

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

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In the Matter of the :  
Application of Duke Energy:  
Ohio, Inc., for an : Case No. 17-32-EL-AIR  
Increase in Its Electric :  
Distribution Rates. :  
:

In the Matter of the :  
Application of Duke Energy:  
Ohio, Inc., for Tariff : Case No. 17-33-EL-ATA  
Approval. :  
:

In the Matter of the :  
Application of Duke Energy:  
Ohio, Inc., for Approval : Case No. 17-34-EL-AAM  
to Change Accounting :  
Methods. :  
:

- - -

PROCEEDINGS

before Mr. Nick Walstra and Ms. Stacie Cathcart,  
Attorney Examiners, at the Butler Technology and  
Career Development Schools, 3603 Hamilton-Middletown  
Road, Auditorium, Hamilton, Ohio, called at 6:05 p.m.  
on Monday, October 30, 2017.

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PUBLIC HEARING - HAMILTON

- - -

ARMSTRONG & OKEY, INC.  
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- - -

APPEARANCES:

Duke Energy Ohio, Inc.  
By Ms. Elizabeth Watts  
139 East Fourth Street  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45201

On behalf of the Applicant.

Bruce E. Weston, Ohio Consumers' Counsel  
By Mr. Christopher Healey,  
Assistant Consumers' Counsel  
10 West Broad Street, Suite 1800  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3485

On behalf of the Residential Consumers of  
Duke Energy Ohio, Inc.

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Monday Evening Session,

October 30, 2017.

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EXAMINER WALSTRA: Welcome, everyone.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio has assigned for public hearing at this time and place Case No. 17-32-EL-AIR, being in the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Incorporated, for an Increase in Its Electric Distribution Rates.

My name is Nick Walstra, with me is Stacie Cathcart, and we are the Attorney Examiners assigned by the Commission to hear this case. Additionally, there is staff members from the PUCO here today you may have met coming in. Jill Kocher is standing there in the back from our Public Affairs Department as well as Derita Patterson who is signing people in up at the beginning. She is a staff member with the PUCO. These PUCO staff members are available if you have a question concerning utility matters other than the application which is the focus of tonight's hearing.

At this time I'd like to take appearances on behalf of the parties. On behalf of the company.

MS. WATTS: Thank you, your Honor. On behalf of the Duke Energy Ohio, Elizabeth H. Watts,

1 139 East Fourth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

2 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

3 There have been a number of parties that  
4 have filed for intervention in this case. Are any of  
5 them present today? Go ahead.

6 MR. HEALEY: My name is Christopher  
7 Healey representing Bruce Weston, Ohio Consumers'  
8 Counsel, 10 West Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio. With  
9 me is Andy Tingler. Thank you.

10 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

11 Any other parties?

12 Okay. Duke Energy filed this application  
13 on March 2, 2017. Duke is requesting an approximate  
14 3 percent rate increase in order to generate over  
15 \$50 million in additional revenue. Staff filed its  
16 report and recommendation on September 2, 2017. In  
17 its report staff recommends a 3 to 6 percent rate  
18 decrease. Staff's report is a recommendation only,  
19 and the final decision that will ultimately be made  
20 will be up to the Commission.

21 The local public hearings scheduled in  
22 this case are only one aspect of the process. An  
23 additional public hearing is scheduled for this  
24 Thursday at 12:30 p.m. at Cincinnati City Hall, and  
25 an evidentiary hearing is also scheduled to commence

on December 11, 2017, at the Commission offices in Columbus.

The purpose of this evening's public hearing is to receive comments from the public regarding Duke's application for an increase in rates. We know that Duke does have other pending cases before the Commission including an application for an electric security plan.

Today's hearing is only comments regarding this case. Unfortunately this is not a question and answer session, although Duke and Ohio Consumers' Counsel and staff are available to talk separately after the hearing. Mainly, however, this is your opportunity to let the Commission know what you think about Duke's application.

Tonight's hearing is being transcribed by a court reporter. Your testimony will be considered part of the official record in this case. It will be reviewed by the Commission before they make a final decision on the application. If you plan to testify, please speak clearly so that the court reporter can accurately reflect your comments on the record. Also if you have prepared a written statement, it will be helpful if you could provide a copy to the court reporter.

1                   If you decide you do not wish to testify,  
2                   you may submit written comments on the PUCO website  
3                   or by mail under this case number which is 17-32.  
4                   When you arrived, you were offered the opportunity to  
5                   sign up to testify. Once we get started I will begin  
6                   calling the witnesses forward in the order they  
7                   signed up. Before you give your comments, I'll ask  
8                   you to state your name and address, and I'll swear  
9                   you in. We have the podium up here. Come up the  
10                  stairs. We do have the wireless mics if you can't  
11                  make it up the stairs. Just let us know.

12                  The Commission does appreciate your  
13                  participation in tonight's hearing. We want everyone  
14                  who wishes to make a public statement to have the  
15                  opportunity to do so. So please be considerate of  
16                  others waiting to give their testimony and keep your  
17                  statements to a reasonable period of time.

18                  At this time I will begin calling  
19                  witnesses forward. Barb Miller.

20                  MS. MILLER: Can I do the mic from down  
21                  here?

22                  EXAMINER WALSTRA: Yeah, sure.

23                  MS. MILLER: Thank you.

24                  EXAMINER WALSTRA: State your name for  
25                  the record and address.

1 MS. MILLER: My name is Barbara Miller.  
2 I live at 219 Folsom Drive, Dayton, Ohio 45405. And  
3 I'm here today --

4 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Ma'am, first, can you  
5 scoot over here so the court reporter can see you?

6 MS. MILLER: Okay. Is that okay from  
7 here?

8 EXAMINER WALSTRA: If you could raise  
9 your right hand.

10 (Witness sworn.)

11 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Go ahead.

12 - - -

13 BARBARA MILLER

14 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
15 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

16 DIRECT EXAMINATION

17 THE WITNESS: I'm aware this has to do  
18 with increasing the amount of money that everyone  
19 pays per month for utilities here. I would like to  
20 also bring some attention to health issues because  
21 some of the money that's collected is being used by  
22 utilities in order to upgrade equipment, and I think  
23 that was stated in one of the things that I got  
24 earlier here.

25 The wireless meters, digital meters,



1 remote meters, however you want to say that, not only  
2 are they more expensive to maintain, they need to be  
3 replaced more often. They need to be upgraded more  
4 often, but they also do not last. The analogue  
5 meters last sometimes 25 to 35 years. They're safer,  
6 and they are more private. The wireless meters are  
7 class 2B carcinogen, and so when you're submitting  
8 more money monthly, you're also almost like paying  
9 them to put something in your house that actually can  
10 make you ill. And I think that's something to think  
11 about.

12 I've had my own experiences with the  
13 digital remote meters. And I from -- speaking from  
14 my own experience, there's a lot of things -- if you  
15 are not aware of, there are a lot of problems people  
16 are reporting and things anywhere from sleep problems  
17 to stress, irritability. It goes all the way down to  
18 eye pain. The radiation coming from the meters when  
19 they're being reported -- they're recording the  
20 readings, the radiation is present in the house, and  
21 it's a fair enough amount, especially in my case,  
22 when the meter only needs to be read once a month,  
23 but it's being read numerous times every day which  
24 increases the danger to anyone in my household.

25 And from my own experience, you know, I

1 will say that my life has changed so much in the  
 2 years since I was aware that I had the meter in my  
 3 home. It -- so many things that I wanted to do as I  
 4 retired, I used to do my own, grass, do my own  
 5 yardwork, enjoyed gardening, liked to travel, liked  
 6 to do all kind of things. Because of the joint  
 7 problems and stomach problems, it is just very, very  
 8 difficult, irritability, sleep problems. It's very  
 9 difficult to do a lot of the things that I really  
 10 wanted to be doing at this point in my life.

11 I do encourage people to think about it,  
 12 be aware that, you know, there is more radiation  
 13 coming off a lot of the wireless things and think  
 14 about where your money is going. There's no mandate  
 15 that says that, you know, the companies have to put  
 16 in these new wireless meters. And it's something I  
 17 think to really check and make a decision maybe to  
 18 see if that's really what you want your companies to  
 19 do.

20 So thank you for your attention and your  
 21 time.

22 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

23 Bob Andrews.

24 MR. ANDREWS: My name is Bob Andrews,  
 25 5360 Millikin Road, 45011, Liberty Township.

1 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Raise your  
2 right hand.

3 (Witness sworn.)

4 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Go ahead.

5 - - -

6 BOB ANDREWS

7 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
8 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

9 DIRECT EXAMINATION

10 THE WITNESS: I'm a small volume user at  
11 the present time. My monthly fixed costs is higher  
12 than my usage. Obviously with this proposal a fixed  
13 cost will cost more. I recently installed a new  
14 furnace, an on demand hot water tank, and switched my  
15 cookstove over to gas. Now with the fixed costs none  
16 of this will help me offset the cost of what I put in  
17 in improvements.

18 I'm a retired person and obviously this  
19 will take more out of my budget, and with this  
20 proposal I see no way that I can use less and save  
21 money. It's still going to cost me more.

22 So thank you.

23 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

24 Lisa Crawford. Please state your name  
25 and address.

1 MS. CRAWFORD: Lisa Crawford. My address  
2 is 10206 Crosby Road, Harrison, Ohio 45030.

3 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Raise your  
4 right hand.

5 (Witness sworn.)

6 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Go ahead.

7 - - -

8 LISA CRAWFORD

9 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
10 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

11 DIRECT EXAMINATION

12 THE WITNESS: My comments almost totally  
13 ditto what the fella before me said. I'm going to be  
14 a little more explicit though and just say to you our  
15 entire household is electric. We have no gas.  
16 Everything we have is electric. So you can imagine  
17 our bills are already high.

18 I'm frustrated by this because my husband  
19 and I are both retired. We are at a point in our  
20 life where you think you should be comfortable. You  
21 know, my health insurance is going up \$100 a month  
22 beginning January. Our water bills have doubled in  
23 the last few years. We have a school board levy  
24 issue that's coming up for a vote next Tuesday that  
25 if it passes will be a tremendous amount of money for

1 all of us.

2 It's just -- it's become very, very hard.  
3 We live in a community where a lot of older people  
4 live, you know, that live on Social Security and live  
5 on a very limited fixed income. And this -- this is  
6 really harmful to not only us but to them also.

7 I really want to encourage you to really  
8 take a good hard look at this. This is really --  
9 it's like it's -- it's like everything is against us  
10 and pushing us out of our homes at this point and  
11 there's going to come a day when none of us are going  
12 to be able to afford any of it. So I really hope  
13 that the Commission will stand back and really look  
14 at this and think about this.

15 The other point I just want to make is  
16 they talk about a thousand kilowatts an hour -- or  
17 kilowatt-hours. Well, we aren't typical. My house  
18 is not typical, so I have a feeling it's going to be  
19 a whole lot more than \$1.15 a month. From what I  
20 have been reading and researching, we're looking at,  
21 you know, like 20, 21 something a month so, you know,  
22 this -- this is just ridiculous. It's outrageous,  
23 and it's uncalled for.

24 Thank you.

25 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

1 Ken Crawford.

2 MR. CRAWFORD: I'll decline.

3 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

4 Jim Poole.

5 MR. POOLE: Hi. I'm Jim Poole. I live  
6 at 782 Carini Lane, Greenhills, Ohio 45218.

7 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Raise your  
8 right hand.

9 (Witness sworn.)

10 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

11 - - -

12 JIM POOLE

13 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
14 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

15 DIRECT EXAMINATION

16 THE WITNESS: I'm here to oppose the Duke  
17 Energy rate increase, in particular the huge proposed  
18 increase in the fixed rate for residential customers.  
19 I've always conserved energy both because of  
20 environmental reasons as well as not wanting to waste  
21 money that I simply don't have.

22 I think the increase Duke Energy is  
23 asking for, an additional \$200 per year before we  
24 even turn on the lights, is totally outrageous. And  
25 don't even let Duke tell you many of their customers

1 would even out because of volumetric discounts  
2 either. It's ridiculous to make everyone pay more  
3 regardless of any future discount. But it's  
4 preposterous to then penalize those of us who  
5 conserve energy regularly and want to receive the  
6 full benefits from installing more energy efficient  
7 appliances or solar on our rooftops.

8 I really can't afford and don't want to  
9 pay this Duke bill. That's like adding a 13th or  
10 14th bill per year. As much as I will have trouble  
11 paying an additional amount, the people who will be  
12 hurt the most by this increase are the people who are  
13 on the most fixed incomes. People like my mom, she's  
14 78 years old, lives in a modest two-room apartment,  
15 and only nets \$1,000 per month from her Social  
16 Security check. She already has to stretch that  
17 measly monthly amount much further than most of us  
18 would ever have to experience.

19 She's always worrying about what to do if  
20 her rent goes up, if her other bills increase, and  
21 what happens if she doesn't get an increase yet again  
22 this year in her Social Security check. She can't  
23 handle any small increase. And, now, we're told that  
24 Duke's going to raise her rates and make her pay an  
25 additional \$200 more per year in just the fixed

1 customer charge alone, a charge she has no way to  
2 control herself. And my question is why does Duke  
3 think they need this more than my mom?

4 And she's not alone in these worries.  
5 She lives about an hour east of Cincinnati in a rural  
6 community where she's lived her entire adult life.  
7 In her apartment complex there are 50 residents who  
8 are in exactly the same boat she's in. And none of  
9 them live in an apartment large enough to reap any  
10 benefits from the ridiculous volumetric discount Duke  
11 is touting as softening the hurt this increase would  
12 cause.

13 Think of everyone who this will affect  
14 who, like my mom, can't afford any increase, let  
15 alone being able to come here tonight to speak out  
16 against it. Please do it for all of us. Reject this  
17 Duke fixed income -- or fixed rate increase.

18 Thanks.

19 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

20 Caitlin Smith.

21 MS. SMITH: Hi. My name is Caitlin  
22 Smith, 3926 Trevor Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45211.

23 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Raise your  
24 right hand.

25 (Witness sworn.)



1 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Go ahead.

2 - - -

3 CAITLIN SMITH

4 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
5 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

6 DIRECT EXAMINATION

7 THE WITNESS: So I work in community  
8 mental health, so as you can imagine, I see a lot of  
9 people in poverty. This Duke bill is going to  
10 negatively affect those people. Not only for myself  
11 working as a community mental health provider and not  
12 making a large salary, it's going to be difficult to,  
13 you know, bear the brunt of that cost.

14 However, I'm thinking more about my  
15 clients and the people that I see in the community  
16 every day that are already struggling, that are  
17 budgeting down to the last penny. This is going to  
18 really negatively affect them and we are going to see  
19 an increase in anxiety. We are going to see  
20 demonstrable mental health effects from this.

21 So I think this is something we should  
22 consider as, you know, something neglective that is  
23 going to impact our community. And that's all.

24 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

25 Rich McVay.

1 MR. McVAY: Good evening. Rich McVay,  
2 8198 Daleview Road, Cincinnati, Ohio.

3 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

4 (Witness sworn.)

5 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Go ahead.

6 - - -

7 RICH McVAY

8 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
9 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

10 DIRECT EXAMINATION

11 THE WITNESS: At the outset I would like  
12 to convey to this committee and this staff of the  
13 PUCO congratulations on the hard work you guys do in  
14 maintaining a reliable supply of low cost energy for  
15 the state of Ohio. I appreciate that. And I thank  
16 you for holding this important public hearing this  
17 evening.

18 I do not support the Duke proposal to  
19 increase fixed monthly charges by 280 percent. I  
20 live in Colerain, a township of 58,500 people. They  
21 have approximate 2,000 households, about 2,500  
22 businesses, all who pay their electric bills. Maybe  
23 not all, I think they do. 23 percent of our family  
24 incomes are below \$35,000 a year. Those are families  
25 with sometimes both people working and having more

1 than one job. 44 percent of our family incomes are  
 2 below 50,000 a year. 53 percent of the families with  
 3 children under 5 years of age in our township live in  
 4 poverty. 38 percent of the families with children  
 5 under 18 years of age live in poverty as well.  
 6 That's census data. These families who can't afford  
 7 attorneys are not able to attend these meetings.  
 8 They can't afford this increase. Your committee is  
 9 their first line of hope.

10 Now, prior to the meeting this evening, I  
 11 did go online to try to see if I could find a one- or  
 12 two-page simple summary of why Duke thinks they merit  
 13 this rate increase, and I couldn't find that. I did  
 14 get something here as I walked in the door. I was  
 15 also struck by the fact there is all these postings  
 16 by attorneys, most of them well paid, who are making  
 17 a case for their own companies. Most of the people I  
 18 talk about can't afford those attorneys.

19 And I did look at some of the submissions  
 20 that were made by people online. You can see those  
 21 where some have filled out these packets where  
 22 volunteers have said send your things in so it gets  
 23 to the PUCO, and I am glad that you pay attention to  
 24 that. But I hope you give them the same merit that  
 25 you give the inputs of an attorney who makes \$200,000

1 a year because the people that are being affected are  
2 these poor people we're talking about.

3 Over my 50-year business career, I've  
4 operated with the assumption there is no such thing  
5 as a fixed cost that Duke talks about. In the final  
6 analysis all costs are variable. This is the  
7 assumption that guided our products strategy as  
8 Proctor and Gamble. You set your product cost rates  
9 for power each year, what it would take to produce  
10 target margins. Duke needs to do that as well.

11 The regular rate established that PUCO  
12 does use should require zero base budgeting for each  
13 year and every rate increase. So now they're asking  
14 they want to have their fixed rate increased. Fixed  
15 costs are not real. Fixed costs are imagined and  
16 championed by those who don't want to bother to  
17 define and reduce the total base cost of running  
18 their business. They just wanted to pass this fixed  
19 costs on from PUCO hearing to PUCO hearing so they  
20 don't have to defend it. Consumers have no choice  
21 about their energy distribution. They don't have the  
22 free market to promote competitive pricing.

23 What we have is your committee and  
24 Commission. I ask you to hold the line and deny the  
25 rate increase requests by Duke. They have not made

1 their case. I see that they are asking for an  
2 increase of \$15 million. Duke is a big company. It  
3 doesn't take much effort to come up and save \$15  
4 million. Two or three bright people from the outside  
5 can go into Duke and show them how to save that money  
6 and avoid this rate increase, and I respect the fact  
7 that the staff of PUCO has declined this. I think  
8 that's well reasoned on your part and applaud you for  
9 that.

10 Thank you.

11 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

12 Steffanie Gentile.

13 MS. GENTILE: I'm going to pass. My  
14 points have already been said.

15 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

16 Crystal Steele.

17 MS. STEELE: My name is Crystal Steele,  
18 4043 Sharon Park Lane, Sharonville, Ohio 45241.

19 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Could you  
20 raise your right hand.

21 (Witness sworn.)

22 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Go ahead.

23 - - -

24 CRYSTAL STEELE

25 presented herself as a public witness, and being

1 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

2 DIRECT EXAMINATION

3 THE WITNESS: I know it was mentioned  
4 earlier about some of the community workers that  
5 works in the community. I am also a community  
6 worker. I'm a director at a family homeless shelter  
7 in Walnut Hills, and I see a lot of our families in  
8 poverty. I see a lot of children with no heat, no  
9 electric. All of our families -- most of our  
10 families that come into our family shelter is because  
11 of Duke. They can't pay electric. And I know that  
12 PIPP and HEAP is a helpful thing for some families,  
13 and it is for some families.

14 But with the increase in Duke it's going  
15 to be hard for our families to -- to pay their  
16 electric bill, to get utilities cut on. There's a  
17 lot of landlords who will not include utilities into  
18 the rent for us to pay for our families to get into  
19 housing, and also with the Human Services that John  
20 Cranley is wanting to cut as well, that is tearing a  
21 hole in our budget at the family shelter. So we're  
22 paying thousands of dollars a week to pretty much  
23 provide for electric for our families to live in  
24 stable housing so they are not living on the street.  
25 And then that's like on my career side.

1           On the personal side I also have an  
2 elderly mother that I take care of who is on a fixed  
3 income. And me being a single mother with three  
4 boys, I'm always helping her to pay her electric  
5 bills. She lives in a two -- two-bedroom apartment  
6 building and I'm always helping her and she's always  
7 crying to me about how her Duke keeps going up and up  
8 and up.

9           And also on that notion, me being a  
10 single mother I am trying to be a homeowner myself,  
11 and with the rate increase it's really holding me  
12 back from not being a homeowner. So that's going to  
13 tear that whole economic society through the roof  
14 like everything is going to go up and up, and people  
15 won't be able to buy milk, bread, anything, and all  
16 the essentials that they need for their household.

17           Thank you.

18           EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

19           Linda Newman.

20           MS. NEWMAN: I decline. Everything has  
21 been said.

22           EXAMINER WALSTRA: All right. Thank you.

23           This is all I have on the list and I  
24 don't know if anyone signed up additionally. Yes,  
25 they have.

1                   Jill, do you know if there is an updated  
2 list? Here comes one.

3                   Ryan Hoskins.

4                   MR. HOSKINS: Ryan Hoskins, 7325 Werner  
5 Avenue, Cincinnati, 45231.

6                   EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Raise your  
7 right hand.

8                   (Witness sworn.)

9                   EXAMINER WALSTRA: Go ahead.

10                                   - - -

11                                   RYAN HOSKINS

12 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
13 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

14                                   DIRECT EXAMINATION

15                   THE WITNESS: I'm here today to speak out  
16 against what is essentially a fee increase charged to  
17 Cincinnati consumers purely because they are  
18 customers of Duke Energy. Duke Energy is reporting a  
19 net profit for 2016 of \$12.17 billion. That's not  
20 operation costs. It's not what it takes to pay  
21 people to put the lines in. That's profit margin.  
22 Duke continues its fights around the country to  
23 maintain the status quo in energy as new technology  
24 seek markets to bring savings and control and  
25 innovation to the private consumer. They actually



1 fight privately-owned solar and wind anywhere they do  
2 business. Ask the poor idiot as of last year.

3 So what this is -- what will this  
4 approximately 200 percent increase in a fee do to the  
5 poor and people on fixed incomes? How much more  
6 could you afford if you only had so much money coming  
7 in? The citizens that will be affected the most are  
8 clearly the poor and unfortunately fixed incomes.  
9 This will force some to decide this winter between  
10 food and potentially heat.

11 How does this actually benefit anyone  
12 other than Duke Energy and its shareholders? They  
13 use an electric grid that's based on technology and  
14 design that's 100 years old and still rely upon  
15 environmentally disastrous generation technologies or  
16 technologies that have been enslaved to the military  
17 cultural complex through the waste generated from  
18 nuclear power while for decades longer -- for decades  
19 better sources have been available.

20 This proposed fee increase does nothing  
21 to benefit the customers nor does it improve  
22 technology, reduce transmission loss, or broaden  
23 renewables and utilization. Frankly, Duke Energy is  
24 a dinosaur of a business model selling an antiquated  
25 product that is desperate to preserve a bloated

1 profit margin on the backs of citizens that have no  
2 choice but to purchase their service and product.

3 I urge our regulators to stand on the  
4 side of fraud in a free market by shutting this  
5 bailout down and make a corporate giant adapt to an  
6 ever changing world based on new technologies.

7 Thank you very much.

8 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Appreciate it. Cathy  
9 Marksteiner. Is Cathy still here? Sorry.

10 MS. MARKSTEINER: That's all right. Just  
11 taking the long way around.

12 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Not a problem.

13 MS. MARKSTEINER: Good evening. Cathy  
14 Marksteiner and I live at 5575 Raven Valley Drive,  
15 Liberty Township, Ohio, 45011.

16 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Raise your  
17 right hand.

18 (Witness sworn.)

19 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

20 - - -

21 CATHY MARKSTEINER

22 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
23 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

24 DIRECT EXAMINATION

25 THE WITNESS: First of all, I would like

1 to echo what one person said earlier which is to say  
2 thank you to the Public Utilities Commission for this  
3 opportunity to be here tonight.

4 The other thing is that I would like for  
5 us to recognize that we are present because short of  
6 a class action suit there is no other opportunity for  
7 the general public to have an opportunity to come  
8 together. They are the Public Utilities Commission.  
9 They represent us, not just the utility company. So  
10 I want to congratulate all of you for being here  
11 because you represent all of us even if it is one  
12 person at a time.

13 Duke is asking for an increase in both a  
14 fixed rate as well as a volumetric. Nobody denied  
15 that any company has the opportunity or the right to  
16 earn a living, to earn a profit. But to go from  
17 3.14 percent to 7.82 percent is pretty incredible.

18 Why did they choose those numbers? Is  
19 that what inflation is allowing us to handle? These  
20 are not questions for the PUCO to be addressing and I  
21 understand that. We are not putting that to you but  
22 rather these are the frustrations that we as the  
23 public also experience.

24 Duke is constantly asking its customers,  
25 its consumers save energy, lower your usage,

1 especially during the summer. We've had entire grids  
2 go down because of overuse. So they've made  
3 opportunities available to us to reduce our usage and  
4 that includes the little meter that they will put on  
5 your air conditioner that will shut it down during  
6 when they have high energy use, a rolling brownout.

7 For those that are in medical need, and  
8 I'm a retired firefighter and paramedic, where it was  
9 vitally critical that the oxygen keep going so those  
10 patients were identified. But it doesn't necessarily  
11 mean that they weren't affected. They were. There  
12 was some that refused to turn their air conditioning  
13 on because they were afraid of the electric bill. We  
14 reached them when they were -- their body  
15 temperatures were high, and it was a hyperthermic  
16 situation. We transported them to the hospital.  
17 They were afraid to turn on their air conditioning  
18 because they couldn't afford the bill already.

19 As we strive to lower our bills, Duke now  
20 wants to turn around and say thank you so much. You  
21 did a good job. Now, we are going to raise your bill  
22 because we still have to maintain our profit margin.  
23 You are doing exactly what we asked you to do. You  
24 are using less. It is time that Duke recognize that  
25 in using less we are just simply using less. It

1 doesn't necessarily mean that they need to keep  
2 increasing their profit from 3.14 percent to over 7  
3 percent on the backs of us doing what we were  
4 supposed to do.

5 Thank you.

6 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

7 Melissa English.

8 MS. ENGLISH: Melissa English, 4209  
9 Brookside Avenue, Cincinnati, 45223.

10 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

11 (Witness sworn.)

12 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

13 - - -

14 MELISSA ENGLISH

15 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
16 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

17 DIRECT EXAMINATION

18 THE WITNESS: Others have made my points  
19 far more eloquently. Thank you all for turning out  
20 and speaking the truth. I will just stand here and  
21 say I want to go on record as opposing the Duke rate  
22 hike for the reasons that have been presented here  
23 today. It is something that discourages energy  
24 efficiency which is a direction in which we should be  
25 moving. It discourages the use of renewable, a

1 direction in which we should be moving, and it puts  
2 the hardship most on people who can afford it least.

3 I myself make a decent living. I have  
4 seen my health insurance go up 40 percent already  
5 this year. I've been informed I am going to see  
6 another increase the beginning of next year, and my  
7 mortgage has gone up \$250 a month. Even I am going  
8 to have trouble paying this extra \$200 to Duke, and I  
9 really hope you deny it.

10 Thank you.

11 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

12 Joe Davidson.

13 MR. DAVIDSON: Joe Davidson, 4607 Perry  
14 Street, Cincinnati, 45242.

15 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Raise your right hand.

16 (Witness sworn.)

17 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Please proceed.

18 - - -

19 JOE DAVIDSON

20 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
21 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

22 DIRECT EXAMINATION

23 THE WITNESS: My take is a little bit  
24 different. You are talking about a lot of increases  
25 and stuff. The spin I'm going to talk about is the

1 effect of the supposedly cost savings that Duke did  
2 which is basically putting in electronic meters. If  
3 you don't know someone who has been affected by it  
4 healthwise, you just need to talk to a few people.

5 In the last five years when I moved into  
6 the property that I'm at now -- by the way I do  
7 appreciate PUCO's help in getting those meters  
8 removed, but within six months of moving into my  
9 house, having had very few health issues before that,  
10 I have been blessed with some pretty good health.  
11 Not only did I have -- there is like a long list.  
12 Actually I have some handouts here of symptoms that  
13 are pretty typical from exposure to electronic  
14 meters.

15 And, again, this all started pretty  
16 drastically with moving into a house that had meters.  
17 I mean, within six months of moving in, I had not  
18 only one root canal, I had two on the same side of my  
19 face which is extremely rare according to my dentist.  
20 And, now, I just found out today I have to have one  
21 of those teeth removed because they can't save it.  
22 I've also in the previous 50 years had maybe four or  
23 five teeth that I had worked on. I've had 12 worked  
24 on in the last five years I have been exposed to  
25 this. It's been drastic.

1 I did finally figure out part of the  
2 issues, had meters removed with PUCO's help because  
3 Duke drug their feet because supposedly it's a cost  
4 savings measure, and they don't want to go out and  
5 read the meters, but we don't care that those meters  
6 actually send EMF waves through your house basically  
7 microwaving you.

8 And I have got a lot of research and a  
9 lot of things that go online and look and there's a  
10 ton of it out there people are kind of ignoring.  
11 Fortunately getting meters removed from my house was  
12 a help, and for about a couple years I actually saw a  
13 big difference with that.

14 But, now, I am exposed too at my work  
15 because we moved into a new building because -- I  
16 can't exactly quit a job just because where they  
17 moved, and I seen a steady decline and those health  
18 issues coming back. And, you know, a lot of people  
19 think it's all in our head.

20 I tell you what, I went out of the  
21 country for a week back in March. And I had joint  
22 issues, sleep issues, a lot of the issues I have been  
23 having. Went out of the country, Cuba which doesn't  
24 have any wifi, doesn't have any electronics at all.  
25 It's fairly primitive, but it's a cool place to go.



1 When I got back, I felt great. I couldn't believe  
2 how much better I felt. And it wasn't just because  
3 of vacation because it was pretty rustic and didn't  
4 sleep all that great, but the difference was  
5 dramatic. I got back. I didn't have any joint pain.  
6 I was sleeping like I hadn't slept in years and  
7 didn't have any issues.

8 And then gradually over about two or  
9 three weeks all those symptoms started coming back.  
10 So to me it's like maybe I was just, you know,  
11 getting old, right? But just going not exposed to  
12 that for a week, which is not that long, made a huge  
13 difference.

14 And, again, the continued issues I'm  
15 having with especially dental health, I mean, I can't  
16 even tell you how much I spent in the last two years  
17 just on the dental work from -- I've been told from  
18 EMF stuff. That's the only thing that's changed in  
19 my environment. And, now, they're putting up more  
20 and more towers and hyping up the wifi and the EMF  
21 effects.

22 Even though I had the meters removed from  
23 my house, they are putting some substations  
24 everywhere just to amp up that electricity and  
25 these -- all these meters are supposedly to save

1 money. But, then again, the rate increases have been  
2 ridiculous over the last couple of years even though  
3 we basically pay for those meters to be put in, and,  
4 now, they're still -- they are not reducing costs.  
5 It's just a profit thing for them. So, again, my  
6 more issue is the health impact I have had on this  
7 stuff, not just the rate increases, but the rate  
8 increases are on top of basically poisoning us with  
9 the -- because they are -- they don't want to read  
10 meters.

11 So I don't know if -- if you would like a  
12 copy of any of the readings I did here, but I can  
13 certainly pass those along.

14 EXAMINER WALSTRA: You can probably  
15 submit them online if you want to, and they will be a  
16 part of the record there.

17 MR. DAVIDSON: Yeah, I appreciate your  
18 time.

19 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Barb Boylan.

20 MS. BOYLAN: I'm Barb Boylan. I live at  
21 4225 Delaney Street, Cincinnati, 45223.

22 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Raise your right hand.

23 (Witness sworn.)

24 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Go ahead.

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BARB BOYLAN

presented herself as a public witness, and being  
first duly sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

THE WITNESS: I appreciate everything  
that the people have said here tonight, particularly  
about profit margins, so I second all of that. I  
want to say for the record that I'm opposed to  
proposals that allow a utility to charge me a  
mandatory fee for power I'm not using, particularly  
with this utility where we are not seeing a lot of  
energy efficiency and renewable programs as Melissa  
English stated.

I think in that way that's not a good  
business practice, and I am opposed to a utility that  
is not providing that kind of good business practice  
and also one that can charge these fixed rates.

What I really wanted to talk about  
tonight is the thing I find, since it's Halloween  
time, a little bit of creepy business practice and  
that is that I see a utility as being a part of the  
basic needs. It's housing. It has to do with how we  
have to be in the modern world. You need utilities.  
So in the old psychology triangle of the part of the  
hierarchy of need that's at the bottom, you know,

1 food, shelter, water, and so we have to have  
2 utilities. And while I understand this is a business  
3 and the profit margins need to satisfy the  
4 stakeholders, it's also something that you can't have  
5 creepy business practices on and I oppose that all  
6 generally around people and I know there's great  
7 programs and I think that they are out there but  
8 that's not -- they are never enough.

9 So what I wanted to read tonight was  
10 things going on in the renter's world and I think  
11 this affects greatly this what's going to be referred  
12 to as the 13th payment now if this rate hike  
13 increases. In Hamilton County, which is where I am,  
14 workers pay 30 percent of their income for housing  
15 while earning minimum wage. This is because rent has  
16 risen 66 percent since 2000 and household incomes  
17 have only risen 35 percent. The highest eviction  
18 rates in the country includes Cincinnati. It's  
19 ranked 10 out of the top 50 and there is a newspaper  
20 article that just came out last week which I will  
21 post to your website. Out of the earnings of less  
22 than \$30,000 a year, 11 percent of people faced  
23 eviction threatened in the last year. Rents are  
24 rising in Cincinnati metro at the fastest pace of any  
25 major metro in the Midwest. In August of this year,

1 monthly rates averaged \$935. That's a 15 percent  
2 increase from August of 2016 when they averaged \$750.

3 I ask the utilities how could you allow  
4 increases to fixed charges that benefit the utility  
5 and their shareholders and making people pay  
6 basically a 13th electric bill on the burden of what  
7 I would call a basic need.

8 Thank you.

9 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Carren  
10 Herring.

11 MS. HERRING: Carren Herring, 3549 Glen  
12 Edge Drive, Cincinnati, 45213.

13 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you. Raise your  
14 right hand.

15 (Witness sworn.)

16 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Go ahead.

17 - - -

18 CARREN HERRING

19 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
20 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

21 DIRECT EXAMINATION

22 THE WITNESS: I'm a sister of Mercy and  
23 I'm a representative payee for 25 clients that have  
24 mental illness and they are required by the courts to  
25 have someone pay their bills and manage their money.

1 This fixed rate increase would severely harm people  
2 like my clients who live month to month. There's no  
3 way they can control this increase by decreasing  
4 their electric use. I ask PUCO to reject the  
5 request.

6 I myself am a renter and face the same  
7 issues. I see this as a moral issue, that we have to  
8 care for the most vulnerable in our society and  
9 protect them from rate increases that are out of  
10 their control that no amount of good stewardship of  
11 their use of electricity would impact.

12 I also live in the neighborhood where  
13 Duke is trying to put in a high pressure natural gas  
14 line which we are vehemently opposing. Duke is not  
15 one of my favorites.

16 EXAMINER WALSTRA: Thank you.

17 That is all I have on the list. Is there  
18 anyone who still wishes to testify?

19 That being said, I want to thank everyone  
20 for coming out. The Commission will consider  
21 everything that is said here today. I do encourage  
22 if you still want to submit comments, you can do that  
23 online.

24 We do have a second public hearing which  
25 is taking place Thursday at 12:30 at Cincinnati City

1 Hall.

2 That being said we are adjourned and  
3 thank you all.

4 (Thereupon, at 6:48 p.m., the hearing was  
5 concluded.)

6 - - -

7 CERTIFICATE

8 I do hereby certify that the foregoing is  
9 a true and correct transcript of the proceedings  
10 taken by me in this matter on Monday, October 30,  
11 2017, and carefully compared with my original  
12 stenographic notes.

13  
14 *Karen Sue Gibson*

15 Karen Sue Gibson, Registered  
16 Merit Reporter.

17 (KSG-6444)

18 - - -

