

**BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>In the Matter of the Application of Ohio )<br/>Power Company for an Increase in Electric )<br/>Distribution Rates. )</b> | <b>Case No. 20-585-EL-AIR</b> |
| <b>In the Matter of the Application of Ohio )<br/>Power Company for Tariff Approval. )</b>                                  | <b>Case No. 20-586-EL-ATA</b> |
| <b>In the Matter of the Application of Ohio )<br/>Power Company for Approval to Change )<br/>Accounting Methods. )</b>      | <b>Case No. 20-587-EL-AAM</b> |

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**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF TERESA RINGENBACH**

**ON BEHALF OF**

**NATIONWIDE ENERGY PARTNERS, LLC**

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**April 20, 2021**

**PART I. BACKGROUND**

**Q1. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, BUSINESS ADDRESS, AND ON WHOSE BEHALF YOU ARE TESTIFYING?**

A1. My name is Teresa Ringenbach. I am the Vice President, Business Development with Nationwide Energy Partners, LLC (“NEP”). My business address is 230 West Street, Suite 200, Columbus, Ohio 43215. I am presenting testimony in this proceeding on behalf of NEP.

**Q2. PLEASE DESCRIBE NEP’S BUSINESS.**

A2. NEP creates technology solutions for multifamily developers and property owners. Our products and services include energy control and advisory services, energy construction and design solutions, electric vehicle charging, and tenant billing. Our customers are the property owners or condominium associations. Our customers contract with us to act as their authorized representative with their local utility.

**Q3. WHAT ARE YOUR JOB RESPONSIBILITIES?**

A3. I lead NEP’s business development, and its government and regulatory affairs. My team includes legal, governmental affairs and regulatory functions.

**Q4. WHAT IS YOUR ENERGY EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND?**

A4. I hold a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in International Business from the University of Toledo. I started in the energy industry in 2001 with Integrys Energy Services, Inc. (formerly WPS Energy Services, Inc. and FSG Energy Services, Inc.) as a Customer Service and Marketing Specialist promoting and managing Ohio residential and small commercial electric offers. In 2002, I became an Account Manager – Inside Sales, where I sold and managed government aggregation programs for

1 both gas and electric. In 2005, I was promoted to Regulatory Specialist. In that position,  
2 I was responsible for regulatory compliance throughout the United States and Canada. In  
3 2006, I accepted the position of Regulatory Affairs Analyst – East which required covering  
4 New England, New York, New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania gas and electric issues. In  
5 the spring of 2008, I accepted the Regulatory Affairs Analyst position for the Midwest  
6 region covering Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and all of Canada. In that  
7 position, I directed the regulatory and legislative efforts affecting Integrys Energy's gas  
8 and electric business. In August 2009, I joined Direct Energy as the Manager of  
9 Government and Regulatory Affairs for the Midwest. I managed the regulatory and  
10 legislative activities of Direct Energy throughout the Midwest, primarily in Ohio, Illinois,  
11 Indiana, Kentucky, and Michigan. My responsibilities covered electric, gas, and home  
12 services issues for all levels of customers, from residential to large industrial customers.  
13 In October 2020, I joined Builders Resource Group where I act as a shared service to  
14 Armada Power and NEP in my current professional position.

15 **Q5. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY TESTIFIED BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES**  
16 **COMMISSION OF OHIO?**

17 A5. Yes. A list of the Commission cases in which I have previously provided official testimony  
18 is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

19 **Q6. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY?**

20 A6. The purpose of my testimony is to support certain NEP objections to the Staff Report filed  
21 in these proceedings on November 25, 2020 (NEP Objections A.3 and A.4, B.2 and B.4)  
22 and to advocate for certain additions and/or revisions to the stipulation, including the tariff  
23 attached to the stipulation, filed in these proceedings on March 12, 2021. Specifically,

1 while the stipulation (and not the tariff) has a provision at Section E, paragraph 12, for  
2 equipment purchases by customers from Ohio Power Company (“AEP”), the language  
3 does not create a specific process or require good faith negotiation on the part of AEP.  
4 Additionally, Section 10. EXTENSION OF LOCAL FACILITIES of the tariff attached to  
5 the stipulation that begins on Sheet 103-5 should be revised to ensure a process exists that  
6 promotes efficiency through the use of better forms and timely updates to customers.

7  
8 **PART II. EQUIPMENT PURCHASE LANGUAGE, STIPULATION, SECTION E,**  
9 **PARAGRAPH 12**

10  
11 **Q7. WHY DID NEP PREVIOUSLY OBJECT TO THE STAFF REPORT AND WOULD**  
12 **REVISE THE STIPULATION’S LANGUAGE FOR EQUIPMENT PURCHASES?**

13 A7. NEP supports a standardized process for equipment purchases to establish a reasonable and  
14 consistent approach among customers. NEP acknowledges the recognition in the  
15 stipulation that customers do purchase AEP equipment. While the stipulation proposes  
16 language addressing equipment purchases, the language proposed in Section E, paragraph  
17 12 of the stipulation is woefully inadequate. Section E, paragraph 12 of the stipulation  
18 states “[t]he Company agrees to make best efforts to respond within 21 days to customer  
19 requests to purchase AEP Ohio facilities on customer premises.” (emphasis added). The  
20 language proposed by AEP does not create a process. Instead, the language requires AEP  
21 Ohio to make a best effort to respond by a deadline, without any clarity as to what a  
22 response includes or what happens after the response. The stipulation language does not  
23 require an evaluation, negotiation or anything other than some kind of a response within  
24 21 days. It is important for AEP customers that the Commission modify this language to

1 ensure AEP responds timely to requests and provides customers with a reasonable, uniform  
2 process to purchase equipment.

3 **Q8. WHAT DOES NEP PROPOSE AS A SOLUTION WITH RESPECT TO**  
4 **PURCHASES OF EQUIPMENT FROM AEP?**

5 A8. NEP proposes a process that includes a standard form and submittal process along with the  
6 21-day response deadline. Such process would provide property owners or their contracted  
7 authorized representatives with the “how” and “who” to contact for equipment purchases.  
8 It would ensure all customers who want to negotiate a purchase are treated equally. Finally,  
9 NEP recommends the Commission require a good faith negotiation between AEP and the  
10 customer or the customer’s authorized representative, as opposed to merely AEP’s “best  
11 efforts” to respond within 21 days. Under the current language in the stipulation, AEP can  
12 satisfy its duties under the proposed stipulation by “responding” on the twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) day  
13 after a purchase request that such request has been forwarded to individual “X” within  
14 AEP. Clearly, something more – specifically, **pricing** for the equipment – should be  
15 required from AEP in response to requests by customers to purchase AEP equipment. A  
16 higher quality of customer response should be established – well beyond the inadequate  
17 language in the stipulation. Accordingly, Section E, paragraph 12 of the stipulation should  
18 be revised to include a standard form and submittal process along with a good faith  
19 negotiation/dealing standard on the part of AEP in addition to the 21-day response  
20 deadline. It is in the public’s interest to have a set and fair process for the purchase of  
21 AEP’s equipment, and it would be unreasonable for the Commission to approve any  
22 stipulation without such straight-forward protections for the public.

1 The following is proposed language (additional language is in bold and italics) for Section  
2 E, paragraph 12 of the stipulation:

3 The Company agrees to make best efforts to respond within 21 days to  
4 customer requests to purchase AEP Ohio facilities *that are located* on  
5 customer premises *and that would no longer be used for AEP Ohio*  
6 *distribution service due to a customer project. Within 30 days of a*  
7 *Commission order approving this settlement, the Company will meet with*  
8 *interested parties to create a form for customer use in requesting an*  
9 *equipment purchase. The form should contain language explaining that,*  
10 *for a customer to request the purchase of a Company facility, the customer*  
11 *or the customer's authorized representative shall submit the completed*  
12 *form to the Company and the Company shall provide pricing and a list of*  
13 *any equipment that must remain with the Company due to any*  
14 *restrictions, to the customer or the customer's authorized representative.*  
15 *The process will require the Company to begin good faith negotiations*  
16 *with the customer or the customer's authorized representative within 21*  
17 *days of receipt of the request form from the customer.*  
18

19 **Q9. DO YOU RECOMMEND A PRICE FOR THE EQUIPMENT?**

20 A9. We are not recommending the process include a set price for specific equipment. Given  
21 depreciation and different ages versus useful life of equipment, it would be best for AEP  
22 and the customer or their authorized representative to negotiate the price in good faith to  
23 ensure a fair price is reached.

24 **Q10. WHY DO CUSTOMERS PURCHASE EQUIPMENT FROM THE UTILITY?**

25 A10. In general, when a customer switches between secondary or primary service, such customer  
26 may choose to install its own equipment or privatize the existing equipment on the property  
27 by purchasing it from the utility. In the case of NEP's customers, they may be choosing to  
28 privatize the infrastructure already installed by AEP rather than build over and around that  
29 equipment. I have also been advised by our engineers that AEP's equipment often sits  
30 unused on the customer's property after the customer builds its own infrastructure

1 **Q11. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A MULTIFAMILY PROPERTY OWNER**  
2 **PRIVATELY OWNING THIS EQUIPMENT?**

3 A11. There are multiple benefits to the property owner and they include the following:

- 4 a) Allows for streamlined move in and move out processes.
- 5 b) Allows the ability to track usage at a community, building and resident level.
- 6 c) Provides the community with predictive insights and control for maintenance and
- 7 troubleshooting rather than waiting on the utility.
- 8 d) Allows the multifamily owner to better manage its asset by receiving insights into
- 9 anomalies that can damage their property.
- 10 e) Enables the ability to uniformly distribute and benefit from energy efficiency and
- 11 energy technology measures.
- 12 f) Allows a customer to move the infrastructure on the property to meet safety and
- 13 property needs – something that a customer cannot do if the infrastructure is just built
- 14 over.
- 15

16 **PART III. CONSTRUCTION REQUESTS AND THE NEED FOR A PROCESS**

17 **Q12. WHAT HAS NEP'S EXPERIENCE BEEN IN MAKING CONSTRUCTION**  
18 **REQUESTS TO AEP UNDER THE EXISTING PROTOCOLS?**

19 A12. The existing process for construction requests, including line extensions and energizing  
20 new locations, is inefficient. NEP and its contractors often submit requests to AEP but  
21 then do not hear back for long periods of time, or have to escalate or more through multiple  
22 levels of AEP employees, and duplicate efforts. As just one example, on a project referred  
23 to as the Bantry Bay project, NEP contacted AEP on August 3, 2020, with respect to  
24 converting the property to a master metered property and the removal of AEP's meters

1 when the commercial meters are installed. By August 25, 2020, NEP was communicating  
2 with the fourth person at AEP involved with NEP's request. On November 9, 2020, NEP  
3 was advised by an AEP representative that yet another AEP representative was going to  
4 create the removal orders. On November 25, 2020, NEP was advised that there was another  
5 department within AEP, which the AEP representative did not previously know about, that  
6 creates removal orders on a quicker basis. On February 2, 2021, NEP was advised that the  
7 renewal orders were created, but then NEP had to wait for the AEP representative to  
8 communicate with AEP's line department to schedule the job. AEP's current process for  
9 responding to and fulfilling construction requests is inefficient and creates delays for us  
10 and our customers. NEP has experienced such delays on other projects in addition to  
11 Bantry Bay. Moreover, the existing form for construction requests does not allow  
12 customers (or their authorized representatives) to request or identify customized equipment  
13 needs. Customers should be able to provide such specific information at the inception of  
14 the project in order to eliminate the multiple exchanges with AEP regarding the scope of  
15 the construction for a specific project, when such scope can be clearly set forth at the outset  
16 if AEP's intake form is revised pursuant to the proposal below.

17 **Q13. WHAT SOLUTION DOES NEP PROPOSE TO IMPROVE CONSTRUCTION**  
18 **REQUESTS?**

19 A13. NEP previously objected regarding the need for improvements, and now is advocating for  
20 a process for construction requests that includes a more customizable form by the  
21 contractor/developer, a deadline of seven (7) calendar days from submittal to acknowledge  
22 that the request was received and to provide the AEP contact for the project, and an update  
23 on project status every twenty (20) calendar days. This will allow our team or any customer



1 working with developers and contractors to better plan a project, and ensure that the project  
2 has not fallen through the cracks and can proceed on a predictable schedule. The current  
3 process includes a form that does not include the ability to customize the service requests  
4 to the specific needs of our customers, which leads to our team re-writing AEP's form and  
5 then the request going into a bit of a closed room process at AEP. Even if we have the  
6 same AEP customer representative through the entire process (which is not always the  
7 case), the representative is often not clear on the status of our projects or not able to provide  
8 timely and accurate updates. Similar to the earlier issue I addressed, a higher quality of  
9 customer response should be established in the tariff for construction requests. Our  
10 proposal will provide visibility and clear planning for projects, and such efficiency is in  
11 the public interest and should also be beneficial to AEP, as AEP will be better able to keep  
12 track of construction requests on its end. NEP's modifications to the stipulation to improve  
13 AEP's construction request process are reasonable because such changes will make the  
14 process more efficient and transparent. Indeed, it would be unreasonable not to include  
15 such modifications to the stipulation as the current construction request process is  
16 inefficient and causes frustration, and such inefficiency and frustration costs our customers  
17 time and money. The existing problems with the construction request process can be fixed  
18 with slight modifications to the language in the tariff.

19 The following is NEP's proposed language (additional language is in bold and in italics)  
20 to Section 10. EXTENSION OF LOCAL FACILITIES of the tariff attached to the  
21 stipulation that begins on Sheet 103-5:

22 The Company shall construct suitable electric transmission and distribution  
23 facilities under this line extension policy to serve customer premises when  
24 the customer cannot be served from existing electrical facilities.  
25

1 Customers *or their authorized representative* requesting new or expanded  
2 electric service shall submit detailed and complete information *via an*  
3 *electronic business portal*, which ~~may~~ *will* include but not be limited to a  
4 *customer-customizable form for construction requests identifying* switch  
5 size, requested delivery voltage, total estimated load, listing of connected  
6 loads, operating characteristics, site survey plans (showing other utilities or  
7 underground infrastructure) and first floor elevations before the Company  
8 can develop a plan of service and prepare a construction cost estimate. *The*  
9 *business portal will allow customers to provide, with the initial request,*  
10 *additional information and documents.*  
11

12 The Company will determine the modifications to the Company's  
13 transmission and/or distribution facilities required to provide for a basic  
14 service plan to serve the customer's load. The Company will design,  
15 construct, own, operate and maintain the line extension and all other  
16 equipment installed to serve the customer's load up to the point of service  
17 for each customer. The Company, at its discretion and where practicable,  
18 will consider alternative route designs on the customer's premises, and the  
19 customer will be responsible for the incremental costs associated with the  
20 alternative route.  
21

22 *Within seven days of receiving the request, the Company shall*  
23 *acknowledge the request and shall provide the customer or their*  
24 *authorized representative with the name and contact information of the*  
25 *Company representative who will be responsible for the construction*  
26 *request. Company shall update the customer every twenty days regarding*  
27 *the status of the construction request and associated project.* Upon receipt  
28 of the necessary information from the customer, the Company will comply  
29 with Chapter 4901:1-907 of the Ohio Administrative Code and exercise its  
30 best efforts to expedite the entire process for developing a service plan and  
31 preparing a cost estimate.  
32

33 The Company shall have no obligation to extend, expand or rearrange its  
34 facilities if it determines that the existing facilities are adequate to serve the  
35 customer's electrical load.  
36

37 **Q14. ARE THERE OTHER PROVISIONS WHICH NEP OPPOSES IN THE**  
38 **STIPULATION?**

39 A14. Yes. Multifamily master metered customers have specific load factors which often result  
40 in high demand charges. Susanne Buckley will present testimony on this issue and NEP's  
41 alternative proposal for a pilot program for low-load factor customers.

- 1    **Q15. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR DIRECT TESTIMONY?**
- 2    A15. Yes, but I reserve the right to supplement my testimony.

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's e-filing system will electronically serve notice of the filing of this document on the parties referenced in the service list of the docket card who have electronically subscribed to this case. In addition, the undersigned certifies that a courtesy copy of the foregoing document is also being served upon the persons below via electronic mail this 20<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021.

/s/ Gretchen L. Petrucci

Gretchen L. Petrucci

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# EXHIBIT A

## LIST OF PUCO CASES IN WHICH TERESA RINGENBACH PRESENTED TESTIMONY

| Case Numbers  | Case Captions   |
|---|---|
| 08-935-EL-SSO   | In the Matter of the Application of Ohio Edison Company, The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, and The Toledo Edison Company for Authority to Establish a Standard Service Offer Pursuant to RC §4928.143 in the Form of an Electric Security Plan   |
| 11-346-EL-SSO,<br>11-348-EL-SSO,<br>11-349-EL-AAM<br>and<br>11-350-EL-AAM     | 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<br><br>In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company for Approval of Certain Accounting Authority   |
| 10-2929-EL-UNC  | In the Matter of the Commission Review of the Capacity Charges of Ohio Power Company and Columbus Southern Power Company  |
| 12-1230-EL-SSO  | The Application of The Ohio Edison Company, The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, and The Toledo Edison Company for Authority to Provide for a Standard Service Offer Pursuant to R.C. Section 4928.143 in the Form of an Electric Security Plan   |
| 12-1842-GA-EXM  | In the Matter of the Application to Modify, In Accordance with Section 4929.08, Revised Code, The Exemption Granted to the East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion East Ohio in Case No. 07-1224-GA-EXM  |
| 12-2637-GA-EXM  | In the Matter of the Application to Modify, in accordance with Section 4929.08, Revised Code, the Exemption Granted Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. in Case No. 08-1344-GA-EXM   |
| 12-1685-GA-AIR,<br>12-1686-GA-ATA,<br>12-1687-GA-ALT<br>and<br>12-1688-GA-AAM | In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for an Increase in Gas Rates<br><br>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Tariff Approval<br><br>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Approval of an Alternative Rate Plan for Gas Distribution Service<br><br>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Approval to Change Accounting |
| 13-1141-GE-RDR  | In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc. to Adjust Rider DR-IM and Rider AU for 2012 Grid Modernization Costs   |
| 13-2385-EL-SSO<br>and<br>13-2386-EL-AAM                                       | In the Matter of the Application of Ohio Power Company for Authority to Establish a Standard Service Offer Pursuant to §4928.143, Revised Code, in the Form of an Electric Security Plan<br><br>In the Matter of the Application of Ohio Power Company for Approval of Certain Accounting Authority   |
| 14-841-EL-SSO<br>and<br>14-842-EL-ATA   | In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio for Authority to Establish a Standard Service Offer Pursuant to Section 4928.143, Revised Code, in the Form of an Electric Security Plan, Accounting Modifications and Tariffs for Generation Service<br><br>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio for Authority to Amend its Certified Supplier Tariff, P.U.C.O. No. 20                                  |
| 14-1277-EL-CSS  | Direct Energy Business, LLC vs. Duke Energy Ohio, Inc.  |
| 13-1939-EL-RDR  | In the Matter of the Application of Ohio Power Company to Initiate Phase 2 of Its   |



# EXHIBIT A

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|--|---|
|  | gridSMART Project and to Establish the gridSMART Phase 2 Rider  |
| 15-1830-EL-AIR,<br>15-1831-EL-AAM<br>and<br>15-1832-EL-ATA   | <p>In the Matter of the Application of The Dayton Power and Light Company for an Increase in Its Electric Distribution Rates</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of The Dayton Power and Light Company for Accounting Authority</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of The Dayton Power and Light Company for Approval of Revised Tariffs</p>   |
| 17-791-EL-CSS<br>and<br>17-1967-EL-CSS   | <p>Direct Energy Business, LLC vs. Ohio Edison Company and The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company</p> <p>Ohio Edison Company and The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company vs. Direct Energy Business, LLC</p>   |
| 16-1602-EL-ESS,<br>17-32-EL-AIR,<br>17-33-EL-ATA,<br>17-34-EL-AAM,<br>17-872-EL-RDR,<br>17-873-EL-ATA,<br>17-874-EL-AAM,<br>17-1263-EL-SSO,<br>17-1264-EL-ATA<br>and<br>17-1265-EL-AAM | <p>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., to Establish Minimum Reliability Performance Standards Pursuant to Chapter 4901:1-10, Ohio Administrative Code</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for an Increase in Electric Distribution Rates</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Tariff Approval</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Approval to Change Accounting Methods</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Approval to Modify Rider PSR</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Approval to Amend Rider PSR</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Approval to Change Accounting Methods</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Authority to Establish a Standard Service Offer Pursuant to Section 4928.143, Revised Code, in the Form of an Electric Security Plan, Accounting Modifications, and Tariffs for Generation Services</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Authority to Amend its Certified Supplier Tariff, P.U.C.O. No. 20</p> <p>In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio, Inc., for Authority to Defer Vegetation Management Costs</p> |

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

Summary: Testimony - Direct Testimony of Teresa Ringenbach electronically filed by Mrs. Gretchen L. Petrucci on behalf of Nationwide Energy Partners, LLC