

84

**FILE**

BEFORE

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

- - -

**ORIGINAL**

In the Matter of the )  
 Application of Ohio )  
 Edison Company, The ) Case No. 07-551-EL-AIR  
 Cleveland Electric ) Case No. 07-552-EL-ATA  
 Illuminating Company and) Case No. 07-553-EL-AAM  
 The Toledo Edison ) Case No. 07-554-EL-UNC  
 Company for Authority )  
 to Increase Rates for )  
 Distribution Service, )  
 Modify Certain )  
 Accounting Practices and)  
 for Tariff Approvals. )

- - -

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**PUCO**

BE IT REMEMBERED, that upon the hearing of  
 the above-entitled matter, held at the Geneva  
 City Hall, Municipal Building, 44 North Forest  
 Street, Geneva, Ohio, and commencing on  
 Wednesday, the 12th day of March, 2008, at 6:29  
 o'clock p.m., at which time the following  
 proceedings were had.

- - -

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1     **APPEARANCES:**

2

3             On Behalf of the Public Utilities

4             Commission of Ohio:

5                     PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

6             BY:     Janet K. Stoneking, Attorney Examiner

7                     Legal Department

8                     180 East Broad Street

9                     Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

10                    614/466-6849

11

12             On Behalf of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

13                     OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL

14             BY:     Jeffrey L. Small

15                     Assistant Consumers' Counsel

16                     10 West Broad Street, Suite 1800

17                     Columbus, Ohio 43215-3485

18                     614/466-8574

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1 APPEARANCES (CONTINUED):

2

3 On Behalf of the Ohio Edison Company,  
4 The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company  
5 and The Toledo Edison Company:

6 FIRSTENERGY CORP.

7 BY: Ebony L. Miller, Attorney at Law

8 76 South Main Street

9 Akron, Ohio 44308

10 330/384-5969

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1                   **MS. STONEKING:**     Good evening. My  
2 name is Janet Stoneking, and I'd like to thank  
3 you for taking time out of your schedules -- try  
4 this again.

5                   My name is Janet Stoneking. Is that  
6 better? I'd like to thank you for taking time  
7 out of your schedules to come tonight to the  
8 hearing. I work for the Public Utilities  
9 Commission, and I've been assigned to conduct  
10 the local public hearing tonight.

11                  I have a brief set of information to  
12 give you as introductory remarks before we start  
13 taking testimony from the witnesses that would  
14 like to testify this evening.

15                  The Public Utilities Commission of  
16 Ohio has assigned for hearing at this time and  
17 place four case numbers, 07-551-EL-AIR,  
18 07-552-EL-ATA, 07-553-EL-AAM, and 07-554-EL-UNC.  
19 These four cases are jointly titled, "In the  
20 Matter of the Application of Ohio Edison  
21 Company, The Cleveland Electric Illuminating  
22 Company and The Toledo Edison Company for  
23 Authority to Increase Rates for Distribution  
24 Service to Modify Certain Accounting Practices  
25 and for Tariff Approvals."

1                   This case is specifically for the  
2   distribution portion of your phone  
3   bill -- excuse me, your electric bill. Sorry.  
4   I do multiple utilities.

5                   With the electric deregulation,  
6   instead of one amount that you used to see on  
7   your bill -- you're been used to seeing multiple  
8   parts. The transmission lines is what takes it  
9   from major city to major city. The generation  
10   is the fuel itself. The distribution is what we  
11   call the wires, how it gets from your local  
12   power station to your house. And the focus of  
13   this case, for the increase in rates, is for the  
14   distribution portion of your bill.

15                  The companies filed their application  
16   in June; but before I get started with the  
17   details of the case itself, I'd like to take  
18   appearances from two of the attorneys that are  
19   here tonight. First, from the company?

20                  **MS. MILLER:**           My name is Ebony  
21   Miller; I'm here on behalf of the companies, the  
22   Ohio Ed- -- excuse me, Ohio Edison Company, The  
23   Toledo Edison Company and The Cleveland Electric  
24   Illuminating Company. My business address is 76  
25   South Main Street, Akron, Ohio 44308.

1                   **MS. STONEKING:**     And from the Ohio  
2 Consumers' Counsel?

3                   **MR. SMALL:**           On behalf of the  
4 residential customers of the FirstEnergy  
5 companies, Jeffrey Small, Assistant Consumers'  
6 Counsel, Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel.  
7 10 West Broad Street, Suite 1800, Columbus,  
8 Ohio.

9                   For the audience, the Office of the  
10 Ohio Consumers' Counsel is a state agency tasked  
11 with representing residential customers  
12 before -- in cases before the Public Utilities  
13 Commission of Ohio.

14                  **MS. STONEKING:**     Thank you. In  
15 addition to these two parties to the case, there  
16 are also other intervenors: The City of  
17 Cleveland, a citizens' coalition comprised of  
18 Consumers for Fair Utility Rates, the  
19 Empowerment Center of Greater Cleveland and the  
20 Neighborhood Environmental Coalition.

21                  Also intervening as parties in this  
22 case are the Northwest Ohio Aggregation  
23 Coalition, the Kroger Company, Constellation  
24 NewEnergy, Industrial Energy Users-Ohio, the  
25 Ohio Energy Group, Ohio Home Builders, Ohio

1 Manufacturers Association, Ohio Partners for  
2 Affordable Energy, Ohio schools and Nucor Steel  
3 Marion, Incorporated.

4 Each of these parties are  
5 representing the various constituents within  
6 this rate case.

7 On June 7, 2007, the Ohio Edison  
8 Company, The Toledo Edison Company and The  
9 Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company filed  
10 their applications with the Public Utilities  
11 Commission to increase their electric  
12 distribution rates.

13 By their applications, each company  
14 seeks a rate increase that would generate the  
15 following additional revenues for each of the  
16 three companies: For Cleveland Electric  
17 Illuminating, they are requesting approximately  
18 \$108,598,923 of additional revenue; the Ohio  
19 Edison Company is seeking approximately  
20 \$160,762,886 of additional revenue; and The  
21 Toledo Edison Company, approximately \$70,539,796  
22 of additional revenue.

23 Now, when a company files a rate case  
24 proceeding with the Commission, the staff of the  
25 Public Utilities Commission then inspects

1 portions of that company's plant and equipment.  
2 They interview company personnel and government  
3 officials. They review company records, perform  
4 analysis of data, including financial  
5 information that they've collected from the  
6 company.

7 The Commission staff then prepares  
8 and files a staff report for each separate  
9 company, which they did on December 4th of 2007.

10 The staff report summarized the  
11 staff's findings regarding each company's  
12 financial circumstances, their service  
13 performance; and then, they set forth  
14 recommendations in the case which, among other  
15 things, for the three companies, for Cleveland  
16 Electric Illuminating, they're recommending a  
17 revenue increase range between \$22,678,561 and  
18 \$29,807,558; for the Ohio Edison Company, a  
19 revenue increase range between \$56,162,093 and  
20 \$64,701,390; and for The Toledo Edison Company,  
21 a revenue increase range between \$34,924,693 and  
22 \$37,823,225.

23 I should mention at this point, this  
24 is the staff's recommendation to the Commission.  
25 The commissioners will still make their decision



1 based on the entire evidence presented in the  
2 case, which includes your testimony here tonight  
3 at the local public hearing.

4 Tonight is one of twelve local public  
5 hearings. In addition to the testimony that we  
6 get from the public at the twelve local  
7 hearings, there was also an evidentiary hearing  
8 which began in Columbus on January 29th. The  
9 purpose of that hearing was to allow the  
10 companies, the staff and the intervening parties  
11 to present witnesses and evidence in support of  
12 each of their positions in the case.

13 It's important that we hear from you  
14 tonight. We're hoping to get several people to  
15 testify -- I think we started off with a good  
16 list -- because the commissioners do want to  
17 know what you think about the companies'  
18 requests to increase the rates.

19 If you've missed the opportunity to  
20 sign up when you came in, you're still free to  
21 sign up outside. And I will also check to see  
22 if there's anyone else who would like to testify  
23 once I've called each person that's signed up.

24 Before you begin your statement, I  
25 will ask you for your name and address, and I

1 will also swear you in. As you've noticed,  
2 there's a court reporter here who is recording  
3 the testimony tonight and that will be submitted  
4 as an official part of the record of the case.

5 If you happen to have brought a  
6 prepared statement, if you would leave a copy of  
7 that with the court reporter to be filed with  
8 the case record, that would be helpful.

9 Should you decide that you don't want  
10 to testify when I call your name, just please  
11 let me know that you want to pass.

12 Do you have any questions about the  
13 process before we start to take testimony? I do  
14 want to mention that we have people here to  
15 answer questions -- I'm sorry. Yes?

16 **MR. CHAPUIS:** I do have a  
17 question. When you said about the charges -- I  
18 have a CEI bill here, and what you stated isn't  
19 on this, that I have, to look at. They have  
20 customer charge, delivery charge, transition  
21 charge, generation regulated component,  
22 transmission related component, NOPEC generated  
23 discount. Those are on my bill.

24 **MS. STONEKING:** The delivery charge  
25 is the distribution charge. That's to get it to

1 your house. Sir, could you please state your  
2 name for the record?

3 MR. CHAPUIS: I'm sorry.

4 MS. STONEKING: Would you please  
5 state your name for the record?

6 MR. CHAPUIS: Oh, I'm sorry.  
7 Melvin Chapuis.

8 MS. STONEKING: Thank you.

9 MR. CHAPUIS: Is that the  
10 delivery charge?

11 MS. STONEKING: Yes, it is.

12 MR. CHAPUIS: The delivery  
13 charge.

14 MS. STONEKING: Yes. Thank you.  
15 Sometimes we use technical terms when they put  
16 it in plain English on the bill, so thank you  
17 for asking that.

18 MR. CHAPUIS: Thank you.

19 MS. STONEKING: In terms of  
20 questions, we also have other people here if you  
21 have questions about your bill or things other  
22 than the rate case.

23 We have two people in the back from  
24 the Public Utilities Commission staff: the  
25 gentleman and the lady standing at the doorway.

1 We also have folks here from the Ohio Consumers'  
2 Counsel. If you'll raise your hand? Okay. And  
3 I believe we also have people here from  
4 FirstEnergy to answer your questions. Okay.

5 So if you have any questions at all  
6 about your bill other than the rate case, feel  
7 free to see any of those folks this evening to  
8 have your questions addressed.

9 Are there any other questions before  
10 we get started? Yes.

11 **MR. PREZIUSO:** So -- sorry. My  
12 name is Tony Preziuso.

13 In terms of translating those large  
14 millions of dollars into -- what does that mean  
15 per kilowatt hour on my electric bill? What  
16 kind of an increase are they asking for? Is it  
17 a 1 cent a kilowatt hour or 15 cents a kilowatt  
18 hour? What kind of impact is that going to have  
19 on our individual electric bills?

20 **MS. STONEKING:** I'm sorry, I don't  
21 have that exact translation. I don't know if  
22 one of the -- let me back up a second.

23 We don't know exactly what that  
24 amount will be. Once we know what the amount  
25 would be, then that would get translated to per

1 kilowatt hour.

2 I don't know if any of the company  
3 folks here would like to attempt to address that  
4 after the hearing, just to give you an estimate?  
5 Can you -- yes, one of the two gentleman at the  
6 front can do that.

7 I will try not to mangle names. Tony  
8 Preziuso?

9 MR. PREZIUSO: That's me.

10 MS. STONEKING: Sir, if you would  
11 come up to the microphone here. I'll make sure  
12 it's on. You can pick it up if you want or just  
13 speak from there. Please raise your right hand.

14 TONY PREZIUSO  
15 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
16 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
17 testified and said as follows:

18 MS. STONEKING: Please state and  
19 spell your name for the record and give your  
20 address to the court reporter.

21 MR. PREZIUSO: Tony Preziuso,  
22 P-r-e-z-i-u-s-o. 7927 King Memorial Drive in  
23 Mentor, Ohio 44060.

24 I represent a company called Grace  
25 Geothermal. We install geothermal heating and

1 cooling equipment. And many of our customers,  
2 in the past, received the residential  
3 all-electric rate because it's an all-electric  
4 heating and cooling system. And that rate has  
5 since -- it is no longer available to new  
6 customers. Previous customers were  
7 grandfathered in.

8 And I am wondering, what's going to  
9 happen with that rate? If existing customers  
10 that were grandfathered in will be able to keep  
11 that rate.

12 I'm also wondering, since geothermal  
13 is an environmentally friendly, energy  
14 efficient, all-electric heating and cooling  
15 system that actually brings new customers to  
16 FirstEnergy, helps level out demand in the  
17 summer or decrease demand in the summer because  
18 of the high efficiency, so it makes them good  
19 customers for FirstEnergy. Will there be any  
20 compensation or credits or special rates  
21 possibly for customers that are using three  
22 times as much energy as a regular customer with,  
23 you know, FirstEnergy, because they're not  
24 burning fuel oil or propane or something like  
25 that?

1           So I'm just wondering what type of an  
2    impact can be saved and can continue to  
3    encourage people to make an environmentally  
4    friendly choice like geothermal, which also  
5    happens to be an all-electric choice, which  
6    helps FirstEnergy?

7           **MS. STONEKING:**     I think you can  
8    talk to one of the company representatives here  
9    also to address that. I'm not able to do that  
10   tonight.

11           **MR. PREZIUSO:**     No problem.

12           **MS. STONEKING:**    Okay. Thank you.

13           **MR. PREZIUSO:**     Thanks.

14           **MS. STONEKING:**    Daniel Whitmire?

15                           DANIEL WHITMIRE

16   of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
17   first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
18   testified and said as follows:

19           **MS. STONEKING:**    Thank you. Please  
20   state and spell your name for the record and  
21   give your address.

22           **MR. WHITMIRE:**     My name is Daniel  
23   E. Whitmire, W-h-i-t-m-i-r-e. I reside at  
24   27 -- 2807 State Route 307 in Austinburg, Ohio.  
25           I am a past employee of The

1 Illuminating Company, Centerior Energy and  
2 FirstEnergy. After 27 years, I was summarily  
3 dismissed on a hearsay phone call, and I'm  
4 currently retired.

5 I say that because I don't want  
6 anybody to think that the reason that I'm here  
7 is some -- something that happened in between  
8 time.

9 I think it is ludicrous for the PUCO  
10 to even consider rate increases for Toledo  
11 Edison, which already has the highest electric  
12 rates in the state. CEI, I believe, is number  
13 two, and Ohio Edison, third or close to it.

14 A decade or so ago, CEI had stocks  
15 lower than \$10 per share and dividends around a  
16 dollar. FirstEnergy now is at or close to \$70  
17 per share and dividends are at \$2.20 per share.

18 FirstEnergy has acquired companies  
19 from the Indiana/Michigan border through Ohio  
20 and Pennsylvania to the Jersey shore. After  
21 slashing employees, doing little to no  
22 maintenance, they are being egregious enough to  
23 ask for more money.

24 If the PUCO allows any portion of  
25 this rate increase to go through, it will be the



1 largest white-collar crime in Ohio since the  
2 Bureau of Workers' Comp fiasco and Coingate.  
3 Thank you very much.

4 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you for your  
5 testimony.

6 George Zirm?

7 **GEORGE ZIRM**

8 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
9 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
10 testified and said as follows:

11 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you. Please  
12 state and spell your name for the record and  
13 give your address.

14 **MR. ZIRM:** George Zirm,  
15 Z-i-r-m. I live at 5767 Windjammer Court in  
16 Madison, Ohio.

17 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you.

18 **MR. ZIRM:** Okay. I wasn't  
19 prepared to make a speech, but you have got  
20 questions here, and I just want to go over each  
21 one of them real quickly.

22 **MS. STONEKING:** That's fine.

23 **MR. ZIRM:** Being a retiree,  
24 any increase in my power costs is going to  
25 affect any retirees that's on a fixed income.

1 We moved into a new development in 1999 -- yeah,  
2 1999. I was the first one, so I got seniority  
3 in the whole development.

4 We have underground wiring to our  
5 development, and so we don't see any tree  
6 problems in our general area. Now, we don't  
7 know, on the lines feeding to that area, what's  
8 going on.

9 They switched our substation probably  
10 about a month ago, but it hasn't made any  
11 difference in our power outages. Our power is  
12 always going out.

13 We -- the brief power interruptions  
14 we have, we don't even bother calling those in;  
15 but those are an ongoing problem that happens  
16 all the time. We never know when it's going to  
17 happen. And it's caused appliances to be  
18 damaged. It's caused satellite dishes, the  
19 receivers and everything, to have to be  
20 replaced.

21 But the worst thing is, lengthy  
22 outages. Since the holidays, in our  
23 development, we've had four outages that last at  
24 least two or three hours or longer. And these  
25 can happen on a sunny afternoon with no wind.

1 So we never know what's going on or anything.  
2 And we haven't had any response that -- I mean,  
3 my wife calls every outage in to the company, so  
4 they should have a record of what our  
5 development is going through.

6 We haven't had any problem getting  
7 through to them on the outages, but we haven't  
8 seen any change in our service. And it's -- I  
9 mean, when it went out over the holidays, I went  
10 out in the neighborhood -- and our lines are all  
11 underground. The street next door has overhead  
12 lines going into it, and they had Christmas  
13 lights and streetlights and every light in their  
14 house on. And we had nothing, with underground  
15 lines. I mean, that's ridiculous.

16 So that's -- and they haven't been  
17 responsible, and we're at the point where we've  
18 gone to city council. And they were supposed to  
19 get a representative of FirstEnergy out there,  
20 and they haven't got one out. They brought one  
21 out there and they didn't notify us that -- had  
22 complained about it, and they haven't had one  
23 since.

24 And we're at the point where we're  
25 either going to get a group from the homeowners

1 there to go up to council -- but we're ready to  
2 go to the newspapers, because we're not seeing  
3 any improvement. This has been from day one we  
4 moved in there, power outages.

5 MS. STONEKING: When was that?

6 MR. ZIRM: Yeah, August of  
7 '99.

8 MS. STONEKING: Thank you.

9 MR. ZIRM: That's  
10 basically -- I mean, the service is what really  
11 has us up in arms.

12 MR. SMALL: If I may, Your  
13 Honor, could I ask a couple questions?

14 MS. STONEKING: Okay.

15 MR. SMALL: Sir, you've  
16 mentioned the switch in substations?

17 MR. ZIRM: That's what they  
18 told -- they told Jay at the council meeting.

19 MR. SMALL: Okay. So you were  
20 informed by the company that -- the switch in  
21 substations?

22 MR. ZIRM: He would -- they  
23 talked to him. I wasn't at that one.

24 MR. SMALL: I'm sorry, who are  
25 you indicating?

1                   **MR. ZIRM:**           Jay Doyle.

2                   **MS. STONEKING:**   The gentleman  
3 there.

4                   **MR. SMALL:**           Okay. And his  
5 relationship with you?

6                   **MR. ZIRM:**           He's one of the  
7 neighbors.

8                   **MR. SMALL:**           Okay. And was  
9 there information about the reason for the -- do  
10 you know the reason for the switch in  
11 substations?

12                   **MR. ZIRM:**           Well, I think they  
13 were trying to fix the problem.

14                   **MR. SMALL:**           Okay.

15                   **MR. ZIRM:**           It didn't work.

16                   **MR. SMALL:**           Thank you. I just  
17 wanted to be clear about it.

18                   **MR. ZIRM:**           Okay.

19                   **MS. STONEKING:**   Thank you for your  
20 testimony.

21                   **MR. ZIRM:**           Thank you.

22                   **MS. STONEKING:**   Nora Anderson?

23                                   NORA ANDERSON

24 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
25 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,

1 testified and said as follows:

2 MS. STONEKING: Thank you. Please  
3 state and spell your name for the record and  
4 give your address.

5 MS. ANDERSON: My name is Nora  
6 Anderson, A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n. My address is 3344  
7 South Maple Lane, Ashtabula, Ohio 44004.

8 MS. STONEKING: Go ahead.

9 MS. ANDERSON: Good evening. I am  
10 Nora Anderson, vice president of the Buckeye  
11 Local Board of Education. I'm representing that  
12 district in relationship with the distribution  
13 cost increases.

14 First, I want to thank FirstEnergy  
15 for the support they have provided to my school  
16 district and the other 248 districts in the  
17 Energy for Education program. We have had two  
18 of these programs over the last ten years, which  
19 have been very helpful in keeping the electric  
20 rates down. And we want to continue that, if we  
21 can.

22 The problem is that our current  
23 Energy for Education program will expire  
24 December 31, 2008. That will cause our electric  
25 rates to automatically go up 13.4 percent, on

1 average, for the 249 districts in Ohio. And  
2 that's just an average. Then, any new  
3 distribution rate on top of that will increase  
4 our cost that much more.

5 Collectively, the loss of the current  
6 Energy for Education program will cost the 249  
7 participating Ohio public school districts over  
8 \$11.7 million per year. FirstEnergy  
9 distribution rate increase in this PUCO case and  
10 any generation increase will be an addition to  
11 that \$11.7 million.

12 I do -- did collect that information  
13 primarily from the -- let me make sure I get the  
14 right title here -- the Ohio Schools Council.  
15 We are consortium members for prices.

16 And that relates directly to our  
17 school district. We have 2,200 students.  
18 Approximately 5 percent of the school district's  
19 operating budget is expended for utilities. Our  
20 school buildings are not new yet. It's  
21 something that we are going to be addressing.  
22 The Buckeye Local School District has not been  
23 able to participate in new -- building new  
24 facilities. So those are issues that we will be  
25 facing soon relative to costs.

1           This budget currently -- our school  
2 budget, it currently includes \$220,000 for  
3 electricity as of this year.

4           The Ohio Schools Council Energy for  
5 Education program has allowed us to benefit from  
6 stable and predictable energy costs, and we  
7 would very much like to continue that.

8           The rate increase proposal before the  
9 Commission will nullify this benefit. Our  
10 distribution price of electricity will cost the  
11 Buckeye schools approximately 31,500 per year  
12 increase, if we take that 13.4 percent that I  
13 was mentioning earlier.

14           Our total increase then would be  
15 larger than that based -- because of the loss  
16 from the Energy for Education program, as well  
17 as increased distribution rates.

18           The Ohio school system right now,  
19 education system, is facing a number of  
20 financial issues in the next few years. I think  
21 most people are aware that the school system has  
22 been taken to court twice, and funding for Ohio  
23 school systems is in large question. We would  
24 very much appreciate if we did not have to face  
25 this on top of all the other financial issues



1 that all the school board systems are facing.

2 Thank you for your time.

3 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you for your  
4 testimony.

5 Mary Zappitelli? Did I mangle it?

6 **MS. ZAPITELLI:** No, you did just  
7 fine.

8 **MARY ZAPPITELLI**

9 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
10 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
11 testified and said as follows:

12 **MS. STONEKING:** And please state  
13 and spell your name for the record and give your  
14 address.

15 **MS. ZAPITELLI:** My name is Mary  
16 Zappitelli, Z-a-p-p-i-t-e-l-l-i. And my home  
17 address is 660 Sandusky Street, Conneaut, Ohio  
18 44030.

19 Good evening. I'm the superintendent  
20 for the Conneaut Area City Schools, and with me  
21 this evening are my board president, Mr. Michael  
22 Kennedy, and my treasurer, Mrs. Linda Bryan.

23 My thanks to the Commission for  
24 allowing me to speak tonight to share with you  
25 how an increase in our electric rates will have

1 a negative effect on the education of the  
2 students in our district.

3 When I became the superintendent in  
4 January of 2006, just over two years ago, one of  
5 my first actions was to recommend to the board a  
6 \$1.2 million reductions in expenditures package.

7 We cut administrators, teachers,  
8 support staff and programs. We reduced some  
9 sports and coaching positions, along with other  
10 extracurricular programs. We instituted a pay  
11 for participation to help support funding of  
12 extracurriculars. Our teachers, administrators  
13 and support staff took a wage freeze on their  
14 base salaries.

15 We have been on the ballot three  
16 times in the past two years to ask the voters  
17 for funds to operate the district. All three  
18 attempts have failed.

19 As a result of the failed levies,  
20 I've had to recommend an additional \$700,000  
21 reductions in expenditures package for the  
22 coming school year. The board accepted this  
23 package, which includes even deeper cuts into  
24 staffing, program and extracurriculars,  
25 including the elimination of four varsity sports

1 and three sports at the middle school level.

2 We are reducing our bussing to state  
3 minimum levels, which will be a real hardship  
4 for many families. We are controlling those  
5 expenses, which we have control over, to the  
6 best of our ability.

7 We cannot control expenses such as  
8 increases in utilities; however, we are asking  
9 for your help. As Nora said, when the current  
10 Energy for Education program expires on December  
11 31, 2008, the automatic increase of 13.4  
12 percent, average, in our electric costs will  
13 cost us an additional \$74,000, which is more  
14 than the cost of an average teacher's salary and  
15 a benefit package in Conneaut.

16 As indicated by the Ohio Schools  
17 Council, a 30 to 40 percent increase in rates in  
18 Conneaut equates to the loss of another two to  
19 three teachers.

20 Asking the Conneaut schools to absorb  
21 an increase of 30 to 40 percent means asking us  
22 to take away another 166,000 to \$220,000 from  
23 the academic success of our students.

24 When the 2008/2009 school year  
25 begins, we will have cut close to \$2 million in

1 expenses from our general fund in a two-year  
2 period, which represents a 12 percent decrease  
3 in our spending. However, our five-year  
4 forecast shows that unless we can find a way to  
5 increase our revenue, in two years, we will be  
6 in the red.

7 I tell you all this to give you an  
8 accurate picture of our finances, and I tell you  
9 this in the hopes that you will continue to look  
10 upon your school customers differently than your  
11 commercial ones when it comes to setting rates.

12 We appreciate and are grateful for  
13 your partnership with the past two Energy for  
14 Education programs and very much hope there will  
15 be a third such program. Thank you again for  
16 giving me the chance to share our concerns from  
17 the Conneaut schools.

18 MS. STONEKING: Thank you for your  
19 testimony.

20 MS. ZAPITELLI: You're welcome.

21 MS. STONEKING: It's beautiful  
22 handwriting, but I can't read the name. The  
23 person lives on Leslie Road.

24 MR. CHAPUIS: Melvin. It's not  
25 beautiful.

1                   MELVIN CHAPUIS, JR.,  
2   of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
3   first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
4   testified and said as follows:

5                   **MS. STONEKING:**     Would you please  
6   state and spell your name for the record? And  
7   your address?

8                   **MR. CHAPUIS:**       Melvin J. Chapuis,  
9   C-h-a-p-u-i-s, Jr. 4843 Leslie Road, Rock  
10   Creek, Ohio.

11                   It's interesting to hear these  
12   things. I just -- I'm a retired person. I own  
13   a home. My electric bill is one of my biggest  
14   bills. I'm basically all electric, but I don't  
15   get an electric discount.

16                   Number one, I think that every  
17   customer should pay the same amount of electric  
18   charge. There should be no discounts to  
19   anybody. If it costs so much money to generate  
20   electricity, why me, as a homeowner, do I have  
21   to pay more than everybody else? I only think  
22   it would be fair, today, to start everybody  
23   paying their fair share.

24                   It's just like the schools. My taxes  
25   on my property are \$1,300. Goes to the schools.

1 On top of that, if the schools have to get more  
2 money to pay the electric bill, I get that  
3 charge also, onto mine. So that means not only  
4 am I going to pay mine, but I'm going to pay  
5 part of theirs.

6 That's the part that isn't right. I  
7 worked in the construction industry for 30  
8 years. Our union tried to get a raise, and the  
9 federal government stepped in and told us we  
10 weren't allowed a 5 percent raise. It was  
11 inflationary. So we had to settle for a  
12 1 percent per year.

13 I don't know how anybody could ask  
14 for a 25 percent increase in a charge,  
15 especially today. Nobody has any money. Well,  
16 I shouldn't say nobody. There are a few that  
17 could afford it. I'm living on Social Security  
18 and a small pension. It's tough to make ends  
19 meet. But 25 percent is a ridiculous figure.  
20 If it has to be 25, make it over 25 years. Give  
21 them 1 percent per year.

22 Not only that, from my understanding,  
23 what this charge is for is to repair the aging  
24 lines. When stuff ages in my house, there's  
25 nobody I can go to to help me repair it. I have

1 to absorb that cost myself. And they squandered  
2 their money that they already were given,  
3 because they received it for the maintenance of  
4 those lines and they never bothered to take care  
5 of the stuff, evidently. Because why else would  
6 they be asking for this kind of a charge?

7           Us in this area, the reason our rates  
8 are so high, because they came to us and they  
9 wanted us to pay for the Perry Nuclear Power  
10 Plant. It was going to be the answer to  
11 everything in the area. So we agreed.

12           Our rates went up. And our rates  
13 were higher in the area all along. But now,  
14 they just want to tag us along with all the  
15 rest. Us in this area, that have been paying  
16 extra all along, we're not any better off.  
17 We're just like all the rest of them.

18           It was the same thing with Sohio and  
19 the oil pipeline. The people in the area paid  
20 extra for that. And then Sohio sold it to BP.  
21 We got nothing for it. If it was sold to us, we  
22 were going to have all the power we wanted.

23           The nuclear power plant, when they  
24 originally talked about that, electricity was  
25 going to be so cheap, you wouldn't even need a

1 meter on your house. Now they're talking we're  
2 going to have to pay to get rid of it. And  
3 they're going to charge us for it, is what I  
4 heard. Thank you.

5 MS. STONEKING: Thank you for your  
6 testimony.

7 MR. CHAPUIS: Thank you.

8 MS. STONEKING: John Ball?

9 JOHN BALL

10 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
11 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
12 testified and said as follows:

13 MS. STONEKING: Please state and  
14 spell your name for the record.

15 MR. BALL: John Ball, B-a-l-l.  
16 1743 Morningstar Drive, Roaming Shores, Ohio  
17 44084.

18 My concern tonight is how sporadic  
19 the power outages are in our village of Roaming  
20 Shores. It's a village just over 40 years old  
21 that has grown to 800 -- over 800 homes.

22 In 2007, I recorded 14 power outages.  
23 They weren't in the wintertime; they were  
24 August, July, whenever. 2008, already there's  
25 been seven power outages. And, you know, I



1 understand with the ice storm, that's  
2 understandable. But all last year was terrible.

3 One of our residents has a geothermal  
4 furnace. And I don't know for a fact, I'm not  
5 involved in that, but due to the sporadic surges  
6 in power, she's had to replace some of the  
7 components in this system because of these power  
8 outages.

9 I'm just wondering, being we're in  
10 the southern part of Ashtabula County, if the  
11 power company is successful in gaining these  
12 rate increases, will they use the money to  
13 update our services?

14 And I'd also like to know -- and I  
15 should have done some research on this, but I  
16 didn't -- is the Rural Electrification Act still  
17 in existence? I know it was enacted many, many  
18 years ago to bring power to rural locations.  
19 And if it is, which I think it is, maybe this  
20 money could be used to update Ashtabula County.  
21 Thank you.

22 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you for your  
23 testimony.

24 Kevin Lillie?

25 KEVIN LILLIE

1 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
2 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
3 testified and said as follows:

4 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you. Please  
5 state and spell your name for the record and  
6 give your address.

7 **MR. LILLIE:** My name is Kevin  
8 Lillie, L-i-l-l-i-e. I am representing Geneva  
9 Area City Schools, and that address is 135 South  
10 Eagle Street, Geneva, Ohio 44041.

11 I thank the Commission for allowing  
12 me to explain how an electric rate increase will  
13 impact the education of our children.

14 As most of the people in this room  
15 know, school funding is a major issue in our  
16 state. Any increase in the cost of the basic  
17 costs of operating our district will take  
18 dollars away from our budget items.

19 Our district, our current five-year  
20 forecast, shows us in a deficit by fiscal year  
21 2011. Now, that's only three years away. I've  
22 calculated, based on a total electric cost on  
23 our last completed fiscal year, of \$280,918.63.  
24 And that would be what we expended in the past  
25 fiscal year. Different levels of increase,

1 because we're hearing a number of different  
2 things.

3 I know here we're talking about the  
4 increase in the distribution portion of our bill  
5 due to the PUCO rate increase. We're also  
6 looking at a possible increase in the generation  
7 rate after January 1, 2009 due to potential Ohio  
8 legislation at the end of our current Energy for  
9 Education II program.

10 In addition, we're looking at the  
11 loss of the school rate, which would place  
12 schools on the commercial rate. And  
13 with -- unless we get into another Energy for  
14 Education program, we could be looking at up to  
15 a 13 to 15 percent rate increase there.

16 All these things add up. Just that  
17 basic 15 percent increase would cost us over  
18 \$42,000 a year. That would equate to only half  
19 a teacher, and at the same time, it might equate  
20 to one-and-a-third special needs aides that we  
21 use to serve our special education population.

22 The Ohio Schools Council has  
23 estimated with all those increases, if they hit  
24 us, could run us over 40 percent. A 40 percent  
25 increase would cost us \$112,000 a year, which

1 would be one-and-a-half teachers or  
2 three-and-a-half aides. These just are things  
3 that we can't afford.

4 These increases could add to our  
5 deficit in three years, a 40 percent increase,  
6 over 337,000. That would tend to send us to the  
7 ballot quicker, as one of the gentlemen earlier  
8 indicated, and send us back to that deficit.

9 So I appreciate the time, and that's  
10 all I have to say.

11 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you for your  
12 testimony. Doug Hlader?

13 **MR. HLADER:** I will pass.

14 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you.

15 Linda Bryan?

16 **MS. BRYAN:** Pass.

17 **MS. STONEKING:** Ron Donatone?

18 **MR. DONATONE:** I'm passing.

19 **MS. STONEKING:** Ron Shissler?

20 **RON SHISSLER**

21 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
22 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
23 testified and said as follows:

24 **MS. STONEKING:** Please state and  
25 spell your name for the record.

1                   **MR. SHISSLER:**       Ron Shissler,  
2     S-h-i-s-s-l-e-r. I live at 10009 Cutts Road,  
3     that's C-u-t-t-s, Chardon, Ohio 44024.

4                   The PUCO should not allow this rate  
5     hike. FirstEnergy has the highest rates in Ohio  
6     and is making record profits. FirstEnergy's top  
7     executive, Anthony Alexander, has a salary over  
8     \$6 million according to Forbes magazine. The  
9     people in this area, who are trying to pay their  
10    current electric bill, are going bankrupt.

11                  The PUCO should never have allowed  
12    Perry and Beaver Valley to be put into the rate  
13    base. We captive customers of FirstEnergy  
14    continue to pay the stranded costs of these  
15    nuclear plants. We've done so three times:  
16    first, the rate deal in 1989; second, the market  
17    development period 2001 to 2005; third, the rate  
18    stabilization plan in 2005 to 2008. And a  
19    further injustice is the Ohio Senate Bill 221,  
20    which would permit FirstEnergy to continue to  
21    recover these monies.

22                  FirstEnergy pays for advertising on  
23    each evening news of this area's public radio  
24    station. At the Cleveland Browns and Cleveland  
25    Indians stadiums, FirstEnergy is the largest

1 advertiser.

2 Now, I have worked in the field of  
3 education for over 25 years. And recently,  
4 accountability is the latest buzz word. I'm not  
5 opposed to the concept of taxpayers and students  
6 getting their monies' worth; but accountability  
7 in education has been taken to such an extreme,  
8 that it has become counterproductive.

9 But FirstEnergy and the PUCO need to  
10 be held accountable. The stockholders took  
11 risks with when they bought stocks. They are  
12 not entitled to a return if the company has  
13 faults and continues to dump money into  
14 uneconomical nuclear plants.

15 The working poor of this area should  
16 not have to subsidize stockholders who took  
17 risks. If FirstEnergy has problems with  
18 distributive costs, then they should use some of  
19 their record profits to cover them. Or use some  
20 of Anthony Alexander's salary. Or use what they  
21 spend on advertising at the Indians and Browns  
22 stadium.

23 The PUCO should not allow this rate  
24 hike.

25 MS. STONEKING: Thank you for your

1 testimony.

2 **MR. SHISSLER:** Thank you.

3 **MS. STONEKING:** Ron O'Connell?

4 **RON O'CONNELL**

5 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
6 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
7 testified and said as follows:

8 **MS. STONEKING:** Please state and  
9 spell your name for the record.

10 **MR. O'CONNELL:** Ron O'Connell,  
11 O-C-o-n-n-e-l-l. 774 Route 534, Geneva, Ohio  
12 44041.

13 I guess everybody said everything I  
14 was going to say. I have here written down  
15 stuff like, you know, \$6 million a year. I  
16 think the gentleman back there -- you know, too  
17 cheap, the meter. So, everybody got my stuff,  
18 so I'll just add a few more things.

19 But I should point out for the  
20 record, in '89, when this first reg case came  
21 through for the Perry plant, every single  
22 township in the Ashtabula County passed a  
23 resolution opposing the Perry Nuclear Power  
24 Plant for the single reason of these rate hikes  
25 we're standing here today about. That is in the

1 record; those were all proffered into the -- my  
2 testimony when I testified back then.

3 And by the way, I am on the Board of  
4 Directors of Citizen Power, obviously, a group  
5 from Pennsylvania.

6 Profits were up 46 percent from 2006  
7 to 2000- -- from 2005 to 2006. Forty-six  
8 percent. Okay? The gentleman back there  
9 talking about how flat everything is, imagine if  
10 you had doubled your money today than you had a  
11 year ago. That's what we're arguing about, just  
12 so we're clear.

13 Their generation, the actual power --  
14 nuclear or coal, it doesn't matter -- that they  
15 put out in that same year, 2.2 percent. Now,  
16 think about if you went into your boss, said,  
17 "Hey, I did 2.2 percent more work this year.  
18 How about a 50 percent raise?" Well, sure.  
19 You'd get it, wouldn't you? Well, that's what  
20 this is about. That's really what this is  
21 about. Okay?

22 Just looking at the fourth quarter,  
23 their earnings, 27.4 million, 84 cents per  
24 share, rendered them 2.6 billion. Their  
25 earnings one year later, 2000- -- that's 2005,



1 fourth quarter. 2006, fourth quarter, they went  
2 from 190 to 274 in earnings. They went from 58  
3 cents a share to 84 cents a share, but their  
4 revenue dropped. They went from 2.68 to 2.72.

5 And I'm going like -- I'm reading  
6 these numbers, and I -- I got these out of the  
7 Plain Dealer. These aren't special numbers or  
8 anything. But it doesn't make sense.

9 This whole thing of all the school  
10 boards in here is what we call phantom taxes.  
11 If I'm sitting up here and I'm representing you  
12 in Geneva and I want to raise your rates, I'll  
13 come to you and say, "I need 10 percent more  
14 because we need another truck." And you say,  
15 "No, we can't afford it." So we get by with the  
16 trucks we have.

17 Okay. But what they do is they get  
18 PUCO to raise your electric bill. And what that  
19 is, that's a phantom tax. And why I'm saying  
20 that is you give the money to them, they have a  
21 guaranteed rate of return and the money goes  
22 straight to the government. So what is it?  
23 Rather than asking you, they go through PUCO and  
24 CEI and get it from you. It's a phantom tax.

25 So it's not just the gentleman that

1 was talking about with the -- you're getting the  
2 money from -- you're paying your school board to  
3 try to keep them above water, and you're also  
4 paying your own. You're paying it that way,  
5 too.

6 So I think CEI has been a good  
7 resident of the community in some things that  
8 they've done. I'm not totally negative. I'm  
9 really not. But they've made some mistakes with  
10 Beaver Valley and Perry. And we're not done.  
11 There's still no solution to the waste, and they  
12 know that.

13 So we're going to be sitting out here  
14 again two or three years later. There will be  
15 another way they'll phrase it. They'll go for a  
16 little more. But what I don't think that  
17 they're understanding is the real economic  
18 impact it's having on this community.

19 And when I mean that, I -- these  
20 lawyers are good lawyers. These -- the Ohio  
21 Consumers' Counsel for the company, nobody's  
22 bad. Okay? But it's a sham. It's a con game.  
23 We all know that. They're going to get this.  
24 They're going to get a percentage of it.

25 OCC goes along with PUCO. PUCO says,

1 "We'll slap your hands." The whole thing --  
2 look at the records. I've been a legal  
3 intervenor with PUCO for I don't know how many  
4 years. And I think there's good people on both  
5 sides of the aisle. But you're driving jobs out  
6 of this area.

7 I just -- you can pick any website.  
8 Look at the -- look at the difference in the  
9 rates. Look at what we're paying for kilowatt  
10 hour. Residential, commercial and the big guys.  
11 You know? We're driving people out of this  
12 area.

13 Now, you know, they'll say it's --  
14 "Well, it's really because, you know, the price  
15 of labor is cheaper over there and it's a price  
16 your manufacturing is getting hit with that."  
17 That's part of it. But what's really part of it  
18 is -- I've been involved with several start-up  
19 companies, and when I'm seeing rates, this is  
20 what they look at. Okay?

21 Why shouldn't I go to Kentucky, West  
22 Virginia, Tennessee, Indiana and pay one-fourth  
23 the power, one-half the power that I pay here?  
24 Where is the motivation for me to come here?  
25 What are we offering them?

1           Now, the gentleman that was talking  
2   about geothermal and other things. That's good.  
3   You know, I'm glad everybody is moving along in  
4   those ways. But our rates are too high. I'd  
5   like my kids to stay here. I'd like my  
6   grandkids to stay here; but I don't see why they  
7   should. I really don't.

8           And it's not all CEI's fault, but  
9   they're part of it. And the only way it's going  
10  to change is for more people to see that we have  
11  to change the whole system, because what PUCO  
12  does is they just basically say, "Well, company  
13  files, we say that's twice as much, they take  
14  half as much," and they come up with these  
15  profits.

16           It's a con. Okay? It really is. So  
17  the only way we're really going to change is --  
18  if I'm a stockholder and I get my prospective  
19  and I see, wait a minute, this CEO is making 6  
20  million? I think I'll, you know, next time I  
21  vote, vote with a member of the shareholders  
22  that will do something about that. Which you  
23  can do, because it's a private company, CEI, or  
24  Toledo, FirstEnergy. Whatever they are this  
25  week.

1           But you can't do that, because this  
2   is your shareholder right here, sitting here.  
3   Nothing against you, but you're not a  
4   commissioner. And, you know, that's an  
5   indication of why they don't want to come to  
6   Geneva and Ashtabula. They don't even want to  
7   send a commissioner. They're supposed to have a  
8   commissioner here tonight. She's got an  
9   assignment. Not knocking you. You had your job  
10  to do. She's an administrator.

11           But they make those choices. You  
12  know, they make those choices. We've been hard  
13  hit here in Ashtabula, and it's not over. And  
14  the only way it's going to be over is you talk  
15  to your state reps, you talk to your  
16  legislators, because we have to go through this  
17  politically. And I don't know how. I'm not  
18  Democrat, Republican, none of that. You figure  
19  it out.

20           But it's not going to work like this,  
21  because they're going to keep coming back and  
22  coming back and coming back. And, you know,  
23  enough school boards say something, they might  
24  give them a little. Enough big commercial  
25  customers, they might give them a little.

1 But look at the whole thing. Look at  
2 the businesses that are leaving. Look at the  
3 60,000 jobs out of the state of Ohio. That's  
4 the real issue. We keep on looking with a  
5 little cream, but we're missing the pyramid.  
6 It's shifting.

7 So that's all I have to say, and  
8 appreciate everybody coming.

9 MS. STONEKING: Thank you for your  
10 testimony.

11 Kelli O'Neill?

12 KELLI O'NEILL  
13 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
14 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
15 testified and said as follows:

16 MS. STONEKING: Okay. Please state  
17 and spell your name for the record.

18 MS. O'NEILL: My name is Kelli  
19 O'Neill, K-e-l-l-i, O apostrophe N-e-i-l-l.  
20 2424 Dock Road, D-o-c-k, Madison.

21 My name is Kelli O'Neill. I am a  
22 resident of Madison, Ohio, and I am testifying  
23 in the capacity of board member of Citizen  
24 Power.

25 My first time ever testifying in a

1 rate hike was for the then Cleveland Electric  
2 Illuminating Company, now FirstEnergy. I was an  
3 idealistic 19-year-old. I was going to college  
4 full time and working three jobs, as well as  
5 doing research for testimony before the PUCO. I  
6 actually believed what I had to say then made a  
7 difference. I was representing myself and my  
8 economic future and standing up for rights of my  
9 community and my family, including nieces and  
10 nephews, several of whom were not even yet born.

11 Back then, in the late 1980s, I  
12 presented testimony before the PUCO, encouraging  
13 them, at the time, to not let the Perry Nuclear  
14 Power Plant and all its problems into our  
15 electric rate base, as the owners, who we now  
16 call FirstEnergy, had taken on a project that  
17 was to have cost, in total, about \$700 million,  
18 but with cost overruns and much mismanagement,  
19 had at that time accrued a price tag of 10  
20 billion, with a "B."

21 Not to mention a 17 percent  
22 cumulative increase in operating and maintenance  
23 costs. This was a time when the owners were  
24 making record profits. CEOs of CEI, Ohio Edison  
25 and Toledo Edison were raking in quite bloated

1 salaries. And the shareholders are drawing  
2 quite a hefty dividend for their shares in the  
3 companies.

4 FirstEnergy was granted every rate  
5 hike request by the PUCO. And it has been  
6 granted such at every turn, whether it be having  
7 Perry listed as stranded assets and have it  
8 included in the rate base, whether it be  
9 deregulation, which has proven not to work. And  
10 Citizen Power at the time was the only one  
11 saying so.

12 No matter what the new name for it  
13 the company comes up with, it's still the same  
14 thing. Cost overruns for Perry have been paid  
15 for time and again by the consumers.

16 It's now 22 years later. Since that  
17 time, I've graduated from John Carroll. I've  
18 attained another degree on top of that. I own  
19 my own business here in Madison, about five  
20 miles downwind of the Perry Nuclear Power Plant.

21 I'm no longer 19 years old. I have  
22 toned down a lot of my idealistic expectations,  
23 and I have many a gray hair now to show for my  
24 life experience. However, other than that, I  
25 can't see what else has really changed here.



1           FirstEnergy is still asking the PUCO  
2   for yet another rate hike. The executives of  
3   FirstEnergy are still bringing in huge, bloated  
4   salaries. The shareholders are guaranteed a  
5   hefty dividend, while the company asks again to  
6   have stranded costs for the Perry Nuclear Power  
7   Plant included for the third time into our rate  
8   base. And PUCO, more than likely, will still  
9   grant them their every wish.

10           So other than a few gray hairs, what  
11   has really changed? Had I been able to set my  
12   hands on it, I could have brought here to you  
13   and read my original testimony to the PUCO back  
14   from the late 1980s. I could have read it  
15   word-for-word to you because it's still apropos,  
16   because nothing has changed. It's still the  
17   same old, same old. Politics as usual, where  
18   the big boys make deals in smoke-filled back  
19   rooms and where we, the consumers, work hard to  
20   pay our bills while we watch our bills continue  
21   to rise.

22           One thing has changed. I no longer  
23   believe what I say to the PUCO matters. And I,  
24   like Ron O'Connell, I'm concerned that no PUCO  
25   commissioner has seen it important enough to

1 come here to the area that has been hit the  
2 hardest economically. No offense to you; I  
3 appreciate you coming. Thank you very much.

4 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you for your  
5 testimony.

6 Barbara Hacker?

7 **BARBARA HACKER**

8 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
9 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
10 testified and said as follows:

11 **MS. STONEKING:** Thank you. Please  
12 state your --

13 **MS. HACKER:** Barber Hacker,  
14 H-a-c-k-e-r, 3551 Vineland Avenue, Ashtabula,  
15 44004.

16 Well, the only reason I'm here is the  
17 word "increase." I'm a homeowner. I've lived  
18 in Ashtabula all my life, which is 57 years.  
19 I've lived on Vineland Avenue 35 plus years. I  
20 am a homeowner. I pay taxes. I support the  
21 school system and respect everybody in it.

22 I have a daughter-in-law who is a  
23 teacher with Buckeye Local Schools. I have a  
24 son who is a deputy of the Ashtabula County  
25 Sheriff's Department. Both of these positions

1 are very serious and important positions.

2 My son just took a wage freeze  
3 because of economical problems. My  
4 daughter-in-law teaches year-to-year because of  
5 contracts, not knowing what's going to be there  
6 the next year. So these two people, who are  
7 dear to my heart, are most important to me.

8 Just within the last three years,  
9 Ashtabula has hit the Star Beacon heavily. And  
10 I mean heavily. To the point where I say to my  
11 children, "Get out of here," because of this  
12 problem. This is part of our problem and we  
13 need to address it. This is -- well, let's read  
14 it. Monday, March 10th. This is one article  
15 that I want my children to read heavily.

16 Another one just in today's paper,  
17 Wednesday, March 12th, continues on. Taxpayers.  
18 We're bearing everything. When does it stop?

19 And, then, I got an e-mail from a  
20 friend of mine who lives in South Carolina.  
21 "Ashtabula, a city that cries despair." This  
22 e-mail I wasn't aware of, but my son was and my  
23 daughter-in-law and my brother, who is also in  
24 private law enforcement. I was stunned to know  
25 that this article actually made it to Florida.

1 And once again, we talk about Ashtabula.

2 As a taxpayer, it concerns me because  
3 every time I read the paper, it's an increase.

4 As I came down Route 20 here this evening,  
5 gasoline is 3.45 a gallon. And that's at the  
6 gas station across from McDonald's in Ashtabula.

7 Obviously, we are aware that there  
8 are economical problems in Ashtabula. Serious  
9 ones. How can I put an article in the paper and  
10 say I can't make my mortgage next month; who is  
11 going to pay it for me? Nobody is. I have to  
12 make sure that I have the fundings to take care  
13 of my living. Somebody else should do the same.

14 Increases are enough. Enough is  
15 enough. My husband has not had a pay increase  
16 where he works. My son takes a freeze. My  
17 daughter-in-law works from year-to-year on  
18 contracts that she doesn't know what's going to  
19 happen.

20 I have a granddaughter that's  
21 two-and-a-half years old that I plead that she  
22 doesn't have to go through this. And I beg that  
23 we don't allow these increases to continuously  
24 take ahold of our households.

25 I am just a taxpayer. I'm not the

1 bigger person, but you filter down to me. The  
2 school problems filter to me and I have to  
3 absorb those. I have to absorb what goes across  
4 the lines into my home alone, too. So I beg  
5 you, and I beg you not to allow this to go  
6 through. This is very important that we make a  
7 stop someplace, and it has to stop now. Thank  
8 you.

9 MS. STONEKING: Thank you for your  
10 testimony.

11 Evelyn Schaeffer?

12 EVELYN SCHAEFFER

13 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
14 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
15 testified and said as follows:

16 MS. STONEKING: Thank you.

17 MS. SCHAEFFER: My name is Evelyn  
18 Schaeffer. I live at 1211 Route 45, Austinburg  
19 44010.

20 I am here because I know that the  
21 Commission does listen. You listened to  
22 Ashtabula County in the early 1990s, and there  
23 was a major improvement in basic local telephone  
24 service for the captive ratepayers of our local  
25 exchange companies. People here still speak in

1 appreciation of that improvement in their daily  
2 lives.

3 I'm asking you to listen again to  
4 captive ratepayers and to work with CEI now,  
5 through this rate case, to ensure that the  
6 necessary investments are made in Ashtabula  
7 County. I know that deregulation of the  
8 industry began about eight years ago, and I know  
9 that Governor Strickland has a new energy plan.

10 But I also know that here, in this  
11 largely rural county, we are served by a  
12 monopoly. There's no longer even any choice on  
13 the generation side. And Northeast Ohio pays  
14 the highest rates in the state.

15 All of us high ratepayers here are  
16 dependent on electricity from CEI; and I'd like  
17 to point out that we also depend on electricity  
18 for our water, in many cases. Many of us use  
19 private wells, and if the power is out, we have  
20 no water.

21 We had a pretty severe weather week  
22 last week. I know that there were dozens of  
23 crews out working around the clock, sometimes in  
24 a blizzard, because 55,000 customers were  
25 without power for up to five days.

1           On March 4th, we had freezing rain  
2   and, according to the local paper, quote, "ice  
3   covered limbs began crashing down on power  
4   lines."

5           I looked at the staff report on your  
6   website, and I was immediately struck by the  
7   findings and recommendations beginning on page  
8   66. "CEI has been violating the Commission  
9   rules regarding tree trimming records since  
10   2003. The company has consistently failed to  
11   meet its System Average Interruption Frequency  
12   Index targets since 2003, and failed to meet its  
13   Customer Average Interruption Duration Index  
14   targets for a lot longer. The company even  
15   failed to meet any of the reduced interim  
16   targets set for 2006 and 2007."

17           And according to a footnote in the  
18   report, both of these performance targets  
19   exclude major storm data. So, last week doesn't  
20   count.

21           These failures triggered the hiring  
22   of an independent consultant. There's a  
23   two-and-one-half page list of recommendations  
24   from the UMS Group that goes right to the heart  
25   of what we experience here on the ground in

1 Ashtabula County. I know that I frequently  
2 experience brief interruptions. These occur  
3 several times a month and often in clusters on  
4 the same day.

5           Resetting clocks is an annoyance.  
6 Having my computer shut down while I'm in the  
7 middle of my work is more serious. I've had  
8 longer outages, too. The one that sticks in my  
9 mind is the evening one that we had last year.  
10 We called in and we were told the power would be  
11 restored by 2 a.m. When it was still out at 6  
12 a.m., my husband called again. The  
13 representative told him, "Oh, your power went  
14 back on at 3:20."

15           I understand that when there are  
16 massive outages like we experienced last week,  
17 there's probably some triage going on in the  
18 decisions about where to send crews first.  
19 Repairs in more densely populated Lake County  
20 put more people back on line more quickly.

21           Therefore, it makes sense to me that  
22 those of us in this rural county could ask the  
23 Commission to order the company to implement the  
24 UMS recommendations, and immediately meet their  
25 responsibilities for tree trimming and even



1 exceed them in Ashtabula County. Let's exercise  
2 a loss prevention attitude here and prevent  
3 those icy limbs from crashing down in the first  
4 place.

5 I moved here in 1978, in time for the  
6 controversy surrounding the building of the  
7 Perry Nuclear Power Plant. I clearly remember  
8 the local Sunshine Alliance contradicting CEI's  
9 claims that building this plant would reduce  
10 energy costs for us.

11 Thirty years later, I live downwind  
12 of a plant that has certainly had its safety  
13 problems, and I'm still paying the highest rates  
14 in the state.

15 I have no choice if I want  
16 electricity. Commercial and industrial users,  
17 those already here and those we might try to  
18 attract, they have no other choice.

19 I ask the Commission to order CEI to  
20 implement all of the UMS recommendations  
21 immediately. We pay very high rates, and it  
22 seems only fair that we should receive a decent  
23 level of service. And I also ask you to limit  
24 this rate increase, keeping in mind the very  
25 real bite these high rates take out of this

1 economically challenged county.

2 And I thank you for remembering us  
3 here in Ashtabula County and holding this  
4 hearing tonight in Geneva.

5 MS. STONEKING: Thank you for your  
6 testimony.

7 This exhausts my list of people who  
8 have signed up to testify. Is there anyone else  
9 who would like to add to the record for this  
10 evening before we adjourn? Yes.

11 MR. WILTROUT: I would.

12 MS. STONEKING: Thank you.

13 ROGER WILTROUT  
14 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
15 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
16 testified and said as follows:

17 MS. STONEKING: Please state and  
18 spell your name for the record and give your  
19 address.

20 MR. WILTROUT: Roger Wiltrout,  
21 W-i-l-t-r-o-u-t. And it's 6294 Bazetta Road,  
22 Cortland, Ohio.

23 Me and my son-in-law attended the  
24 same meeting down in Gerard last week, heard a  
25 lot of the same things -- help me out here,

1 Chad.

2 MR. HOLKO: First of all,  
3 there's only --

4 MS. STONEKING: I'm sorry, I need  
5 to swear you in if you're going to testify.

6 MR. HOLKO: I can speak later,  
7 if you'd like me to.

8 MS. STONEKING: If you want to come  
9 up now --

10 MR. WILTROUT: I just come up here  
11 and lost all my train of thought. That's all.

12 People in this area have problems.

13 The people down in Trumbull County have the same  
14 problems. It's not -- it's not isolated to  
15 Ashtabula.

16 I had them all figured out. Can he  
17 come up and help me to, like, kind of like tag  
18 team?

19 MS. STONEKING: It's going to be  
20 hard for the court reporter to keep track of  
21 who's saying what.

22 MR. HOLKO: I'll speak.

23 MR. WILTROUT: Okay. You speak,  
24 then, because I just --

25 MS. STONEKING: That's fine.

1                   **MR. WILTROUT:**       There's too much  
2 going on in the head.

3                   **MS. STONEKING:**     I understand.

4                               CHAD HOLKO  
5 of lawful age, a witness herein, having been  
6 first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified,  
7 testified and said as follows:

8                   **MR. HOLKO:**       My name is Chad  
9 Holko, H-o-l-k-o. I live at 8541 Dennison  
10 Ashtabula Road, and that's in North Bloomfield,  
11 Ohio 44450.

12                   First of all, I've lived in Trumbull  
13 County all of my life. I've been a homeowner  
14 now for about seven years, and the bills keep  
15 going up. I understand that's a fact of life.

16                   I do understand that FirstEnergy is a  
17 business. They're in it to make money.  
18 However, 20, 25, 40 percent is ludicrous.  
19 That's like saying the business I work for,  
20 says, "Sorry, we're raising our prices and  
21 there's nothing we can do about it."

22                   However, I could be wrong. And if I  
23 am, I ask for somebody to correct me. They had  
24 record profits last year, in the ballpark of  
25 \$1.3 billion. That's amazing. Who here can

1 actually -- you can't fathom that much money.  
2 \$1.3 billion is -- we can all share that and we  
3 can give them to everybody. That's  
4 unbelievable.

5           Excuse me, my nerves are -- I'm not  
6 good at public speaking.

7           But it's just, I don't understand.  
8 FirstEnergy, I understand there's good people  
9 and I understand it's a business. But I don't  
10 understand how the PUCO can let something like  
11 this go through. I understand if -- you know,  
12 inflation, 1 percent here, 1 percent there. But  
13 20 to 40 percent is ridiculous.

14           I -- in Warren, Trumbull County,  
15 we've lost many steel mills, many businesses.  
16 Packard Electric, Delphi. A lot of jobs have  
17 moved south. Part of it is because utility  
18 rates and whatnot.

19           It's just -- my wife and I have  
20 talked about moving to another state just for  
21 the reasons, you can't hardly pay the bills in  
22 Ohio. There's no new bills coming in. I live  
23 in Trumbull County, and in order to find a  
24 decent paying job, you have to work up towards  
25 Cleveland or towards Akron or towards Columbus.

1 Where am I supposed to go?

2 This is just -- if the Ohio  
3 government wants to keep business and people in  
4 Ohio, by passing this, that's not going to help.  
5 It's just more incentive for businesses not to  
6 stay in town and for new businesses to go  
7 somewhere else, and along with the residents.

8 And I thank all of your time. All  
9 the speakers were excellent tonight. I just  
10 hope there's something we can all do about this.  
11 And thank you.

12 MS. STONEKING: Thank you for your  
13 testimony.

14 Is there anyone else that would like  
15 to testify this evening?

16 Thank you for your time and your  
17 testimony. The testimony that's been recorded  
18 tonight and the exhibits that have been handed  
19 to the court reporter will be submitted on the  
20 record as part of the evidence in this case, and  
21 we're adjourned.

22 (Thereupon, the proceedings were  
23 concluded at 7:43 o'clock p.m.)

24 - - -

25 C E R T I F I C A T E

1 STATE OF OHIO, )  
2 ) SS:  
3 SUMMIT COUNTY, )

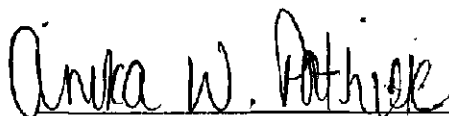
4 I, Anika W. Patrick, a Registered Merit  
5 Reporter, Certified Realtime Reporter and Notary  
6 Public within and for the State of Ohio, duly  
7 commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify  
8 that these proceedings were taken by me and  
9 reduced to Stenotypy, afterwards prepared and  
10 produced by means of Computer-Aided  
11 Transcription and that the foregoing is a true  
12 and correct transcription of the proceedings so  
13 taken as aforesaid.

14 I do further certify that these proceedings  
15 were taken at the time and place in the  
16 foregoing caption specified.

17 I do further certify that I am not a  
18 relative, employee of or attorney for any party  
19 or counsel, or otherwise financially interested  
20 in this action.

21 I do further certify that I am not, nor is  
22 the court reporting firm with which I am  
23 affiliated, under a contract as defined in Civil  
24 Rule 28(D).

25 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my  
hand and affixed my seal of office at Akron,  
Ohio on this 17th day of March, 2008.



Anika W. Patrick, RMR, CRR

My commission expires March 13, 2010.

- - -

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Evelyn Schaeffer  
1211 Route 45  
Austinburg OH 44010  
March 12, 2008

I am here because I know the Commission listens. You listened to Ashtabula County in the early 1990's, and there was a major improvement in basic local telephone service for the captive ratepayers of our local exchange companies. People here still speak in appreciation of that improvement in their daily lives.

I'm asking you to listen again to captive ratepayers, and to work with CEI now, through this rate case, to ensure that the necessary investments are made in Ashtabula County. I know that deregulation of the industry began about 8 years ago, and I know that Gov. Strickland has a new Energy Plan. But I also know that here in this largely rural county we are served by a monopoly. There is no longer even any choice on the generation side, and northeast Ohio pays the highest rates in the state. All of us high ratepayers here are dependent on electricity from CEI. And I'd like to point out that we also depend on electricity for our water, as many of us use private wells; if the power is out, we also have no water.

We had a pretty severe weather week last week. I know that there were dozens of crews out working around the clock, sometimes in a blizzard, because 55,000 customers were without power for up to five days. On March 4 we had freezing rain, and according to the local paper, "ice covered limbs began crashing down on power lines" (SB 3/11)

I looked up the staff report on your website, and I was immediately struck by the findings and recommendations beginning on page 66. CEI has been violating the Commission rules regarding tree trimming records since 2003. The company has consistently failed to meet its System Average Interruption Frequency Index targets since 2003, and failed to meet its Customer Average Interruption Duration Index targets for a lot longer. The company even failed to meet any of the reduced interim targets set for 2006-7. And according to a footnote in the report, both performance targets exclude major storm data (so last week doesn't count). These failures triggered the hiring of an independent consultant. There is a two and one half page list of recommendations from

the UMS Group that goes right to the heart of what we experience here "on the ground" in Ashtabula County.

I know that I frequently experience brief interruptions. These occur several times a month, and often in clusters on the same day. Resetting clocks is an annoyance; having my computer shut down while I'm in the middle of my work is much more serious. We have had longer outages too; the one that sticks in my mind is the evening one last year. We called in and were told power would be restored at 2:00 am. When it was still out at 6:00 am. my husband called again. The representative told him "Oh, your power went back on at 3:20 am."

I understand that when there are massive outages like we experienced last week, there is probably some triage going on in the decisions about where to send crews first: repairs in more densely populated Lake County put more people back online more quickly. Therefore, it makes sense to me that those of us in this rural county could ask the Commission to order the company to implement the UMS recommendations, and immediately meet their responsibilities for tree trimming, and even exceed them in Ashtabula County. Let's exercise a loss prevention attitude here, and prevent those icy limbs from crashing down in the first place.

I moved here in 1978, <sup>in time for</sup> at the height of the controversy surrounding the building of the Perry Nuclear Power Plant. I clearly remember the local Sunshine Alliance contradicting CEI's claims that building this plant would reduce energy costs for us. Thirty years later, I live downwind of a plant that has certainly had its safety problems, and I'm still paying the highest rates in the state. I have no choice if I want electricity; commercial and industrial users, those already here and those we might try to attract, have no other choice.

I ask the Commission to order CEI to implement all of the UMS recommendations immediately. We pay very high rates, and it seems only fair that we should receive a decent level of service. And I also ask you to limit this rate increase, keeping in mind the very real bite these high rates take out of this <sup>economically challenged</sup> county.

And I thank you for remembering us here in Ashtabula County and holding this hearing tonight in Geneva.

Prepared Testimony  
Kelli O'Neill, BA, LMT, NCBTMB  
Board Member – Citizen Power

PUCO Public Hearing  
Rate Hike Hearing for First Energy  
Geneva, Ohio ~ Wednesday, 12 March 2008 ~ 6:30PM

My name is Kelli O'Neill, I am a resident of Madison, Ohio and I am testifying in the capacity of Board Member of Citizen Power.

My first time ever testifying in a rate hike hearing for the then Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, now First Energy, I was an idealistic 19 year old. I was going to college full time and working three jobs, as well as doing research for testimony before the PUCO. I actually believed what I had to say made a difference. I was representing myself and my economic future, and standing up for the rights of my community and my family, including nieces and nephews, several of whom were not yet born then. Back then, in the late 1980's, I presented testimony before the PUCO, encouraging them at that time to not let the Perry Nuclear Power Plant and all its problems into our electric rate base, as the owners, who we now call First Energy, had taken on a project that was to have cost, in total, about \$700 Million but with cost overruns and much mis-management, had AT THAT TIME, accrued a price tag of \$10 BILLION. Not to mention a 17% CUMULATIVE increase in Operating and Maintenance costs. This was a time when the owners were making record profits, CEO's of CEI, Ohio Edison and Toledo Edison were raking in quite bloated salaries, and the shareholders were drawing quite a hefty dividend for their shares in the companies. First Energy was granted EVERY RATE HIKE REQUEST BY THE PUCO, and has been granted such at every turn, whether it be having Perry listed as stranded assets and have it included in the rate base, whether it be deregulation, which has been proven not to work (and Citizen Power at the time was the only one saying so), no matter what the new name for it the company comes up with, it's still the same thing. Cost overruns for the Perry Nuclear Power Plant have been paid for TIME AND AGAIN BY US CONSUMERS!

It's now 22 years later. Since that time, I graduated from John Carroll University, I obtained another degree on top of that, I own my own business here in Madison, about 5 miles downwind of the Perry Nuclear Power Plant. I'm no longer 19 years old, have toned down a lot of my idealistic expectations, and have many a grey hair now to show for my life experience. However, other than that, I can't see what else has changed here:

First Energy is STILL asking the PUCO for yet ANOTHER rate hike, the executives at First Energy are STILL bringing in HUGE, bloated salaries, the shareholders are guaranteed a hefty dividend, while the company asks again to have stranded costs for the Perry Nuclear Power Plant included FOR THE THIRD TIME into our rate base, and PUCO more than likely will STILL GRANT THEM THEIR EVERY WISH.

So, other than a few grey hairs, what really has changed? Had I been able to set my hands on it, I could have brought here to you and read my original testimony to the PUCO back from the late 1980s, and I could have read it word for word to you, <sup>because</sup> ~~because~~ it is still apropos because NOTHING HAS CHANGED. It's still the same old - same old, politics as usual, where the big boys make deals in smoke-filled back rooms and we, the consumers, work hard to pay our bills, while we watch our bills continue to rise.

One thing HAS changed – I now no longer believe what I say to the PUCO matters.

Thank you.