

LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING  
MUSKINGUM COUNTY, OHIO

In Re: The Application of :  
The Ohio Power Company for :  
Authority to Establish a : Case No. 23-23-EL-SSO  
Standard Service Offer, and : &  
The Application of Ohio Power : Case No. 23-24-EL-AAM  
Company for Approval of :  
Certain Accounting Authority :

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE GRETA SEE, Presiding

Wednesday, April 26th, 2023

6:00 p.m.

Zanesville-Muskingum County  
Conference & Welcome Center,

Heritage Hall

205 North 5th Street

Zanesville, Ohio 43701

\* \* \*

EMMA JANE TROYER

COURT REPORTER

\* \* \*

1 APPEARANCES:

2  
3 On behalf of Ohio Power Company:

4  
5 Steven T. Nourse  
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7 Columbus, Ohio 43215  
8 Stnoursr@aep.com

9 On behalf of Ohio Consumer's Counsel:

10  
11 Angela O'Brien  
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13 Columbus, Ohio 43215  
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## PROCEEDINGS:

MS. SEE: Let's go on the record. Scheduled for hearing tonight at this time and place before the Public Utilities Commission is Case Number 23-23-EL-SSO, captioned, in the Matter of the Application of the Ohio Power Company for Authority to Establish a Standard Service Offer, pursuant to 4928.143, in the form of an Electric Security Plan, and Case Number 23-24-EL-AAM, which is captioned, in the Matter of the Application of Ohio Power Company for Approval of Certain Accounting Authority.

My name is Greta See, and I am one of the attorney examiners assigned to the case by the Commission. Also with us tonight is Commissioner Dennis Deters. Commissioner Deters, did you want to say a few words?

MR. DETERS: Yeah. I just wanted to say hello and thank everyone for being here tonight. These hearings are an important part of our process, AEP's electric security plan. Obviously, very thankful that our staff at the PUCO who made it here, and Judge See for conducting this hearing. So thank you all for coming out.

MS. SEE: Thanks. Additionally, you met the

1 staff members as you came in the door -- Matt, who is at  
2 the table, and Jill, and they are members of the Ohio  
3 Power -- the Public Utilities Commission Public Affairs  
4 Department. If you have questions about how to access  
5 the Commission's website or questions about service or  
6 concerns about service or other utilities matters, you  
7 can approach them and they will try to help you.

8 At this time, I'd like to take appearances  
9 of counsel on behalf of the parties, and we'll start  
10 with AEP Ohio, or Ohio Power.

11 MR. NOURSE: Thank you, Your Honor. On  
12 behalf Ohio Power Company, Steven T. Nourse. With me  
13 is -- I'm VP of legal for AEP Ohio. With me is Lisa  
14 Kelso, vice president of finance and regulatory for AEP  
15 Ohio. We've got Michael Travis, and a brand new person,  
16 Jennifer Porter, Brett Schmied.

17 So we're all here to answer any questions  
18 people have as well. If they want to talk afterwards,  
19 or have questions about their bill or anything else  
20 about us, we're happy to stay and talk. Thank you, Your  
21 Honor.

22 MS. SEE: And on behalf of Ohio Consumer's  
23 Counsel?

24 MS. O'BRIEN: Good evening, Your Honors. On  
25 behalf of Ohio's Residential Utility Consumers, Angela

1 O'Brien with the Office of the Ohio Consumer's Counsel,  
2 65 East State Street, Suite 700, Columbus, Ohio, 43215.

3 Thank you.

4 MS. SEE: Thank you. In addition to Ms.  
5 O'Brien with Ohio Consumer's Counsel, there are a number  
6 of parties that have also filed to intervene in this  
7 case who represent various interests, including  
8 environmental organizations, industrial organizations,  
9 and other low income residential organizations.

10 Ohio Power, also known as AEP, filed this  
11 application on January 6th, requesting authority to  
12 establish a standard service offer in the form of an  
13 electric security plan for the period commencing June  
14 1st, 2024, and continuing through May 31st, 2030.

15 The local public hearings scheduled in this  
16 case are only one aspect the process. In addition to  
17 the hearing tonight, there are four additional hearings  
18 at -- local public hearings scheduled at various  
19 locations in April and May, as well as a virtual hearing  
20 option.

21 If you would like information on these other  
22 public hearings, please speak to either Matt or Jill,  
23 and they can give you the information you need to attend  
24 or to access the hearing. The evidentiary hearing in  
25 this case is scheduled to commence on July 10th, 2023,

1 at the Commission's offices in Columbus.

2 In AEP Ohio's application, the company is  
3 proposing an electric security plan that, among other  
4 things, is intended to satisfy the requirement for the  
5 company to provide a default electric generation  
6 service, which we refer to as the standard service  
7 offer, while also addressing certain other aspects of  
8 distribution service and the continuation and or  
9 creation of certain additional riders.

10 The purpose of this hearing -- the purpose  
11 of the hearing this evening is to receive comments from  
12 the public regarding AEP Ohio's application. It's not a  
13 question and answer session, but it's your opportunity  
14 to put on the record things that you want the Commission  
15 to know about AEP's application.

16 It's being transcribed by a court reporter.  
17 If you plan to testify, please speak clearly and slowly  
18 so that the court reporter can accurately record your  
19 comments on the record, and if you have a prepared  
20 written statement, if you would provide it to the court  
21 reporter for reference. It does not become part of the  
22 transcript in this case.

23 Additionally, if you do not wish to testify  
24 at this time, there's the opportunity to file written  
25 comments with the Commission via the Commission's

1 website or by mail, and be sure to use the case number,  
2 23-23-EL-SSO.

3 When you arrived you were afforded the  
4 opportunity to sign up to testify. Once we get started  
5 I'll call the witnesses forward. At this point we only  
6 have one individual who has requested to offer testimony  
7 tonight. When you come forward, you'll be sworn in,  
8 asked to give your name and address, and then you can  
9 proceed with your testimony.

10 Given that there's only one person that  
11 signed up so far, we'll use our first witness as an  
12 example. I believe the first witness on the list is  
13 Mayor of Zanesville, Don Mason. Mr. Mason, if you'd  
14 please step forward. Would you please raise your right  
15 hand?

16  
17 DONALD MASON,  
18 first having been duly sworn to testify to the truth,  
19 testified as follows:

20  
21 MS. SEE: Please state and spell your name  
22 for the record.

23 MR. MASON: Donald L. Mason, M-A-S-O-N.  
24 I'll use my business address, 401 Market Street,  
25 Zanesville, Ohio.



1 MS. SEE: Go ahead with your testimony.

2 MR. MASON: Thank you. And I'll abbreviate  
3 it, but I'll send a full electronic. It actually was  
4 interesting; after hearing you talk, I realized there  
5 was more I should have probably added. I do want to  
6 thank you for holding the hearing in Zanesville, Ohio.

7 As you're aware, AEP is requesting a 2.2  
8 billion dollar rate hike beginning in June, 2024 through  
9 2030. The ESP also includes such things as distribution  
10 system, grid modernization, economic development, and  
11 job retention. Again, I'm going to skip through a  
12 little bit so I don't read it word for word.

13 But I appreciate that electricity security  
14 plans are used for determining pricing of supply  
15 generation for customers who remain on the standard  
16 service offer rate. With the distribution electricity  
17 utility, ESPs can also include the investment in the  
18 distribution system, grid modernization, economic  
19 development, and job development. But this looks much,  
20 much more like a Christmas tree filled with presents.

21 I don't believe this is the right time for  
22 AEP to go along with locking in prices related to the  
23 ESP, and I ask PUCO to not entertain loading up the ESP  
24 with things that are not directly related to security or  
25 reliability.

1           The market for electricity has experienced a  
2 dramatic and unprecedented increase over the last few  
3 months. I believe that locking in prices when the  
4 market is volatile and high is not prudent. For  
5 example, the recent auction clearing prices are expected  
6 to increase bills for AEP standard service offers by  
7 nearly 30 percent in June -- by June of 2023. I think  
8 PUCO needs to view these requests in total, along with  
9 other increased costs that consumers are facing, such as  
10 gasoline, groceries, healthcare, and mortgage rates.

11           And I want to make it clear at this time --  
12 and this is what I wish I had added -- so in Zanesville,  
13 our median income is \$32,500, according to the 2020  
14 census. That's \$32,500. The median income for the  
15 State of Ohio is around \$53,000. So the point is,  
16 Zanesvillians really are making three-fifths what's  
17 being made across the State of Ohio.

18           More troubling, I see that there are -- in  
19 addition to the ESP, there are five new charges, riders,  
20 extending and modifying existing charges. These charges  
21 include the Energy Efficiency Rider, the Customer  
22 Experience Rider, the Rural Access Rider, the Ohio First  
23 Rider, and again, the Governmental Aggregation Standby  
24 Rider.

25           You know, the Smart City Rider Charge looks

1     like it will increase from 24 cents to 59 cents over the  
2     term of the ESP. I think the marketplace should be used  
3     to determine the factor of who is building EFV charging  
4     stations. The cost causer should be responsible for the  
5     cost, not the cost avoider. Let the owners of the  
6     Teslas pay for the charging station, using our  
7     traditional fuel -- excuse me -- because we're using  
8     traditional fuels, and those should not be saddled with  
9     the socialized cost.

10             Again, I don't think the Economic  
11     Development Rider Charge -- even though it's not  
12     scheduled to be increased, I think it should be  
13     eliminated, and AEP does have the sole discretion of  
14     when and where to use those funds. It's unlikely that  
15     Zanesville residents would see any benefits of these  
16     riders. These costs should be borne by shareholders and  
17     not regulated.

18             I'd like to also say, the Total Enhanced  
19     Service Rider, vegetation management, expense is going  
20     to go up from June of '24 through 2030 by \$539,000,000.  
21     I just think this is way above and beyond those charges  
22     that are already in the rate base. I would like to see  
23     more attention spent on where the best practices are  
24     being used on vegetation management, because quite often  
25     we see a lot of the same vegetation addressed year after

1 year after year, and probably should be eliminated at  
2 the very beginning.

3 Again, I don't think AEP should keep the  
4 energy efficiency plan in place. I think it should  
5 actually be removed, because residential customers are  
6 already paying a high cost, and it's the rise in  
7 electricity prices which will -- and the increase of new  
8 technologies which will reduce demands.

9 So new technologies, whether it's LED  
10 lights, water softeners, are all using classic energy,  
11 and a high energy price causes people to be more  
12 prudent. So I think those should be the tools we use  
13 for energy efficiency.

14 I really don't like the Customer Experience  
15 Rider. It's designed to recover capital investment  
16 expenses associated with existing customer information  
17 system, and as I view that, the Customer Experience  
18 Rider is really replacing what human people used to be,  
19 used to do, and I believe AEP has already captured those  
20 costs, really, in another line-item.

21 AEP proposes an electric vehicle  
22 transportation plan. I believe the budget is about  
23 \$99,000,000 for the ESP in term, or 16.5 million  
24 annually through that time period. That includes  
25 administrative costs of just under a couple million

1 dollars. Again, residential customers pay 6.3 million  
2 annually, plus a portion of research and development  
3 costs and education and outreach. I think this is the  
4 same as choosing winners and losers by subsidizing one  
5 mode of transportation over another.

6 There is no evidence -- there's been no  
7 evidence of the impact on the distribution or the  
8 transmission grids by increasing EFVs in our community.  
9 And again, I don't think Zanesville consumers should be  
10 charged for any of the net costs above and beyond what's  
11 available in federal funding.

12 AEP proposes a Government Standby Rider, and  
13 I'll just segue -- this appears to me when certain  
14 aggregators failed to perform their fiduciary duties. I  
15 believe AEP is proposing a placeholder standby charge  
16 for aggregators to pay an insurance premium for  
17 customers returning to default service. I just think a  
18 performance bond would be better when aggregators are  
19 picking up customer load.

20 Frankly, and lastly, I don't agree with the  
21 idea of having Rural Access Riders to fund fiberoptics  
22 projects. Costs are estimated \$94,000,000 capital, and  
23 \$20,000,000 operating expenses. There are many state  
24 and federal funding sources for broadband in rural  
25 areas, and urban areas like Zanesville do not need these

1 kind of socialized costs. We're already served with  
2 broadband. Actually, we have spectrum, and Horizon is  
3 coming through the area, so we have at least two  
4 well-working fiberoptics services. But it does seem  
5 like AEP is revisiting the issue of 20 years ago, when  
6 they looked at broadband through the power lines.

7 But then, once again, I want to thank the  
8 PUCO, and actually all the people attending here, for  
9 being in Zanesville, and again, I ask you to stop by  
10 Tom's Ice Cream Bowl or one of our restaurants to help  
11 our economy.

12 But also, on a serious note, we're very  
13 pleased. I saw Mike was here; we have a great working  
14 relationship with AEP, so this isn't anything personal  
15 about AEP, the service, the linemen who work here and  
16 live here. We appreciate them.

17 MS. SEE: Any cross examination for this  
18 witness? Mr. Nourse, Ms. O'Brien?

19 MR. NOURSE: No, Your Honor.

20 MS. O'BRIEN: None.

21 MS. SEE: Thank you. Is there anyone else  
22 present that wishes to offer testimony tonight? Okay.  
23 We'll go off the record.

24  
25 (Recess from 6:18 p.m. to 6:32 p.m.)

1 MS. SEE: Let's go back on the record. Let  
2 the record reflect that it is now 6:32 p.m., and no one  
3 has -- no additional persons have appeared to offer  
4 testimony tonight, and so we are adjourned. Thank you.

5  
6 (Hearing concluded at 6:32 p.m.)

7  
8 \* \* \*

C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is true, correct  
and complete written transcript of the proceedings in  
this matter, taken by me on the 26th day of April, 2023,  
and transcribed from my stenographic notes.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Emma J. Troyer", is written over a horizontal line.

EMMA JANE TROYER

Professional Reporter and  
Notary Public in and for the  
State of Ohio

My Commission Expires: 01-09-27



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