**BEFORE THE**

**THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

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| In the Matter of the Annual Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for an Adjustment to Rider ASRP Rates. | )  )  ) | Case No. 15-1990-GA-RDR |

**MOTION TO INTERVENE**

**BY**

**THE OFFICE OF THE OHIO CONSUMERS’ COUNSEL**

The Office of the Ohio Consumers’ Counsel (“OCC”) moves to intervene in this case where Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., (“Duke” or “Utility”) seeks to increase rates for customers for the replacement of natural gas service lines in Duke’s service territory.[[1]](#footnote-1) OCC is filing on behalf of all 400,000 residential natural gas customers of Duke. The reasons the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (“PUCO”) should grant OCC’s Motion are further set forth in the attached Memorandum in Support.

Respectfully submitted,

BRUCE J. WESTON (0016973)

OHIO CONSUMERS’ COUNSEL

/s/ *Kevin F. Moore*

Kevin F. Moore, Counsel of Record (0089228)

Jodi Bair (0062921)

Assistant Consumers’ Counsel

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# Office of the Ohio Consumers’ Counsel

# 10 West Broad Street, Suite 1800

# Columbus, Ohio 43215-3485

Telephone: Moore (614) 387-2965

Telephone: Bair (614) 466-9559

[Kevin.moore@occ.ohio.gov](mailto:Kevin.moore@occ.ohio.gov)

(will accept service via email)

[Jodi.bair@occ.ohio.gov](mailto:Jodi.bair@occ.ohio.gov)

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## MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

On December 1, 2015, Duke filed a pre-filing notice stating that on or before March 1, 2016, it will file an application for approval to increase rates for its Accelerated Service Line Replacement Program Rider (“Rider ASRP”). However, the PUCO has not ruled on Duke’s previously filed and currently pending ASRP Application.[[2]](#footnote-2) Therefore, Duke has no authority to file to collect unapproved rates from its customers. OCC has authority under law to represent the interests of all the 400,000 residential gas customers of Duke, pursuant to R.C. Chapter 4911.

R.C. 4903.221 provides, in part, that any person “who may be adversely affected” by a PUCO proceeding is entitled to seek intervention in that proceeding. The interests of Ohio’s residential customers may be “adversely affected” by this case, especially if the customers were unrepresented in a proceeding which sets the rates they will pay for natural gas service. Thus, this element of the intervention standard in R.C. 4903.221 is satisfied.

R.C. 4903.221(B) requires the PUCO to consider the following criteria in ruling on motions to intervene:

(1) The nature and extent of the prospective intervenor’s interest;

(2) The legal position advanced by the prospective intervenor and its probable relation to the merits of the case;

(3) Whether the intervention by the prospective intervenor will unduly prolong or delay the proceeding; and

(4) Whether the prospective intervenor will significantly contribute to the full development and equitable resolution of the factual issues.

First, the nature and extent of OCC’s interest is representing the residential customers of Duke in this case involving an ASRP, which could cost consumers more than $320 million over the ten year life of the program. This interest is different than that of any other party and especially different than that of the Utility whose advocacy includes the financial interest of stockholders.

Second, OCC’s advocacy for residential customers will include advancing the position that rates should be no more than what is reasonable and lawful under Ohio law, for service that is adequate under Ohio law. OCC’s position is therefore directly related to the merits of this case that is pending before the PUCO, the authority with regulatory control of public utilities’ rates and service quality in Ohio.

Third, OCC’s intervention will not unduly prolong or delay the proceedings. OCC, with its longstanding expertise and experience in PUCO proceedings, will duly allow for the efficient processing of the case with consideration of the public interest.

Fourth, OCC’s intervention will significantly contribute to the full development and equitable resolution of the factual issues. OCC will obtain and develop information that the PUCO should consider for equitably and lawfully deciding the case in the public interest.

OCC also satisfies the intervention criteria in the Ohio Administrative Code (which are subordinate to the criteria that OCC satisfies in the Ohio Revised Code). To intervene, a party should have a “real and substantial interest” according to Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-11(A)(2). As the advocate for residential utility customers, OCC has a very real and substantial interest in this case where the ultimate rates paid by residential customers may be significantly impacted by the application to increase rates for Duke’s customers.

In addition, OCC meets the criteria of Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-11(B)(1)-(4). These criteria mirror the statutory criteria in R.C. 4903.221(B) that OCC already has addressed and that OCC satisfies.

Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-11(B)(5) states that the PUCO shall consider “The extent to which the person’s interest is represented by existing parties.” While OCC does not concede the lawfulness of this criterion, OCC satisfies this criterion in that it uniquely has been designated as the state representative of the interests of Ohio’s residential utility customers. That interest is different from, and not represented by, any other entity in Ohio.

Moreover, the Supreme Court of Ohio confirmed OCC’s right to intervene in PUCO proceedings, in deciding two appeals in which OCC claimed the PUCO erred by denying its interventions. The Court found that the PUCO abused its discretion in denying OCC’s interventions and that OCC should have been granted intervention in both proceedings.[[3]](#footnote-3)

OCC meets the criteria set forth in R.C. 4903.221, Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-11, and the precedent established by the Supreme Court of Ohio for intervention. On behalf of Ohio residential customers, the PUCO should grant OCC’s Motion to Intervene.

Respectfully submitted,

BRUCE J. WESTON (0016973)

OHIO CONSUMERS’ COUNSEL

/s/ Kevin F. Moore

Kevin F. Moore, Counsel of Record

(0089228)

Jodi Bair (0062921)

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that a copy of this *Motion to Intervene* was served on the persons stated below via electronic transmission, this 23rd day of December 2015.

*/s/ Kevin F. Moore\_\_\_*

Kevin F. Moore

Assistant Consumers’ Counsel

**SERVICE LIST**

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| William Wright  Ohio Attorney General’s Office  Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  180 E. Broad St., 6th Fl.  Columbus, OH 43215  [William.wright@puc.state.oh.us](mailto:William.wright@puc.state.oh.us) | Amy B. Spiller  Elizabeth H. Watts  Duke Energy Business Services  139 East Fourth Street  1303-Main  Cincinnati, Ohio 45202  [Amy.Spiller@duke-energy.com](mailto:Amy.Spiller@duke-energy.com)  [Elizabeth.watts@duke-energy.com](mailto:Elizabeth.watts@duke-energy.com) |

1. *See* R.C. Chapter 4911, R.C. 4903.221 and Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See *In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Approval of an Alternative Rate Plan Pursuant to Section 4929.05, Revised Code, for an Accelerated Service Line Replacement Program*, PUCO Case No. 14-1622-GA-ALT, Application (January 20, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *See Ohio Consumers’ Counsel v. Pub. Util. Comm*., 111 Ohio St.3d 384, 2006-Ohio-5853, ¶¶ 13-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)