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Via E-File

September 17, 2012

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

In re: 11-346-EL-SSO, 11-348-EL-SSO 11-349-EL-AAM, 11-350-EL-AAM

Dear Sir/Madam:

Please find attached the MEMORANDUM CONTRA APPLICATIONS FOR REHEARING BY THE OHIO ENERGY GROUP for filing in the above-referenced matters.

Copies have been served on all parties on the attached certificate of service. Please place this document of file.

Respectfully yours,

Mitten

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 Jonathan Tauber, Esq. (via electronic mail) Chairman Todd A. Snitchler (via overnight mail) Commissioner Cheryl Roberto (via overnight mail) Commissioner Steven D. Lesser (via overnight mail) Commissioner Andre T. Porter (via overnight mail) Commissioner Lynn Slaby (via overnight mail) Eric Weldele, PUCO Chief of Staff (via overnight mail) Certificate of Service

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company for Authority to Establish a Standard Service Offer Pursuant to §4928.143, Ohio Rev. Code, in the Form of an Electric Security Plan.	:	Case No. 11-346-EL-SSO Case No. 11-348-EL-SSO
In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company for Approval of Certain Accounting Authority	:	Case No. 11-349-EL-AAM Case No. 11-350-EL-AAM

MEMORANDUM CONTRA APPLICATIONS FOR REHEARING BY THE OHIO ENERGY GROUP

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September 17, 2012

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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern	:	Case No. 11-346-EL-SSO
Power Company and Ohio Power Company for Authority to	:	Case No. 11-348-EL-SSO
Establish a Standard Service Offer Pursuant to §4928.143,	:	
Ohio Rev. Code, in the Form of an Electric Security Plan.	:	
	:	
In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern	:	Case No. 11-349-EL-AAM
Power Company and Ohio Power Company for Approval of	:	Case No. 11-350-EL-AAM
Certain Accounting Authority	:	

MEMORANDUM CONTRA APPLICATIONS FOR REHEARING BY THE OHIO ENERGY GROUP

Pursuant to Ohio Adm. Code 4901-1-35(B), the Ohio Energy Group ("OEG") submits this Memorandum Contra the Applications for Rehearing filed by Ohio Power Company ("AEP-Ohio") and the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel/Appalachian Peace and Justice Network ("OCC/APJN") on September 7, 2012 at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("Commission"). OEG's responses to certain arguments advanced in those Applications for Rehearing are discussed below.

I. The Commission Can Address AEP-Ohio's Concerns Regarding The 12% Earnings Cap By Characterizing The Cap As An Electric Security Plan ("ESP") Provision Providing Rate Stability And Certainty Pursuant To R.C. 4928.143(B)(2)(d) Rather Than A SEET Threshold.

AEP-Ohio argues that the Commission should eliminate the 12% significantly excessive earnings test ("SEET") threshold established in its August 8, 2012 Opinion and Order ("Order"), alleging that the Commission did not follow the established method in determining the threshold and

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that a 12% earnings threshold is inadequate when compared to the 15% SEET threshold stipulated to by Duke Energy Ohio ("Duke") in its ESP proceeding.¹

But the 12% (after tax) earnings cap established in the Order provides important protection for consumers and should be upheld. The pre-tax earnings cap is approximately 17%. The Commission's 12% earnings cap helps ensure that AEP-Ohio does not reap disproportionate benefits as a result of the approved ESP components. Such a mechanism is critical in this case given the uncertainty regarding the ultimate impacts of the approved ESP. There are so many moving parts in the ESP which could affect earnings that, when combined with normal business considerations, an ROE ceiling is a wise protection. These ESP moving parts include: amount of shopping, effect of the Distribution Investment Rider, profits from off-system sales from energy freed up by shopping, amount of profit from off-system sales from energy freed up by energy-only auctions, AEP Power Pool restructuring, the transfer of the Amos and Mitchell Units to non-Ohio affiliates, amount of CRES revenue, and amount of RSR revenue. The normal business considerations which affect earnings are cost reductions from efficiencies including manpower downsizing, weather, and increases is revenue from other sources. Accordingly, the Commission should take steps to preserve the 12% (after tax) earnings threshold in this case.

To quell AEP-Ohio's concerns regarding whether the Commission followed the established method for determining a SEET threshold, the Commission should clarify that the 12% earnings cap is an ESP provision adopted pursuant to R.C. 4928.143(B)(2)(d) rather than a formal SEET threshold. R.C. 4928.143(B)(2)(d) provides that an ESP may include terms, conditions, or charges "...as would have the effect of stabilizing or providing certainty regarding retail electric service." A 12% earnings cap stabilizes retail rates that may otherwise fluctuate too far upward and provides certainty that AEP-Ohio will not substantially overearn as a result of the approved ESP. Hence, the Commission may

¹ AEP-Ohio Application for Rehearing at 31-34.

properly adopt a 12% earnings cap as an ESP provision, while allowing the formal SEET threshold to be adopted independently of the 12% earnings cap.

The Commission should also consider the financial impact of increasing the 12% earnings cap before making any alterations to the cap. For example, if the Commission adopted a 15% earnings threshold AEP-Ohio would have the opportunity to retain a significantly increased level of revenues. Based upon OEG witness Lane Kollen's May 4, 2012 calculation that each 100 basis points of earnings is equivalent to approximately \$69 million in revenues, the Commission's grant of a 15% earnings threshold would allow AEP-Ohio to keep an additional \$207 million in revenues.² This is a substantial sum of money that would not be refunded to consumers if the earnings cap is increased by 3%.

The Commission should preserve the 12% earnings cap, and the important protection that the cap provides consumers, by clarifying that the cap was adopted as an ESP provision pursuant to R.C. 4928.143(B)(2)(d) rather than as a formal SEET threshold.

II. To Resolve The Concerns Of AEP-Ohio, FirstEnergy, OCC/APJN and OEG, The Commission Should Merge Both The Phase-In Recovery Rider Rates And The Fuel Adjustment Clause Rates For The Two AEP-Ohio Rate Zones.

AEP-Ohio believes that the Fuel Adjustment Clause ("FAC") and Phase-In Recovery Rider ("PIRR") for the Ohio Power and Columbus Southern rate zones should be merged.³ FirstEnergy advocates that the Commission should merge the FAC rates for both rate zones, rather than maintaining separate rates for each rate zone.⁴ In addition, OCC/APJN advocate that the Commission should merge the PIRR rates for both rate zones.⁵ And OEG has already noted that, if the FAC and PIRR rates are maintained separately for each rate zone, the Commission will need to conduct two separate rate zone-

² Direct Testimony of Lane Kollen at 18:6-11.

³ AEP-Ohio Initial Post Hearing Brief at 138-39 and AEP-Ohio Reply Post Hearing Brief at 109-110.

⁴ FirstEnergy Solutions Corp. Application for Rehearing at 31-33.

⁵ OCC/APJN Application for Rehearing at 78-80.

specific energy-only auctions since the "price to beat" in the Ohio Power rate zone is \$6/MWh lower than the price to beat in the Columbus Southern rate zone.⁶

A simple way for the Commission to address the concerns of AEP-Ohio, FirstEnergy, OCC/APJN and OEG is to determine that the FAC and PIRR rates should be merged immediately. Doing so would decrease administrative complexity/burden, increase efficiency, and align the structure of the FAC and PIRR rates with the other AEP-Ohio rates that were merged in this proceeding. We understand that there are pros and cons on this issue, but on balance a uniform pricing structure for all AEP-Ohio customers is superior.

III. AEP-Ohio's Position On The Boundaries Of The PJM Reliability Assurance Agreement Reinforces OEG's Argument That The RAA Does Not Provide The Commission Authority To Hold Non-Shopping Retail Customers Responsible For The Wholesale Capacity Costs Owed To AEP-Ohio By CRES Providers.

AEP-Ohio argues that the Order should be clarified to confirm that the state compensation mechanism established in Case No. 10-2929-EL-UNC (the "Capacity Case") does not apply to SSO auctions or non-shopping customers in general.⁷ As part of its argument, AEP-Ohio cites the language of the PJM Reliability Assurance Agreement ("RAA"), which provides that "[*i*]*n* the case of load reflected in the FRR Capacity Plan that switches to an alternative retail LSE, where the state regulatory jurisdiction requires switching customers or the LSE to compensate the FRR Entity for its FRR capacity obligations, such state compensation mechanism will prevail."⁸ AEP-Ohio states that "a [state compensation mechanism] under the RAA has no application to non-shopping customers or retail SSO rates."⁹

OEG agrees with AEP-Ohio's interpretation of the plain language of the RAA. Such an interpretation echoes arguments that OEG has repeatedly made regarding the illegality of recovering the

⁶ OEG Application for Rehearing at 6-7.

⁷ AEP-Ohio Application for Rehearing at 16-18.

⁸ AEP-Ohio Application for Rehearing at 17 (emphasis added).

⁹ AEP-Ohio Application for Rehearing at 17.

capacity costs deferred in the Capacity Case from non-shopping retail customers. In short, the plain language of the RAA does not provide the Commission authority to impose charges for the deferred capacity costs established under the state compensation mechanism upon AEP-Ohio's non-shopping retail customers. Consequently, the Commission's decision that AEP-Ohio must allocate \$1/MWh of the \$3.50/MWh and \$4/MWh nonbypassable Retail Stability Rider ("RSR") charges toward repayment of the capacity costs deferred is unlawful and unreasonable. The \$1/MWh of the RSR charge that is earmarked to pay AEP-Ohio part of the capacity costs owed to it by CRES providers cannot be assessed to SSO load.

Recognizing the risk that challenges to the capacity cost deferrals and the RSR, like OEG's challenge, could prevail, AEP-Ohio requests that the Commission "provide up front that CRES providers will automatically be responsible for the full \$188.88/MW-day ... in the event that either the establishment of the capacity deferrals or the deferral recovery mechanism is reversed or vacated."¹⁰ There is no need to adopt AEP-Ohio's contingency recommendation if the Commission requires CRES providers to now pay the full \$188.88/MW-day during AEP-Ohio's Fixed Resource Requirement period. Such an approach is consistent with the plain language of the RAA, and avoids the need to establish any contingency or deferral mechanism. This approach is also economically rational since it merely requires CRES providers to pay for the capacity they use.

IV. The Commission Should Uphold Its Decision Regarding The IRP-D Credit.

Citing provisions of the Stipulation and Recommendation in AEP-Ohio's last energy efficiency/peak demand reduction portfolio case ("EE/PDR Stipulation"),¹¹ OCC/APJN argue that costs related to the Rider IRP-D interruptible credit should not be collected from residential customers.¹² But

¹⁰ AEP-Ohio Application for Rehearing at 26.

¹¹ Case No. 11-5568-EL-POR.

¹² OCC/APJN Application for Rehearing at 113-114.

the interruptible credit adopted under Rider IRP-D is a new credit established in this proceeding and therefore is not governed by the EE/PDR Stipulation. The EE/PDR Stipulation is only applicable to programs and costs which were the subject of the Stipulation. Accordingly, the Commission acted lawfully and reasonably in deciding to approve the Rider IRP-D credit and the associated cost recovery mechanism.

CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, for the foregoing reasons, the Commission should adopt OEG's recommendations in this proceeding.

Respectfully Submitted,

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September 17, 2012

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Summary: Memorandum Ohio Energy Group's (OEG) Memorandum Contra Applications for Rehearing electronically filed by Mr. Michael L. Kurtz on behalf of Ohio Energy Group