

File

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FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

Dennis E. Wellman
(YOUR NAME)

AGAINST

The American Electric Power Company
(THE COMPANY)

00-1164-EI-CSS

MY COMPLAINT IS: (Please see the attached letter of)
(complaint)

I am requesting that AEP charge me the minimum usage rate for April, May, and then charge me for 93 KWH's in June. June was the month when AEP's reading of my meter finally agreed with the actual meter reading which I videotape recorded.

(ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY BE ATTACHED)

Dennis E. Wellman
SIGNATURE

5110 Parkline Drive
STREET ADDRESS

Columbus, OH 43232-5213
CITY, STATE, & ZIP

614-964-8647
TELEPHONE NUMBER

RECEIVED-DOCKETING DIV
00 JUN 27 AM 12:03
PUCO

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Technician Dennis E. Wellman Date Processed June 28, 2000

RECEIVED-DOCKETING DIV

00 JUN 27 PM 12: 05

PUCO

June 19, 2000

Dennis E Wellman
5110 Parkline Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43232-5213
Telephone: (614) 864-4607
Account: 104-532-613-0-6
Meter Number: 58594924

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

Dear sirs:

My current difficulties with the American Electric Power Company (AEP) began with the bill which I received for the month of October, 1999, for \$74.05. This was my first warning that my power bills would be escalating rapidly over the next few months.

The only irregularities that I had previously noted were a number of power surges, sometimes two or three per day, beginning last summer, which I had called AEP to report. These surges stalled both my refrigerator and air conditioner, and even turned my computer-printer on. I purchased an expensive surge protector to attempt to protect my sensitive computer equipment. I expressed concern to AEP that I was afraid that these surges would damage my appliances. William Sucevic of AEP finally contacted me in a letter dated January 13, 2000, asking me to call him. During the phone conversation Mr. Sucevic indicated to me that AEP had been unable to trace the source of these power surges.

During the early months of this year my electric power bill has increased exponentially. During this period the same three people have lived at my address and I am at a loss to explain the reasons for such a marked increase. Below are the amounts listed for recent bills beginning October, 1999, when I first became concerned:

10/99	\$74.05	
11/23/99	\$54.47	603 KWH
12/99	\$81.54	
1/00	\$84.33	
2/25/00	\$96.81	1519 KWH
3/27/00	\$135.56	1372 KWH
4/25/00	\$170.96	3486 KWH

(This April bill has not yet been paid by me as I have continued to contest it.)

The only time that I had previously seen my electric bill reach \$70.00 prior to October, 1999, was during the peak usage summer month of August when my central air-conditioning unit was in full use. My electric bills for the previous months of 1999 are listed below:

01/99	\$49.77	
02/99	\$34.81	
03/99	\$33.58	
04/99	\$26.40	
05/28/99	\$24.03	
06/25/99	\$47.32	581 KWH
07/27/99	\$56.04	700 KWH
08/25/99	\$70.04	792 KWH
09/99	\$52.99	

I have lived in my home on Parkline Drive in Columbus since 1998. The homes in the neighborhood where I live were built by Qualstan during the 1970's. I have spoken with my neighbors who live in homes of similar design, and which were built during the same period. They have indicated that their electric bills do not exceed \$70 per month during the peak cooling summer season with their central-air conditioning units running.

I placed a series of calls to AEP expressing my concern and dismay over the escalating power bills. Only after many phone calls and involving the PUCO and the Consumer Council did AEP show any interest in my complaints.

When I asked AEP representatives if the meter could be faulty, they responded that there was little possibility of it. I was told that the problem was mine and that their responsibility for me as a customer ended at the meter. When I asked the AEP representatives for other possible causes for the sudden increase of my power bills, I was told that I probably had faulty appliances which were causing my elevated bills. So beginning last December, I began replacing my appliances. Over the next few months I purchased a new refrigerator, stove, microwave oven, chest freezer, washer and dryer. I even purchased compact fluorescent light bulbs to try to further reduce my usage of electricity.

When my bills continued to soar even higher, I continued to express my dismay to AEP. AEP representatives then said that I must have a sump pump that was running constantly. I took a representative from the company down to my basement and showed him that my basement was dry, and that I have never even been aware that there was ever a necessity for the sump pump to kick "on."

All the while, the bills just continued to mount. When all these efforts did not decrease my bills, I was then told by AEP representatives that I might have a circuit breaker in my fuse box that had shorted out. I was told that I should use my hand to feel the circuit breakers in my box to see if there was indeed a breaker that was faulty. I was told that if a breaker was damaged it would be very hot to my touch. They further related that if a breaker was indeed damaged, there was a very real danger that my house would catch fire. I followed their instructions but was unable to identify any problem with a circuit breaker.

After AEP finally began its own investigation, my meter was read four different times. I escorted the meter readers into my backyard myself each time, since for security reasons (several of my neighbors have been burglarized recently), I felt that it was necessary to install a lock on the gate to my backyard.

Two of these meter readings were conducted by Mr. Terry Tipple, who indicated that he had been assigned to investigate the case. In subsequent phone conversations, Mr. Tipple told me on two different occasions that he would come to my home to discuss the matter with me the following day. However each time he failed to appear. Mr. Tipple also indicated that he would bring me a meter reading schedule which I have never received.

When an African-American employee of AEP did come to test the meter, he told me that it was functioning within AEP specifications. He said that he wished that everything that was thirty years old worked as well as the meter on my house. Later that day, I received the following phone message on my answering machine from Mr. Tipple of AEP, saying:

"Morning, Mr. Wellman, this is Terry Tipple at American Electric Power Company. I wanted to talk to you about your electric bill. The company has over read the meter, and, in fact, just checking this morning, (I'm in briefly at the moment--it's the tenth of April), but it appears that on the seventh, the company read the meter and again *misread* it. I'm going to stop by again today and hope I catch you there, but I'll have this account re-billed. This most recent bill, when you see it, you won't like this, I think that's what the problem was, I have ordered a meter test."

Through 03/09/00, the last bill that we both agree I paid, I paid for a meter reading of 42, 543 KWH of electricity. I am confused, because AEP appears to be attempting to add additional charges to bills which I had already received.

AEP has re-billed me adding an additional \$21.16 to the \$135.56 that I had already paid for the month of March.

03/09/00 04/07/00 41026 M 42055 M \$21.16 \$21.16 Extra

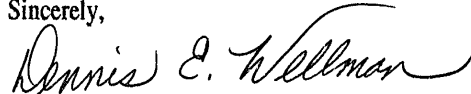
In addition, to the \$170.96 bill for April, they have re-billed me, adding an additional charge of \$51.93 for a total of \$222.89 for the month of April.

04/07/00 to 04/10/00 42055 M 42085 A
04/10/00 to 05/09/00 42085 A 42636 A \$51.93 \$51.93 Extra

AEP is, in effect, attempting to add an additional charge of \$73.09 for 93 KWH's of electrical usage, for the months of March and April, for which I had already received bills. At no time did I request a re-billing of my account by AEP. It appears that I am being charged twice for the same electricity. Instead of just billing me a minimum usage rate until their readings agreed with what I had already paid for, they appear to have decided to bill me twice for the same electricity.

I believe that AEP should have charged me at the minimum usage rate for my April and May bills and then have added the 93 KWH to my June bill. June was the month when their reading of my meter finally agreed with the actual meter reading which I had videotape recorded. I am in a quandary as to what path to pursue at this point and would appreciate any suggestions you might have. I feel that AEP has been insensitive to my concerns. Any interest or help which you or others might offer me with this problem would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Dennis Wellman

cc: AEP, Ohio Consumer Council, Eyewitness 10 Troubleshooters, Six on Your Side