

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF
OHIO POWER COMPANY FOR AN
INCREASE IN ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION
RATES.

CASE NO. 20-585-EL-AIR

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF
OHIO POWER COMPANY FOR TARIFF
APPROVAL.

CASE NO. 20-586-EL-ATA

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF
OHIO POWER COMPANY FOR APPROVAL
TO CHANGE ACCOUNTING METHODS.

CASE NO. 20-587-EL-AAM

ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on January 14, 2021

{¶ 1} Ohio Power Company d/b/a AEP Ohio (AEP Ohio or the Company) is an electric light company as defined by R.C. 4905.03 and a public utility as defined by R.C. 4905.02, and, as such, is subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission.

{¶ 2} In Case No. 16-1852-EL-SSO, et al., the Commission modified and approved a stipulation and recommendation (Stipulation) filed by AEP Ohio, Staff, and numerous other signatory parties, which authorized the Company to implement an electric security plan for the period of June 1, 2018, through May 31, 2024. Among the commitments in the Stipulation, AEP Ohio agreed to file a base distribution rate case by June 1, 2020. *In re Ohio Power Co.*, Case No. 16-1852-EL-SSO, et al., Opinion and Order (Apr. 25, 2018) at ¶ 45.

{¶ 3} On April 29, 2020, in the above-captioned cases, AEP Ohio filed a pre-filing notice of its intent to file an application for approval of an increase in its electric distribution rates, tariff modifications, and changes in accounting methods.

{¶ 4} On June 8, 2020, AEP Ohio filed its application to increase its rates pursuant to R.C. 4909.18.¹ AEP Ohio filed direct testimony in support of its application on June 15, 2020.

{¶ 5} Pursuant to R.C. 4909.19, Staff conducted an investigation of the facts, exhibits, and matters relating to the application. On November 18, 2020, as amended on November 25, 2020, Staff filed a written report of its investigation (Staff Report).

{¶ 6} Pursuant to R.C. 4909.19 and Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-28(B), objections to the Staff Report were due by December 18, 2020.

{¶ 7} By Entry issued on November 23, 2020, as amended by Entry issued on December 1, 2020, the procedural schedule was established in these cases such that the prehearing conference and technology test session will be held on February 11, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., through Webex; and the evidentiary hearing will commence on March 4, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., through Webex. Further, direct expert testimony supporting objections to the Staff Report is due by January 19, 2021; motions to strike objections to the Staff Report are due by January 28, 2021; and memoranda contra motions to strike objections to the Staff Report are due by February 4, 2021.

{¶ 8} On March 9, 2020, the governor signed Executive Order 2020-01D (Executive Order), declaring a state of emergency in Ohio to protect the well-being of Ohioans from the dangerous effects of COVID-19. As described in the Executive Order, state agencies are required to implement procedures consistent with recommendations from the Department of Health to prevent or alleviate the public health threat associated with COVID-19. Additionally, all citizens are urged to heed the advice of the Department of Health regarding this public health emergency in order to protect their health and safety. The Executive Order

¹ Due to the closure of the Commission's offices from June 1, 2020, through June 5, 2020, the application for a rate increase, which was submitted by AEP Ohio on June 1, 2020, was accepted for filing on June 8, 2020, and deemed timely filed in accordance with R.C. 1.14 and Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-07 and 4901-1-13. *In re the Extension of Filing Dates for Pleadings and Other Papers Due to a Building Emergency*, Case No. 20-1132-AU-UNC, Entry (June 8, 2020).

was effective immediately and will remain in effect until the COVID-19 emergency no longer exists. The Department of Health is making COVID-19 information, including information on preventative measures, available via the internet at coronavirus.ohio.gov/.

{¶ 9} Due to the continued state of emergency, and the passage of Sub. H.B. 404, the public hearing will be held using remote access technology that facilitates participation by telephone and/or live video on the internet.

{¶ 10} The public hearing will be held on February 8, 2021, commencing at 6:00 p.m., through Webex.

{¶ 11} Interested persons who are not a party to these cases and wish to provide testimony must pre-register with the Commission before 12:00 p.m., on February 5, 2021, at <https://puco.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/puco/events/case-no-20-585-EL-AIR-et-al-lph> or by calling the Commission at 1-800-686-7826.

{¶ 12} Persons providing public testimony will be required to provide their full name, home address, telephone number, and electronic mail address, if available; state that they wish to register for the public hearing in Case Nos. 20-585-EL-AIR, 20-586-EL-ATA, and 20-587-EL-AAM; specify whether they plan to join the remote access event by internet or by telephone; and state that they intend to offer testimony. Individuals that plan to attend the remote access event through internet access must have a computer or smart device with a microphone and speakers, an electronic mail address, and reliable internet service.

{¶ 13} Individuals who have registered to testify will be asked to speak beginning shortly after 6:00 p.m., so all those who have registered to testify should be prepared to speak at that time. For individuals who are speaking by telephone, the Commission's staff will contact those individuals by telephone when it is time for their testimony and connect them to the public hearing.

{¶ 14} Interested individuals who merely wish to attend the hearing remotely and not offer testimony can do so by calling 1-408-418-9388 and entering the access code 179 414 7650. The public hearing will also be live streamed for viewing at www.youtube.com/user/PUCOhio. Additional information is available by contacting the Commission's Consumer Call Center at 1-800-686-7826.

{¶ 15} Access information for the public hearing will be provided to counsel for the parties at the electronic mail address of record. Counsel who will speak during the hearing should join the Webex event through internet access and must have a computer or smart device with a camera, microphone, and speakers; an electronic mail address; and reliable internet service.

{¶ 16} AEP Ohio should publish notice of the public hearing in newspapers of general circulation in the affected service territory once each week for two consecutive weeks prior to the scheduled date of the hearing. The notice should not appear in the legal notices section of the newspaper. AEP Ohio shall file proof of publication of the notice with the Commission. The notice should read as follows:

LEGAL NOTICE

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio has scheduled a public hearing in Case Nos. 20-585-EL-AIR, 20-586-EL-ATA, and 20-587-EL-AAM, *In the Matter of Ohio Power Company for an Increase in Electric Distribution Rates, for Tariff Approval, and for Approval to Change Accounting Methods*. AEP Ohio seeks a rate increase, including miscellaneous charges, that would generate approximately \$36.2 million of additional revenue, or an increase of 2.96 percent over current total base distribution revenue. For a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatts per month, AEP Ohio seeks an increase of 1.80 percent on the total bill for the Ohio Power Company rate zone and an increase of 1.81 percent on the total bill for the Columbus Southern Power Company rate zone. After its review of AEP Ohio's records and application, the staff of the Commission recommends a decrease of 2.92 percent on the total bill for a

residential customer using 1,000 kilowatts per month for the Ohio Power Company and the Columbus Southern Power Company rate zones.

A public hearing is scheduled for the purpose of providing an opportunity for interested members of the public to testify in these proceedings. The public hearing will be held on Monday, February 8, 2021, commencing at 6:00 p.m. via Webex.

Interested persons who are not a party to these cases and wish to provide testimony must pre-register with the Commission before 12:00 p.m., on February 5, 2021, at <https://puco.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/puco/events/case-no-20-585-EL-AIR-et-al-lph> or by calling the Commission at 1-800-686-7826. If individuals wish to supplement their testimony with an exhibit for the Commission's consideration, a copy of the document, along with a reference to Case Nos. 20-585-EL-AIR, 20-586-EL-ATA, and 20-587-EL-AAM, must be provided to the Commission by February 5, 2021, if possible, but no later than February 16, 2021, by electronic mail to [contactThePUCO@puco.ohio.gov](mailto:ThePUCO@puco.ohio.gov) or by mail to Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, 180 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

Interested individuals who merely wish to attend the hearing remotely and not offer testimony can do so by calling 1-408-418-9388 and entering the access code 179 414 7650. The public hearing will also be live streamed for viewing at www.youtube.com/user/PUCOOhio. Additional information is available by contacting the Commission's Consumer Call Center at 1-800-686-7826.

An evidentiary hearing, where counsel for the parties to the cases may present evidence and cross examine witnesses, will commence on March 4, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., by Webex. Further information may be obtained by contacting the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, 180 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793, viewing the Commission's web page at <http://www.puco.ohio.gov>, or contacting the Commission's hotline at 1-800-686-7826.

Public comments can be provided in writing on the Commission's website at <https://puco.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/puco/help-center/file-a-complaint>, by electronic mail to contactThePUCO@puco.ohio.gov, or by mail to Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, 180 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. Written comments should reference the case numbers for this matter.

{¶ 17} On January 12, 2021, AEP Ohio filed a motion seeking a ten-day extension of the deadlines for direct expert testimony supporting objections to the Staff Report, motions to strike objections to the Staff Report, and memoranda contra motions to strike objections to the Staff Report. In support of its motion, AEP Ohio states that the parties are engaged in settlement negotiations to resolve some or all of the issues raised in these proceedings and that the requested extension will facilitate continued discussions. AEP Ohio further states that it does not seek to modify any other date or deadline in the procedural schedule. Finally, AEP Ohio requests an expedited ruling on the motion pursuant to Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-12(C). AEP Ohio represents that no party opposes the motion or the request for an expedited ruling.

{¶ 18} The attorney examiner finds that the unopposed motion for an extension is reasonable and should be granted. Accordingly, direct expert testimony supporting objections to the Staff Report should be filed by January 29, 2021; motions to strike objections to the Staff Report should be filed by February 8, 2021; and memoranda contra motions to strike objections to the Staff Report should be filed by February 16, 2021.

{¶ 19} It is, therefore,

{¶ 20} ORDERED, That the public hearing be held on February 8, 2021, in accordance with Paragraph 10. It is, further,

{¶ 21} ORDERED, That AEP Ohio publish notice of the public hearing and file its proof of publication in accordance with Paragraph 16. It is, further,

{¶ 22} ORDERED, That AEP Ohio's unopposed motion for an extension of the deadlines for direct expert testimony supporting objections to the Staff Report, motions to strike objections to the Staff Report, and memoranda contra motions to strike objections to the Staff Report be granted. It is, further,

{¶ 23} ORDERED, That the procedural schedule be modified as set forth in Paragraph 18. It is, further,

{¶ 24} ORDERED, That a copy of this Entry be served upon all parties of record.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

/s/Greta See

By: Greta See
Attorney Examiner

SJP/hac

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on

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in

Case No(s). 20-0585-EL-AIR, 20-0586-EL-ATA, 20-0587-EL-AAM

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry ordering that the public hearing be held on February 8, 2021, in accordance with Paragraph 10; ordering that AEP Ohio publish notice of the public hearing and file its proof of publication in accordance with Paragraph 16; ordering that AEP Ohio's unopposed motion for an extension of the deadlines for direct expert testimony supporting objections to the Staff Report, motions to strike objections to the Staff Report, and memoranda contra motions to strike objections to the Staff Report be granted; and, ordering that the procedural schedule be modified as set forth in Paragraph 18 electronically filed by Heather A Chilcote on behalf of Greta See, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission