

**FAX**

*The*  
**Legal Aid Society**  
*of Cleveland*  
*Since 1905*

Chief of Docketing  
 The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
 180 East Broad Street  
 Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

January 28, 2008

**PUCO**

2008 JAN 29 PM 12:11

RECEIVED-DOCKETING DIV

**SUBJECT:**

In the Matter of the Application of Ohio )  
 Edison Company, The Cleveland Electric )  
 Illuminating Company and The Toledo )  
 Edison Company for Authority to )  
 Increase Rates for Distribution Service, )  
 Modify Certain Accounting Practices )  
 And for Tariff Approvals )

Case No. 07-551-EL-AIR  
 Case No. 07-552-EL-ATA  
 Case No. 07-553-EL-AAM  
 Case No. 07-554-EL-UNC

Dear friends:

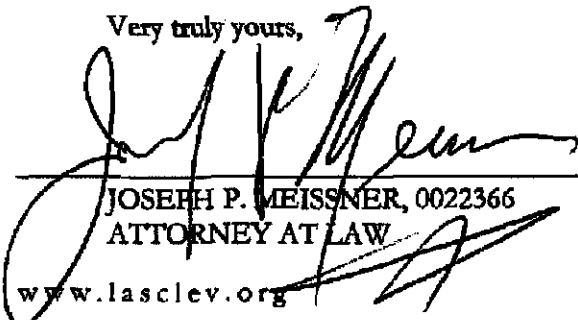
We are enclosing Recommendations for Public Hearings filed on behalf of the Citizens Coalition. . .

We have already faxed this. Please file it today. We are mailing by regular mail. Other parties are being served by email. We have also enclosed an envelope addressed back to us. Please time-stamp one of the enclosed copies and return this to us.

Let us know of any problems.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

  
 JOSEPH P. MEISSNER, 0022366  
 ATTORNEY AT LAW  
[www.lasclev.org](http://www.lasclev.org)

**Main Office**

1223 West Sixth Street  
 Cleveland, OH 44113

Phone: 216.687.1900  
 Fax: 216.687.0779

**Ashtabula County**

121 East Walnut Street  
 Jefferson, OH 44047

Phone: 866.873.9663  
 Fax: 440.576.3021

**Lake & Geauga**

8 North State St - Ste 300  
 Painesville, OH 44077

Phone: 888.808.2800  
 Fax: 440.352.0015

**Lorain County**

538 West Broad St - Ste 300  
 Elyria, OH 44035

Phone: 800.444.7348  
 Fax: 440.323.8526

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 **LSC**

**BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

In the Matter of the Application of Ohio	)	
Edison Company, The Cleveland Electric	)	
Illuminating Company, and The Toledo	)	Case No. 07-796-EL-TA
Edison Company For Approval of a	)	
Competitive Bidding Process for Standard	)	
Service Offer Electric Generation Supply,	)	
Accounting Modifications Associated with	)	
Reconciliation mechanism and Phase In,	)	
And tariffs for Generation Service	)	

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**RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PUBLIC HEARINGS  
FILED ON BEHALF OF THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION  
THE EMPOWERMENT CENTER OF GREATER CLEVELAND,  
CLEVELAND HOUSING NETWORK  
AND  
THE CONSUMERS FOR FAIR UTILITY RATES**

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Now comes The Neighborhood Environmental Coalition (hereinafter "Coalition"), The Consumers for Fair Utility Rates (hereinafter "Consumers"), The Cleveland Housing Network (hereinafter "Network"), and The Empowerment Center of Greater Cleveland (hereinafter "Center") who, through their counsel, hereby file the following recommendations concerning the holding of public hearings in this proceeding.

First, it is our understanding the Hearing Examiners in this case will be scheduling public hearings at which customers and members of the general public can offer their testimony for consideration in this case. Our client groups have been involved in many public hearings not only before the PUCO but also with other agencies and

governmental proceedings. Based on these experiences, our client groups are convinced that public participation in the current PUCO proceedings related to Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company and the other First Energy companies is advantageous to all, important for our communities, and essential for the customers. Members of the public can provide helpful testimony and information for the Commission, the electric companies, and other parties to this proceeding. Furthermore, Public Hearings provide an excellent opportunity for focusing public attention on utility concerns as well as educating the public about crucial energy issues.

2. Generally, the Citizens Coalition, its members, and customers of the utility companies have a difficult time understanding why their rates should be increased. They read in the Plain Dealer about the mammoth profits made by First Energy, which were \$800,000,000 two years ago, over a \$1.2 billion a year ago, and again in the range of \$1.2 billion last year. Furthermore, the so-called stranded costs as well as its "replacement" in the current rates should be coming out of the rates very soon which ought to lead to lower electric rates. So the Citizens Coalition as well as their supporters are extremely interested in discussing reductions in rates at the public hearings.

3. Here are the Recommendations offered by the Citizens Coalition for the conduct of the Public Hearings in this proceeding:

a. FIRST RECOMMENDATION: Timely notice must be given to the public about such hearings so that the public can participate. Remember these members of the public are not paid, that they face other problems in their lives, that they must educate themselves about the issues in the case, and that they must make family and

other arrangements so they can attend hearings. That means at least 60 days advance notice should be provided, and 90 days advance notice would be better.

b. **SECOND RECOMMENDATION:** Public hearings must be held at places convenient for the public. As for Cleveland, the best solution would be to have some hearings on the East Side of the City and some on the West Side at community centers that are accessible to all, including adequate and free parking. If hearings are held in the downtown area of Cleveland, then the Commission and the utilities should provide for free parking and for bus transportation, especially for seniors and for low-income members of the public so that they can attend, listen, and testify.

c. **THIRD RECOMMENDATION:** Hearings should be scheduled so that people can attend with due regard for their personal and financial situations. Members of the working poor and others who are employed generally cannot attend public hearings during the day or else they lose time and money at work, even if their employers are willing to let them miss a day of work.. On the other hand, for seniors and the disabled, especially during the winter, it is better for them to attend meetings during the day. Thus, some public hearings should be scheduled during the day and other sessions should be held in the evening.

d. **FOURTH RECOMMENDATION:** In the past PUCO Commissioners as well as the Hearing Examiners have attended these public hearings. This is an excellent form of outreach, illustrates the Commission's concern for the citizenry, and gives the ordinary customers an opportunity to meet and interact with the PUCO and its staff. The Citizens Coalition both thanks the PUCO Commissioners and their staff for

their past presence at the Public Hearings and also urges the Commissioners and Staff to continue that tradition in the current proceeding.

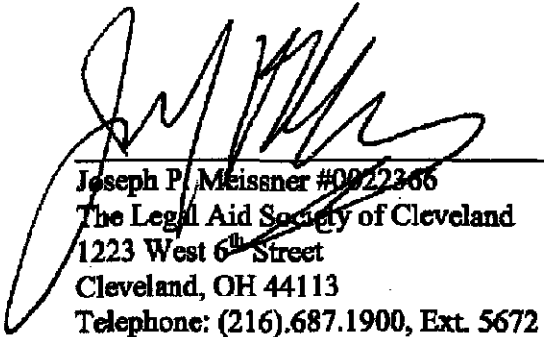
e. **FIFTH RECOMMENDATION:** In the past, the Commission, the Ohio Consumers Council, and others have provided displays and educational materials for the public at such hearings. Given all the changes that are taking place and the new parties involved in the electric energy arena, it would seem advantageous for all that similar displays and materials be made available at these current public hearings.

f. **SIXTH RECOMMENDATION** The Citizens Coalition would recommend that the notice include language about the hearing room being handicap accessible and that the use of sign language interpreters will be provided.

g. **SEVENTH RECOMMENDATION:** These public hearings should be noticed in the local newspapers including the community newspapers such as The Plain Press in Cleveland and the Call and Post in Cleveland. Also in the public notices summary or explanation should be provided in advance in simple language detailing why and how the rate increase would occur.

The Citizens Coalition urges the PUCO to adopt and use all of these SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS in planning the upcoming Public Hearings.

Respectfully submitted,

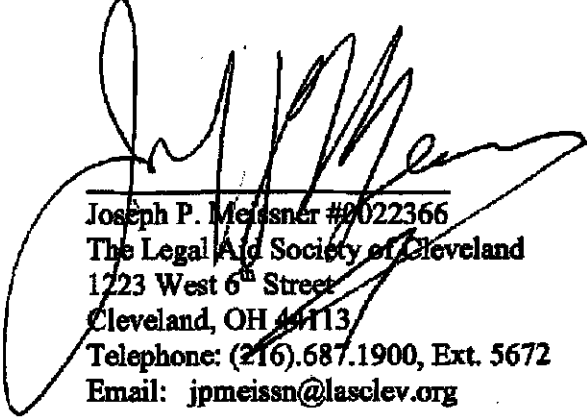


Joseph P. Meissner #0022366  
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland  
1223 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
Telephone: (216).687.1900, Ext. 5672  
Email: [jpmeissn@lasclev.org](mailto:jpmeissn@lasclev.org)

Counsel for:  
Neighborhood Environmental Coalition,  
Consumers for Fair Utility Rates  
Cleveland Housing Network  
and  
The Empowerment Center of  
Greater Cleveland

**NOTICE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing Recommendations Concerning Public Hearings was served upon the parties in this proceeding through the email list provided this past week by counsel. This was done on this 29<sup>th</sup> day of January 2008.



Joseph P. Meissner #0022366  
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland  
1223 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
Telephone: (216).687.1900, Ext. 5672  
Email: [jpmessn@lasclev.org](mailto:jpmessn@lasclev.org)