

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In Re: Duke Energy Rates: Cause No. 21887ELAIR

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Proceedings had in the public hearing before NICHOLAS WALSTRA, Attorney Examiner for the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, at 6:00 p.m., on Wednesday, July 20, 2022, at Butler Tech Public Safety Complex, 5140 Princeton-Glendale Road, Liberty Township, Ohio, before, Jill M. Cutter, RPR, a Registered Professional Reporter within and for the State of Ohio.

1 APPEARANCES:

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3 NICHOLAS WALSTRA, Attorney Examiner
4 DENNIS DETERS, Commissioner
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 E. Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

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6 ROCCO D'ASCENZO, Deputy General Counsel
Duke Energy
7 139 East Fourth Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

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9 ANGELA D. O'BRIEN, Assistant Consumers Counsel
Ohio Consumers Council, Bruce Weston
10 65 East State Street
Suite 700 Columbus, Ohio 45215

06:21

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1 (Proceedings commenced at 6:00 p.m.)

2 MR. WALSTRA: Let's get started
3 here. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.
4 This is scheduled for a public hearing at this
5 time and place. Case number 21887ELAIR, which
6 relates to Duke Energy Ohio application for an
7 increase in its electric distribution rates, as
8 well as case numbers 21888 ELATA and 21889
9 ELAAM.

10 My name is Nick Walstra and I'm
11 the Attorney Examiner assigned by the
12 Commission to hear this case. Presiding with me
13 this evening is Commissioner Deters.

06:20

14 Commission Deters, if you would
15 like to say a few words.

16 MR. DETERS: I just wanted to
17 welcome everybody. I'm Commissioner Deters with
18 the Public Utilities Commission. I'm one of
19 five commissioners that serves the State of Ohio
20 in these cases. And I appreciate seeing all of
21 your faces. Whether or not you're here just to
22 pay attention and take notes or to speak, this
23 is an important part of our process as we
24 evaluate our distribution rate cases. Thank you
25 for being here.

06:20

1 MR. WALSTRA: We also have staff
2 members here with the Commission; Jill Kocher,
3 you probably saw her at the door. They are
4 available if you have any questions.

5 We also have representatives here
6 from Duke, the applicant, as well as Ohio
7 Consumers Council.

8 Along those lines, we'll start by
9 taking appearances on behalf of the parties and
10 we'll start with Duke.

06:21

11 MR. D'ASCENZO: Thank you, Your
12 Honor. On behalf of Duke Energy, Ohio, I am
13 Rocco D'Ascenzo, Deputy General Counsel. Our
14 address is 139 East Fourth Street, Cincinnati,
15 Ohio.

16 MR. WALSTRA: Thank you. And on
17 behalf of OCC.

18 MS. O'BRIEN: Good evening, Your
19 Honor. On behalf of the office of the Ohio
20 Consumers Council, Bruce Weston, Angela D.
21 O'Brien, Assistant Consumers Counsel, 65 East
22 State Street, Suite 700 Columbus, Ohio, 45215.
23 Thank you.

06:21

24 MR. WALSTRA: The subject of
25 today's hearing is the application filed by Duke

1 seeking to increase rates and charges. The
2 application was filed on October 1st, 2021. The
3 Commission staff filed a report of investigation
4 on May 19, 2022. This report is a
5 recommendation of the Commission staff and does
6 not necessarily reflect what the Commission's
7 final determination in this case will be.

8 The purpose of this evening's
9 public hearing is to receive testimony about the
10 application from persons in the local community
11 who are affected by the proposed rates, but who
12 are not parties to the case.

06:22

13 Tonight's public hearing will not
14 be treated as a question and answer session, but
15 rather an opportunity to let the Commission know
16 about Duke's application.

17 Tonight's public hearing is only
18 one aspect of the process in this case. We have
19 a public hearing, as well, next week on Tuesday,
20 and an evidentiary hearing is scheduled to
21 commence on September 19, 2022, at the
22 Commission's offices in Columbus. The purpose
23 of the evidentiary hearing is for the parties
24 and Commission staff to provide testimony and
25 other evidence regarding the project.

06:22

1 Tonight's hearing is being
2 transcribed by a court reporter. If you
3 please -- if you plan to testify, please speak
4 clearly so that the court reporter can
5 accurately reflect your comments on the record.
6 If you have a written statement, it may be
7 helpful to provide a copy to the court reporter
8 for reference to insure the transcript is
9 accurate.

10 Since we have a smaller crowd, I
11 will truncate this a little bit and skip ahead.
12 But the Commission appreciates your
13 participation in tonight's hearing. Everyone
14 who has signed up to testify will have an
15 opportunity to do so.

06:23

16 Along those lines, since we don't
17 have a big crowd, we will probably keep the
18 record open until 6:30 or so, in case anyone
19 else comes in.

20 We have a list of witnesses that
21 Commissioner Deters will call. If you could
22 come up to the podium up here and I will swear
23 you in, and then you can give your testimony.
24 And I'll ask that you give your name on the
25 record for the court reporter. Okay. We will

06:23

1 turn it over to you.

2 MR. DETERS: Jim Bolen.

3 (Participant sworn.)

4 MR. WALSTRA: Would you give your
5 name and address for the record?

6 MR. BOLEN: My name is Jim Bolen.
7 Address of my agency is 315 High Street,
8 Suite 670, Hamilton, Ohio 41011.

9 Thank you for allowing me the
10 opportunity to speak at this hearing.

06:24

11 My name is Jim Bolen and I'm the
12 Deputy Director of the Butler County Emergency
13 Management Agency. I have served this county
14 since 2016, and I have had the opportunity to
15 work with Duke Energy several times throughout
16 my tenure.

17 I'm here today to share my
18 experiences working with Duke Energy. It is
19 incredibly important that our agency maintain
20 strong working relationships with the utility
21 companies that serve our county, and we are
22 blessed to enjoy such relationships with the
23 utility companies here in Butler County, City of
24 Hamilton utilities, AES, Butler Rural, and, of
25 course, Duke Energy.

06:24

1 This strong working relationship
2 was most recently evident during heavy storms
3 experienced by Butler County in Southwestern
4 Ohio on June 13, 2022. Southwestern Ohio
5 experienced over 80,000 customers without power
6 during an unseasonably warm stretch. Duke
7 Energy and our other utility providers worked
8 hard to restore power and limit the impact of
9 the storms on the local citizens and
10 infrastructure in Southwest Ohio.

06:25

11 Additionally, Duke Energy worked
12 with my agency to establish a logical staging
13 area at the Butler County fairgrounds to further
14 expedite this process.

15 In addition to this most recent
16 example, Duke Energy has also supported several
17 emergency management initiatives in Southwest
18 Ohio. Duke Energy has routinely participated in
19 the Southwest Ohio Emergency Management
20 Association meetings. Duke Energy has also,
21 very graciously, served as the presenting
22 sponsor of the Southwest Ohio Regional Safety
23 Summit, a one-day series of lectures and
24 presentations on various safety topics.

06:25

25 Duke Energy and the other utility

1 companies in Southwest Ohio have worked
2 tirelessly with emergency management
3 professionals in our area to respond to the
4 needs of our community. Duke Energy management
5 and their technicians have established open
6 dialogue with emergency management professionals
7 during disasters and have responded promptly to
8 high priority issues, including priority
9 restoration of power to long-term care
10 facilities, hospitals, and other pieces of 06:26
11 critical infrastructure. These relationships
12 are a critical component of our emergency
13 management program.

14 In conclusion, the Butler County
15 emergency management agency would like to thank
16 Duke Energy and the other utility companies,
17 providers, in Butler County for the continued
18 support of our agency. Relationships with our
19 community partners are critical to our ability
20 to respond to disasters, and we thank them for 06:26
21 the role they play in our community. Thank you.

22 MR. WALSTRA: Thank you. I will
23 say, one paragraph that I skipped over, you may
24 be open to questions from the parties, so I will
25 ask if any of the parties have any questions?

1 MS. O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Your
2 Honor, I do. Good evening, Mr. Bolen.

3 First of all, thank you very much
4 for coming and providing your testimony here
5 today. It's nice to hear about your agency's
6 relationship with Duke.

7 Does your agency support the
8 54.7 million proposed increase by Duke Energy
9 Ohio?

10 A. My agency does not support any
11 political endeavor or any position. We are
12 simply here to state the relationship that we
13 have with Duke Energy and our other companies.
14 So I have no comment on whether or not our
15 agency supports or does not support them.

06:27

16 MS. O'BRIEN: Thank you.

17 MR. WALSTRA: Thank you. Anyone
18 else?

19 Thank you. You are excused.

20 That is the only witness we have
21 so far. We'll stick around till 6:30, but
22 otherwise, we will close the record and consider
23 ourselves adjourned. We can always go back on
24 the record if need be. Thank you for your
25 testimony and thank you all for coming out.

06:27

1 (Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.)

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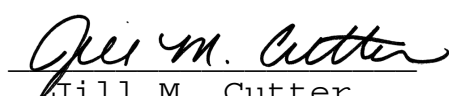
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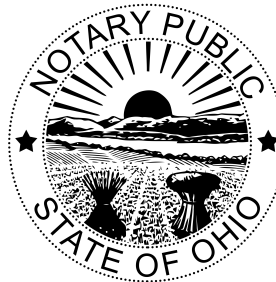
STATE OF OHIO
: SS
COUNTY OF WARREN

I, Jill M. Cutter, the undersigned, a duly qualified notary public within and for the State of Ohio, do hereby certify that the foregoing is the hearing given at said time and place; hearing was taken pursuant to stipulations hereinbefore set forth; hearing was taken by me in stenotype and transcribed by me by means of computer; I am neither a relative of any of the parties or any of their counsel; I am not, nor is the court reporting firm with which I am affiliated, under a contract as defined in Civil Rule 28(D) and have no financial interest in the result of this action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and official seal of office at Cincinnati, Ohio this 1st day of August, 2022.



My commission expires: June 25, 2023 Jill M. Cutter
Notary Public - State of Ohio



**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities
Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on**

8/2/2022 12:21:21 PM

in

Case No(s). 21-0887-EL-AIR, 21-0888-EL-ATA, 21-0889-EL-AAM

Summary: Transcript of Local Public Hearing on July 20, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at Butler
Tech in Liberty Township, Attorney Examiner Nicholas Walstra presiding
electronically filed by Ms. Mary E. Fischer on behalf of Jill M. Cutter, RPR, Litigation
Support Services