## BOEHM, KURTZ & LOWRY

ATTORNEYS AT LAW 36 EAST SEVENTH STREET SUITE 1510 CINCINNATI, OHIO 45202 TELEPHONE (513) 421-2255

TELECOPIER (513) 421-2764

Via E-file

July 27, 2012

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio PUCO Docketing 180 E. Broad Street, 10th Floor Columbus, Ohio 43215

#### In re: Case No. 10-2929-EL-UNC

Dear Sir/Madam:

On July 26, 2012 the Ohio Energy Group (OEG) filed an Application for Rehearing in the above captioned proceeding which was inadvertently unsigned. Attached is a corrected Application dated July 26, 2012 (without the supporting memorandum) with the requisite signature. Also, please find enclosed an identical Application for Rehearing and supporting memorandum dated today, July 27, 2012. We are filing the new Application as well as the corrected July 26, 2012 Application in order to ensure that the filing is timely and complete.

Please place this document of file. Copies have been served on all parties listed on the attached Certificate of Service.

Respectfully yours,

PT.

David F. Boehm, Esq. Michael L. Kurtz, Esq. Kurt J. Boehm, Esq. **BOEHM, KURTZ & LOWRY** 

MLKkew Encl.

Cc: ALJ Greta See, Esq. (via electronic mail) ALJ Sarah Parrot, Esq. (via electronic mail) Certificate of Service

#### BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In The Matter Of The Commission Review of the Capacity Charges : of Ohio Power Company and Columbus Southern Power Company : Case No. 10-2929-EL-UNC

### APPLICATION FOR REHEARING OF THE OHIO ENERGY GROUP

Pursuant to R.C. 4903.10 and Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-35, the Ohio Energy Group ("OEG") submits this Application for Rehearing of the July 2, 2012 Opinion and Order ("Order") of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("Commission"). OEG's members who are participating in this proceeding are: Aleris International, Inc., Amsted Rail Company, Inc., AK Steel Corporation, ArcelorMittal, USA, BP-Husky Refining, LLC, E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Company, Ford Motor Company, GE Aviation, Linde, Inc., O-I aka Owens-Brockway Glass Container, Inc., Praxair Inc., RG Steel, The Timken Company, and Worthington Industries. OEG submits that the Order is unreasonable and unlawful because the Commission has no legal authority to require future retail consumers to repay the wholesale capacity cost obligations that unregulated CRES providers owe to AEP-Ohio. A memorandum in support of this Application for Rehearing is attached.

Respectfully submitted

David F. Boehm, Esq. Michael L. Kurtz, Esq. Kurt J. Boehm, Esq. **BOEHM, KURTZ & LOWRY** 36 East Seventh Street, Suite 1510 Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 Ph: (513) 421-2255 Fax: (513) 421-2764 E-Mail: <u>dboehm@BKLlawfirm.com</u> <u>mkurtz@BKLlawfirm.com</u> <u>kboehm@BKLlawfirm.com</u>

**COUNSEL FOR THE OHIO ENERGY GROUP** 

## BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In The Matter Of The Commission Review of the:Capacity Charges of Ohio Power Company and:Columbus Southern Power Company:

Case No. 10-2929-EL-UNC

## APPLICATION FOR REHEARING OF THE OHIO ENERGY GROUP

David F. Boehm, Esq. Michael L. Kurtz, Esq. Kurt J. Boehm, Esq. **BOEHM, KURTZ & LOWRY** 36 East Seventh Street, Suite 1510 Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 Ph: (513) 421-2255 Fax: (513) 421-2764 E-Mail: <u>dboehm@BKLlawfirm.com</u> <u>mkurtz@BKLlawfirm.com</u> kboehm@BKLlawfirm.com

July 27, 2012

COUNSEL FOR THE OHIO ENERGY GROUP

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Respectfully submitted

David F. Boehm, Esq. Michael L. Kurtz, Esq. Kurt J. Boehm, Esq. **BOEHM, KURTZ & LOWRY** 36 East Seventh Street, Suite 1510 Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 Ph: (513) 421-2255 Fax: (513) 421-2764 E-Mail: <u>dboehm@BKLlawfirm.com</u> <u>mkurtz@BKLlawfirm.com</u> <u>kboehm@BKLlawfirm.com</u>

**COUNSEL FOR THE OHIO ENERGY GROUP** 

#### MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

# A. The Commission Has No Legal Authority To Order Future Retail Consumers To Repay The Wholesale Capacity Cost Obligations That Unregulated CRES Providers Owe To AEP Ohio.

The Commission should modify the portion of the Order requiring AEP-Ohio to defer for later recovery from retail consumers the difference between the adjusted RPM rate and the wholesale costbased rate of \$188.88 ("capacity cost differential").<sup>1</sup> Wholesale capacity costs are the responsibility of the unregulated competitive retail electric service ("CRES") providers and the Commission has no legal authority to transfer that payment obligation to retail consumers.

## 1. The Revised Code Allows The Commission To Defer A Utility's Costs Of Providing Retail Electric Service Only Under Limited Circumstances That Do Not Apply Here, And There Is No Legal Authority For The Commission To Require Future Retail Consumers To Repay The Wholesale Capacity Cost Obligations That Unregulated CRES Providers Owe To AEP-Ohio.

The Order authorizing a deferral of part of the wholesale cost-based capacity rate of \$188.88/MW-day rests on a fundamental misconception. What is being deferred is not money ratepayers owe the utility, but money the unregulated CRES providers owe the utility. The Commission has no legal authority to require retail consumers to repay the wholesale capacity cost obligations that the unregulated CRES providers owe to AEP-Ohio.

The Commission found that it had jurisdiction to establish a wholesale cost-based state compensation mechanism for AEP-Ohio pursuant to its general supervisory authority under R.C. 4905.04, 4905.05, and 4905.06 and under its regulatory authority under R.C. Chapters 4905 and 4909. Importantly, the Commission clarified that "[a]/though Chapter 4928, Revised Code, provides for market-based pricing for retail electric generation service, those provisions do not apply because, as we

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Order at 33.

noted earlier, capacity is a wholesale rather than a retail service."<sup>2</sup> Though R.C. 4928.144 grants deferral authority to the Commission in certain circumstances to allow a utility to recover its costs of providing retail electric service, Section 4928 is inapplicable here, as the Commission has already recognized. Moreover, the General Assembly's decision that it was necessary to establish R.C. 4928.144 highlights the fact that the Commission lacks general deferral authority of utility costs of providing retail electric service elsewhere in the Revised Code. The Supreme Court of Ohio has already held that the Commission has no general ratemaking authority to order a deferral or phase-in of money which the utility is entitled to recover from retail consumers. *In Columbus Southern Power Company v. Pub. Util. Comm. Of Ohio*, 67 Ohio St. 3d 535, 620 N.E. 2d 835 (1993).

While the Commission has limited deferral authority over costs owed by consumers to a utility, what is being deferred here are costs that CRES providers owe the utility. There is no provision of the Revised Code that authorizes the Commission to force future retail consumers to repay the wholesale capacity payment obligations that unregulated CRES providers owe to AEP-Ohio. CRES providers' costs are just that - costs which the CRES providers must bear. The Commission is not responsible for ensuring that CRES providers recover all of their costs. Rather, CRES providers operate in a competitive environment with no limit on their profits and no cost recovery guarantee. Just as nothing in the Revised Code authorizes the Commission to force retail consumers to pay the administrative and general or advertising costs of CRES providers, nothing in the Revised Code authorizes the forced recovery from retail consumers of the wholesale capacity costs that unregulated CRES providers owe to AEP-Ohio.

Going down the deferral path where retail consumers must fund the wholesale capacity costs that CRES providers owe to AEP-Ohio will likely create extended litigation and cause investor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Order at 22.

uncertainty over AEP-Ohio's ability to recover what are expected to be hundreds of millions of dollars of deferred wholesale capacity costs. The proper solution is to charge CRES providers the full wholesale cost-based capacity rate of \$188.88/MW-day as AEP-Ohio incurs those costs during the Fixed Resource Requirement ("FRR") period. If the state compensation mechanism is a wholesale rate, then that rate must be recovered from CRES providers on a wholesale basis.

Nowhere in the Revised Code is there any authority for the proposition that retail consumers can be forced to repay the wholesale capacity obligations that unregulated CRES providers owe to the utility. The costs which the Commission ordered to be deferred are not costs ratepayers owe the utility for providing retail electric service, but costs which the CRES providers owe the utility for providing wholesale capacity. This case represents a payment dispute between AEP-Ohio and the CRES providers, and consumers cannot lawfully be required to foot the bill.

## 2. Permitting Deferred Recovery Of The \$188.88/MW-Day Wholesale Cost-Based Capacity Rate Will Result In Future Consumers Paying Hundreds Of Millions Of Dollars In Above-Market Rates.

Requiring consumers to repay the wholesale capacity obligations that unregulated CRES providers owe to AEP-Ohio will result in hundreds of millions of dollars of above-market capacity prices on future retail customers once the deferrals actually begin to be recovered. The effect of transferring the payment obligations of CRES providers on to ratepayers is that future retail customers will be required to pay above-market rates for capacity during the period after AEP-Ohio becomes an RPM market participant. Deferral of the recovery of the wholesale capacity cost differential would also result in customers paying significant interest on AEP-Ohio's deferred capacity costs. Because capacity costs are unusually low in the next two years and already show signs of rising in future years, it is preferable for CRES providers to simply be charged the full capacity rate now rather than transferring the CRES capacity obligation to consumers in future years.

The Commission's stated rationale for deferring the capacity cost differential is "to encourage the further development of retail competition in AEP-Ohio's service territory...."<sup>3</sup> We agree that this will be the result, but such a result would be achieved on borrowed money. Though requiring AEP-Ohio to charge current adjusted RPM-based prices to CRES providers is likely to promote retail competition in AEP-Ohio's service territory, the record does not indicate that charging CRES providers the wholesale cost-based capacity price of \$188.88/MW-day during the FRR period will hinder retail competition.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the record indicates that CRES providers made offers to customers when the capacity price was set at \$255/MW-day.<sup>5</sup> Further, as OEG already noted in this proceeding,<sup>6</sup> retail competition actually increased in AEP-Ohio's territory when the RPM capacity price was set at \$145.79/MW-day in 2011, which is not that much less than the Commission's \$188.88/MW-day cost-based capacity price.<sup>7</sup> Though promoting retail competition is one of the Commission's objectives, the Commission must balance this objective against its statutory obligation to provide just and reasonable rates to both current and future customers. Because competition in AEP-Ohio's service territory can still occur if the full \$188.88/MW-day cost-based wholesale capacity rate is charged to CRES providers, there is no compelling reason to transfer the wholesale capacity payment obligation of unregulated CRES providers to future retail consumers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Order at 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Commission Roberto also states that she is "not convinced on the record before [the Commission] that competition has suffered sufficiently or will suffer sufficiently during the remaining term of the Fixed Resource Requirement as a result of the state compensation method to warrant intervention in the market." Roberto Opinion at 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> AEP-Ohio witness Allen noted that CRES providers made offers to customers when the capacity charge was \$255/MW-Day and the price of energy was \$10/MW-hour higher than it is now. Tr. Vol. XI (May 14, 2012) at 2406:4-7. Retail Electric Supply Association witness Ringenbach also confirmed that offers continued to be made generally at \$255/MW-day. Tr. IV (April 20, 2012) at 819:24-8:20:11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> OEG Post-Hearing Brief at 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Order at 10.

B. If The Commission Requires Future Retail Consumers To Repay The Wholesale Capacity Obligations That Unregulated CRES Providers Owe To AEP-Ohio, Then The Commission Should Make Several Important Clarifications.

The Commission cannot and should not adopt a deferral mechanism for purposes of transferring the unregulated CRES providers wholesale capacity cost obligations to future retail consumers. But if the Commission does adopt such a mechanism, the Commission should provide several important clarifications. Specifically, the Commission should clarify that: 1) AEP-Ohio customers with approved reasonable arrangements who certify that they did not shop during the three-year ESP period will be exempt from repayment of AEP-Ohio's deferred capacity costs; 2) any deferred capacity costs will be allocated and recovered on the same basis as if the CRES providers were charged the full capacity rate in the first place (i.e. on the basis of demand); and 3) AEP-Ohio is required to reduce any deferred capacity costs by the relevant accumulated deferred income tax so that the interest expense reflects the Company's actual carrying costs.

## 1. The Commission Should Clarify That Reasonable Arrangement Customers Who Do Not Purchase Competitive Generation During The ESP Period Are Exempt From Deferral Repayment.

Customers with approved reasonable arrangements who certify that they did not shop during the three-year ESP period should be exempt from repayment of AEP-Ohio's deferred wholesale capacity costs. Reasonable arrangement customers who do not shop during the ESP period will not have caused any of the deferred capacity costs associated with shopping. Those customers will receive no benefit from RPM-based capacity charges to CRES providers. Requiring such reasonable arrangement customers to pay for any deferred capacity costs would amount to an unjustified rate increase on those customers who choose not to or cannot shop. Additionally, deferral repayment would effectively punish those customers for adhering to the terms of their carefully negotiated and Commission approved contracts with AEP-Ohio.

When it comes time to repay AEP-Ohio for the difference between its wholesale capacity cost of \$188.88/MW-day and the RPM price, such repayment should come from CRES providers or those customers who actually shopped. These are the entities who will have benefited from up-front RPM pricing. If the deferral repayment is made nonbypassable and reasonable arrangement customers who have not shopped are required to pay the deferred capacity costs, then those reasonable arrangement customers will be forced to directly subsidize CRES providers and/or their shopping customers.

Right now, there are at least three reasonable arrangement customers of AEP-Ohio: Ormet, Eramet and Timken. These three energy-intensive customers comprise more than 10% of AEP-Ohio's retail sales. Forcing them to repay 10% of a multi-hundred million deferral balance for which they are not responsible is unreasonable and would be economically devastating.

## 2. The Commission Should Clarify That Any Deferred Capacity Costs Will Be Allocated On The Same Basis As If CRES Providers Were Charged The Full Capacity Rate In The First Place (I.E. On The Basis Of Demand).

The cost allocation mechanism we recommend replicates how customers would have been billed if CRES providers were charged the full cost-based capacity rate of \$188.88/MW-day in the first place. Our proposal is also revenue-neutral to both AEP-Ohio and to the CRES providers.

Because the costs that AEP-Ohio is allowed to defer are capacity-related costs, the Commission should allocate and recover any deferred capacity costs on the basis of demand. Capacity obligations within the AEP-Ohio load zone are assigned to load-serving entities on the basis of their contributions to PJM's 5 coincident peaks, also known as a "5 CP" basis. Accordingly, it is appropriate for the Commission to require AEP-Ohio to first allocate any deferred capacity costs to rate schedules on the basis of each rate class' contribution to the 5 PJM coincident peaks. The Commission should then require AEP-Ohio to allocate and recover the deferred capacity costs within demand-metered rate classes on the basis of demand and to allocate and recover the deferred capacity costs within the nondemand-metered rate classes on a kWh basis.

This allocation methodology would not be difficult for AEP-Ohio to administer. It would simply result in a different deferral repayment charge by rate schedule. This is the result that would have occurred had the \$188.88/MW-day been charged to CRES providers in the first place. Recreating that same result through the deferral collection methodology is therefore appropriate.

The Commission should reject any proposal that the deferred balance should be repaid by a uniform per kWh charge. While this would be simple, it would also be wrong. Such a methodology would improperly punish the high load factor customers, both large and small, in both the commercial and industrial rate classes. Such high load factor customers include most members of OEG and IEU-Ohio, many members of OMA Energy Group, Kroger, Wal-Mart, the Ohio hospitals and other intervenors in this case. The effective result of a uniform per kWh deferral repayment would be that, instead of all shopping customers being charged \$188.88/MW-day, the high load factor customers would be charged more and the low load factor customers less. The allocation method we propose avoids such unjustified cost shifts.

# 3. The Commission Should Clarify That AEP-Ohio Must Reduce Any Deferred Capacity Costs By The Relevant Accumulated Deferred Income Tax Amounts.

The Commission should clarify that AEP-Ohio must reduce any deferred capacity costs by the relevant accumulated deferred income tax ("ADIT") during the recovery period so that the carrying costs reflect the Company's actual financing costs.

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ADIT represents a reduction in the income taxes paid by AEP-Ohio. During the deferral period, AEP-Ohio will deduct the capacity expenses as they are incurred for income tax purposes, but will not have any matching revenue (income) to be taxed because the Commission deferred the recovery of that revenue from AEP-Ohio's customers. Accordingly, the Company will receive income tax savings during the deferral period. These income tax savings will reduce the amount of the deferred capacity costs that have to be financed and thus, should reduce the carrying costs that must be recovered in order for the Company to be made whole. Conversely, during the recovery period, AEP-Ohio will receive revenue from recovery of the deferred capacity costs, but will have no deductions against that income. Hence, only during the recovery period will the Company pay the income taxes that they did not pay during the deferral period. In essence, the federal and state governments will have provided interest free loans during the deferral period that will only be paid back during the recovery period.

This means that the Company will not have to finance the entire amount of the deferred capacity costs. Instead, the Company will finance the amount of deferred capacity costs minus (or "net-of") the income tax savings gained during the deferral period. Consequently, the Commission should clarify that AEP-Ohio is required to reduce the deferred capacity costs by the relevant amount of ADIT during the recovery period when computing the carrying costs on the unamortized deferred capacity costs.

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#### CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, for the foregoing reasons, the Commission should modify or clarify the Order in accordance with OEG's recommendations and hold that there is no provision of the Revised Code that authorizes the Commission to force future retail consumers to repay the wholesale capacity payment obligations that unregulated CRES providers owe to AEP-Ohio.

Respectfully submitted,

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David F. Boehm, Esq. Michael L. Kurtz, Esq. Kurt J. Boehm, Esq. **BOEHM, KURTZ & LOWRY** 36 East Seventh Street, Suite 1510 Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 Ph: (513) 421-2255 Fax: (513) 421-2764 E-Mail: <u>dboehm@BKLlawfirm.com</u> <u>mkurtz@BKLlawfirm.com</u> <u>kboehm@BKLlawfirm.com</u>

COUNSEL FOR THE OHIO ENERGY GROUP

July 27, 2012

#### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that true copy of the foregoing was served by electronic mail (when available) or ordinary mail, unless otherwise noted, this 27<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2012 to the following:

David F. Boehm, Esq. Michael L. Kurtz, Esq. Kurt J. Boehm, Esq.

DOMINION RETAIL, INC. GARY A. JEFFRIES 501 MARTINDALE STREET SUITE 400 PITTSBURGH PA 15212-5817

OHIO PARTNERS FOR AFFORDABLE ENERGY RINEBOLT DAVID C 231 WEST LIMA ST. PO BOX 1793 FINDLAY OH 45839-1793

KROGER CO LINDA VIENS 60 WORTHINGTON MALL WORTHINGTON OH 43085

YURICK, MARK S. 65 EAST STATE STREET SUITE 1000 COLUMBUS OH 43215-4213

\*COCHERN, CARYS DUKE ENERGY 155 EAST BROAD ST 21ST FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215 \*SUGARMAN, ROGER P. MR. KEGLER BROWN HILL & RITTER CO., LPA 65 EAST STATE STREET SUITE 1800 COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*KUTIK, DAVID A MR. JONES DAY 901 LAKESIDE AVENUE CLEVELAND OH 44114

STINSON, DANE BAILEY CAVALIERI LLC 10 WEST BROAD STREET SUITE 2100 COLUMBUS OH 43215 FIRSTENERGY SOLUTIONS MANAGER MARKET INTELLIGENCE LOUIS M D'ALESSANDRIS 341 WHITE POND DR AKRON OH 44320

\*RINEBOLT, DAVID C MR. OHIO PARTNERS FOR AFFORDABLE ENERGY 231 W LIMA ST PO BOX 1793 FINDLAY OH 45840-1793

KRAVITZ, ZACHARY D. CHESTER, WILCOX & SAXBE, LLP 65 EAST STATE STREET, STE 1000 COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*NOURSE, STEVEN T MR. AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER SERVICE CORPORATION 1 RIVERSIDE PLAZA, 29TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*RANDAZZO, SAMUEL C. MR. MCNEES WALLACE & NURICK LLC 21 E. STATE STREET, 17TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*DARR, FRANK P MR. MCNEES, WALLACE & NURICK LLC 21 E. STATE STREET 17TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*ALEXANDER, NATHANIEL TREVOR MR. CALFEE, HALTER & GRISWOLD, LLP 21 E. STATE ST., SUITE 1100 COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*SATTERWHITE, MATTHEW J MR. AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER SERVICE CORPORATION 1 RIVERSIDE PLAZA, 29TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215 \*THOMPSON, MELISSA L. MS. WHITT STURTEVANT LLP PNC PLAZA, SUITE 2020 155 EAST BROAD STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*DUFFER, JENNIFER MRS. ARMSTRONG & OKEY, INC. 222 EAST TOWN STREET 2ND FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*MCBRIDE, LAURA C. MS. CALFEE, HALTER & GRISWOLD LLP 1400 KEYBANK CENTER 800 SUPERIOR AVE. CLEVELAND OH 44114

\*BINGHAM, DEB J. MS. OFFICE OF THE OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL 10 W. BROAD ST., 18TH FL. COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*MALLARNEE, PATTI THE OFFICE OF THE OHIO CONSUMERS COUNSEL 10 W. BROAD ST. SUITE 1800 COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*LEACH-PAYNE, VICKI L. MS. MCNEES WALLACE & NURICK LLC 21 E. STATE ST., 17TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*LOUCAS, CATHRYN N. MS. THE OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL 1207 GRANDVIEW AVENUE COLUMBUS OH 43212

DARR, FRANK P. ATTORNEY AT LAW MCNEES WALLACE & NURICK LLC 21 EAST STATE STREET, 17TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215-422

\*ORAHOOD, TERESA BRICKER & ECKLER LLP 100 SOUTH THIRD STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215-4291

GRACE, SANDY I-RU

\*VOGEL, ANNE M AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER SERVICE CORPORATION 1 RIVERSIDE PLAZA COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*HAQUE, ASIM Z. MR. ICE MILLER LLP 250 WEST STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215

WIGHT, PAUL F. SKADDEN, ARPS, SLATE, MEAGHER & FLOM LLP 1440 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W. WASHINGTO, DC 20005

\*PETRICOFF, M HOWARD VORYS SATER SEYMOUR AND PEASE LLP 52 E. GAY STREET P.O. BOX 1008 COLUMBUS OH 43216-1008

MCBRIDE, LAURA CALFEE HALTER & GRISWOLD LLP 1400 KEYBANK CENTER 800 SUPERIOR AVE CLEVELAND OH 44114

\*RINEBOLT, DAVID C MR. OHIO PARTNERS FOR AFFORDABLE ENERGY 231 W LIMA ST PO BOX 1793 FINDLAY OH 45840-1793

ALEXANDER, TREVOR CALFEE HALTER & GRISWOLD LLP 1400 KEYBANK CENTER 800 SUPERIOR AVE CLEVELAND OH 44114

\*ALVAREZ, MARIANNE M MS. EXELON CORPORATION 101 CONSTITUTION AVE, NW SUITE 400 EAST WASHINGTON DC 20001

HAEDT, ALLISON E. ATTORNEY AT LAW JONES DAY 325 JOHN H. MCCONNELL BLVD., SUITE 600 COLUMBUS OH 43215-2673

\*MOORE, CHRISTEN M MS.

EXELON BUSINESS SERVICES COMPANY, LLC 101 CONSTITUTION AVENUE, NW SUITE 400 EAST WASHINGTON DC 20001

\*PRITCHARD, MATTHEW R. MR. MCNEES WALLACE & NURICK 21 EAST STATE STREET #1700 COLUMBUS OH 43215

SMALL, JEFFREY OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL 10 WEST BROAD STREET SUITE 1800 COLUMBUS OH 43215-3485

DUKE ENERGY RETAIL SALES LLC FKA CINERGY RETAIL SALES LLC VICE PRESIDENT MATT WALZ 139 EAST FOURTH STREET EA600 CINCINNATI OH 45202

ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES OF OHIO C/O CHRISTOPHER MILLER ICE MILLER LLP 250 WEST STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215

CONSTELLATION NEWENERGY INC SENIOR COUNSEL CYNTHIA FONNER BRADY 550 W WASHINGTON STREET SUITE 300 CHICAGO IL 60661

DIRECT ENERGY SERVICES LLC MANAGER GOVERNMENT & REGULATORY AFFAIRS TERESA RINGENBACH 9605 EL CAMINO LANE PLAIN CITY OH 43064

DUKE ENERGY COMMERCIAL ASSET MANAGEMENT, INC. 139 E. FOURTH STREET, 1303-MAIN P.O. BOX 961 CINCINNATI OH 45201-0960

EXLON GENERATION COMPANY, LLC 101 CONSTITUTION AVE N.W., SUITE 400 EAST WASHINGTON DC 20001

INDUSTRIAL ENERGY USERS OF OHIO GENERAL COUNSEL SAMUEL C RANDAZZO PORTER WRIGHT MORRIS & ARTHUR, LLP 41 SOUTH HIGH STREET 30TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*OLIKER, JOSEPH E. MR. INDUSTRIAL ENERGY USERS-OHIO 21 EAST STATE STREET SUITE 1700 COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*LANG, JAMES F MR. CALFEE HALTER & GRISWOLD LLP 1400 KEYBANK CENTER 800 SUPERIOR AVE. CLEVELAND OH 44114

KINGERY, JEANNE W

DUKE ENERGY OHIO INC 139 E. FOURTH STREET, 1303-MAIN PO BOX 960 CINCINNATI OH 45201-0960

CITY OF GROVE CITY

CHRISTOPHER L. MILLER, IC 250 WEST STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*PETRICOFF, M HOWARD

VORYS SATER SEYMOUR AND PEASE LLP 52 E. GAY STREET P.O. BOX 1008 COLUMBUS OH 43216-1008

\*PETRICOFF, M HOWARD VORYS SATER SEYMOUR AND PEASE LLP 52 E. GAY STREET P.O. BOX 1008 COLUMBUS OH 43216-1008

RODRIGUEZ, JESSE A ATTORNEY 300 EXELON WAY KENNETT SQUARE PA 19348

OLIKER, JOSEPH E ATTORNEY MCNEE WALLACE & NURICK LLC 21 EAST STATE STREET, 17TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215

INTERSTATE GAS SUPPLY INC VINCENT PARISI 6100 EMERALD PARKWAY DUBLIN OH 43016

INTERSTATE GAS SUPPLY INC VINCENT PARISI 6100 EMERALD PARKWAY DUBLIN OH 43016

NFIB OHIO ROGER P SUGARMAN KEGLER, BROWN, HILL & RITTER 65 EAST STATE ST STE1800 COLUMBUS OH 43215

OHIO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION CHAD A. ENDSLEY 280 N. HIGH STREET, PO BOX 182383 COLUMBUS OH 43218-2383

OHIO HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION RICHARD L. SITES 155 E. BROAD STREET 15TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215-3620

OHIO MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION 33 N HIGH STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215

RETAIL ENERGY SUPPLY ASSOCIATION (RESA) STEPHEN HOWARD 52 E. GAY ST. COLUMBUS OH 43215

AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER LEGAL DEPARTMENT 1 RIVERSIDE PLAZA COLUMBUS OH 43215-2372

CONSTELLATION ENERGY GROUP, INC.

CYNTHIA A. FONNER, SENIOR 550 W. WASHINGTON BLVD, STE 300 CHICAGO IL 60661 21 EAST STATE STREET, 17TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OHIO 43215

\*THOMPSON, MELISSA L. MS. WHITT STURTEVANT LLP PNC PLAZA, SUITE 2020 155 EAST BROAD STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215

\*WHITT, MARK A WHITT STURTEVANT LLP PNC PLAZA, 20TH FLOOR 155 EAST BROAD STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215

OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL 10 W. BROAD STREET SUITE 1800 COLUMBUS OH 43215-3485

OHIO HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION RICHARD L. SITES 155 E. BROAD STREET 15TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215-3620

O'BRIEN, THOMAS BRICKER & ECKLER LLP 100 SOUTH THIRD STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215-4291

MCALISTER, LISA G BRICKER & ECKLER 100 SOUTH THIRD STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215-4291

\*PETRICOFF, M HOWARD VORYS SATER SEYMOUR AND PEASE LLP 52 E. GAY STREET P.O. BOX 1008 COLUMBUS OH 43216-1008

SATTERWHITE, MATTHEW 1 RIVERSIDE PLAZA 29TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215

DIRECT ENERGY BUSINESS LLC MANAGER GOVERNMENT & REGULATORY AFFAIRS TERESA RINGENBACH 9605 EL CAMINO PLAIN CITY OH 43064 ESTES III, JOHN N 1440 NEW YORK AVE N.W. WASHINGTON D.C 20005

FIRSTENERGY SERVICE COMPANY 76 SOUTH MAIN ST AKRON OH 44308

GARBER, GRANT W. JONES DAY P.O.BOX 165017 325 JOHN H MCCONNELL BLVD. STE 600 COLUMBUS OH 43215-2673

BENTINE, JOHN CHESTER WILLCOX & SAXBE LLP 65 E. STATE STREET, SUITE 1000 COLUMBUS OH 43215

OHIO HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION RICHARD L. SITES 155 E. BROAD STREET 15TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215-3620

OHIO POWER COMPANY

1 RIVERSIDE PLAZA, 29TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215

UNITED WAY OF JEFFERSON COUNTY 501 WASHINGTON STREET P.O. BOX 1463 STEUBENVILLE OH 43952 GARBER, GRANT W JONES DAY PO BOX 165017 SUITE 600 ALEXANDER, N TREVOR CALFEE HALTER & GRISWOLD LLP 1100 FIFTH THIRD CENTER 21 EAST STATE STREET COLUMBUS OH 43215-4243

WIGHT, PAUL F. SKADDEN, ARPS, SLATE, MEAGHER & FLOM LLP 1440 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W. WASHINGTON, DC 20005

GRADY, MAUREEN OFFICE OF CONSUMERS' COUNSEL 10 W. BROAD STREET SUITE 1800 COLUMBUS OH 43215-3485

SITES, RICHARD ATTORNEY AT LAW OHIO HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION 155 EAST BROAD STREET 15TH FLOOR COLUMBUS OH 43215-3620

NOURSE, STEVEN T. MR. AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER 1 RIVERSIDE PLAZA COLUMBUS OH 43215 This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

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