the current costs of food, heat, energy, housing, medicines and other necessities. I urge you to take whatever actions are necessary to prevent further needless suffering and even death.

Signed,

FROM:

Brenda Mathews
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TO: Chairman Andre T. Porter
The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad St.
Columbus, OH 43215

5-375304

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RIGHT NOW more than 88,000 households in mid-Ohio are at risk of having their utility service terminated due to their low income and inability to pay the current rates. Yet the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) continues to allow utility companies to raise the rates to unaffordable levels, despite their mission statement to "mandate the availability of adequate, safe, and reliable utility service to all businesses, industrial and residential consumers."

The Franklin County Workers Benefit Council petitioned the PUCO on December 2014 with the following demands. PUCO scanned the 239 petitions with more than 1600 signatures and listed them under the Docket No. 14-1371-GE-UNC, Public Comments section. Instead of responding to the demands, PUCO has approved one subsequent rate hike request by AEP, and is deliberating on a second! As a result, growing numbers of state residents who cannot afford the current rates will be shut off.

Will you take a stand to stop the shut-offs?

I'm calling on you to take all necessary steps to:

1. Lower utility rates for residential customers and small business owners, such that their utility service is "adequate, safe and reliable."
2. Establish a year-round moratorium on gas and electric utility shut-offs for Ohio residents whose income is at or below 300% of federal poverty line.
3. Direct AEP and Columbia Gas to cancel arrears for their customers whose incomes are at or below 300% of federal poverty lines.
4. Allow anyone whose service has been terminated because of economic inability to pay due to hardships such as ill health, job loss or foreclosure to renegotiate a reasonable and affordable payment plan based on their incomes, and have their services reconnected forthwith, without penalty fees.

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Technician AN Date Processed Jan 29 2015