

BEFORE

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Application of Iron)
Energy, LLC for Certification as a) Case No. 12-2459-EL-CRS
Competitive Retail Power Marketer.)

In the Matter of the Application of Iron)
Energy, LLC for Certification as a) Case No. 12-2460-GA-CRS
Competitive Retail Natural Gas Marketer.)

ENTRY

The attorney examiner finds:

- (1) On September 6, 2012, Iron Energy, LLC (Iron Energy or company) filed applications for certification as a competitive retail power marketer (Case No. 12-2459-EL-CRS [12-2459]) and a competitive natural gas marketer (Case No. 12-2460-GA-CRS [12-2460]). On that same day, Iron Energy filed motions for protective orders, pursuant to Rule 4901-1-24(D), Ohio Administrative Code (O.A.C.), requesting that exhibits C-3 (financial statements), C-4 (financial arrangements), and C-5 (forecasted financial statements) of its applications, which were filed under seal in 12-2459 and 12-2460 on September 6, 2012, be kept under seal.
- (2) In support of its motions for protective orders, Iron Energy explains that exhibits C-3, C-4, and C-5 contain competitively sensitive and highly proprietary business financial information that is not generally known or available to the general public. Therefore, Iron Energy requests that the information found in exhibits C-3, C-4, and C-5 be treated as confidential.
- (3) Section 4905.07, Revised Code, provides that all facts and information in the possession of the Commission shall be public, except as provided in Section 149.43, Revised Code, and as consistent with the purposes of Title 49 of the Revised Code. Section 149.43, Revised Code, specifies that the term "public records" excludes information which,

under state or federal law, may not be released. The Ohio Supreme Court has clarified that the “state or federal law” exemption is intended to cover trade secrets. *State ex rel. Besser v. Ohio State*, 89 Ohio St. 3d 396, 399, 732 N.E. 2d 373 (2000).

- (4) Similarly, Rule 4901-1-24, O.A.C., allows an attorney examiner to issue an order to protect the confidentiality of information contained in a filed document, “to the extent that state or federal law prohibits release of the information, including where the information is deemed . . . to constitute a trade secret under Ohio law, and where non-disclosure of the information is not inconsistent with the purposes of Title 49 of the Revised Code.”
- (5) Ohio law defines a trade secret as “information . . . that satisfies both of the following: (a) It derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons who can obtain economic value from its disclosure or use. (b) It is the subject of efforts that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain its secrecy.” Section 1333.61(D), Revised Code.
- (6) The attorney examiner has examined the information covered by the motions for protective orders filed by Iron Energy, as well as the assertions set forth in the supportive memoranda. Applying the requirements that the information have independent economic value and be the subject of reasonable efforts to maintain its secrecy pursuant to Section 1333.61(D), Revised Code, as well as the six-factor test set forth by the Ohio Supreme Court,¹ the attorney examiner finds that the information contained in exhibits C-3, C-4, and C-5 of Iron Energy’s applications constitutes trade secret information. Release of these documents is, therefore, prohibited under state law. The attorney examiner also finds that nondisclosure of this information is not inconsistent with the purposes of Title 49 of the Revised Code. Accordingly, the attorney examiner

¹ See *State ex-rel. The Plain Dealer v. Ohio Dept. of Ins.*, 80 Ohio St.3d513,524-525,687 N.E.2d 661 (1997).

finds that Iron Energy's motions for protective orders are reasonable with regard to exhibits C-3, C-4, and C-5, which were filed under seal in 12-2459 and 12-2460 on September 6, 2012; therefore, the motions should be granted.

- (7) Rule 4901-1-24(D)(4), O.A.C., provides for protective orders relating to electric and gas marketers' certification renewal applications to expire after 24 months. The attorney examiner finds that the 24-month provision in Rule 4901-1-24(D)(4), O.A.C., is intended to synchronize the expiration of protective orders related to gas marketers' certification applications with the expiration of their certification and that the expiration dates should allow adequate time for consideration of any motion for extension. Therefore, confidential treatment shall be afforded to exhibits C-3, C-4, and C-5 for a period ending 24 months from the effective date of the certificates issued to Iron Energy, or until October 7, 2014, in 12-2459 and 12-2460. Until those dates, the docketing division should maintain, under seal, exhibits C-3, C-4, and C-5, which were filed under seal in 12-2459 and 12-2460 on September 6, 2012.
- (8) Rule 4901-1-24(F), O.A.C., requires a party wishing to extend a protective order to file an appropriate motion at least 45 days in advance of the expiration date. If Iron Energy wishes to extend this confidential treatment, it should file an appropriate motion at least 45 days in advance of the expiration date. If no such motion to extend confidential treatment is filed, the Commission may release this information without prior notice to Iron Energy.

It is, therefore,

ORDERED, That the motions for protective orders filed by Iron Energy be granted with regard to the information contained in exhibits C-3, C-4, and C-5 of Iron Energy's applications. It is, further,

ORDERED, That the Commission's docketing division maintain, under seal, the unredacted exhibits C-3, C-4, and C-5, which were filed under seal in 12-2459 and 12-2460 on September 6, 2012, for a period of 24 months, ending on October 7, 2014. It is, further,

ORDERED, That a copy of this entry be served upon each party of record.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

s/Kerry Sheets

By: Kerry K. Sheets
Attorney Examiner

JRJ/sc

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in

Case No(s). 12-2459-EL-CRS, 12-2460-GA-CRS

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry granting a protective order. - electronically filed by Sandra Coffey on behalf of Kerry Sheets, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio