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PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION

February 13, 2020

Public Service Commission
211 Sower Blvd.
P.O. Box 615
Frankfort, KY 40602-0615

RE: Case Number 2019-00271


Dear Public Service Commission Members:

My comments pertain to Duke Energy's request for an increase in electric rates for users in the utility's Northern Kentucky region. An investor owned utility has a responsibility to treat its stakeholders—customers, shareholders, and staff, in a fair and reasonable manner, and at the same time provide safe reliable energy.

Duke Energy's request for a 16.2% electric rate increase is **unreasonable**. In 2018, after 11 years of no increase by Duke in the fixed charge, the PSC approved a new fixed rate of \$11, up from \$4.50. That seemed fair, given the number of years with no increase, as well as changes now taking place in the energy industry. But coming back two year later with a 27.3% increase in the fixed rate to \$14 seems out of bounds and disproportionately burdensome to customers. Has Duke explored other alternatives in meeting a viable return on its investment in infrastructure? To what extent are other stakeholders sharing the burden?

I live in Ludlow where the poverty rate in this town of 4500 is 21.4%. In next door Covington the rate is 24.7%. Ludlow has a large number of rental units, and 66% of the residents in this housing are below the poverty line. Absorbing such a large rate increase will indeed be a challenge to those on fixed incomes and low wage earners. In addition, such a large increase in the base rate creates a disincentive for customers to improve energy efficiency in their homes.

I am aware that it is the responsibility of the utility company, and not the PSC to determine the affordability factor in rate setting. I sense that Duke did not consider this factor adequately when it made its request to the PSC. I urge the PSC to request that Duke go back to the drawing board and come up with a more realistic rate request where all stakeholders share the burden.


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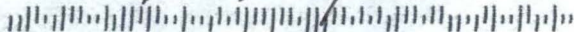
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