**Before**

**The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio**

In the Matter of the Application of )

Columbus Southern Power Company and )

Ohio Power Company for Authority to ) Case No. 11-346-EL-SSO

Establish a Standard Service Offer ) Case No. 11-348-EL-SSO

Pursuant to §4928.143, Ohio Rev. Code, )

in the Form of an Electric Security Plan. )

In the Matter of the Application of )

Columbus Southern Power Company and ) Case No. 11-349-EL-AAM

Ohio Power Company for Approval of ) Case No. 11-350-EL-AAM

Certain Accounting Authority. )

**Industrial Energy Users-Ohio’s, first energy solutions corp.’s**

**and applalachian peace and justice network’s**

**Memorandum Contra Ohio Power Company’s Requests for Waivers**

Samuel C. Randazzo, Esq.

Frank P. Darr

Joseph E. Oliker

Matthew R. Pritchard

McNees Wallace & Nurick LLC

21 East State Street, Suite 1700

Columbus, OH 43215-4228

Telephone: 614-469-8000

Telecopier: 614-469-4653

sam@mwncmh.com

fdarr@mwncmh.com

joliker@mwncmh.com

mpritchard@mwncmh.com

**On Behalf of Industrial Energy Users-Ohio**

Mark A. Hayden

FirstEnergy Service Company

76 South Main Street

Akron, OH 44308

haydenm@firstenergycorp.com

James F. Lang

Laura C. McBride

N. Trevor Alexander

Calfee, Halter & Griswold LLP

1400 KeyBank Center

800 Superior Ave.

Cleveland, OH 44114

jlang@calfee.com

lmcbride@calfee.com

talexander@calfee.com

David A. Kutik

Jones Day

North Point

901 Lakeside Avenue

Cleveland, OH 44114

dakutik@jonesday.com

Allison E. Haedt

Jones Day

P.O. Box 165017

Columbus, OH 43216-5017

aehaedt@jonesday.com

**On Behalf of FirstEnergy Solutions Corp.**

Michael R. Smalz

Joseph V. Maskovyak

Ohio Poverty Law Center

555 Buttles Avenue

Columbus, OH 43215

msmalz@ohiopovertylaw.org

jmaskovyak@ohiopovertylaw.org

**On Behalf of the Appalachian Peace and Justice Network**

**Before**

**The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio**

In the Matter of the Application of )

Columbus Southern Power Company and )

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**Industrial Energy Users-Ohio’s, first energy solutions corp.’s**

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**Memorandum Contra Ohio Power Company’s Requests for Waivers**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

On March 30, 2012, Ohio Power Company (“OP”) filed an Application (“March 30 Application”) to establish an electric security plan (“ESP”). Contained in OP’s March 30 Application are three different waiver requests from the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio’s (“Commission”) rules: (1) a waiver, as it pertains to the Turning Point Solar project and the Generation Resource Rider (“GRR”), of Rule 4901:1-35-03(C)(3), Ohio Administrative Code (“O.A.C.”), which requires an ESP application to include projected rate impacts by customer class/rate schedule for the duration of the ESP; (2) a waiver of Rule 4901:1-35-03(C)(9)(b), O.A.C., which requires an ESP application to include certain information pertaining to the generating facility for which the electric distribution utility (“EDU”) is seeking a non-bypassable surcharge under Sections 4928.143(B)(2)(b)-(c), Revised Code; and (3) a waiver of any other Commission rule that its March 30 Application fails to comply with.

 Although the Commission may grant a waiver of its rules for good cause, OP has failed to provide *any* legitimate rationale why the Commission should grant the waiver requests. Because OP has failed to offer any legitimate reason for the waivers, the Commission should reject OP’s requests and require it to supplement the March 30 Application.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. **ARGUMENT**
2. **OP Has Failed to Offer Any Legitimate Reason Why the Commission Should Grant OP’s Waiver Requests.**

 The Commission should deny all three of OP’s waiver requests because OP has failed to demonstrate good cause as to why the Commission should grant the waivers. Rule 4901:1-35-02, O.A.C., provides that “[t]he commission may, upon an application or a motion filed by a party, waive any requirement of this chapter, other than a requirement mandated by statute, *for good cause shown*.” (Emphasis added.) Initially, OP claims that the “SSO filing requirements do not apply” to the March 30 Application. The Commission, however, lacks the statutory authority to approve a standard service offer (“SSO”) pursuant to Section 4928.141, Revised Code, if it has not been presented with an application to establish a market rate offer (“MRO”) under Section 4928.142, Revised Code, or an application to establish an ESP under Section 4928.143, Revised Code. Additionally, the Commission’s standard filing requirements apply to all applications to establish an SSO.

 Regardless of whether the Commission adopts OP’s argument that the March 30 Application is not a new ESP application, there is also no reason why an amendment to an existing ESP should not have to comply with the standard filing requirements. The standard filing requirements require necessary and essential information to be filed along with an SSO application. This information allows all parties an ability to thoroughly review the filing and provides a certain degree of transparency to the application.

 The rules that require that the applicant provide this information are rooted in sound regulatory policy. Transparency and openness are fundamental cornerstones of the Commission’s obligation to the public it serves.[[2]](#footnote-2) By seeking waivers of the filing requirements under Rule 4901:1-35-03, O.A.C., however, OP is again attempting to hide the true costs and impacts that the March 30 Application, in general, and the Turning Point Solar project, in particular, will have on customers.[[3]](#footnote-3) This attempt to avoid disclosure follows the recent uproar regarding the process that culminated in approval of the Stipulation, ultimately rejected by the Commission. That process drew great criticism for its lack of transparency and its failure to properly notify customers of the potential rate increases they would face from the ESP. Chairman Snitchler’s acknowledgment of this flaw was highlighted in the Commission’s press release following its rejection of the Stipulation ESP:

“Our decision effectively hits the reset button on AEP’s electric security plan, allows us to start over from the beginning, *ensure that we have a complete picture of any proposal*, and balance the interests of all customers and the utility,” Chairman Todd A. Snitchler stated. “Ohio remains committed to continuing down the path towards fully competitive markets.”

…

The Commission also acknowledges that small businesses and residential customers were negatively impacted by the order approved last December. Bills for certain customers significantly exceeded what was expected based on the record in the case.

“The evidence in the record inadvertently *failed to present a full and accurate record of the actual bill impacts to be felt by customers*,” Snitchler continued. “This is particularly true with respect to low load factor customers who have high electricity demand for short periods and low usage the rest of the time.” (Emphasis added.)[[4]](#footnote-4)

The Commission has been sensitized to the necessity of transparency in this proceeding. Requiring OP to comply with the filing requirements will allow the Commission, Staff, and all interested parties the time necessary to properly review OP’s claims. OP has not demonstrated any reason why it should not supply the most up-to-date information. In the spirit of and requirements for fairness and transparency, and in accordance with Commission rules, the Commission should deny OP’s waiver requests and require OP to update the March 30 Application with the required information. Rejecting the waiver requests would be the first step in fulfilling Chairman Snitchler’s goal to “ensure that we have a complete picture of any proposal.”

1. **The Information Regarding Costs and Customer Impacts of the Turning Point Solar Project is Relevant and Necessary to Properly Analyzing an ESP and Conducting the Statutorily Required ESP v. MRO Test.**

 As noted previously, OP has failed to provide any demonstration of “good cause” for waiving the filing requirements. Moreover, the Commission has already identified the need for OP to provide full disclosure in its prior decisions in this case.

 First, it is clear that the Commission should be fully apprised of the rate impacts of the March 30 Application before it takes any action on the application. As the Commission previously determined, the rate impacts of the ESP can be dramatic.[[5]](#footnote-5) Without a full understanding of those impacts, the parties will not be able to properly analyze individual effects of the proposal, leading to a repeat of the unfortunate results customers faced in early 2012.

Second, the Commission has already determined the need for information regarding recovery of plant addition, *i.e.* theTurning Point Solar project, required by Rule 4901:1-35-03(C)(9)(b), O.A.C. In its presentation to the Commission, OP attempted to exclude the effects of the Turning Point Solar project in its application of the ESP v. MRO test. In its December 14, 2011 Opinion and Order, however, the Commission determined that the Turning Point Solar project’s rate effects were relevant to the application of the statutory test that the ESP must satisfy under Section 4928.143(C)(1), Revised Code. The Commission found that OP witness Thomas had improperly excluded the costs associated with the Turning Point Solar project from the calculation of the ESP v. MRO test, and categorized the error as a “material flaw[].”[[6]](#footnote-6) The Commission, instead, agreed with Staff witness Fortney who testified that it was “reasonable to include an estimated charge for the GRR, as AEP-Ohio has produced a revenue requirement for the Turning Point project.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Ultimately, the Commission relied on Staff witness Fortney’s calculation of the ESP v. MRO test, as corrected by FirstEnergy Solutions Corp. (“FES”), which properly included the costs associated with the Turning Point Solar project on the ESP side of the equation.

 In analyzing the March 30 Application, the Commission will once again address the propriety of establishing a recovery mechanism for plant additions and the effect of those additions on the statutory test the ESP must pass before the Commission may approve it. OP is seeking approval of the GRR (again),[[8]](#footnote-8) but has failed to include the effects of the Turning Point Solar project in its ESP v. MRO review (again).[[9]](#footnote-9) Because OP is seeking the GRR and the Commission must review the ESP “in the aggregate,” OP must provide updated information regarding the Turning Point Solar project in compliance with the Commission’s filing requirements.

 Because the rate impact due to the Turning Point Solar project as well as other project-specific information is necessary for a proper review of the March 30 Application, the Commission should not grant the specific waiver requests that OP has made. OP has failed to make the necessary demonstration of good cause to waive the rules, and recent experience demonstrates that these waivers are not warranted.

1. **OP’s Request for a General Waiver of Unspecified Rules Has Already Been Rejected by the Commission in This Proceeding and Should Again be Rejected.**

The Commission has already rejected OP’s request for a general waiver of unspecified rules in this proceeding and should again reject OP’s request. In its March 23, 2011 Entry, the Commission stated:

As to AEP-Ohio's request for a general waiver of any other filing requirement found in Chapter 4901:1-35, O.A.C., to the extent that the relief requested in AEP-Ohio's application requires such a waiver, the attorney examiner finds that AEP-Ohio has failed to make a demonstration of good cause for the request and such request is unsupported. Thus, the request should be denied.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Here, OP has again failed to offer any legitimate reason for the Commission to waive the unspecified rules. Therefore, the Commission should again reject OP’s general waiver request.

1. **CONCLUSION**

 As discussed above, OP has failed to demonstrate good cause exists to waive the Commission’s standard filing requirements and other Commission rules that conflict with OP’s March 30 Application. The information OP seeks to suppress is relevant to properly conducting the ESP v. MRO test and is crucial to analyzing the rate impact customers will face from OP’s proposal. If OP’s waiver requests are granted, the Commission will again be presented an incomplete picture of the actual impact on customers; exactly what the Commission sought to prevent the second time around.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Samuel C. Randazzo /s/ Michael R. Smalz

Samuel C. Randazzo, Esq. Joseph V. Maskovyak

Frank P. Darr Ohio Poverty Law Center

Joseph E. Oliker 555 Buttles Avenue

Matthew R. Pritchard Columbus, OH 43215

McNees Wallace & Nurick LLC msmalz@ohiopovertylaw.org

21 East State Street, Suite 1700 jmaskovyak@ohiopovertylaw.org

Columbus, OH 43215-4228

Telephone: 614-469-8000 **On Behalf of the Appalachian Peace**

Telecopier: 614-469-4653 **and Justice Network**

sam@mwncmh.com

fdarr@mwncmh.com

joliker@mwncmh.com

mpritchard@mwncmh.com

**On Behalf of Industrial Energy**

**Users-Ohio**

/s/ Mark A. Hayden

Mark A. Hayden

FirstEnergy Service Company

76 South Main Street

Akron, OH 44308

haydenm@firstenergycorp.com

James F. Lang

Laura C. McBride

N. Trevor Alexander

Calfee, Halter & Griswold LLP

1400 KeyBank Center

800 Superior Ave.

Cleveland, OH 44114

jlang@calfee.com

lmcbride@calfee.com

talexander@calfee.com

David A. Kutik

Jones Day

North Point

901 Lakeside Avenue

Cleveland, OH 44114

dakutik@jonesday.com

Allison E. Haedt

Jones Day

P.O. Box 165017

Columbus, OH 43216-5017

aehaedt@jonesday.com

**On Behalf of FirstEnergy Solutions Corp.**

#### Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing *Industrial Energy Users-Ohio’s, FirstEnergy Solutions Corp.’s and Appalachian Peace and Justice Network’s Memorandum Contra Ohio Power Company’s Requests for Waivers* was served upon the following parties of record this 10th day of April 2012, *via* electronic transmission, hand-delivery or first class U.S. mail, postage prepaid.

/s/ Matthew R. Pritchard

Matthew R. Pritchard

Matthew J. Satterwhite

Steven T. Nourse

Anne M. Vogel

American Electric Power Service Corporation

1 Riverside Plaza, 29th Floor

Columbus, OH 43215

mjsatterwhite@aep.com

stnourse@aep.com

amvogel@aep.com

Daniel R. Conway

Porter Wright Morris & Arthur

Huntington Center

41 S. High Street

Columbus, OH 43215

dconway@porterwright.com

**On Behalf of Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company**

Dorothy K. Corbett

Amy Spiller

139 East Fourth Street

1303-Main

Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dorothy.Corbett@duke-energy.com

Amy.spiller@duke-energy.com

Philip B. Sineneng

Terrance A. Mebane

THOMPSON HINE LLP

41 S. High St., Suite 1700

Columbus, OH 43215

Philip.Sineneng@ThompsonHine.com

Terrance.Mebane@ThompsonHine.com

**On Behalf of Duke Energy Retail Sales, LLC**

David F. Boehm

Michael L. Kurtz

Boehm, Kurtz & Lowry

36 East Seventh Street Suite 1510

Cincinnati, OH 45202

dboehm@BKLlawfirm.com

mkurtz@BKLlawfirm.com

**On Behalf of the Ohio Energy Group**

Gregory J. Poulos

EnerNOC, Inc.

101 Federal Street, Suite 1100

Boston, MA 02110

gpoulos@enernoc.com

**On Behalf of EnerNOC, Inc.**

Terry L. Etter

Maureen R. Grady

Office of the Ohio Consumers’ Counsel

10 W. Broad Street, 18th Floor

Columbus, OH 43215-3485

etter@occ.state.oh.us

grady@occ.state.oh.us

small@occ.state.oh.us

**On Behalf of the Office of the Ohio**

**Consumers’ Counsel**

Richard L. Sites

General Counsel & Senior Director of Health Policy

Ohio Hospital Association

155 East Broad Street, 15th Floor

Columbus, OH 43215-3620

ricks@ohanet.org

Thomas J. O’Brien

Bricker & Eckler, LLP

100 South Third Street

Columbus, OH 43215-4291

tobrien@bricker.com

**Oh Behalf of Ohio Hospital Association**

Mark S. Yurick

Zachary D. Kravitz

Chester Willcox & Saxbe, LLP

65 East State Street, Suite 1000

Columbus, OH 43215

jbentine@cwslaw.com

myurick@cwslaw.com

zkravitz@cwslaw.com

**On Behalf of The Kroger Co.**

Terrence O’Donnell

Christopher Montgomery

Bricker & Eckler LLP

100 South Third Street

Columbus, OH 43215-4291

todonnell@bricker.com

cmontgomery@bricker.com

**On Behalf of Paulding Wind Farm II LLC**

Lisa G. McAlister

Matthew W. Warnock

Thomas O’Brien

BRICKER & ECKLER LLP

100 South Third Street

Columbus, OH 43215-4291

lmcalister@bricker.com

mwarnock@bricker.com

tobrien@bricker.com

**On Behalf of OMA Energy Group**

Jay E. Jadwin

American Electric Power Service Corporation

1 Riverside Plaza, 29th Floor

Columbus, OH 43215

jejadwin@aep.com

**On Behalf of AEP Retail Energy Partners LLC**

M. Howard Petricoff

Stephen M. Howard

Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP

52 E. Gay Street

P.O. Box 1008

Columbus, OH 43215-1008

mhpetricoff@vorys.com

smhoward@vorys.com

**On Behalf of PJM Power Providers Group and the Retail Energy Supply Association**

Glen Thomas

1060 First Avenue, Ste. 400

King of Prussia, PA 19406

gthomas@gtpowergroup.com

Laura Chappelle

4218 Jacob Meadows

Okemos, MI 48864

laurac@chappelleconsulting.net

**On Behalf of PJM Power Providers Group**

M. Howard Petricoff

Michael Settineri

Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP

52 E. Gay Street

P.O. Box 1008

Columbus, OH 43215-1008

mhpetricoff@vorys.com

mjsettineri@vorys.com

William L. Massey

Covington & Burling, LLP

1201 Pennsylvania Ave., NW

Washington, DC 20004

wmassey@cov.com

Joel Malina

Executive Director

COMPLETE Coalition

1317 F Street, NW

Suite 600

Washington, DC 20004

malina@wexlerwalker.com

**On Behalf of the COMPETE Coalition**

Henry W. Eckhart

1200 Chambers Road, Suite 106

Columbus, OH 43212

henryeckhart@aol.com

Christopher J. Allwein

Williams, Allwein and Moser, LLC

1373 Grandview Ave., Suite 212

Columbus, OH 43212

callwein@williamsandmoser.com

**On Behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club**

Gary A Jeffries

Assistant General Counsel

Dominion Resources Services, Inc.

501 Martindale Street, Suite 400

Pittsburgh, PA 15212-5817

Gary.A.Jeffries@aol.com

**On Behalf of Dominion Retail, Inc.**

M. Howard Petricoff

Michael J. Settineri

Stephen M. Howard

Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP

52 East Gay Street

P.O. Box 1008

Columbus, OH 43216-1008

mhpetricoff@vorys.com

mjsettineri@vorys.com

smhoward@vorys.com

**On Behalf of Constellation NewEnergy, Inc., Constellation Energy Commodities Group, Inc. , Direct Energy Services, LLC**

David I. Fein

Vice President, Energy Policy – Midwest

Constellation Energy Group, Inc.

Cynthia Fonner Brady

Senior Counsel

Constellation Energy Resources LLC

550 West Washington Blvd., Suite 300

Chicago, IL 60661

david.fein@constellation.com

cynthia.brady@constellation.com

**On Behalf of Constellation NewEnergy, Inc. and Constellation Energy Commodities Group, Inc.**

Pamela A. Fox

C. Todd Jones,

Christopher L. Miller,

Gregory H. Dunn

Asim Z. Haque

Schottenstein Zox and Dunn Co., LPA

250 West Street

Columbus, OH 43215

pfox@hillardohio.gov

cmiller@szd.com

gdunn@szd.com

ahaque@szd.com

**On Behalf of the City of Hilliard, Ohio, the City of Grove City, Ohio and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio**

Sandy I-ru Grace

Assistant General Counsel

Exelon Business Services Company

101 Constitution Ave., NW

Suite 400 East

Washington, DC 20001

sandy.grace@exeloncorp.com

M. Howard Petricoff

Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP

52 East Gay Street

P.O. Box 1008

Columbus, OH 43216-1008

mhpetricoff@vorys.com

David M. Stahl

Eimer Stahl Klevorn & Solberg LLP

224 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1100

Chicago, IL 60604

dstahl@eimerstahl.com

**On Behalf of Exelon Generation Company, LLC**

Kenneth P. Kreider

David A. Meyer

Keating Muething & Klekamp PLL

One East Fourth Street

Suite 1400

Cincinnati, OH 45202

kpkreider@kmklaw.com

dmeyer@kmklaw.com

Holly Rachel Smith

Holly Rachel Smith, PLLC

Hitt Business Center

3803 Rectortown Road

Marshall, VA 20115

holly@raysmithlaw.com

Steve W. Chriss

Manager, State Rate Proceedings

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

Bentonville, AR 72716-0550

Stephen.Chriss@wal-mart.com

**On Behalf of Wal-Mart Stores East, LP and Sam’s East, Inc.**

Barth E. Royer (Counsel of Record)

Bell & Royer Co., LPA

33 South Grant Avenue

Columbus, OH 43215-3927

BarthRoyer@aol.com

Tara C. Santarelli

Environmental Law & Policy Center

1207 Grandview Ave., Suite 201

Columbus, OH 43212

tsantarelli@elpc.org

**On Behalf of the Environmental Law &**

**Policy Center**

Nolan Moser

Trent A. Dougherty

Camille Yancy

Cathryn Loucas

Ohio Environmental Council

1207 Grandview Avenue, Suite 201

Columbus, OH 43212-3449

nolan@theoec.org

trent@theoec.org

camille@theoec.org

cathy@theoec.org.

**On Behalf of the Ohio Environmental Council**

Douglas G. Bonner

Emma F. Hand

Keith C. Nusbaum

Clinton A. Vince

Daniel D. Barnowski

SNR Denton US LLP

1301 K Street NW

Suite 600, East Tower

Washington, DC 20005

doug.bonner@snrdenton.com

emma.hand@snrdenton.com

keith.nusbaum@snrdenton.com

clinton.vince@snrdenton.com

daniel.barnowski@snrdenton.con

**On Behalf of Ormet Primary Aluminum Corporation**

Jay L. Kooper

Katherine Guerry

Hess Corporation

One Hess Plaza

Woodbridge, NJ 07095

jkooper@hess.com

kguerry@hess.com

**On Behalf of Hess Corporation**

Allen Freifeld

Samuel A. Wolfe

Viridity Energy, Inc.

100 West Elm Street, Suite 410

Conshohocken, PA 19428

afreifeld@viridityenergy.com

swolfe@viridityenergy.com

Jacqueline Lake Roberts,

Counsel of Record

101 Federal Street, Suite 1100

Boston, MA 02110

jroberts@enernoc.com

**On Behalf of CPower, Inc., Viridity Energy, Inc., EnergyConnect Inc., Comverge Inc., Enerwise Global Technologies, Inc., and Energy Curtailment Specialists, Inc.**

Robert Korandovich

KOREnergy

P.O. Box 148

Sunbury, OH 43074

korenergy@insight.rr.com

**On Behalf of KOREnergy**

Benita Kahn

Lija Kaleps-Clark

Vorys Sater, Seymour and Pease LLC

52 East Gay Street, P.O. Box 1008

Columbus, OH 43216-1008

bakahn@vorys.com

lkalepsclark@vorys.com

**On Behalf of Ohio Cable Telecommunications Association**

Mark A. Whitt

Melissa L. Thompson

Whitt Sturtevant LLP

PNC Plaza, Suite 2020

155 East Broad Street

Columbus, OH 43215

whit@whitt-sturtevant.com

thompson@whitt-sturtevant.com

Vincent Parisi

Matthew White

Interstate Gas Supply, Inc.

6100 Emerald Parkway

Dublin, OH 43016

vparisi@igsenergy.com

mswhite@igsenergy.com

**On Behalf of Interstate Gas Supply, Inc.**

Dane Stinson

Bailey Cavalieri LLC

10 West Broad Street, Suite 2100

Columbus, OH 43215

**On Behalf of The Ohio Association of School Business Officials, The Ohio School Boards Association, The Ohio Schools Council and The Buckeye Association of School Administrators**

Chad A. Endsley

Chief Legal Counsel

Ohio Farm Bureau Federation

280 North High Street, P.O. Box 182383

Columbus, OH 43218-2383

cendsley@ofbf.org.

**On Behalf of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation**

Brian P. Barger

Brady, Coyle & Schmidt, LTD

4052 Holland-Sylvania Rd.

Toledo, OH 43623

bpbarger@bcslawyers.com

**On Behalf of the Ohio Construction Materials Coalition**

Diem N. Kaelber

Robert J Walter

10 West Broad Street, Suite 1300

Columbus, Ohio 43215

kaelber@buckleyking.com

walter@buckleyking.com

**On Behalf of Ohio Restaurant Association**

William Wright

Werner Margard

Thomas Lindgren

John H. Jones

Assistant Attorneys’ General

Public Utilities Section

180 East Broad Street, 6th Floor

Columbus, OH 43215

john.jones@puc.state.oh.us

werner.margard@puc.state.oh.us

thomas.lindgren@puc.state.oh.us

william.wright@puc.state.oh.us

**On Behalf of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio**

Greta See

Jon Tauber

Attorney Examiner

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

180 East Broad Street, 12th Floor

Columbus, OH 43215

**Attorney Examiners**

1. The Office of the Ohio Consumers’ Counsel (“OCC”) supports but does not join this memorandum contra. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *See* *In the Matter of the Commission's Review of Chapters 4901:1-9,4901:1-10,4901:1-21, 4901:1‑22, 4901:1-23, 4901:1-24, and 4901:1-25 of the Ohio Administrative Code*, Case No. 06-653-EL-ORD, Finding and Order at 26 (November 5, 2008) (“The Commission believes that the proposed rules, as modified herein, provide for regulations, standards, and enforcement of those regulations and standards that will provide for a transparent and public process, which should result in more accountability as well as greater reliability of the electric utilities' distribution systems.”); *In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company for Authority to Establish a Standard Service Offer Pursuant to §4928.143, Ohio Rev. Code, in the Form of an Electric Security Plan, et al.*, Case Nos. 11-346-EL-SSO, *et al.*, Opinion and Order at 25 (December 14, 2011) (enough facts existed to demonstrate settlement discussions were open and transparent supporting a finding that the Stipulation was in the public interest); Section 4905.17, Revised Code (Commission records are open to the public); *see also In the Matter of the Regulation of the Purchased Gas Adjustment Clause Contained Within the Rate Schedules of Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc., and Related Matters*, Case Nos. 05-221-GA-GCR, *et al.*, Opinion and Order, *Concurring Opinion of Commissioner Paul A. Centolella* at 2 (January 23, 2008) (“Parties before this Commission have a responsibility to promote openness, transparency, and public confidence in the regulatory process.”); Rule 4901:1-35-08, O.A.C. (competitive bid solicitation process should be open, fair, and transparent). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. OP has demonstrated a consistent desire to delay and prevent any analysis regarding the impact of the Turning Point Solar project. In its first attempt to establish an ESP in this proceeding, OP took the position that it need not provide financial information regarding the project. Application at 11 (January 27, 2011). Once that position was ultimately rebuffed, OP then took the position that the impact of the project should not be reviewed in this proceeding (a position rejected by Staff and the Commission). *See* Opinion and Order at 30 (December 14, 2011) (OP failed to include the costs of the Turning Point Solar project in the ESP v. MRO test). Again, in OP’s long-term forecast report (“LTFR”) proceeding, Case Nos. 10-501-EL-FOR, *et al.*, OP stated that the LFTR proceeding was not the appropriate place to review the financial impact of the project.  *In the Matter of the Long-Term Forecast Report of Ohio Power Company and Related Matters*, Case Nos. 10-501-EL-FOR, *et al.,* Joint Motion to Strike Portions of the Testimony of FirstEnergy Solutions Corp. witness Jonathan Lesser and Memorandum in Support of Signatory Parties at 1-2 (March 27, 2012) (“In short, FES's testimony seeks to challenge the establishment of a nonbypassable surcharge that is not being established in this case and therefore is beyond the scope of this proceeding and premature until such surcharge is sought to be established.”). Finally, in its March 30 Application filed in this proceeding, OP has again attempted to prevent a financial review of the impact of the Turning Point Solar project. Application at 15-16 (March 30, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. PUCO Press Release, *PUCO revokes AEP-Ohio electric security plan settlement agreement* (February 23, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *See* Entry on Rehearing at 11 (February 23, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Opinion and Order at 30 (December 14, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. March 30 Application at 8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Id.*, Testimony of Laura Thomas at 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Entry at 3 (March 23, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. PUCO Press Release, *PUCO revokes AEP-Ohio electric security plan settlement agreement* (February 23, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)