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January 11, 2023

PUCO

Subject: Columbia Gas of Ohio 21-0637-GA-AIR/21-0638-GA-ALT/21-0639-GA-UNC/21-0640-GA-AAM

To Whom it May Concern,

As a representative of the Community Action Agency of Columbiana County, Inc., I respectfully ask that you deny the proposed Stipulation as it doesn't not benefit consumers and restricts our ability to serve the low-income members of our community.

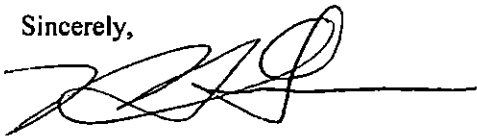
Our agency utilizes the WarmChoice program to provide much needed weatherization services to those households carrying the heaviest energy burden. By offering these services, we are providing direct benefits to low-income households as a long-term solution to higher energy bills while increasing their quality of life. This stipulation proposes diverting \$1.2 million away from these types of programs in favor of a bill payment assistance program. As a Director overseeing the LIHEAP funds I can attest that although bill payment programs provide a great benefit and are much needed by the population we serve, we do not fully expend our allocations available. Bill payment is also a temporary fix to a long-term problem and utilizing energy reduction measures are what make the difference.

Another area of concern referenced in the stipulation is the limiting of weatherization services to one rental premises per property owner. This would reduce the number of units that can be weatherized in areas where there is an aging housing stock that is the least energy efficient. Weatherization services is a cost-effective way to quickly address energy loss in these homes that are many times occupied by low income individuals. By limiting the services to one per property owner, low income households are being disproportionately affected and many units within our colder climate region will not receive weatherization services to reduce consumption. It should also be noted that many times it is more cost effective to complete projects in a single site location and many times rental units owned by one property owner are within the same geographic region. We strive to be good stewards of the funding we have available and this proposal will reduce our ability to work efficiently.

The mission of our organization is to strengthen the community, foster well-being, and promote self-sufficiency. We have been providing services to low income individuals since 1965. The items included in this filing by Columbia Gas are not in the best interest of the individuals needing assistance during times we are facing with high inflation and high energy prices.

Again, I ask that you do not approve the Stipulation as filed.

Sincerely,



Martina Grimm, Community Service Director
Community Action Agency of Columbiana County, Inc.

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