

BEFORE

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Commission's Promulgation of Rules for Electric Transition Plans and of a Consumer Education Plan, Pursuant to Chapter 4928, Revised Code. ) Case No. 99-1141-EL-ORD

ENTRY

The Commission finds:

- (1) Ohio Power Company, Columbus Southern Power Company, the Cincinnati Gas & Electric Company, The Dayton Power and Light Company, Monongahela Power Company, Ohio Edison Company, Toledo Edison Company, and Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company (hereinafter referred to as companies) are electric light companies as defined in Section 4905.03(A)(4), Revised Code, and public utilities as defined in Section 4905.02, Revised Code. As such, these companies are subject to the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Commission in accordance with Sections 4905.04 and 4905.05, Revised Code.
- (2) The Ohio General Assembly passed, and the governor signed, legislation that will require the restructuring of the electric industry and provides for retail electric competition with regard to the generation component of electric service (Amended Sub. Senate Bill No. 3 of the 123<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly). Section 4928.42, Revised Code, requires the companies to spend, in the aggregate, \$33 million during the transition period to educate Ohio's consumers about their new choices for electric service. Section 4928.42, Revised Code, also directs the Commission to prescribe and adopt by order a general plan for consumer education.
- (3) On November 30, 1999, in this docket, the Commission adopted the general plan for consumer education. This plan includes the use of a toll-free hotline for consumers to request more information about their choices. The Request for Proposal (RFP) attached to this entry solicits expressions of interest from firms that wish to be considered as an outsourced extension of the Commission's Public Interest Center answer center functions in support of a statewide

advertising/educational campaign. The Commission believes that the fluctuating call volumes and the expected duration of increased call volumes over a limited period, as experienced in other states going through electric restructuring, requires a flexibility in staffing both short term and long term that would be difficult for a state agency to maintain. Although the Commission currently handles sustained large call volumes, the Commission does not believe the state employment system offers a state agency the staffing flexibility and efficiency necessary for needing extended peaks and periods of substantially less volumes. We note that a per-call charge offered by centers in other states have been effective in addressing the problem. By memorandum docketed on March 1, 2000, in this docket, staff outlined a recommendation for supplementing its answer center activities and we affirmed their recommendation in our March 2, 2000, Entry in this docket. Therefore, the Commission is seeking to supplement its answer center activities with this outsourced support.

- (4) The Commission will, in consultation with OCC and OEUI, review the bids and shall approve the selection of the firm to assist in consumer education. Pursuant to our November 30, 1999 Finding and Order, the Commission directed that the cost of contracts for the education campaign for electric restructuring will be borne by the companies and coordinated by the Ohio Electric Utilities Institute. The companies shall make appropriate arrangements with the firm(s) for such payment and shall make such payments pursuant to the arrangements solely upon the instruction of the Commission's staff.
- (5) The selected firm shall perform its duties as an independent contractor. It shall be understood that the Commission, its staff, and all other agencies and offices of the state of Ohio shall not be liable for any acts committed by the selected firm in the performance of its duties.

It is therefore,

ORDERED, That the Commission's staff issue the request for proposal, and evaluate all responses received. It is, further,

ORDERED, That the companies and the consultant shall observe the requirements set forth in this entry. It is, further,

ORDERED, That a copy of this entry be served upon the companies.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

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Alan R. Schriber, Chairman

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Ronda Hartman Fergus

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Craig A. Glazer

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Judith A. Jones

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Donald L. Mason

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