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PUCO

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

PUBLIC HEARING

IN RE: CASE NOS. 08-72-GA-AIR  
08-73-GA-ALT  
08-74-GA-AAM  
08-75-GA-AAM

NOVEMBER 12, 2008

- - - - -

PUCO Local Public Hearing for Electric Security Plan Applications, taken before me, the undersigned, Christine Leisure, an RPR and Notary Public in and for the State of Ohio, at the Bowhser High School, 2200 Arlington Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43609, commencing at 6:00 p.m. the day and date above set forth.

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216.298.4888

## 1 APPEARANCES:

2 On Behalf of PUCO:

3 PAUL DUFFY, Esq.  
4 CHERYL ROBERTO  
5 PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO  
6 180 East Broad Street  
7 Columbus, OH 43215  
8 614-644-8955/614-644-8226

9 On Behalf of Ohio Consumers:

10 LARRY S. SAUER, Esq.  
11 Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel  
12 10 West Broad Street  
13 18th Floor  
14 Columbus, OH 43215  
15 614-466-8574

16 On Behalf of Columbia Gas:

17 DANIEL A. CREEKMUR, Esq.  
18 200 Civic Center Drive  
19 Columbus, OH 43215  
20 614-460-4680

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22

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25

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1 MR. DUFFY: Let us go on the  
2 record, then. The Public  
3 Utilities Commission of Ohio has  
4 assigned for public hearing at  
5 this time and place Case Nos.  
6 08-72, 08-73, 08-74 and 08-75,  
7 which are captioned in the matter  
8 of the Application of Columbia Gas  
9 of Ohio for authority to increase  
10 rates and charges for its gas  
11 distribution service and other  
12 related matters.

13 My name is Paul Duffy. I am  
14 the legal director of the  
15 Commission, and they have assigned  
16 me to conduct the hearing tonight.  
17 In addition, you just listened to  
18 Jill Coker, and at the front door  
19 is John Campbell. They're  
20 available to assist you if you  
21 have any problems related to  
22 service issues or billing  
23 problems. And in just moment, I'm  
24 sure Columbia Gas and the  
25 Consumers' Counsel will also point

1 out people who can help you in  
2 those matters if you're interested  
3 in that.

4 At this time could I take an  
5 appearance on behalf of Columbia?

6 MR. CREEKMUR: Thank you,  
7 Your Honor. On behalf of Columbia  
8 Gas of Ohio, I am Daniel A.  
9 Creekmur, 200 Civic Center Drive,  
10 Columbus, Ohio, 43215. May the  
11 record also reflect the various  
12 Columbia representatives that are  
13 here today. Jack Partridge,  
14 President of Columbia Gas of Ohio;  
15 Susan Surface, Director of  
16 Regulatory Affairs; Stephanie  
17 Knoll, also Director of Regulatory  
18 Affairs; Chris Kozak from our  
19 Communications Team. In the back,  
20 Carmella King from our  
21 Communications Team; Sue Davis  
22 from our Communications Team, and  
23 Doug Brownlee and Annette Barker  
24 from our Operations Team, and  
25 then, perhaps most importantly,

1 Carol Wilson and Peggy Walker from  
2 our Customer Service Team who are  
3 in the back. If there are any  
4 customers here today that would  
5 like to speak to them in regards  
6 to our customer assistance program  
7 or any other questions that they  
8 might have regarding our company,  
9 or their billing or our services,  
10 they can speak to those ladies.  
11 Thank you, Your Honor.

12 MR. DUFFY: Thank you. On  
13 behalf of the Consumers' Counsel?

14 MR. SAUER: Thank you, Your  
15 Honor. On behalf of the  
16 residential customers of Columbia  
17 Gas of Ohio, the office of the  
18 Ohio Consumers' Counsel, Janine L.  
19 Migden-Ostrander, Consumers'  
20 Counsel, Larry S. Sauer, Assistant  
21 Consumers' Counsel, 10 West Broad  
22 Street, Suite 1800, Columbus,  
23 Ohio, 43215.

24 Also with me tonight is Amy  
25 Carles, Marty Berkowitz and Ceedra

1           Horn. If you didn't meet them  
2           when you came in tonight, they  
3           were located at the scores table  
4           in the back. They have facts  
5           sheets and other information  
6           pertinent to this case. If you  
7           want to talk to them after, I'm  
8           sure you can find Marty, or Amy,  
9           or Ceedra, or myself if you have  
10          any questions.

11           MR. DUFFY: Thank you. In  
12          just a few seconds I will begin  
13          calling witnesses forward who wish  
14          to give statements for the record  
15          tonight. Before you begin your  
16          statement, I will ask for your  
17          name and address. The court  
18          report will take your testimony,  
19          and it will be considered part of  
20          the official record in this case,  
21          which the Commissioners will  
22          review before they make their  
23          final decision.

24                  When you come up to testify,  
25          I'm going to ask that you stand to

1 the right of the court reporter,  
2 speak towards the audience so that  
3 the audience can hear you but the  
4 court report can also pick up  
5 everything you're saying. And in  
6 order to save time when the  
7 witnesses come up, what I would  
8 like to do right now is swear in  
9 everybody who wants to testify  
10 tonight. So if anybody intends to  
11 testify, if you would, raise your  
12 right hand right now.

13 - - - - -

14 THOMAS BOUGHRY, DEAN MONSKE, DORA THARP,  
15 KEVENA COOKE, KATE SCHWARTZ,  
16 BRANDI WIELGOPOLSKI, GLEN BLONZ,

17 After having been first duly sworn, as  
18 hereinafter certified, was examined and testified  
19 as follows:

20 - - - - -

21 MR. DUFFY: Are there any  
22 questions about the process before  
23 we begin? Okay. Then the first  
24 name on the list is Thomas  
25 Boughry.

1 MR. BOUGHRY: Bau-ree.

2 MR. DUFFY: Bau-ree. Just  
3 begin by giving your name and  
4 address for the record.

5 MR. BOUGHRY: My name is  
6 Thomas Boughry. I'm at 230 West  
7 Woodside Terrace, Holland, Ohio,  
8 43528. And what I'm here to talk  
9 about, mainly, is the effect and  
10 the impact it has on us senior  
11 citizens for the 6.1 percent  
12 raise, which, you know, with the  
13 -- we're being hit right now with  
14 the raises in the taxes, food,  
15 energy costs, costs of services,  
16 medical, medical insurance,  
17 premiums, and everything else that  
18 we're hit with, and we're on the  
19 fixed incomes.

20 I wouldn't mind so much  
21 paying for a raise for the public,  
22 but this is not even factored into  
23 our social security cost of living  
24 allowances, you know. So to us it  
25 hits us pretty hard. And I think



1           that, you know, there should be  
2           some consideration for the senior  
3           citizens here and have certain  
4           breaks on the raises that they're  
5           bringing in here. That's all I  
6           got to say.

7           MR. DUFFY: Okay. Thank you,  
8           sir.

9           MR. CREEKMUR: Your Honor, if  
10          I may. I wouldn't ask any  
11          questions. I would just like to  
12          encourage you to speak to the two  
13          customer service representatives I  
14          mentioned at the beginning of this  
15          procedure: Carol Wilson and Peggy  
16          Walker. I think they would be  
17          able to explain the certain  
18          customer assistance programs that  
19          we have that might be a benefit to  
20          you and perhaps neighbors that you  
21          know. So if you have a few  
22          minutes, I think that would be  
23          well worth it to you.

24          MR. DUFFY: Can you point  
25          them out again, where they are?

1 MR. CREEKMUR: Yeah. Carol,  
2 Peggy, if you could just raise  
3 your hand. They're in the back  
4 there standing.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. DUFFY: All right. The  
7 next person is Dean Monske.

8 MR. MONSKE: Mon-ski.

9 MR. DUFFY: Mon-ski.

10 MR. MONSKE: Thank you.

11 MR. DUFFY: Your name and  
12 address?

13 MR. MONSKE: Dean Monske, 300  
14 Madison Avenue, Toledo, 43604.

15 Thank you, Your Honor,  
16 Commissioner. I'm going to read a  
17 letter into the record tonight.  
18 This was a letter that I sent to  
19 the editor of the Toledo Blade  
20 about two weeks ago.

21 Again, I'm Dean Monske. I'm  
22 the vice-president of the Regional  
23 Growth Partnership. We're the  
24 regional economic development  
25 group here in Northwest Ohio. We

1 cover about 12 counties here in  
2 Northwest Ohio, and I run the team  
3 of business development  
4 responsible for bringing new  
5 companies into the area and  
6 helping companies already here  
7 grow. I'll be happy to leave this  
8 copy with you if you would like,  
9 as well.

10 When competing in worldwide  
11 economies for economic development  
12 and the creation of jobs, a state-  
13 of-the-art infrastructure is vital  
14 to Ohio. Currently, Columbia Gas  
15 of Ohio has its first rate case in  
16 14 years before the Public  
17 Utilities Commission of Ohio.  
18 This plan includes an  
19 unprecedented program to spend \$2  
20 billion to replace nearly 4,000  
21 miles of natural gas pipeline  
22 across its service territory in  
23 Ohio, including approximately 450  
24 miles of pipeline in northwest  
25 Ohio, reflecting a \$200 million

1 investment locally.

2 The scope and scale of this  
3 infrastructure upgrade will have a  
4 tremendous impact on economic  
5 development opportunities in  
6 Ohio. By upgrading nearly 25  
7 percent of its natural gas lines  
8 in Ohio, Columbia will help create  
9 a state-of-the-art delivery  
10 system, ensuring the companies  
11 will have a reliable and  
12 dependable source for natural  
13 gas. In addition, this work will  
14 directly create 500 jobs across  
15 Ohio, and another 1,700 jobs  
16 indirectly.

17 Economic impact of this \$2  
18 billion investment will translate  
19 to nearly \$3.2 billion statewide.  
20 In addition to the economic  
21 impact, the system will provide  
22 ample access for Ohio businesses  
23 to natural gas, the cleanest  
24 burning fossil fuel, which is  
25 considered an alternative energy

1 by many. And considering that 87  
2 percent of all U.S. natural gas  
3 used is domestically produced,  
4 this new infrastructure will help  
5 reduce dependency on foreign  
6 energy sources.

7 In the late 1800s the glass  
8 industry was attracted to Toledo  
9 by the close, abundant and  
10 affordable supplies of natural  
11 gas, earning Toledo the title,  
12 Glass Capital of the World. As  
13 our community moves forward in  
14 this global economy, the proposed  
15 rate case will provide the  
16 foundation for Ohio's future  
17 economic development and growth.  
18 Thank you very much.

19 MR. DUFFY: Thank you.

20 Dora Tharp.

21 MS. THARP: Thank you. Dora  
22 Tharp, 704 2nd Street in Toledo,  
23 Ohio, 43605. Good evening. My  
24 name is Dora Tharp, and I'm the  
25 energy coordinator for

1 Neighborhood Housing Services here  
2 in Toledo, and I wanted to come  
3 here today and talk about the Warm  
4 Choice Program that we have here  
5 in Toledo. We have administered  
6 the Warm Choice Program since  
7 1986, and since then Columbia Gas  
8 has funded our program.

9 Some of the weatherization  
10 measures that we do under this  
11 program are such things as attic  
12 insulation, sidewall insulation,  
13 floor insulation. We also do an  
14 inspection on the heating unit and  
15 the hot water tank to make sure  
16 that they're operating safely and  
17 efficiently.

18 The Warm Choice Program is  
19 provided to eligible low-income  
20 Lucas County residents, and we  
21 cover Lucas County, however, the  
22 Warm Choice Program is a statewide  
23 program, so there are other  
24 providers that provide these  
25 services to Columbia Gas customers

1 as well.

2 The type of equipment that we  
3 use is top notch. We use the  
4 blower door, which, what we do is  
5 we hook up a blower door to get an  
6 indication as to how much air  
7 leakage is going through the house  
8 by depressurizing the house. And  
9 so that gives us an idea as to how  
10 much air leakage there is.

11 When we do the weatherization  
12 program, there can be as much as  
13 an average of 30 percent annual  
14 gas consumption reduction. And so  
15 this does provide a very important  
16 service to these customers that we  
17 serve. Approximately -- that  
18 translates to approximately about  
19 anywhere from \$400 to \$500 per  
20 household. Obviously each  
21 household is going to be  
22 different, but on an average it's  
23 about that much.

24 We also deal with health and  
25 safety issues, which is very

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1 important. Obviously, if we run  
2 across some of the heating units  
3 that emit carbon monoxide, we will  
4 replace those units, as well as  
5 the hot water tank. So that's a  
6 very important part of our program  
7 that is very valuable to our  
8 customers.

9 Since 1986 Columbia Gas has  
10 invested in this program, and  
11 since 1986 they've invested  
12 approximately \$16 million just in  
13 Lucas County alone. With that  
14 money we've been able to  
15 weatherize approximately 5,000 of  
16 Columbia Gas customers.

17 The investment that Columbia  
18 Gas has made throughout all these  
19 years is not a mandate. They have  
20 decided to do this on their own,  
21 and so thereby providing these  
22 services to customers that need  
23 it, because these are low-income  
24 households that really do not have  
25 the money to take care of these



1 issues.

2 So I would like to thank  
3 Columbia Gas for doing this for  
4 their customers and to thank them  
5 for providing these services that  
6 are badly needed, and I would like  
7 to thank you for the opportunity  
8 to speak tonight. Thank you.

9 MR. DUFFY: Thank you.

10 The next witness is Kevena  
11 Cooke.

12 MS. COOKE: Kevena Cooke, 704  
13 2nd Street. I am with  
14 Neighborhood Housing Services that  
15 administers the Warm Choice  
16 Program for Lucas County. I am  
17 one of the case workers. I have a  
18 lot of interaction with the  
19 clients.

20 Last month I had the  
21 opportunity to interview a few of  
22 the clients that have received  
23 services through our organization  
24 for Warm Choice, and there were so  
25 many clients that felt that our

1 program was a gift, that they  
2 never would have been able to do  
3 anything without us. They didn't  
4 know how they were going to keep  
5 their children warm over the  
6 winter; they didn't know how they  
7 were going to keep their elderly  
8 parents cooler in the summer; they  
9 didn't know what they would do,  
10 and by chance they happened to  
11 hear about our organization.

12 I do have a couple of letters  
13 that I would like to read from  
14 clients. The first one is from an  
15 elderly gentleman, and he said,  
16 "Thank you. In my plight, you  
17 were the only one that came to my  
18 aid, and come to my aid you did.  
19 I had tried three other agencies  
20 of service to the public before  
21 your agency came to my rescue."

22 "Now you don't know who I am,  
23 but your agency repaired a gas  
24 leak in the front of my house in  
25 the dead of winter. Thank you.

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1 Randy --" he was one of the  
2 workers -- "may God continue to  
3 bless him always -- saw that there  
4 were other endangering problems  
5 with the heating system at my  
6 house and repaired them, and was  
7 cheerful and helpful throughout my  
8 ordeal. Thank you."

9 "I am a retired man with a  
10 respiratory condition on an  
11 extremely limited budget, was  
12 helped without deference to my  
13 personal condition beyond my  
14 wildest expectations. Thank you.  
15 Perhaps I have not been  
16 demonstrative enough for you to  
17 see that I am extremely grateful  
18 to you and your agency for helping  
19 me through during my adversity. I  
20 cannot thank you enough."

21 "If ever there is a reason or  
22 situation that you might feel I  
23 might be of some service to you,  
24 please feel free to call upon me  
25 without hesitation."

1           One more. This one is from a  
2           client that was just completed a  
3           couple of the months ago,  
4           actually. "I would like to thank  
5           your program for the work done on  
6           my home. From the first phone  
7           call to the last service, I was  
8           treated with kindness and  
9           respect. Every person that came  
10          to my home put me at ease and  
11          answered all of my questions. I  
12          feel very blessed to have had this  
13          service." And that is, you know,  
14          just two of the thousands of  
15          customers that we have helped  
16          through the Warm Choice Program.

17                I would just like to say  
18          personally that I make about  
19          \$18,000 a year. I have a  
20          ten-year-old son, two cats and a  
21          dog, so most months I have to rob  
22          Peter to pay Paul just to keep my  
23          head above water, but I know that  
24          there are people out there who  
25          don't even have that. They don't

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1 have anything. And if paying  
2 about \$2.50 a month extra on my  
3 gas bill will help one person get  
4 their home weatherized, I would do  
5 it gladly. Thank you.

6 MR. DUFFY: Thank you.

7 Kate Schwartz.

8 MS. SCHWARTZ: Kate Schwartz,  
9 3485 146 Street, Toledo, Ohio,  
10 43611. I am one of those people  
11 that got helped through this  
12 program. Basically my house is  
13 dated 1925, and when they -- they  
14 bring in an infrared camera and  
15 they scan all of the walls, and  
16 then they go back through and they  
17 drill holes, test holes, to see if  
18 there is actually insulation in  
19 there. And low and behold, there  
20 was nothing. Around one door  
21 there was crumbled up rags and  
22 newspaper, and that was it.

23 I live out in Point Place  
24 right, you know, not too far from  
25 the water, and we're the only

1 two-story on the block, so we got  
2 it going and coming.

3 It's amazing the difference  
4 in my house. I was actually just  
5 completed last Friday. I can use  
6 my house again. To me, that is  
7 critical. And I know that \$2.51  
8 is, to some, a lot of money, but  
9 if you look at it in the greeter  
10 scheme of things, like Kevena was  
11 saying, \$2.51, in all reality, is  
12 half of a value meal. And I know  
13 that, you know, everybody is  
14 feeling the crunch from energy,  
15 food, gas, you know, and it all  
16 comes together as the perfect  
17 storm, but \$2.51 is literally,  
18 normally, a tank of gas. So  
19 that's one less errand. You  
20 consolidate errands. You only go  
21 to the grocery store once that  
22 week or once that month. But the  
23 -- even more so, even more than  
24 the insulation, they came in and  
25 they made sure that my house was

1 safe.

2 We are poor. That's the  
3 reality. We have two small  
4 children. We are a one-income  
5 family. We have two kids that  
6 have some form of special needs,  
7 so as a result, I'm on the road a  
8 lot. So there isn't a lot of  
9 money at the end of the month. We  
10 make the furnace is working. If  
11 the furnace comes on every winter,  
12 great. If it doesn't, that's when  
13 you start to worry. But who knew  
14 that we literally could have died  
15 because our heat exchange was  
16 cracked.

17 Yes, we knew that the pilot  
18 light blew out three or four times  
19 a year. I knew that we froze  
20 until either my husband came home  
21 or the neighbor came over, or  
22 something else happened, but I  
23 didn't know at the time that I was  
24 putting my family in danger.

25 Also, the thing that hits

1 home for me is, we have a back  
2 porch that was enclosed at some  
3 point before we purchased the  
4 house, and we couldn't use it  
5 during the winter. We put a  
6 blanket over the door frame  
7 because it was so cold that you  
8 could literally see your breath.  
9 And I have to tell you that I can  
10 use my four-seasons room. To me  
11 that -- every year we would have  
12 to move the kids' toys out of  
13 there. We would have totally and  
14 completely disrupt their routine  
15 because you couldn't go back there  
16 without freezing. And even with  
17 space heaters, it still was  
18 wickedly cold. And I was so  
19 excited because after they  
20 completed our house, our furnace  
21 didn't come on. It was amazing to  
22 me the difference just with  
23 insulation and just with -- with  
24 the little things. But these are  
25 things that we couldn't afford.



1 This was -- this wasn't a pie in  
2 the sky dream. We could have  
3 never afforded to replace our  
4 furnace. We would have made due  
5 and worried. And now I don't have  
6 to use space heaters in my kids'  
7 rooms. And with two toddlers, a  
8 five year old and a two and a half  
9 year old that throw blankets and  
10 stuffed animals and everything  
11 else, I no longer have to worry  
12 that my house is going to burn  
13 down in the middle of the night,  
14 because now my family is warm.

15 And so I understand more than  
16 anybody about -- you know, that  
17 that \$2.51 could mean, you know,  
18 the ability to pay or the ability  
19 to not pay, but \$2.51 is a very  
20 small price to pay when you think  
21 about it could have been  
22 somebody's life on the line or a  
23 fire started because we were using  
24 space heaters. Thanks.

25 MR. DUFFY: Thank you.

1                   The next witness is Brandi  
2                   Wielgopolski.

3                   MS. WIELGOPOLSKI: I'm going  
4                   to pass.

5                   MR. DUFFY: You may pass.  
6                   That's fine.

7                   Then Glen Blonz.

8                   MR. BLONZ: I'm also going to  
9                   pass.

10                  MR. DUFFY: Okay. Those are  
11                  the final names on the list. I  
12                  can come back to those who passed,  
13                  if they want to, or I can ask if  
14                  there is anybody else in the room  
15                  who wants to testify tonight.

16                  Okay. Let the record reflect  
17                  that there were no indications  
18                  that anyone else wished to  
19                  testify.

20                  The Commission wishes to  
21                  thank everyone here in the room  
22                  tonight who attended this  
23                  hearing. As we indicated earlier,  
24                  your testimony will be considered  
25                  by the Commissioners when they

1 make their final decision in this  
2 case. The Commission wishes to  
3 thank the Toledo School District  
4 for allowing us to use this  
5 facility tonight. And if there is  
6 nothing else, this will conclude  
7 the public hearing, and the  
8 testimony will be submitted to the  
9 Commissioners for their  
10 consideration. Thank you.

11 - - - - -

12 (Hearing concluded.)

13 - - - - -

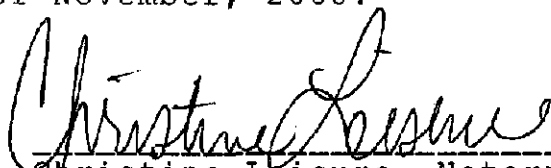
The State of Ohio,       )  
                                  ) SS:                   CERTIFICATE  
County of Cuyahoga.    )

I, Christine Leisure, RPR and Notary Public within and for the State of Ohio, duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that the within-named witnesses was first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in the cause aforesaid; that the testimony then given by him/her was by me reduced to stenotypy in the presence of said witness, afterwards transcribed on a computer, and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony so given by him/her as aforesaid.

I do further certify that this testimony was taken at the time and place in the foregoing caption specified and was completed.

I do further certify that I am not a relative, employee of, or attorney for any of the parties in the above-captioned action; I am not a relative or employee of an attorney for any of the parties in the above-captioned action; I am not financially interested in the action; I am not, nor is the court reporting firm with which I am affiliated, under a contract as defined in Civil Rule 28(D); nor am I otherwise interested in the event of this action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office at Cleveland, Ohio on this 13th day of November, 2008.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Christine Leisure, Notary Public  
In and for the State of Ohio.  
My commission expires April 12, 2012.



# PUBLIC HEARING SIGN-IN SHEET

COMPANY: Columbia Gas of Ohio CASE NO.: Case No. 08-72-GA-AIR  
DATE: November 12, 2008 LOCATION: Toledo, Ohio

If you would like to provide testimony,  
please **PRINT** your name and address below.

[illegible]