

AARP Ohio
The Citizens Coalition
Communities United for Action
Edgemont Neighborhood Coalition
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
The Legal Aid Society of Columbus
Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel
Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy
Ohio Poverty Law Center
Pro Seniors, Inc.
Southeastern Ohio Legal Services

Via E-Mail and Filed in PUCO Case No. 12-3151-EL-COI

July 24, 2013

David Lipthratt, CPA, MPA
Public Utilities Administrator
Utilities Department
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
David.Lipthratt@puc.state.oh.us

Re: In the Matter of the Commission's Investigation of Ohio's Retail Electric Service Market,
Case No. 12-3151-EL-COI

Dear Mr. Lipthratt:

Thank you and your colleagues at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("PUCO") for inviting interested parties to participate in the electric workshop process that could affect the electric bills of Ohio's 4.3 million residential consumers.

The consumer parties are writing to further express our concern that issues of customer protection are not being given the same consideration and priority in the workshop process as issues involving changes in market structure that some in the industry are seeking. We ask you to further consider adding such issues to the process.

This process began with the PUCO Staff inviting parties to propose topics for workshops and subcommittees. On July 15, 2013, the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy (OPAE), and the Ohio Poverty Law Center (OPLC) jointly recommended the following topics:

- 1) Consumer education issues including Apples to Apples website and broader consumer education issues
- 2) Customer enrollment including treatment of customer data
- 3) Customer impact analysis (who pays)

4) Customer complaints process, slamming, etc.

Other than the customer billing/data topic, which may also address customer enrollment issues, none of our proposed topics for protecting Ohio consumers were accepted. The PUCO Staff did explain its approach to one of our proposals, consumer education. It wrote that “The Consumer Education and *Apples-to-Apples* website topics will be addressed by the PUCO’s Office of Retail Competition through a process separate from this proceeding.” Additionally, the PUCO Staff advised that the consumer education subcommittee “will not be part of the 12-3151 proceedings or any other docket.”

It would be consistent with state policy and the interest of Ohioans to consider consumer protection issues contemporaneously with the industry’s proposals for changes in the electricity market structure. In this regard, it is the policy of Ohio to ensure “retail electric service consumers protection against unreasonable sales practices, market deficiencies, and market power.”¹ And it is the policy of Ohio to “[p]rotect at-risk populations, including, but not limited to, when considering the implementation of new advanced energy or renewable energy resources.”²

Therefore, the consumer parties request that the PUCO Staff broaden its proposed topics and subcommittees in this proceeding to include consumer protection and consumer education issues, including but not limited to those proposed above. Due consideration and priority should be given to these issues in the workshop process. These issues directly affect the affordability of Ohioans’ electricity bills. Thank you and we look forward to working with the PUCO Staff and other stakeholders in the workshop process.

Sincerely,

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¹ R.C. 4928.02(I).

² R.C. 4928.02(L).

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cc: All Parties of Record

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Summary: Correspondence Workshop Related Issues Raised by Consumer Parties
electronically filed by Ms. Deb J. Bingham on behalf of Grady, Maureen R. Ms.