In Re: Application of Columbia Gas of Case No. Ohio, Inc. 21637GAAIR HEARING DATE: Friday, October 14, 2022 TIME: 2:32 p.m. BEFORE: Honorable Gregory Price Commissioner Lawrence K. Friedeman LOCATION: Toledo City Council Chambers 1 Government Center Toledo, OH 43604 REPORTED BY: Michael R. Rennillo, Notary Public JOB NO.: 5460108			Page 1
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1 APPEARANCES	1 EXHIBITS
2 ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO:	2 NO. DESCRIPTION ID/EVE
3 JOHN RYAN III, ESQUIRE	3 (None marked.)
4 NiSource Corporate Services	4
5 290 West Nationwide Blvd, 12th Floor	5
6 Columbus, OH 43215	6
7 (614) 285-2220	7
8	8
9 ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE OF THE OHIO CONSUMERS'	9
10 COUNCIL:	10
	11
11 ANGELA O'BRIEN, ESQUIRE	12
12 Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel	13
13 65 East State Street, 7th Floor	
14 Columbus, OH 43215	14
15 (614) 466-9531	15
16	16
17	17
18	18
19	19
20	20
21	21
22	22
23	23
24	24
25	25
Page 3	Page 5
1 INDEX	1 PROCEEDINGS
2 WITNESS(ES): DX CX RDX RCX	THE REPORTER: We are on the record.
3 ANDREA FLOWERS	3 THE COURT: Good afternoon. The Public
4 SHEENA BARNES	4 Utilities Commission of Ohio is set for a hearing at
5 STANLEY SMITH	5 this time and place, case no. 21637GAAIR, et al, being
6 CANDACE BISHOP	6 in the matter of the application of Columbia Gas of
7	7 Ohio, Inc. for authority to amend its filed tariffs to
8	8 increase the rates and charges for gas services and
9	9 related matters.
10	10 My name is Gregory Price. With me is
11	
12	11 Commissioner Larry Friedman. We are presiding here at
	12 today's public hearing.
13	At this time we'd go ahead and like to
14	14 take appearances from the parties starting with the
15	15 company.
16	16 MR. RYAN: Thank you, Your Honor. On
17	17 behalf of the applicant, Columbia Gas of Ohio, John
18	18 Ryan, senior counsel, 290 West Nationwide Boulevard,
19	19 Columbus, Ohio 43215.
20	20 THE COURT: Thank you.
21	21 MR. RYAN: Thank you.
22	22 THE COURT: Service counsel.
23	23 MS. O'BRIEN: Good afternoon, Your
24	24 Honor. As on behalf of the Office of the Ohio
25	25 Consumers' Council, Angela O'Brien, 65 East State

2 (Pages 2 - 5)

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1 Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.	1 Commission, you can file those comments at 180 East
2 THE COURT: Thank you. 3 The subject of today's hearing is an	2 Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215 and reference the 3 case no. 21637GAAIR.
4 application filed on June 30, 2021, by Columbia Gas	4 With that, I'd like to turn to
1	, ,
5 seeking to increase rates and for approval of an	5 Mr. Commissioner and see if he has anything else.
6 alternative rate plan. The Commission staff caused a	6 THE COMMISSIONER: Just a couple of
7 report of investigation of April 6, 2022. This report	7 brief remarks.
8 is a recommendation only and does not assert or	8 First of all, thank you for those of
9 reflect the final determination in the case. If	9 the public who have taken the time to show up today
10 you're interested in the report you can go on the	10 and share your thoughts. As you could no doubt
11 commissioner's website at the docketing information	11 discern from Judge Price's comments, rate cases are
12 systems app and download the staff report by entering	12 complex and nuanced proceedings. Public testimony is
13 the case number 21637.	13 an essential element of a rate case proceeding and one
The purpose of this afternoon's hearing	14 that the Commission takes very seriously, so your
15 is to receive testimony about the application from the	15 comments will in fact be considered.
16 public who are affected by the proposed rates. This	And just, once again, thank you so very
17 is your opportunity to let the commissioners know what	17 much for taking the time to show up today.
18 you think about Columbia's application. Today's	18 THE COURT: Okay. Call the first
19 hearing is only one aspect of the process in this	19 witness if I can, please. Andrea Flowers.
20 case. We have had five I believe prior hearings and a	20 Please raise your right hand.
21 evidentiary hearing is scheduled to commence on	21 WHEREUPON,
22 November 1, 2022, at the Commission offices.	22 ANDREA FLOWERS,
23 Today's hearing is being transcribed by	23 called as a witness, and having been first duly sworn
24 a court reporter. If you plan to testify, please	24 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
25 speak clearly so that the court reporter can	25 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
Page 7	Page 9
1 accurately reflect your comments on the record. If	1 THE COURT: Please state your name and
2 you prepared a written statement, please provide a	2 business address for the record.
3 copy to the reporter.	3 THE WITNESS: Andrea Flowers.
4 Each person who has signed up today to	4 THE COURT: Please proceed.
5 present sworn testimony regarding the application. I	5 THE WITNESS: Good afternoon, Your
6 will swear in each witness and ask you to state your	6 Honor and Commissioner. I am reading on behalf of the
7 name and address for the record. The parties of the	7 legal counsel of the Northwest Ohio Aggregation
8 case are permitted to ask you questions regarding your	8 Coalition.
9 testimony.	9 The Northwest Ohio Aggregation
10 I'd like to note the chair commissioner	10 Coalition negotiates the natural gas prices for about
11 who will be judging the merits of this application.	11 90,000 households, small business, and family farms
12 Neither the commissioner nor I can answer any	12 located in 12 of the NOWAC communities. We thank the
13 questions regarding the application. But again, I	13 Commission for this opportunity to comment on Columbia
14 would refer you to the staff report as filed in the	14 Gas' rate plan to operate the pipeline and delivery
15 docket.	15 system for the coming years.
Once again, this hearing is your	16 A customer's natural gas bill includes
17 opportunity to let the commissioners know what you	17 the cost of natural gas as well as the Columbia Gas
18 think about the application. The testimony you	18 charge to operate its pipe system and deliver gas.
19 provide will be part of the official record in this	19 Columbia's current distribution charge and various
20 case and it will be reviewed by the commissioners	20 riders cost a renter or homeowner over \$450 per year.
21 before any decisions are made.	21 Again, that does not include the cost of the gas.
22 If you decide you do not wish to	22 Columbia Gas proposes to increase this delivery charge
23 testify after you hear me read your name on the signup	23 by 27 percent or over 200 million dollars. This is a
104 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	

3 (Pages 6 - 9)

24 budget buster increase that would harm everyone from

25 the most modest retiree to our most important

24 sheet, please feel free to pass. If you decide that

25 you prefer to file written comments with the

Page 10 I industries. The Northwest Ohio Aggregation Coalition represents enstomers. Customers want the 4 lowest price for both the gas and delivery charge. In 5 procuring gas for our customers, NOWAC uses a 6 non-frills approach. We keep our overhead 8 deals and Tavorable treatment for any special 9 interests. These add costs that are paid for by other 10 customers. NOWAC strictly insists on competition and 1 a competitive bid approach. The result is that the — 12 that over the past 20 years we have saved customers of 13 18 million dollars compared to the standard choice 14 offer. The Court is past 20 years we have saved customers of 13 18 million dollars compared to the standard choice 14 offer. The current Columbia Gas FCO act. However, based upon 18 the expected adder next year, we anticipate savings 19 versus the FCO to increase. Our current gas supply 20 contact runs through May of 2024. All that said, 21 NOWAC cannot fully shield customers from the large 22 increase in the natural gas prices, and this has 23 stretched customers budgets. 23 strateched customers budgets. 24 Columbia Gas delivery charge proposal 25 stands in stark contrast. It wants to add overhead. Page 11 tayes, the legal counsel for the Northwest Ohio 2 Aggregation Coalition. 3 THE COURT: Thank you. THE COURT: Okay. Next, we have a 6 Sheena Barnes. The Course of Sheena Barnes. The Course and the SHEFNA BARNES, 9 called as a witness, and having been first duly sworn 10 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but 11 the truth, was examined and testified as follows: 12 THE COURT: Please state your name and 13 address for the record. 15 of Inclusion and Access for Toledo Lucas County 16 flowelessness Board, 1220 Madison Avenue, 17 THE COURT: Thank you. 18 THE WITNESS: Sheena Barnes, director 15 of Inclusion and Access for Toledo Lucas County 17 THE COURT: Thank you. 18 THE WITNESS: Thank you for the function and the course of the turnes do to 18 THE WITNESS: Thank you for the function and the course of the turnes do to 18 THE		
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4 (Pages 10 - 13)

Page 14 1 find and relocate home -- houses for them or homes for 1 with the way the economy is to -- to hike prices up on 2 them, then they have the burden of trying to pay down 2 anything when we talking about we trying to get our 3 the past bearings of the bill that they owe. 3 communities together. And that's another barrier. With 4 Let's think about the greenbelt right 5 limited resources right now, to cover utilities given 5 across the street. With the commissioner and the 6 by the state we are finding a lot of individuals and 6 field that we -- we work with that program to get them 7 households are trying to figure out even how to have 7 to -- to live better. And yes, a lot of them live 8 accessible housing when we find them housing. So this 8 under low-income housing, but just think. We trying 9 is definitely a -- a equity factor for several 9 to get people to come out of poverty. 10 different reasons -- more disabilities, age, and then 10 I'm the very first one in my family out 11 folks with children, but also just regular families 11 of three generations to come out of poverty. I'm the 12 trying to make ends meet. 12 first one in my family to be fully self-sufficient. 13 As we know, most households sometimes 13 And I know if I can do it, a lot of other people can 14 now have to work two jobs just to make ends meet, and 14 do it. So there's a lot of different programs in 15 now we're asking them again to sit there and live 15 there that we're trying to get people to recognize 16 check to check with two jobs. It's very unfair and it 16 that we don't have to depend on everybody to take care 17 will definitely increase a lot of things that we see 17 of us. We can take care of ourselves, but we need to 18 at the Lucas County Homelessness Board, unfortunately 18 have the means to do that. And striking up prices on 19 house hopping or folks living in their cars because, 19 everything, making it impossible for people to -- to 20 if you don't know, right now our shelter space is over 20 get ahead or to live, I think we know ourselves that 21 -- is over limitations, and we don't have anywhere for 21 we're doing our country a disservice. 22 those folks to go. 22 So I hope you guys really take into 23 23 consideration that this up hike would really hurt and So I'm asking you, on behalf of Lucas 24 County Homelessness Board, do not approve this 24 damage us and maybe our children. And they the ones 25 that most important here, I think. So I really wish 25 increase. Page 15 Page 17 1 Thank you. 1 you would take into consideration to not raise the 2 THE COURT: Thank you. 2 prices. 3 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 3 Thank you. 4 4 THE COURT: Stanley Smith. THE COURT: Thank you. 5 WHEREUPON, 5 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. STANLEY SMITH, 6 THE COURT: And Candace Bishop. 7 WHEREUPON, 7 called as a witness, and having been first duly sworn 8 8 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but CANDACE BISHOP, 9 the truth, was examined and testified as follows: 9 called as a witness, and having been first duly sworn 10 THE COURT: Please state your name and 10 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but 11 address for the record. 11 the truth, was examined and testified as follows: 12 THE WITNESS: My name is Stanley Smith. 12 THE COURT: Please state your name and 13 I work with Lucas Count Family Council, I am an 13 address for the record. 14 outreach specialist, and my job entails -- I deal with 14 THE WITNESS: Candace Bishop, 1220 15 people in Albany, in different communities to try to 15 Madison Avenue, Toledo, Ohio, 43604. 16 16 help them to get ahead. THE COURT: Please proceed. 17 17 I'm here as a voice for -- not just for THE WITNESS: Good afternoon, everyone. 18 myself, because I feel I'm just -- I'm one of them, 18 My name is Candace Bishop and I am the deputy 19 too. I'm in a two-income home with me and my wife, 19 executive director of Toledo Lucas County Homelessness 20 and I'm pretty sure that would affect how we live. We 20 Board. I stand before you today because this topic is

5 (Pages 14 - 17)

23

21 -- is -- because this topic is very disheartening

22 considering the population of folks that we serve.

24 receive a call from a family that is in a place of

25 trying to make a determination of do they pay their

I'd just like to say what it's like to

21 struggle, you know.

You increase that gas bill will cause

23 homelessness. I'm talking about families with kids.

24 I'm talking about it will put people back in their

25 cars trying to sleep. Right now is not a good time

22

Page 20
again for participating in today's public hearing.
And the evidentiary hearing, as I noted before, in
this case will commence on November 1, 2022.
Commissioner?
THE COMMISSIONER: Just thank you again
for your thoughts.
With that, we're adjourned. Let's go
off the record.
THE REPORTER: Going off the record.
2:51 p.m.
(Whereupon, at 2:51 p.m., the
proceeding was concluded.)
Page 21
CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSITION OFFICER
I, MICHAEL R. RENNILLO, the officer before
whom the foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby certify that any witness(es) in the foregoing
proceedings, prior to testifying, were duly sworn;
that the proceedings were recorded by me and
thereafter reduced to typewriting by a qualified
transcriptionist; that said digital audio recording of
said proceedings are a true and accurate record to the
best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; that I am
neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any
of the parties to the action in which this was taken;
and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of
any counsel or attorney employed by the parties
hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the
outcome of this action.
Michael R. Riemble MICHAEL R. RENNILLO
Notary Public in and for the
State of Ohio
State of Office

Page 22	
1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER	
2 I, MEAGAN THELIN, do hereby certify that	
3 this transcript was prepared from the digital audio	
4 recording of the foregoing proceeding, that said	
5 transcript is a true and accurate record of the	
6 proceedings to the best of my knowledge, skills, and	
7 ability; that I am neither counsel for, related to,	
8 nor employed by any of the parties to the action in	
9 which this was taken; and, further, that I am not a	
10 relative or employee of any counsel or attorney	
11 employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or	
12 otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.	
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