

From: [PUCO Consumer Call Center](#)
To: [Puco Docketing](#)
Subject: PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO - CASE #: 00763947 [ref:_00Dt0GzXt_5008y4RWGK:ref]
Date: Wednesday, June 15, 2022 3:49:35 PM



**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
Consumer Service Division
Memorandum**

CASE ID: 00763947

CUSTOMER: Shon E. Gress

SERVICE ADDRESS: 1022 Carlisle Avenue, Cambridge, OH 43725,
Cambridge, Ohio 43725

AIQ: Columbia Gas of Ohio

To ensure your response attaches to the appropriate case, please reply to this email without changing the subject line. Thank you!

DOCKETING CASE #: 21-0637

SUBJECT: Columbia Gas of Ohio - Protest Rate Case

Please docket the associated customer comment and/or attached in the case number referenced above under "Public Comments". This information was received by the Consumer Services Division through alternate channels and is being forwarded to be filed formally. This information is not the opinion of Staff and should not be viewed as such.

"On behalf of Guernsey County Senior Citizens & Disabled individuals living on very fixed incomes our organization and members strongly oppose Columbia Gas of Ohio's plans to increase their rates and approve an alternative rate plan. Columbia Gas of Ohio submitted its applications for rate increases and charges for approval of an alternative rate plan by the PUCO on June 30, 2021.

In Columbia's request that are asking for a 21.3% over current revenue rate increase. Have individuals living on Social Security and SSI/SSD received a 21.3% increase in their monthly benefits? No, they have not. PUCO's proposed increase of 3.98% and 6.34% over current revenues is

still high but seems more in-line and in scope with what most elderly & disabled individuals may even be able to afford.

At a time when gasoline, food, utilities, and most everything is rising in costs--senior citizens and disabled individuals living on very fixed budgets are finding it more and more difficult to make every dollar stretch. This doesn't begin to include the extremely rising and outlandish increases in medication and drug costs for many of these individuals either. While utility companies show big profits it is unfair to pass development and five-year capital expenditures on to the costs of their customers without taking a strong look at how they have spent and allocated their profits over their historic existence.

We are in defiant opposition and adamantly oppose Columbia Gas' requests of a \$221,429,000 (21.3%) increase.

Any rate increase will most certainly impose additional financial hardships, struggles, and increased unpayable bills among southeastern Ohio older & disabled adults. HEAP funding is very limited in Guernsey County and most non-profits that try to assist clients that fall on hard times, have difficulties paying all of their monthly utility expenses, sometimes cannot afford to have gas reconnected or turned back on, more and more go without gas that they need to cook and prepare food--or more importantly heat their water and their homes.

We are please asking the PUCO to deny and reject Columbia Gas of Ohio's proposed rate increase and we challenge the PUCO to work more closely within the State of Ohio to determine what, if any rate senior citizens on limited incomes can actually afford and what, if any, additional funding can be secured for elderly and disabled individuals to help pay their utilities (HEAP, etc...) should any rate increases be imposed from now and over at least the next five years.

I have served as the Executive Director of Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center, Inc., a non-profit, multi-community senior based services provider for 21 years of our organization's 50 years of operations. Over the past two-three years I have never encountered as many senior citizens as I have today who are financially struggling more and more. When for-profit greed, poor corporate investing and planning for business growth is under shadowed, and customers are expected to "just pay the price" there is a certain level of oversight and more closely monitorization that is more greatly needed. For the sake of everyone struggling in today's economy I hope the PUCO will exercise their authority and prevent Columbia Gas of Ohio from receiving permission to raise their rates in our Ohio cities, towns, villages and communities.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me personally.

Thank you.
Shon E. Gress
Executive Director/CEO
GUERNSEY COUNTY SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER, INC.
MEALS ON WHEELS GUERNSEY COUNTY"

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**Case No(s). 21-0637-GA-AIR, 21-0638-GA-ALT, 21-0639-GA-UNC, 21-0640-GA-
AAM**

Summary: Public Comment of Shon E. Gress, via website, electronically filed by
Docketing Staff on behalf of Docketing