

November 10, 2017

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
Attention: Mr. Asim Haque  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Duke Energy Rebate Temporary Suspension Case No. 16-576-EL-POR

Dear Mr. Haque

The ruling the PUCO handed to Duke Energy on September 27<sup>th</sup> of this year, and the subsequent temporary suspension of the Duke Energy rebate program in Ohio has very seriously impacted my business to the point that it may put me out of business!!!

A small business like mine, OPEX Savings, can not withstand having money frozen 44 + days by bureaucracy. I have over \$25,000 frozen in the Duke Energy rebate system right now on projects that are sold and completed, and I am just a small fish in a big ocean. I can't get my money from my lighting supplier because Duke Energy has not only froze the rebate program, they are no longer paying any money out of the program for projects that have been input in the system before the September 27<sup>th</sup> ruling. I have to pay my bills, so I had to dig into my personal funds to pay my business bills just trying to keep my business afloat until you and Duke Energy get things worked out.

I have been communicating with Kevin Bright of Duke Energy and Mariner Taft of the PUCO to see what is going on with this case and when it will be resolved and the Duke Ohio rebate program brought out of suspension.

The timing on this ruling is very poor, in my opinion. Also, the way this has been handled by both the PUCO and Duke Energy is very poor, in my opinion. I hold the PUCO and Duke Energy in very high regards and have a great deal of respect for both organizations. However, you guys have blown it on this one the way everything has gone down to this point in time and your judgement and decision has had serious impact on my business and personal life.

I do not understand why the PUCO decided to place a cap on the Duke Energy Ohio 2017 rebate program almost 8-months into the year. Furthermore, I am appalled at the fact that the PUCO ruling recommended to Duke Energy that they place a temporary suspension on their rebate program. I have a business plan that promotes and relies on the fantastic Duke Energy rebate programs to help my customers perform energy efficiency upgrades in their commercial and industrial facilities. To flat out put the brakes on this rebate program like you did puts me in serious jeopardy of going out of business.

Not only is the temporary suspension of the Duke Energy rebate program seriously impacting my immediate cash flow, it looks like it will have dire consequences to my future cash flow as well. I have energy efficiency upgrade projects that I have sold to customers, but are frozen right now because I can't get the lighting product from my lighting distributor because they can't get into the Duke rebate system because Duke has the rebate program frozen. If these orders do not go through, I will have to shut down my business. Also, I have over \$600,000 worth of energy efficiency upgrade proposals submitted to potential customers waiting for approval. Many of these customers have told me they will approve these projects if they can get the Duke

rebate amount that I provided in my proposals. These customers are also telling me if the rebate amount is decreased, they will not approve the project.

I am asking for two things. First, stop the bureaucracy that is killing my business and approve the waiver Duke Energy has applied to raise the cap for 2017 so Duke can bring this program back to life. Second, make Duke give us 90 days to sell and complete the installation on the projects we have proposed to customers. In communications with Kevin Bright, I understand that Duke is planning to give us 90-days to complete the projects we have sold before they froze the program on September 28<sup>th</sup>. This is not good enough, in my opinion, and will have serious consequences to my business. I am requesting that Duke transition into the new rebate program like they transitioned to the new rebate programs in Kentucky and Indiana where they gave us 90-days to sell and complete the installation of the projects. The 90-day sell and complete transition gives us enough time to finalize the sale of the proposals we have provided to customers but are still open and pending. The 90-day sell and complete transition also gives us time to re-direct our business plans and make the adjustments we need to keep our business thriving and profitable after that 90-day period expires. The immediate transition to a new rebate program with what I imagine will be considerably less incentive money compared to the existing rebate program will most likely be a fatal blow to my business because I can't cash flow another 30-days out of my personal account; the money is just not there to be able to sustain my business.

I have helped my customers perform energy efficiency projects for over 30-years. I have helped these customers obtain millions of dollars in incentive money in exchange for investing hundreds of millions of dollars in these energy efficiency projects. I rely on, and depend on, the incentive money to help me sell these projects. I study the different incentive money that is available for each customer and I help these customers maximize the amount of incentive money obtained to help fund these projects. I have been extremely successful in working this business plan for many years. I worked for major corporations all my working life and in January of this year decided to go out on my own. Things were going extremely well with my new business until you made this ruling on September 27<sup>th</sup> which froze the Duke rebate program. Now I am in jeopardy of losing my business.


This decision is also hurting our Ohio economy. Governor Kasich talks all the time about job creation and improving the Ohio economy. I believe Governor Kasich and his team has done a fine job creating new jobs and improving the economy in Ohio. The ruling you made on September 27<sup>th</sup> with regards to the Duke Energy rebate cap made improving the economy in Ohio take one step backwards, in my opinion. Duke Energy has provided the Ohio economy with \$41.5 million in energy efficiency project money over the first 9-months of 2017. The Duke Energy customers have also invested millions of dollars in the Ohio economy through their investment dollars required to obtain this rebate money from Duke. I believe Mr. Kasich would agree that freezing millions of dollars in economic growth in Ohio is not acceptable.

One other thing, the ultimate people that are making the sacrifice for the PUCO bureaucracy decision that froze the Duke Ohio rebate program is the rate payers of Duke Energy. These rate payers are continuing to pay into the Duke rebate program each month when they pay their utility bills. The EE-PDR rate is not frozen for these customers meaning they are paying Duke millions of dollars while Duke is not paying out any money out of this rebate program during the temporary suspension period. The decision you made on September 27<sup>th</sup> is hurting the Duke Energy rate payers and the vendors and suppliers that provide services to these Duke Energy rate payers. My supplier has millions of dollars in inventory sitting in their warehouses right now that they can't move because this Duke Ohio rebate program is frozen. I can only imagine the

impact it is having on their profit margins buying millions of dollars of inventory and not being able to move it.

I have not seen much publication of what is going on with this Duke Energy rebate program freeze from the press. However, I can tell you this is a public relations nightmare for the PUCO and Duke Energy right now, and will only get much worse if the 90-day sell and install is not implemented for the transition into the new rebate program. The energy efficiency world is a very tight community. I compete with my fellow energy efficiency companies, but hold them in very high regard. We rely on each other, depend on each other, and help each other to help keep our industry in high honor and respect. We work together to help promote all of our businesses so we all thrive and make a good living. Right now in our community there is not much good being said about the PUCO and Duke Energy. As I mentioned before, we hold the PUCO and Duke Energy in very high regard and have tremendous respect for both entities. The ruling made on September 27<sup>th</sup> by the PUCO has done a lot of damage to the respect the energy efficiency community has with regards to the PUCO and Duke Energy, in my opinion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Kinnett   
President of OPEX Savings  
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Cc: Governor Kasich, Mariner Taft, Beth Trombold, Thomas Johnson, Lawrence Friedeman, Daniel Conway, Kevin Bright, Lynn Good

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