

OHIO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN RE:

In the Matter of the Application
of Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc.

LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: Thursday, June 2, 2022

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BEFORE: Attorney Examiner Jacky St. John

LOCATION: Simpson Garden Park

1291 Conneaut Avenue

Banquet Room of Simpson Building

Bowling Green, OH 43402

REPORTED BY: Michael R. Rennillo, Notary Public

JOB NO.: 5246374

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 2</p> <p>1 A P P E A R A N C E S</p> <p>2 ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO:</p> <p>3 JOHN RYAN, ESQUIRE</p> <p>4 NiSource Corporate Services</p> <p>5 290 West Nationwide Boulevard</p> <p>6 Columbus, OH 43214</p> <p>7 johnryan@nisource.com</p> <p>8 (614) 285-2220</p> <p>9</p> <p>10 ON BEHALF OF OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL:</p> <p>11 BILL MICHEAL, ESQUIRE</p> <p>12 Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel</p> <p>13 65 East State Street, 7th Floor</p> <p>14 Columbus, OH 43215</p> <p>15 william.michael@occ.ohio.gov</p> <p>16 (614) 466-1291</p> <p>17</p> <p>18 ALSO PRESENT:</p> <p>19 M. Beth Trombold, Commissioner</p> <p>20 William Farnsel, Chief Executive Officer,</p> <p>21 NeighborWorks Toledo</p> <p>22 William Herald, Attendee</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p> <p>1 P R O C E E D I N G S</p> <p>2 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: The Public</p> <p>3 Utilities Commission of Ohio has scheduled for a</p> <p>4 public hearing at this time and place, Case Nos. 21-</p> <p>5 637-GA-AIR, which relates to Columbia's application</p> <p>6 for authority to amend its filed tariffs to increase</p> <p>7 the rates and charges for gas services and related</p> <p>8 matters; 21-638-GA-ALT, which relates to Columbia's</p> <p>9 application for approval of an alternative form of</p> <p>10 regulation; 21-639-GA-UNC, which relates to Columbia's</p> <p>11 application for approval of a demand side management</p> <p>12 program for its residential and commercial customers;</p> <p>13 and 21-640-GA-AAM, which relates to Columbia's</p> <p>14 application for approval to change accounting methods.</p> <p>15 My name is Jacky St. John, and I am the</p> <p>16 Attorney Examiner assigned by the Commission to hear</p> <p>17 this case. Presiding with me this evening is</p> <p>18 Commissioner Trombold. Commissioner Trombold, would</p> <p>19 you like to say a few words?</p> <p>20 COMMISSION TROMBOLD: Welcome,</p> <p>21 everyone. Thank you for coming out today. We are</p> <p>22 always interested in hearing what consumers and</p> <p>23 constituents and stakeholders are saying or interested</p> <p>24 in a weight case or any kind of case that's pending</p> <p>25 before us. I'm one of five commissioners that will be</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p> <p>1 I N D E X</p> <p>2</p> <p>3 E X H I B I T S</p> <p>4 NO. DESCRIPTION ID/EVD</p> <p>5</p> <p>6 (None attached.)</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 5</p> <p>1 making the final decision as to what's going to happen</p> <p>2 in this case at some point in the future.</p> <p>3 Do we have --- or do you get to that</p> <p>4 point of when we'll be making a decision?</p> <p>5 Okay. She'll be talking more about</p> <p>6 that. I just wanted to give you a sense of timing.</p> <p>7 The next step, it takes several months to go through</p> <p>8 the process.</p> <p>9 So this is an important part of the</p> <p>10 process. Everything that's said tonight will be part</p> <p>11 of the record and like I said, the commissioners, we</p> <p>12 typically like to come to public hearings to hear what</p> <p>13 all of you have to say.</p> <p>14 Currently we have two people registered</p> <p>15 to testify this evening. If anyone else comes in or</p> <p>16 would like to, we're happy to have them join us. Both</p> <p>17 of them are named "William." I should have brought my</p> <p>18 son whose name is William. Happen to be named -- it's</p> <p>19 a great name.</p> <p>20 So anyway, thank you again for coming,</p> <p>21 and I'll turn back to Jacky.</p> <p>22 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Thank you.</p> <p>23 There are also staff members from the Commission</p> <p>24 assisting with us with the hearing tonight, as well as</p> <p>25 individuals from the Public Affairs Department. You</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 6</p> <p>1 probably passed them in on your way in this evening. 2 And they are individuals wearing a PUCO badge or 3 shirt. They're also available if you have any 4 questions concerning the Commission's process, or if 5 you need assistance in accessing any of the documents 6 in this case. 7 At this time I'd like to take 8 appearances on behalf of the parties, starting with 9 Columbia Gas of Ohio. 10 MR. RYAN: Thank you, Your Honor. On 11 behalf of the applicant, Columbia Gas of Ohio, John 12 Ryan, 290 West Nationwide Boulevard, Columbus, Ohio, 13 43214. 14 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Thank you. 15 And do we have another party present 16 this evening? 17 MR. MICHAEL: Good evening, Your Honor. 18 On behalf of Columbia's residential utility consumers, 19 Bill Michael from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' 20 Counsel. 21 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Thank you. 22 And I'm not seeing anyone else. Go 23 ahead and proceed. 24 The subject of today's hearing is a 25 combined application filed by Columbia Gas of Ohio</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 8</p> <p>1 speak clearly so the court reporter can accurately 2 reflect your comments on the record. 3 And if you've prepared a written 4 statement, it would be helpful if you provided a copy 5 to the court reporter for reference to make sure that 6 the transcript is accurate. 7 And after I finish here shortly, we'll 8 begin by inviting individuals on the sign-in sheet to 9 provide testimony. Each person who signed up to 10 testify will be permitted to speak once about the 11 proposed rates. And before you present your 12 testimony, I will ask you to take an oath or 13 affirmation of what you are about say is the truth. 14 I will also ask you to state your name 15 and address for the record. And then if you provide 16 your thoughts on the the proposed rates. 17 The parties in the case as well as 18 Commission Trombold and I will be permitted to ask you 19 questions about your statement, if we have any. And 20 the testimony you provide tonight will be considered 21 part of the official record in this case and it will 22 be reviewed by the Commission before a final decision 23 is made on the application. 24 And with that, we will go ahead and 25 begin with testimony.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 7</p> <p>1 seeking to increase rates and charges and for approval 2 of an alternative rate plan. The application was 3 filed on June 30, 2021, and the Commission's Staff 4 filed a Report of Investigation on April 6, 2022. 5 The report is a recommendation of the 6 Commission's Staff and does not necessarily reflect 7 what the Commission's final determination in this case 8 will be. 9 And the purpose of this evening's 10 public hearing, as Commission Trombold has already 11 mentioned, is to receive testimony regarding the 12 application from those in the local community who are 13 affected by the proposed rates and are not parties to 14 this case. 15 This is your opportunity to let the 16 Commission know what you think about Columbia's 17 application. Tonight's public hearing is only one 18 step of the process in this case. 19 An evidentiary hearing is scheduled to 20 commence on June 15, 2022, at the Commission's offices 21 in Columbus. And the purpose of that hearing is for 22 parties and the Commission's Staff to provide 23 testimony and other evidence regarding this project. 24 Tonight's hearing is being transcribed 25 by a court reporter. If you plan to testify, please</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 9</p> <p>1 COMMISSIONER TROMBOLD: So like I said, 2 we have two people that are signed up to testify. 3 First one, William Farnsel. Okay. Do you want to 4 come forward, please? 5 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Please raise 6 your right hand. 7 WHEREUPON, 8 WILLIAM E. FARNSEL, 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 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Please state 13 and spell your name for the record. 14 THE WITNESS: My name is William 15 Farnsel. That's W-I-L-L-I-A-M Farnsel, F-A-R-N-S-E-L. 16 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Thank you. 17 Please provide your address. 18 THE WITNESS: My address is 704 2nd 19 Street, Toledo, Ohio, 43605. 20 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: And please 21 proceed with your testimony. 22 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Your Honor. 23 Good evening. My name is William 24 Farnsel. I have served as chief executive officer of 25 Neighborhood Housing Services, Incorporated doing</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 10</p> <p>1 business as NeighborWorks Toledo Region. From here 2 forward, I will refer to my organization as 3 "NeighborWorks Toledo." 4 My purpose for providing testimony this 5 evening is to provide some background information on 6 our involvement in Project WarmChoice. Columbia Gas 7 of Ohio has provided the funding for Project 8 WarmChoice since 1986. That works out to 36 years, 9 and it is still running. 10 NeighborWorks Toledo has served as one 11 of the original program providers since the beginning. 12 Columbia's support for Project WarmChoice is 13 voluntary, but this investment has tremendous impact 14 on the lives of the program participants and has been 15 a sustaining support for our organization as well. 16 Our area of operation includes the 17 Columbia Gas service territory within Lucas County, 18 Ohio. The method we use to carry out program 19 activities is direct service delivery. In other 20 words, NeighborWorks employees perform customer 21 intake, income eligibility determination, consumer 22 education, health and safety inspections, initial 23 energy audit, construction, and post construction 24 energy audit. At each step, the progress of a 25 particular case through our system is documented in</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 12</p> <p>1 of 2016, NeighborWorks Toledo has completed 1,267 jobs 2 for a total WarmChoice investment of approximately 3 \$7.67 million. 4 From our perspective, Project 5 WarmChoice and other privately funded energy 6 conservation programs are as important today as at 7 anytime in the past and more critically needed in our 8 current environment of rising energy costs. Demand 9 side management helps all consumers. 10 Both private and publicly energy 11 conservation initiatives are focused on lower income 12 households. The idea is to support demand side 13 management for this consumer group to enhance their 14 housing stability. The less this consumer spends on 15 private utility expenses, the more financial resources 16 are available for all living -- for all other living 17 needs. In the process, less energy is consumed. 18 Since the goal of Project WarmChoice is 19 reducing energy consumption, what are the results? We 20 measure consumption in two ways. First, we predict 21 the amount of energy savings by setting goals for air 22 leakage reduction on each job. Second, we collect 23 natural gas consumption through billing data before 24 the work is commenced, and then follow the use for 12 25 months post completion. What we have documented</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 11</p> <p>1 the IMS. 2 The acronym "IMS" stands for 3 "Information Management System." We use IMS to gather 4 data about each job, share that information with 5 Columbia Gas and submit invoices for work completed. 6 Columbia Gas sponsored the development of the IMS 7 system in 2014 so that all the non-profit program 8 providers in Ohio could achieve a level of uniformity 9 with client data without incurring the expense of 10 developing and launching individual systems. 11 The importance of the Columbia Gas role 12 in sponsoring the development of IMS cannot be 13 overstated. IMS has proven to be a gamechanger in the 14 overall delivery of Project WarmChoice services. 15 The implementation of IMS achieved the 16 hoped-for goal of uniformity across all Project 17 WarmChoice providers and gained efficiencies in data 18 retrieval and analysis. 19 It also enabled our inspectors and 20 technicians to input measurements while working at the 21 individual jobsites while the information was still 22 very fresh. This capability created real time job 23 progress updates, right from the client's home. 24 The first job NeighborWorks Toledo 25 entered into the IMS system was 2016. Since January</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p> <p>1 across our unit completions is an average of a 30 2 percent reduction of natural gas use. 3 How that reduction translates into 4 dollar savings varies with the current pricing. The 5 mere fact that less natural gas is consumed is good 6 for all consumers. 7 If we accept that a 30 percent 8 reduction results in a \$500 annual savings per program 9 participant and during the year, an average of 231 10 consumers receive weatherization in Lucas County, the 11 annual natural gas bill savings amounts to \$115,500. 12 This savings compounds each year as another 231 13 consumers are weatherized. 14 If we begin calculations in 2016 15 through to the present, the accumulated savings in 16 cost to the lower income consumer would be 17 approximately \$3 million just in Lucas County alone. 18 Imagine that 40 percent of the cost of 19 Project WarmChoice since 2016 has been realized as 20 savings back to the consumer in Lucas County. Imagine 21 that same percentage of savings back to the consumer 22 across the entire Columbia Gas service territory in 23 Ohio. This impact is long lasting and monumental. 24 The cost of Project WarmChoice is not 25 inexpensive. But consider the economic impact of this</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 14</p> <p>1 investment in the lives of the program participants 2 and it supports housing stability. 3 On the topic of lives, there is one 4 other aspect I would like to point out. The 5 WarmChoice pram literally saves lives. 6 In our process, the first action 7 following eligibility determination is a health and 8 safety inspection. All natural gas appliances in a 9 home are evaluated for operational efficiency and 10 safety. In most instances, the occupants have no idea 11 that there is a problem until NeighborWorks brings it 12 to their attention. 13 In our experience, seven of ten 14 furnaces are evaluated for -- seven of ten furnaces 15 that are evaluated for safety need to be replaced 16 because of carbon monoxide. That's seven households 17 that are experiencing the unhealthy effects of carbon 18 monoxide that otherwise would not be aware. 19 Project WarmChoice provides the 20 resources needed to replace the unsafe furnace. When 21 we say that Project WarmChoice saves lives, it sounds 22 very dramatic, but it is true. 23 On behalf of the many lower income 24 consumers that have been assisted, we wish to thank 25 Columbia Gas for supporting this service, and I thank</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 16</p> <p>1 1030 Conneaut. That's C-O-N-N-E-A-U-T, 2 Avenue, Bowling Green, Ohio, 43402. 3 THE REPORTER: Thank you. 4 THE WITNESS: I signed up just in case 5 I wanted to say something. I don't really have 6 anything to say, so sorry. 7 But I thought, you know, maybe there 8 would be something. So ... 9 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Well, thank you 10 for attending -- 11 THE WITNESS: Thank you for your time. 12 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: -- and 13 considering any comments for this evening. We do 14 appreciate your attending. 15 And with that, I see the time is 6:15. 16 So at this time I would like to go ahead and go off 17 the record for a few more minutes, maybe until around 18 6:30 so that we can see if there are any other 19 individuals who are still planning on attending this 20 evening, maybe just got home -- for a little bit. So 21 we'll go ahead and go off the record at this time. 22 THE REPORTER: Going off the record 23 6:15 p.m. 24 (Off the record.) 25 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Thank you,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 15</p> <p>1 you for this opportunity to provide testimony. 2 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Thank you for 3 that testimony. 4 Are there any questions for this 5 witness from the parties? 6 All right. Thank you. 7 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much. 8 COMMISSIONER TROMBOLD: Next witness, 9 William Harold, if you want to come forward, please. 10 Thank you. 11 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Good evening. 12 Please raise your right hand. 13 WHEREUPON, 14 WILLIAM HAROLD, 15 called as a witness, and having been first duly sworn 16 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but 17 the truth, was examined and testified as follows: 18 COMMISSIONER ST. JOHN: Please state 19 and spell your name for the record. 20 THE WITNESS: William, W-I-L-L-I-A-M, 21 Harold, H-E-R-A-L-D. Address, 1030 Conneaut Avenue. 22 That's C-O-N-N. Don't need that. 23 THE REPORTER: One more time slower. 24 Your address. 25 THE WITNESS: Oh, yeah.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p> <p>1 everyone, for waiting a few moments to see if anyone 2 else would show up to give testimony. The time is now 3 6:30 and nobody else has arrived who would like to 4 give any statements, so at this time, that concludes 5 the witnesses who signed up to testify. 6 I want to thank everyone for their 7 participation this evening. We'd also like to thank 8 the Bowling Green Parks for allowing us to use their 9 facilities in order to conduct this public hearing. 10 The hearing is now concluded, and the hearing 11 transcript will be submitted on the record for the 12 Commission's consideration in this case. 13 Thank you all again and have a nice 14 evening. 15 THE REPORTER: Going off the record at 16 6:31 p.m. 17 (Whereupon, at 6:31 p.m., the 18 proceeding was concluded.) 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</p>

1 CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSITION OFFICER
 2 I, MICHAEL R. RENNILLO, the officer before
 3 whom the foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby
 4 certify that any witness(es) in the foregoing
 5 proceedings, prior to testifying, were duly sworn;
 6 that the proceedings were recorded by me and
 7 thereafter reduced to typewriting by a qualified
 8 transcriptionist; that said digital audio recording of
 9 said proceedings are a true and accurate record to the
 10 best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; that I am
 11 neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any
 12 of the parties to the action in which this was taken;
 13 and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of
 14 any counsel or attorney employed by the parties
 15 hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the
 16 outcome of this action.

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 MICHAEL R. RENNILLO

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Notary Public in and for the
 State of Ohio

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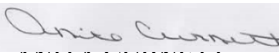
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1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER
 2 I, ANITA CURNETT, do hereby certify that
 3 this transcript was prepared from the digital audio
 4 recording of the foregoing proceeding, that said
 5 transcript is a true and accurate record of the
 6 proceedings to 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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 ANITA CURNETT

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Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure

Title V. Discovery

Rule 30

(e) Submission to Witness; Changes; Signing.

When the testimony is fully transcribed, the deposition shall be submitted to the witness for examination and shall be read to or by the witness, unless examination and reading are waived by the witness and by the parties. Any changes in form or substance that the witness desires to make shall be entered upon the deposition by the officer with a statement of the reasons given by the witness for making them. The deposition shall then be signed by the witness, unless the parties by stipulation waive the signing or the witness is ill, cannot be found, or refuses to sign. The witness shall have thirty days from submission of the deposition to the witness to review and sign the deposition. If the deposition is taken within thirty days of a trial or hearing, the witness shall have seven days from submission of the deposition to the witness to review and sign the deposition. If the trial or hearing is scheduled to commence less than seven days before the deposition is submitted to the witness, the court may establish a deadline for the

witness to review and sign the deposition. If the deposition is not signed by the witness during the period prescribed in this division, the officer shall sign it and state on the record the fact of the waiver or of the illness or absence of the witness or the fact of the refusal to sign together with the reason, if any, given therefor; and the deposition may then be used as fully as though signed, unless on a motion to suppress the court holds that the reasons given for the refusal to sign require rejection of the deposition in whole or in part.

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