

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Application
for Ohio Edison Company and The
Cleveland Electric Illuminating
Company and The Toledo Edison
Company for Authority to
Provide for a Standard Service
Offer Pursuant to R.C. 4928.143
in the Form of an Electric
Security Plan

Case No.
23-301-EL-SSO

HEARING

DATE: Thursday, September 14, 2023

TIME: 6:08 p.m.

BEFORE: Megan J. Addison, Administrative Law
Judge

Isabel Marcelletti, Administrative Law
Judge

LOCATION: Board of Lucas County Commissioners
One Government Center
Toledo, OH 43604

REPORTED BY: Michael Rennillo, Notary Public

JOB NO.: 6057113

A P P E A R A N C E S

ON BEHALF OF TOLEDO EDISON COMPANY:

BRIAN KNIGHT, ESQUIRE

ON BEHALF OF INTERVENORS:

JOHN FINNIGAN, ESQUIRE

ALSO PRESENT:

Amy Carl, Ohio Consumer's Counsel

Kelsey Johnson, Participant

Brian Knight, First Energy

Brandon McMillan, First Energy

George Sarantou, Toledo City Council

Andy Shaffer, First Energy

John Williams, Public Utilities Commission of
Ohio

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E X H I B I T S

| NO. | DESCRIPTION | ID/EVD |
|----------------|-------------|--------|
| Plaintiff: | | |
| (None marked.) | | |

| NO. | DESCRIPTION | ID/EVD |
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| Defendant: | | |
| (None marked.) | | |

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 JUDGE MARCELLETTI: Good evening. I
3 will project. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
4 calls for a hearing at this time and place. Case
5 number 20-3-301-ELSSO. Caption, In the Matter of the
6 Application of Ohio Edison Company, The Cleveland
7 Electric Illuminating Company, and the Toledo Edison
8 Company for Authority to Establish [sic] a Standard
9 Service Offer Pursuant to R.C. 4928.143 in the Form of
10 an Electric Security Plan.

11 My name is Izzy Marcelletti, and with
12 me is Megan Addison. We are the attorney examiners
13 assigned by the Commission to conduct this public
14 hearing tonight. Also with us this evening is
15 Commissioner John Williams, who's one of the five
16 commissioners of the Public Utilities of Ohio.

17 Commissioner Williams, would you like
18 to make a few remarks?

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Good
20 evening, everyone. I would like to welcome everyone
21 to tonight's public hearing, and thank everyone for
22 taking the time out today to attend. For any members
23 of the public that are here today, I would encourage
24 you to come forward and offer any comments that you
25 may have on the case that's before us. Thank you.

1 JUDGE MARCELLETTI: Thank you,
2 Commissioner. We also have some representatives of
3 the commission's public affairs department, and
4 service monitoring enforcement department in the hall
5 that you passed as you walked in tonight. They are
6 available if you have questions concerning the
7 commission's process, if you need assistance in
8 accessing any of the documents submitted in this case,
9 or if you just have general questions about the
10 hearing tonight. And at this time I would like to
11 take appearances of the parties. First Energy?

12 MR. KNIGHT: Thank Your Honors. Good
13 evening, Your Honors, Commissioner Williams.
14 Appearing as counsel on behalf of Toledo Edison
15 Company, I'm Brian Knight. I have others with me this
16 evening. Brandon McMillan, our Ohio manager of rates
17 and regulatory affairs as well as Andy Shaffer for
18 Ohio rates and regulatory affairs.

19 And another thing that the company's
20 done is we anticipate that this evening there may be
21 some in attendance who are customers of the company
22 who may not have positions to express on the proposed
23 electric security plan but may have questions relating
24 specifically to their own bills or service or other
25 issues of that matter, and to try to help those

1 customers, the company has, outside the hearing room,
2 a table -- to distinguish from the commission's table,
3 it has a blue tablecloth, and there we have employees
4 of the company who are standing by and ready to try to
5 help with any issues that customers may have here this
6 evening.

7 The employees staffing the table
8 include members of our customer experience
9 organization. We have -- including our vice president
10 of customer engagement, Mark Jones, vice president of
11 customer care Ken Straw, and other members of that
12 organization. In addition, it includes members of our
13 regional external affairs organization. We have Dan
14 Tompkins, our director of regional external affairs,
15 Terry Killeen, our manager of regional external
16 affairs, and Victor Coleman of our regional external
17 affairs organization as well, and other members of
18 that group that may be able to help with some of your
19 questions.

20 So if you have something here that
21 doesn't relate directly to the security plan but is
22 particular to you and there's a way we might be able
23 to help, please see that table, and they're there to
24 try to help you this evening.

25 Thank you, Your Honors.

1 JUDGE MARCELLETTI: Thank you, Counsel.
2 Are there any counsel on behalf of the intervenors
3 tonight?

4 MR. FINNEGAN: Good evening, Your
5 Honor. My name is John Finnegan with the Office of
6 the Ohio Consumer's Counsel. With me I have Amy Carl.
7 She's our director of outreach and education for this
8 region in Ohio. She's available to help answer any
9 questions that consumers might have about the plan or
10 the process, and she'll be here throughout the evening
11 and she can also follow up later if needed. So I
12 would encourage anyone who might have a question to
13 please come up, and she can help. Thank you.

14 JUDGE MARCELLETTI: Thank you, Mr.
15 Finnegan. Are there any other parties that have been
16 granted or have filed an intervention in this
17 proceeding?

18 Seeing none, I'll just note for the
19 record that while they're not required to attend this
20 evening, there are a number of other parties that have
21 filed for intervention in this case. Ohio Edison
22 Company, the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company,
23 and the Toledo Edison Company, which we'll refer to
24 collectively as First Energy tonight, filed this
25 application on April 5, 2023, requesting authority to

1 establish a standard service officer in the form of an
2 electric security plan for the period commencing June
3 1, 2024, and continuing through May 31, 2032.

4 The purpose of this evening's public
5 hearing is to receive comments from the public
6 regarding an application that has been filed by the
7 companies in this case. This is not a question and
8 answer session, but it is an opportunity to let the
9 commission know what you think about the company's
10 request. Tonight's local hearing, as well as the
11 other scheduled local hearing in Akron are only one
12 aspect of the process. There will also be an
13 evidentiary hearing for the parties who have been
14 granted intervention to present their case to the
15 commission. This evidentiary hearing is currently
16 scheduled to commence on November 7th of this year,
17 2023, and it will be held at the commission's offices
18 in Columbus.

19 Upon your arrival, you have the
20 opportunity to sign up to testify. You have that
21 sign-up sheet, and after I finish these introductory
22 remarks, we will be begin by inviting individuals to
23 come up and speak in the order that they signed up.
24 Each person who signed up to testify will be permitted
25 to speak once about the application. Before you

1 present your testimony, we will ask you to take an
2 oath for affirmation that what you are about to say is
3 the truth. We will also ask you to state your name
4 for the record, and then you'll be free to make your
5 remarks. We ask, for efficiency, try to limit it to
6 under five minutes, and if you've prepared any written
7 comments, please provide a copy to the court reporter
8 there.

9 What is said and heard by the court
10 reporter will be introduced into the record in this
11 case, and then counsel for the parties for this case,
12 we will ask if you have any cross-examination for the
13 witness as a group, so just speak up or signal to us.
14 The testimony that you provide tonight will be
15 considered part of the official record in this case
16 and it will be reviewed by the commission before the
17 final decision is rendered.

18 As counsel for First Energy already
19 pointed out, should you have specific questions about
20 the application, the representatives are here and
21 certainly willing to speak with you, and again, our
22 commission staff is available should you have any
23 questions about the commission's process.

24 Other notes. If you decide that you do
25 not wish to testify, when we read your name from the

1 sign in sheet, you can pass it to the next witness.
2 If you decide that you prefer to file written comments
3 in the case docket, our staff can answer your question
4 about how to do that in the hallway. Once you're
5 finished testifying, or if you're here to observe, you
6 may leave the hearing at any time you wish.

7 For anyone who does not wish to
8 testify, you may also fill out our sheets in the back
9 in support of or in opposition of the application.
10 Again, our staff can assist you with that process.

11 Now at this time we will begin with our
12 testimony.

13 JUDGE ADDISON: The first individual I
14 have signed up to provide testimony this evening is
15 George Sarantou. I'm sorry if I've got your last name
16 wrong.

17 MR. SARANTOU: Sarantou.

18 JUDGE ADDISON: Sarantou. I apologize
19 for that.

20 MR. SARANTOU: Am I testifying --

21 JUDGE ADDISON: If you would just want
22 to come up towards the front of the room so the court
23 reporter can hear you a little easier? That might
24 help.

25 MR. SARANTOU: Sure. Thank you, Your

1 Honors. I'm George Sarantou --

2 JUDGE ADDISON: -- I'm going swear you
3 in real quick.

4 Do you swear the testimony you're about
5 to provide in this proceeding is the truth?

6 MR. SARANTOU: Yes.

7 JUDGE ADDISON: Thank you. Please
8 state your name for the record.

9 MR. SARANTOU: I am George Sarantou,
10 resident of the City of Toledo. I am also a Toledo
11 city councilman at large, and wanted to basically say
12 that we all understand costs have gone up for
13 everybody, including the energy industry, and we
14 understand that at this time, inflation is still very
15 much a challenge here in the United States. Well,
16 it's here in Toledo. I represent about 270,000
17 people, citizens of the City of Toledo, and we
18 recognize that Edison has been a very good corporate
19 citizen in our community.

20 However, I feel that the rate increase
21 is enormous. I feel that it should not be as high.
22 Asking -- could be as high as \$200,000,000 per year
23 for the next eight years. I feel that is excessive.
24 That residents of Toledo, like everyone else around
25 Ohio, are hit with very high costs at the grocery

1 store, gas pumps, and just in raising a family.

2 And I think that it's very important
3 for the commission to consider all factors, including
4 how much money Toledo Edison's making. How much money
5 is First Energy Making? What are the profit levels?
6 Because historically, people in northwest Ohio, in the
7 city of Toledo specifically, we have paid very high
8 electric rates.

9 And it has been a burden, and it's a
10 burden of economic development in attracting employers
11 and companies to come here and open up their shops and
12 hire people. It is a negative, and we know that
13 because as council people, we hear that from many
14 people that have tried to do business here in Toledo
15 and gone out to other areas, Wood County, Bowling
16 Green, Ohio, as an example has a very low electric
17 rate.

18 So we think that the commission needs
19 to take this into total perspective and look at the
20 total picture. Obviously we want to see rates that
21 are not huge increases. Not only will seniors be
22 affected and people that are raising children and
23 people in our community of all ages, but we're also
24 talking about the business community, and what does
25 the business community do when you have higher

1 electric rates? They have to pass those rates on. If
2 you have a diner, if you have a restaurant, if you
3 have a machine shop, if you're an auto parts supplier,
4 if you're a big company like Stellantis, the Chrysler
5 plant here in Toledo, the General Motors plant, you
6 really have to pass those costs on.

7 So I urge you as a councilman to please
8 carefully look at this increase. Please do not give
9 them the increase that they're asking for. I think
10 it's unwarranted and will place a huge burden on the
11 citizens of Toledo. I thank you, Your Honors.

12 JUDGE ADDISON: Thank you very much,
13 Councilman. Any questions for this witness? Anything
14 from you, Mr. Finnegan? Thank you very much for your
15 statement.

16 That does conclude our list of those
17 that have signed up prior to the beginning of our
18 local hearing this evening to testify. At this point,
19 I would like to open the floor for anyone who did not
20 have a chance to sign up to testify but would like to
21 do so at this time.

22 Okay. In order to afford everyone a
23 chance, we may have some folks running late this
24 evening. We will go ahead and just take a quick ten-
25 minute break just to afford those folks another

1 opportunity to get here and try to make comments or
2 testimony that they'd like to provide this evening, so
3 with that we will go off the record for about ten
4 minutes.

5 THE REPORTER: Going off the record at
6 6:21 p.m.

7 (Off the record.)

8 JUDGE MARCELLETTI: -- it's around --
9 6:30. And that concludes the witnesses who signed up
10 to testify tonight. Anyone else who is present this
11 evening who would like to testify? Seeing and hearing
12 none --

13 MR. JOHNSON: I'll go.

14 JUDGE MARCELLETTI: Yes, sir --

15 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. I'll be brief.

16 JUDGE MARCELLETTI: Can you raise your
17 right hand, sir?

18 Do you swear or affirm that the
19 testimony you are about to provide will be the truth?

20 MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

21 JUDGE MARCELLETTI: Perfect. If you
22 can please state and spell your name for the record?

23 MR. JOHNSON: My name is Kelsey
24 Johnson. That's K-E-L-S-E-Y Johnson, J-O-H-N-S-O-N.

25 JUDGE MARCELLETTI: Thank you, Mr.

1 Johnson. You can proceed.

2 MR. JOHNSON: I'll be brief. This
3 consumer alert letter pretty much says it all, and we
4 all know that a rate increase was just done recently.
5 And to have another increase is like, what's really
6 going on? And to lock it in for eight years? That's
7 a sign of the American greed, and we're saying, when
8 is it going to be enough?

9 And then with this increase, is there a
10 well-defined ideological statement on where the
11 dollars are going to be allocated, or is it just a way
12 of saying, "Let's get the best of these consumers so
13 we can laugh our way and giggle to the bank."

14 There has to be a stopping point,
15 because consumers in Ohio, Toledo, can't really afford
16 it. And like George was saying, businesses are going
17 to suffer. So that means that consumers are going to
18 suffer bigger bills at home, and then when they go
19 shopping, they're going to see increases due to the
20 electric increase. And that eight years.

21 That's a lot of years to be paying a
22 lot of money on a monthly basis. It would add up very
23 quickly. So I am totally against a rate hike when we
24 just had one and it wasn't a small hike. It was huge.
25 And I'm still crunching numbers as we speak.

1 So let's not get this thing passed,
2 because it doesn't do anybody any justice other than
3 First Energy and their greed mentality going forward
4 for an eight-year lock in. Thank you.

5 JUDGE MARCELLETTI: Thank you for your
6 statement. Are there any questions from counsel?
7 Thank you again, Mr. Johnson.

8 Is there anyone else who would like to
9 provide a statement tonight? Seeing and hearing none,
10 thank you to everyone for their participation and any
11 travel here tonight. Thank you, Commissioner, for
12 attending with us. We would also like to thank the
13 board of Lucas County Commissioners for allowing us to
14 use their venue in order to conduct this public
15 hearing in person with all of you this evening. The
16 hearing has now concluded. The transcript will be
17 submitted on the record for the commission's
18 consideration in this case. Thank you all again, and
19 have a great evening.

20 THE REPORTER: We are going off the
21 record at 6:37 p.m.

22 (Whereupon, at 6:37 p.m., the
23 proceeding was concluded.)
24
25

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSITION OFFICER

I, MICHAEL RENNILLO, the officer before whom the foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby certify that any witness(es) in the foregoing proceedings, prior to testifying, were duly sworn; that the proceedings were recorded by me and thereafter reduced to typewriting by a qualified transcriptionist; that said digital audio recording of said proceedings are a true and accurate record to the best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this was taken; and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any counsel or attorney employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.



MICHAEL RENNILLO

Notary Public in and for the
State of Ohio

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

I, RICHARD GOODNESS, do hereby certify that this transcript was prepared from the digital audio recording of the foregoing proceeding, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings to the best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this was taken; and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any counsel or attorney employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Goodness', is written over a horizontal line.

RICHARD GOODNESS

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