

## Dearborn Reporting Services

FILE

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THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

PUBLIC HEARING

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

FAX

NOVEMBER 13, 2008

- - - - -

PUCO Local Public Hearing for Electric Security Plan  
Applications, taken before me, the undersigned,  
Christine Leisner, an RPR and Notary Public in and for  
the State of Ohio, at the Parma City Hall, 6611 Ridge  
Road, Parma, Ohio 44129, commencing at 6:00 p.m. the  
day and date above set forth.

- - - - -

PUCO

2008 NOV 19 PM 4:49

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## 1 APPEARANCES:

2 On Behalf of PUCO:

3 JEFFREY JAMES, Esq.  
4 PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO  
5 180 East Broad Street  
6 Columbus, OH 43215  
7 614-644-8955/614-644-8226

8 On Behalf of Ohio Consumers:

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

15 On Behalf of Columbia Gas:

16 STEVEN SEIPLE, Esq.  
17 200 Civic Center Drive  
18 Columbus, OH 43215  
19 614-460-4680

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

13                 My name is Jeff Jones. I'm  
14                 an attorney examiner for the  
15                 Public Utilities Commission of  
16                 Ohio, and I've been assigned to  
17                 conduct this hearing this evening.  
18                 In addition, at the sign-up table  
19                 when you came in this evening  
20                 there were two other members from  
21                 the PUCO, Pam and Amanda. They  
22                 are out there to talk about any  
23                 questions that you have about a  
24                 utility that's not necessarily  
25                 Columbia Gas. If you have some



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1 other question about a utility  
2 service, or if you have even a  
3 question about Columbia, about  
4 something that's not related to  
5 this rate increase application,  
6 they would be happy to assist  
7 you.

8 Also, counsel for the other  
9 two parties that are here this  
10 evening, when I get around to  
11 asking them for an appearance, I'm  
12 sure they will have some folks in  
13 the room that they will introduce  
14 to you as well. Any of us are  
15 available after the hearing is  
16 over, or during a break, to speak  
17 with you about your utility  
18 matters.

19 At this time I will take  
20 appearances on behalf of the  
21 parties present. On behalf of  
22 Columbia Gas of Ohio?

23 MR. SEIPLE: On behalf of  
24 Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. I would  
25 like to enter the appearance of



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1 Steven B. Seiple, 200 Civic Center  
2 Drive, Columbus, Ohio, 43215. And  
3 let me introduce a few of the  
4 Columbia personnel who are here  
5 tonight. We have Jack Partridge  
6 who is the President of Columbia  
7 Gas of Ohio, Ray Frank who is part  
8 of our communications team. We  
9 have Mike Tice who is in the back  
10 there. Mike is our local director  
11 of operations. And we have Carol  
12 Wilson over here. Carol, raise  
13 your hand. Carol can answer any  
14 questions or take down information  
15 about any customer-specific  
16 inquiries you may have. If you  
17 have questions about a bill or  
18 your service, Carol can handle  
19 that. All these folks will stick  
20 around after the hearing and are  
21 available in the back during the  
22 hearing. Thank you.

23 MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr.  
24 Seiple. On behalf of the Ohio  
25 Consumers' Counsel?



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1 MR. SERIO: Thank you. On  
2 behalf of the residential utility  
3 customers of Columbia Gas of Ohio,  
4 Janine L. Migden-Ostrander,  
5 Consumers' Counsel by Joseph P.  
6 Scerio. The OCC is a state agency  
7 that represents residential  
8 customers. We do have folks here  
9 tonight: Amy Charles, Anthony Dill  
10 and Maria Durbin. If you have any  
11 questions, we would be happy to  
12 help you out with anything we can  
13 do. We have participated in the  
14 case, and we well be briefing this  
15 case before the Commission. Thank  
16 you.

17 MR. JONES: Thank you,  
18 Mr. Scerio. Is there anyone else,  
19 any other parties here that needs  
20 to make an appearance? Okay. I  
21 see no one else.

22 In just a moment I will begin  
23 calling witnesses forward in the  
24 order that you signed up who wish  
25 to give statements for the



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1 record. Before you begin your  
2 statement, I will ask you for your  
3 name and address, and I will ask  
4 you to raise your hand and take an  
5 oath. Your testimony will be  
6 considered part of the official  
7 record of the case to be reviewed  
8 by the Commissioners before they  
9 make their final decision.

10 Since today's hearing is  
11 being transcribed, I will ask if  
12 you plan to testify, please speak  
13 plainly and clearly so that the  
14 court reporter can accurately  
15 reflect your comments on the  
16 record.

17 If have you a prepared  
18 written statement, it would be  
19 helpful for you to provide a copy  
20 to the court reporter either  
21 before or after you testify.

22 At this time I will begin  
23 calling the first witness. The  
24 first person signed up is -- I  
25 apologize if I mess up this name



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1           -- Ms. Sue --

2           MS. DAUGHERTY: Daugherty.

3           MR. JONES: I'm sorry. What  
4           is it?

5           MS. DAUGHERTY: Daugherty.

6           MR. JONES: Daugherty.

7           Okay. Would you please raise your  
8           right hand?

9           SUE DAUGHERTY,

10          After having been first duly sworn, as  
11          hereinafter certified, was examined and testified  
12          as follows:

13                 MR. JONES: Please state your  
14                 name and address for the record.

15                 MS. DAUGHERTY: My name is  
16                 Sue Daugherty. I live at 1016  
17                 Third Street in Sandusky, Ohio.

18                 MR. JONES: Thank you. If  
19                 you have a statement, go ahead at  
20                 this time.

21                 MS. DAUGHERTY: I'm here on  
22                 behalf of moderate income  
23                 residents and senior citizens to  
24                 represent the concerns that I have  
25                 with the application to go to a



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1 flat rate for covering the costs  
2 of operations and for  
3 infrastructure repair.

4 My concern is that over time  
5 to the point of 2013 that  
6 residents risk having to pay as  
7 much as \$23 a month even during  
8 the months where they consume no  
9 natural gas at all. And for some,  
10 that may appear to be a small  
11 amount to pay for the service of  
12 having heat delivered to your  
13 home, but I can tell you, because  
14 I work for a geriatric social  
15 service, we subsidize people after  
16 they've exhausted their HEAP. We  
17 subsidize people who are  
18 considered to be too rich for  
19 HEAP. And I can tell you that our  
20 agency is needed, because we have  
21 older retired people that cannot  
22 afford to heat, eat and buy their  
23 prescriptive health care.

24 And so by adding an eventual  
25 \$23 flat fee per month to their



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1 already stretched moderate modest  
2 income, I can tell you that this  
3 is going to be a hardship for many  
4 older people. And I can also tell  
5 you that as a social service  
6 agency, and in churches and other  
7 non profits alike, our revenues do  
8 not look like they will be  
9 increasing so we can assist more  
10 people that can't afford that  
11 additional \$250 more per year for  
12 heating.

13 I am a proponent of the  
14 volumetric rate. And this is an  
15 incentive for people to afford  
16 paying their own bills, especially  
17 during the summer. And I can tell  
18 you, although we aren't seeing  
19 natural gas going up to the \$1.35  
20 and the \$1.56 that we were  
21 dreading this heating season, that  
22 doesn't mean that it's not going  
23 to happen in the future.

24 So if we do have concerns  
25 about the high cost of natural gas



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1 heating, and then adding to that  
2 the flat fee, I believe that this  
3 increase is going to be a hardship  
4 during some very difficult  
5 economic times.

6 I would like to make you  
7 mindful that there are many older  
8 people that, right now, have lost  
9 the nest egg that they were  
10 depending on to meet their monthly  
11 bills. These were people that  
12 never came close to qualifying for  
13 any kind of subsidy, but yet their  
14 nest egg is down by half. And so  
15 their ability to pay these flat  
16 rates are going -- I believe,  
17 going to be a greater hardship  
18 than if they were allowed to pay  
19 based on consumption. Thank you.

20 MR. JONES: Thank you. Any  
21 questions? You may step down.  
22 Thank you.

23 Okay. Mr. Jose --

24 MR. PANETO: Paneto.

25 MR. JONES: Thank you.



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1 JOSE PANETO,  
2 After having been first duly sworn, as  
3 hereinafter certified, was examined and testified  
4 as follows:

5 MR. JONES: Thank you.  
6 Please, again, state your name and  
7 address for the record.

8 MR. PANETO: Jose Paneto,  
9 2506 Broadway, Lorain, Ohio,  
10 44052.

11 MR. JONES: Okay. Thank  
12 you. You may proceed.

13 MR. PANETO: When I first  
14 took a look at the proposal that  
15 the gas company did, first thing I  
16 asked was how much is it going to  
17 cost me. After I took a good look  
18 at this, and the people that I  
19 represent, Heat Share has been a  
20 program that I help a lot of  
21 people. And with this increase,  
22 after I add up the numbers and did  
23 the complete study of the program,  
24 right now I'm running out of money  
25 because of the amount of people



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1 that continue increasing.

2 We have found ourselves in a  
3 situation in the city where the  
4 economy is a little bit shaky  
5 right now. The numbers are going  
6 beyond a way to keep up with it,  
7 to the point that the amount of  
8 funds that we get from Heat Share  
9 and private donors and the money  
10 that Heat Share matches, it comes  
11 down to having people by the  
12 middle of the year already  
13 suffering for not having the funds  
14 to cover. And there is a lot of  
15 senior citizens that, again, as  
16 the person before me was saying,  
17 they don't qualify. Sometimes  
18 there's people that qualify and  
19 don't know they do.

20 We have a lot of people that  
21 come and had to turn around  
22 because the funds are not there.  
23 After checking all of this and  
24 matching the numbers, I, for one,  
25 personally agree that if paying a



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1 little bit extra is going to help  
2 200 or 300 families that I help  
3 that I have to turn around every  
4 year because they don't have the  
5 help, I'm willing. I would be the  
6 first one to say, I'm willing to  
7 pay it, because those are the  
8 three to 400 people that I turn  
9 around every year, and they also  
10 need a voice. And that's what I'm  
11 here for. Thank you.

12 MR. JONES: Thank you. Are  
13 there any questions?

14 MR. SEIPLE: Yes. Sir, would  
15 you please tell us who you  
16 represent? I don't think you  
17 stated it.

18 MR. PANETO: I represent the  
19 Lorain Salvation Army. We are the  
20 only Lorain Salvation Army here in  
21 Lorain, so when we're talking  
22 about helping the people, we help  
23 everybody with inside the Lorain  
24 City, Sheffield, Sheffield Lake,  
25 Sheffield Township.

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1 MR. JONES: Thank you.

2 Mr. Serio, any questions?

3 MR. SERIO: No.

4 MR. JONES: Thank you.

5 Ms. Anne Molnar.

6 ANNE MOLNAR,

7 After having been first duly sworn, as  
8 hereinafter certified, was examined and testified  
9 as follows:

10 MR. JONES: Thank you.

11 Please give your name and address  
12 for the record.

13 MS. MOLNAR: My name is Anne  
14 Molnar. I'm at 2306 East 31st  
15 Street in Lorain. Excuse me. I'm  
16 getting a sore throat.

17 Presently I sit in that  
18 seat. I'm a councilwoman at large  
19 for the City of Lorain. However,  
20 I'm going to go back and tell you  
21 my story. In 1994 I lost my  
22 husband, married 47 years, and I  
23 found, after he died, that I was  
24 living on an income of only \$940.  
25 And after the burial expenses, I



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1 found myself really pretty much in  
2 the hole. My gas bills were --  
3 were really escalating, and I have  
4 an old house, and I have an old  
5 furnace. And I was told to go on  
6 HEAP.

7 At that time I did not know  
8 what HEAP was, really. And once I  
9 put myself on HEAP, they did  
10 assist me in paying the gas bill.

11 And then I got a phone call  
12 from Columbus, a very nice lady  
13 named Bonnie. She asked me if I  
14 would be interested in the Warm  
15 Choice Program. And I can tell  
16 you folks, today I can't tell you  
17 enough how grateful I am to  
18 Columbia Gas and to the Warm  
19 Choice Program. That really  
20 helped me out in my dire need.

21 And this -- I believe it was  
22 1996 when they came in to help  
23 me. I was not sitting in a  
24 council seat at that time. They  
25 put in my furnace. My furnace was



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1 old. It was spewing out carbon  
2 monoxide. My hot water tank was  
3 the old-type Hoffman Heater, the  
4 black one with coils, and that was  
5 about ready to go too. And my  
6 house was not properly insulated,  
7 and they insulated my home.

8 Well, I can tell you folks  
9 that the first time -- the winter  
10 when I had my first -- when it  
11 really was cold, the gas man  
12 knocked on my door and he said,  
13 lady, I think we better check your  
14 gas meter.

15 I said, you don't -- you  
16 don't need to. I have a new  
17 furnace. I have insulation. And  
18 right before my husband died, we  
19 put the new windows in, so that  
20 gas bill went way down. So when I  
21 had this -- when I received this,  
22 you know, I thought to myself, I'm  
23 a senior. I have to really tell  
24 some of the seniors about this  
25 program. And I did go out in the



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1 community, and I have given  
2 speeches about it, okay. And to  
3 date I have helped about eight  
4 people with this program, but I  
5 will not divulge their names. But  
6 I have really -- they've been very  
7 grateful for it. And just  
8 recently -- I have to tell you  
9 this story. Four days ago a lady  
10 called my home. She had no heat,  
11 very low income. She's  
12 handicapped. And I thought, well,  
13 let me see. What can I do. Warm  
14 Choice again. Columbia Gas. Ray  
15 Frank and Amy, I met with them. I  
16 called them up and I said, could  
17 you please help me for this lady.  
18 It's getting cold out there. She  
19 has no heat. Well, I can tell you  
20 folks, today she's really very  
21 grateful. In fact, she cried just  
22 about an hour. When I spoke to  
23 her -- with her before I came down  
24 here, she was actually crying she  
25 was so joyful that she has this

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1 heat in her home.

2 And I really will advocate  
3 this program to people that --  
4 that are in dire need of help like  
5 this, especially with the  
6 seniors. I wouldn't be able to be  
7 on the program now because I am  
8 making just a little bit of extra  
9 money sitting there, but not that  
10 much, though.

11 So folks, I just want to tell  
12 everybody here from Columbia Gas,  
13 the Warm Choice Program, that I  
14 thank you. I thank you. Thank  
15 you.

16 MR. JONES: Okay. Thank  
17 you. Any questions?

18 Next is Mr. Fred Wright.

19 FRED WRIGHT,  
20 After having been first duly sworn, as  
21 hereinafter certified, was examined and testified  
22 as follows:

23 MR. JONES: Please give your  
24 name and address for the record.

25 MR. WRIGHT: My name is Fred



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1 Wright. I'm the president and CEO  
2 of the Lorain County Urban League,  
3 Inc., and the address is 401 Broad  
4 Street, Suite B, Elyria, Ohio.

5 I don't know why I always get  
6 the file with a public official,  
7 but it seems like that's my draw.

8 I have a written statement.  
9 Again, I'm going to say good  
10 evening and thank you for the  
11 opportunity to provide comments  
12 this evening on issues I believe  
13 to be very important, important to  
14 the Greater Lorain County  
15 Community we started serving in  
16 1978.

17 I'm the president and chief  
18 executive officer of the Lorain  
19 County Urban League, one of 102 of  
20 the national Urban League  
21 affiliates. The Urban League is  
22 the nation's oldest and largest  
23 community-based movement.

24 Our mission is simple and  
25 straightforward. It's to empower



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1 African-Americans and all  
2 disadvantaged persons in our  
3 community to participate equally  
4 in the educational, economic and  
5 social mainstream. Our focus  
6 presently is to -- is to -- it's  
7 generally towards the  
8 sustainability programs for  
9 education, employment, health and  
10 housing.

11 As a community leader, I'm  
12 keenly aware of the value of  
13 collaboration if we are to achieve  
14 the highest level of success.  
15 That's why I am encouraging the  
16 Commissioners of the Public  
17 Utilities Commission of Ohio to  
18 review the many benefits proposed  
19 in the Columbia Gas of Ohio rate  
20 case settlement agreement. The  
21 agreement is the -- is the outcome  
22 of collaboration among various  
23 stakeholders including PUCO staff,  
24 Office of Consumers' Counsel and  
25 other interested parties.



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1                   We are convinced many  
2                   residents and constituents among  
3                   those we serve would benefit from  
4                   this proposed: It would also --  
5                   it would increase funding for the  
6                   low-income Columbia Warm Choice  
7                   weatherization program; Energy  
8                   Efficiency program, available to  
9                   all residents and small consumers  
10                  regardless of income, which will  
11                  save an estimated \$100 million for  
12                  consumers; \$3 million of  
13                  shareholders funds will boost  
14                  low-income heating assistance;  
15                  riser replacement program and  
16                  shift in responsibility for  
17                  customer service lines to  
18                  Columbia; automatically meter --  
19                  automatic meter reading device  
20                  installation, a program that will  
21                  be implemented over five years and  
22                  will provide for monthly meter  
23                  readings; infrastructure  
24                  replacement program, which will  
25                  generate new jobs and provide



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1 other economic opportunities.

2 They are all important  
3 benefits to our residents, our  
4 communities and the state.

5 I don't need to remind you of  
6 all the difficult times we are  
7 facing here, people across the  
8 State of Ohio.

9 Certainly I do not have  
10 enough information to take a  
11 position on the amount of the  
12 increase to which the parties have  
13 agreed, but I am pleased that the  
14 parties involved in the settlement  
15 have carefully considered all the  
16 financial information and have  
17 reached an agreement.

18 I trust you -- I trust you  
19 will render the appropriate  
20 decision in this matter and would  
21 encourage you to do so as soon as  
22 possible so our residents and  
23 communities can begin to realize  
24 the savings and opportunities that  
25 this agreement offers. I thank



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1           you for the opportunity and look  
2           forward to your final decision in  
3           the future. Thank you for letting  
4           me go on the record, and I'm going  
5           to submit this to the counsel.

6           Thank you.

7                     MR. JONES: Thank you,  
8           Mr. Wright. Any questions?

9                     You may step down.

10          Mr. Vincent Urbin.

11                     VINCENT URBIN,

12   After having been first duly sworn, as  
13   hereinafter certified, was examined and testified  
14   as follows:

15                     MR. JONES: Please state your  
16           name and address for the record.

17                     MR. URBIN: My name is  
18           Vincent M. Urbin. I am the  
19           Director of Housing and Community  
20           Development for the Lorain County  
21           Community Action Agency located at  
22           506 Broadway, Lorain, Ohio,  
23           44052.

24                     I am here tonight to speak on  
25           behalf of our executive director,



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1 Mr. William T. Lock, who  
2 unfortunately had a prior work  
3 commitment in Columbus that he had  
4 to keep and was unable to attend,  
5 so I'm pinch hitting.

6 I'm proud to be affiliated  
7 with a dedicated team of  
8 professionals who have been making  
9 a positive difference in our  
10 county since our agency was  
11 incorporated in 1966. Lorain  
12 County Community Action Agency is  
13 committed to improving the social  
14 well-being, economic capacity and  
15 opportunities for low- to  
16 moderate-income individuals and  
17 families.

18 Lorain County Community  
19 Action Agency aims to reduce the  
20 incidents and impact of poverty by  
21 strengthening and empowering  
22 individuals, families and  
23 communities. Our mission is very  
24 simply stated, to serve and  
25 empower Lorain County residents in



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1 need.

2 In the past year, 11,107  
3 Lorain County residents have  
4 received assistance from the  
5 housing and energy and emergency  
6 assistance programs of the Lorain  
7 County Community Action Agency.

8 We have begun meeting with  
9 clients to process our winter  
10 crisis program last week. Based  
11 on the volume of traffic we've  
12 experienced so far, we will  
13 surpass the number of residents we  
14 served last year.

15 We are seeing over 70  
16 applicants a day already this  
17 year, not because gas bills have  
18 gone up dramatically. They are  
19 about the same as last year as we  
20 can figure up to this point, but  
21 because of the state of our  
22 economy.

23 I have become aware of some  
24 programs that Columbia Gas has  
25 proposed, which I think will help



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1 our local residents and our  
2 clients, which is why we are here  
3 tonight.

4 Columbia has agreed to  
5 introduce a new conservation or  
6 Energy Efficiency program for all  
7 of the residential and small  
8 commercial customers. This is  
9 very much needed, especially in  
10 this current economy. Consumers  
11 and many of our clients will, if  
12 the program is approved, be  
13 positioned to reduce their energy  
14 consumption and realize over \$100  
15 million in savings. These savings  
16 are the best kind. They're  
17 sustained. So our clients will  
18 save for winters to come.

19 Columbia has also committed  
20 to us that they will increase  
21 funding for their low-income Warm  
22 Choice Program that provides  
23 weatherization, including home  
24 inspections, repairs and  
25 replacement for space, and water



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1 heating equipment, insulation and  
2 ceiling air leaks. People who  
3 have received these services have  
4 averaged a 28 percent reduction in  
5 their energy usage, which  
6 translates to savings of about  
7 \$400 per year. Their homes are  
8 safer and more comfortable after  
9 participating in this program.  
10 Many more of our clients could  
11 become participants in this  
12 program if the funding is  
13 increased, as proposed by  
14 Columbia.

15 Columbia is also committed to  
16 providing, in addition to the  
17 previously mentioned programs, an  
18 additional \$3 million in  
19 shareholder dollars to boost  
20 heating assistance to low-income  
21 customers over the next five  
22 years.

23 Having Columbia responsible  
24 for the repairs and replacement of  
25 prone-to-fail risers and customer



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1 service lines will also be a help  
2 to my constituents by limiting the  
3 fear of high repair bills for this  
4 work. Many of my clients simply  
5 don't have that kind of money for  
6 these repairs, and oftentimes they  
7 turn to us for the financial  
8 resources to pay for these repairs  
9 in order to maintain their service  
10 safely. I have also heard about  
11 the installation of automatic  
12 meter reading devices, which will  
13 be installed on all gas meters  
14 over a five-year period, and we  
15 welcome this news. This will help  
16 our clients receive bills which  
17 accurately show their monthly  
18 consumption, and eliminate the  
19 need to go inside homes with  
20 inside meters every other month.

21 I ask the PUCO to carefully  
22 review this pending agreement, and  
23 please issue your decision as soon  
24 as you can so our clients and  
25 community can begin receiving the



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1           benefits this agreement can  
2           provide us.

3                 As we are all aware, these  
4           are very difficult economic times  
5           for many people in the State of  
6           Ohio.

7                 While I do not have the  
8           information to take a position on  
9           the amount of the increase to  
10          which the parties have agreed  
11          upon, I am pleased that the  
12          parties involved in the settlement  
13          have carefully considered all of  
14          the financial information and have  
15          reached an agreement.

16                I thank the entire Public  
17          Utilities Commission of Ohio for  
18          the opportunity to address this  
19          important matter. I will be glad  
20          to provide Mr. Lock's contact  
21          information if so desired. Thank  
22          you, sir.

23                MR. JONES: Thank you. Are  
24          there any questions?

25                Next is Mr. Ralph Nussle.



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1                   RALPH NUSSLE,  
2   After having been first duly sworn, as  
3   hereinafter certified, was examined and testified  
4   as follows:

5                   MR. JONES: Please state your  
6                   name and address for the record.

7                   MR. NUSSLE: Ralph Nussle,  
8                   117 Ashwood Drive in Avon Lake,  
9                   Ohio, 44012.

10                  MR. JONES: Thank you. You  
11                  may proceed.

12                  MR. NUSSLE: Okay. I came  
13                  here tonight to basically complain  
14                  about the service charge -- the  
15                  proposed service charge. Three or  
16                  four months of my summer usage --  
17                  and I'm not alone in this. There  
18                  are other people -- is being  
19                  tripled. That's what you plan to  
20                  do, is to triple the rate. What  
21                  justification or logic do you have  
22                  to do that? And that's also at  
23                  the expense of some of the big  
24                  users who catch a break.

25                  You know, if they're going to



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1 use so much, it seems like their  
2 service charge ought to go along  
3 with that. They ought to pay more  
4 of the service charge than the  
5 conservationists do. And you  
6 know, the president of the  
7 country, the governor of the  
8 state, conservation is one of  
9 their big principles. But it  
10 seems the PUCO and Columbia Gas  
11 are working against it.

12 I guess I have one final  
13 comment. You know, on the bills  
14 that we get, it says details of  
15 your gas charge, but there are no  
16 details. All you get is the  
17 monthly charge. Why can't they  
18 put down the service charge, a  
19 transmission charge, costs of the  
20 gas, any credits, taxes?

21 Basically I just think that  
22 the PUCO owes the people of Ohio  
23 an explanation of the logic that  
24 they use to raise the service  
25 charge so dramatically. Thank



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1                   you.

2                   MR. JONES: Thank you,

3                   Mr. Nussle.

4                   Questions?

5                   Mr. Phillip Door or Dore?

6                   MR. DORE: Phillip Dore.

7                   PHILLIP DORE,

8   After having been first duly sworn, as  
9   hereinafter certified, was examined and testified  
10 as follows:

11                  MR. JONES: Thank you.

12                  Please state your name and address  
13                  for the record.

14                  MR. DORE: Phillip Dore, 206  
15                  Washington Avenue, Lorain, Ohio.  
16                  I am currently the director of  
17                  public safety for the City of  
18                  Lorain, and the former fire chief  
19                  for the City of Lorain. I'm not  
20                  here to testify as to the impact  
21                  of the financial agreement that  
22                  may have been made, because I  
23                  don't know that I'm educated to  
24                  understand what those numbers  
25                  should or should not be. But what



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1 I would like to testify very  
2 briefly to is how pleased I am to  
3 see that there is some inclusion  
4 into the settlement about the  
5 ability for Columbia Gas to take  
6 responsibility for customer  
7 service lines and risers.

8 Through my career I've seen  
9 that this can be a serious issue  
10 for homeowners, and even through  
11 personal experience, even with a  
12 new home, knowing that when these  
13 risers fail, it becomes an extreme  
14 expensive proposition to fix. And  
15 even to a person who can afford to  
16 have them fixed, it becomes  
17 extremely cumbersome when you  
18 realize that you have multiple  
19 jurisdictions that you have to  
20 deal with; the gas company, then  
21 you have to get a plumber, but you  
22 don't just get any plumber, it has  
23 to be a DOT certified plumber to  
24 take care of this. And through my  
25 personal experience, I know that



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1 sometimes in the middle of winter,  
2 even if you have the money to pay  
3 for these issues, it can be  
4 sometimes as long as a week before  
5 you can get your gas restored.  
6 Not a matter of financial ability,  
7 but just having the ability to  
8 have somebody repair that.

9 So I would just like to  
10 express that I'm very grateful to  
11 see that the responsibility for  
12 replacement repair of these risers  
13 and lines is being shifted to  
14 Columbia Gas. It's going be a  
15 great enhancement for the  
16 community. Thanks.

17 MR. JONES: Thank you. Any  
18 questions?

19 Thank you, Mr. Dore.

20 Next is Mr. Victor Leandry.

21 Would you please raise your  
22 right hand?

23 VICTOR LEANDRY,

24 After having been first duly sworn, as  
25 hereinafter certified, was examined and testified



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1 as follows:

2 MR. JONES: Thank you.

3 Please state your name and address  
4 for the record.

5 MR. LEANDRY: My name is  
6 Victor Leandry. The address is  
7 1888 East 31st Street. Our  
8 organization is called El Centro.  
9 It is the only Spanish social  
10 services here in Lorain County.  
11 Two weeks ago we celebrated 34  
12 years of service in this  
13 community.

14 I'm going to apologize  
15 because I have a written statement  
16 that I was going to bring, and I  
17 forgot it in my desk in the rush  
18 of coming here. So I'm going to  
19 talk just from my heart.

20 But I'm in favor -- I'm here  
21 to support Columbia Gas. I'm in  
22 favor of the grant that they are  
23 submitting for several reasons.

24 The first one that I'm going  
25 to talk is about -- and I

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1 apologize. Before I go there,  
2 also let me state that I'm also  
3 the president for the National  
4 Council La Raza for the Midwest.  
5 The National Council La Raza is  
6 the largest hispanical  
7 organization in the United  
8 States. They have more than 300  
9 affiliates, and I represent the  
10 entire Midwest from here in Ohio  
11 to Kansas.

12 But talking about this -- my  
13 support for the grant, there is  
14 several reasons, and one is it has  
15 been said already, but I'm talking  
16 about we serve most of our  
17 constituents and our consumers  
18 with social services of El Centro,  
19 our low income. And during the  
20 months of December, January and  
21 February we go through a hard time  
22 because all of them are coming to  
23 our agency, asking for us for help  
24 to pay their gas bill. And it's  
25 very difficult for us because



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1           there might be some resources in  
2           the community to help pay for this  
3           account services, but they're not  
4           always available. And it is very  
5           hard for us trying to find the  
6           resources for our consumers to pay  
7           those bills.

8                   I have had several meetings  
9           with my staff talking about how  
10          this is going to benefit our  
11          consumers and our residents, and  
12          all of the staff at El Centro  
13          believe that if our consumers can  
14          have a budget and an amount that  
15          they're going to know that they're  
16          going to pay every month, it would  
17          be easier for them to budget that  
18          and not to be surprised in the  
19          month of December, and January,  
20          and February with very high, high  
21          bills, especially when they are  
22          low income, and on top of that  
23          it's during the holiday seasons  
24          where the few months that they  
25          have they try to spend it with



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1           their family. So it's very  
2           difficult for us.

3                 So we think that having a  
4           flat rate, it will help our  
5           residents.

6                 Also, in the -- they were  
7           just talking about that, the  
8           customer service line repair too.  
9           We have so many families in the  
10          past that have had some lines  
11          damaged, and they have to take a  
12          loan just to repair that when  
13          we're talking about low-income  
14          families. So it is very hard for  
15          them to repair it and then to pay  
16          that loan, to put that in their  
17          budget to pay that loan. So I  
18          think it's going to be in favor  
19          toward our consumers, and  
20          especially -- and also for me,  
21          too, having to pay two or three or  
22          whatever it is extra a month and  
23          not having to be concerned about  
24          what's going to happen if my lines  
25          break and where I going to take

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1 the money. I think it's going to  
2 be very beneficial.

3 Also, before I finish  
4 tonight, I also want to  
5 congratulate Columbia Gas because  
6 they are very friendly with the  
7 Hispanic community. They have  
8 wonderful bilingual services. In  
9 many, many occasion -- actually  
10 right now as we speak in this  
11 week, we're dealing with a senior  
12 couple that doesn't have gas in  
13 their house, and we look at all  
14 the resources in the community.  
15 And the bottom line was that we  
16 turned back to Columbia Gas and  
17 asked them to help us. And  
18 they're helping us to be sure that  
19 this family has gas in their  
20 house, and not cost. It was the  
21 last resources, but they are there  
22 helping our families, so I think  
23 they're a friend, at least to my  
24 agency, and the Hispanic  
25 community, too, so I want to



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1           congratulate Columbia Gas. That  
2           will be it.

3           MR. JONES: Thank you,  
4           Mr. Leandry. Any questions?  
5           Thank you.

6           Mr. Al Schultz.

7           AL SCHULTZ,  
8    After having been first duly sworn, as  
9    hereinafter certified, was examined and testified  
10   as follows:

11          MR. JONES: Please state your  
12          name and address for the record.

13          MR. SCHULTZ: Albert A.  
14          Schultz, 2785 South Jefferson  
15          Boulevard, Lorain, Ohio, 44052. I  
16          became aware of this through the  
17          newspapers. And I'm here  
18          representing what I consider  
19          myself to be part of the working,  
20          just-getting-by group.

21          I applaud all the things I've  
22          heard from the different agencies  
23          that represent people that are  
24          limited income, and I think that  
25          they need someone to represent



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1           them. And I think these agencies  
2           are doing a fine job.

3           I myself am in a situation  
4           where I receive no assistance. My  
5           service charges will go up. I pay  
6           two gas bills, not on some rental  
7           property, but on another residence  
8           that my mother lives in. And  
9           those two bills will go up  
10          approximately six percent and  
11          eight percent. You know, we're  
12          using a very limited amount of  
13          gas, as the gentleman in Avon Lake  
14          mentioned, from March on until,  
15          you know, hopefully November, but  
16          you know, it's a big increase in  
17          price. But I question one thing.  
18          This has to do with -- and I don't  
19          want to get off the subject here,  
20          but if Columbia Gas was actually  
21          in the gas business instead of the  
22          service business and they made a  
23          profit off of their product, would  
24          we be here today addressing this  
25          issue?

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1                   My question to Columbia Gas  
2                   is, if they don't make any money  
3                   off the gas they sell me, then  
4                   what is their incentive to get me  
5                   the best price on gas. If I look  
6                   at the commodity markets -- and  
7                   I've been looking at them for the  
8                   last three months -- gas on the  
9                   commodities market today was \$.61  
10                  a hundred. That's approximately  
11                  40-some cents less than what we're  
12                  being billed through Columbia  
13                  Gas. If you're Dominion East  
14                  Ohio, if you're Opec or whatever  
15                  they call it, then it's less than  
16                  that.

17                  So my question is, are they,  
18                  by not making any money, doing me  
19                  as a consumer that has to pay  
20                  everything out of his own pocket a  
21                  favor? I don't think they are  
22                  because they have no incentive to  
23                  get me the best price.

24                  If you want to talk about  
25                  going out in the open market and



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1 shopping, I'm not going to do  
2 that. I've been down that road  
3 before. But Columbia Gas is a big  
4 company. Dominion Gas is a big  
5 company. They have a lot of  
6 purchasing power. I don't. I  
7 thank you for your time.

8 MR. JONES: Thank you,  
9 Mr. Schultz. Any questions?

10 Next is Mr. Dave Stepanek.

11 MR. STEPANEK: Pass.

12 MR. JONES: Pass. That is  
13 everyone I had on my sheets that  
14 is signed up to testify. Is there  
15 anyone here who is not signed up  
16 that wanted to testify at this  
17 time?

18 Let's go off the record and  
19 assess just a second so I can  
20 check and make sure there is no  
21 one else out there signed up.

22 - - - - -

23 (Discussion had off the record.)

24 - - - - -

25 MR. JONES: Okay. I just



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1 checked. There is no one else  
2 outside that is signed up to  
3 testify, so with that, I would  
4 like to thank the City of Lorain  
5 for allowing us to use their  
6 council chambers tonight. I would  
7 like to thank everyone who took  
8 their time out to come and testify  
9 tonight, or to come and observe  
10 the proceedings, and to thank the  
11 parties for being here. And with  
12 that, if there are no more  
13 witnesses, this concludes this  
14 public hearing, and the testimony  
15 will be submitted for the  
16 Commission's consideration in this  
17 case. Thank you very much, and  
18 good night.

19 - - - - -  
20 (Hearing concluded.)  
21 - - - - -



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

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

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

17 I do further certify that I am not a relative,  
18 employee of, or attorney for any of the parties in the  
19 above-captioned action; I am not a relative or  
20 employee of an attorney for any of the parties in the  
21 above-captioned action; I am not financially  
22 interested in the action; I am not, nor is the court  
23 reporting firm with which I am affiliated, under a  
24 contract as defined in Civil Rule 28(D); nor am I  
25 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  
14th day of November, 2008.



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