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AES Ohio

PUCO Rejects AES Ohio's Motion to File a Sur-Reply (Case Nos. 20-1651-EL-AIR, et al.)

Summary: Based on arguments made by the OMAEG, the PUCO rejected an improper attempt by AES Ohio to make additional, untimely arguments regarding the stipulated rate freeze. Following the conclusion of the briefing period, and on the eve of oral arguments in its distribution rate case, AES Ohio filed a motion for a sur-reply, arguing it be given an *additional* opportunity to respond to arguments made by the OMAEG in its reply brief. The OMAEG opposed the request. The PUCO found, based on the OMAEG's arguments, that "simply responding within a reply brief to an argument asserted in an initial brief does not provide a reasonable basis for the filing of a sur-reply." As a result, the commission rejected the request, allowing the parties to stand on the arguments made in their briefs and at oral argument, while denying AES Ohio the opportunity to raise further arguments.

Columbia Gas

Columbia Holds Public Meeting on Distribution Rate Increase (Case No. 21-637-GA-AIR)

Summary: Columbia held a public meeting to discuss its application to increase distribution rates for natural gas. Columbia is proposing to increase base rates by about 30%. Although Columbia proposes much higher increases to the flat charges paid by customers, these flat charges are only one component of the overall rates customers pay. Additionally, Columbia is proposing new riders and to continue existing riders which will further increase the rates above the 30%. The OMAEG, PUCO staff, and other parties have opposed this unreasonably high increase. Staff recommends that the base rate portion of the increase should be closer to between approximately 4% and 7%. The OMAEG, PUCO staff, Columbia, and other parties continue to participate in settlement discussions.

(Continued)

FirstEnergy

**FirstEnergy Employees Deposed
(Case No. 17-974-EL-UNC)**

Summary: The OMAEG participated in depositions of current and former FirstEnergy officers in relation to the audit of FirstEnergy's corporate separation plan. The witnesses responded to questions regarding FirstEnergy's compliance failures with the corporate separation between FirstEnergy's regulated utilities and unregulated affiliates.