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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

APPLICATION OF OWEN)
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.) Case No. 2011-00037
FOR AN ADJUSTMENT OF RATES)

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S POST-HEARING BRIEF

Comes now the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, by and through his Office of Rate Intervention, and tenders the following posthearing brief in the above-styled matter.

On January 31, 2011 Owen Electric Cooperative, Inc. ("Owen" or "the company") filed its notice of intent to file the instant case seeking a change in retail rate design which the company claimed would be revenue neutral. On May 6, 2011, Owen filed its application, which the Commission accepted into the record on May 31, 2011, after certain deficiencies were cured. Owen's application is based on a historical test year ending December 31, 2009.

At a time when utilities and their customers are facing unprecedented cost increases,¹ Owen, which acknowledges that its financial condition is "excellent,"²

¹ See, e.g., Owen's response to AG 1-89 (c)("Given the current environment with member financial stress resulting from the great recession, rising fuel costs, environmental compliance costs, etc, as evidenced by the recent filings at the Public Service Commission of the six major regulated power suppliers in the state, we expect wholesale power costs to increase dramatically.")

² See Owen's response to AG 1-7 (a): "As shown in exhibit 12 of the Application, Owen's financial condition is excellent;" and Witt cross-examination, Video Record ["V.R."] at approximately

seeks to impose a radical rate design change³ which disincentivizes conservation, and perhaps more importantly, would vastly diminish the ability of its customers to reduce or limit the cost of their utility service.

A. Owen's Data Prove Sales Grew in the Past Ten Years; Sales Forecasts Show Continued Growth Trend

The primary goal of Owen's petition is a fundamental restructuring of the company's rate design for its residential and small commercial classes such that most of the revenue collection is transferred from the variable energy charge to the fixed monthly customer charge. Owen's petition, if approved, would thus shift the current mix of its distribution-level revenue sourcing (excluding purchased power) from approximately 35% derived from fixed monthly fees and the remaining 65% from volumetric charges, to about 75% being derived from the fixed monthly charge and only 25% from volumetric revenue. While Owen claims that the average residential customer will not experience any increase, the same cannot be said for the very significant number of customers who consume less than the system's average customer.

Owen states in essence that implementation of a rate design that collects the preponderance of revenue from fixed monthly fees is necessary in order to: (1) protect its financial integrity against the risk of declining energy sales; and (2)

^{16:02:40} in which the witness stated that last year Owen paid \$750,000 in capital credits to its ratepayers.

³ Under its current rate design, Owen's current member satisfaction rate is 86%, highest in the EKPC system, according to Mr. Stallons. V.R. at approximately 11:50:00.

⁴ See Attorney General's pre-filed written direct testimony of Glenn Watkins, p. 2, lines 17-20.

promote energy efficiency investments. ⁵ Ironically, Owen was making the same statements in its last rate case, ⁶ when it stated it could not pursue energy efficiency unless it was allowed to increase its customer charge the full amount of its request, which the Commission granted in full. ⁷

However, the evidentiary record in the instant case fails to support Owen's request for a stepped increase in its customer charge in the ultimate sum of \$25 per month. Rather, the evidence establishes an entirely different story. Owen's own records prove that its sales have not only been growing for most of the past ten (10) years, but are projected to continue that growth trend into the future. As depicted in Attorney General Hearing Exhibit-1, Owen's own historical data proves there that there has been no decline in usage per residential customer.⁸ Furthermore, the Company's response to AG 1-79, p. 7, column 7, which depicts Owen's forecasted usage as far as 2030, indicates a significant growth in MWh usage for the residential class from 2010 – 2030.⁹ Therefore, Owen cannot cite to any data supporting its claim that it is facing a risk of declining energy sales.

5 Can a Stallong Tostimony on 2

⁵ See, e.g., Stallons Testimony, pp. 2, 5; Owen's Response to PSC 1-8 (Mark Stallons responding); Adkins Rebuttal Testimony, p. 6; Purvis Rebuttal Testimony p. 4.

⁶ See Stallons testimony, Case No. 2008-00154, pp. 4-5, 8. See also, V.R.., Case No. 2008-00154, in which Mr. Stallons acknowledged Owen was not submitting any new DSM programs in that case (V.R. at 10:34 a.m.); that he was not familiar with Kentucky's DSM statute (V.R. at 10:35 a.m.) and did not know that Kentucky utilities could submit energy efficiency programs under which they can capture their costs, a portion of lost sales revenues, and a monetary incentive for participating in such programs (V.R. at 10:36 a.m.); and that Owen would likely file with the Commission proposals for new DSM / conservation programs (V.R. 10:41 a.m.).

⁷ Case No. 2008-00154, Final Order dated June 25, 2009. The Commission, however, did not award the full amount of the revenue increment Owen sought in that case.

⁸ See also V.R. at 16:07:40 through 16:08:15.

⁹ V.R. at 16:09:45 through 16:11:04.

Owen is apparently relying on sales figures for 2009, which plainly show unusually low consumption, so much so that 2009 is clearly an outlier compared with most other years depicted in AG Hearing Exhibit-1.¹⁰ A pertinent portion of that exhibit is attached below for reference:

	Single F	amily (Cla	ss 30) ·
Year	KWH	Bills	Avg. Use
2002	569,383,232	444,674	1,280
2003	571,114,931	461,116	1,239
2004	601,136,933	479,559	1,254
2005	641,206,593	497,350	1,289
2006	627,554,600	512,696	1,224
2007	688,674,014	523,715	1,315
2008	681,505,245	529,421	1,287
2009	662,073,036	533,011	1,242
2010	718,357,600	534,884	1,343

This outlying period of reduced sales may, in fact, be the exact reason why Owen chose a 2009 historical test year, relying on data derived two years ago. Many utilities around the nation experienced a significant decrease in sales during 2009, due in large part, if not primarily to the economic downturn. The use of a two-year old test year, especially one with data which markedly veers from a utility's actual sales trends is patently unreasonable, represents a significant departure from rate filings brought before this Commission, and should be called into question, if not outright disregarded.

 $^{^{10}}$ V.R. at 16:15:09 through 16:15:17. This exhibit is based directly on Owen's response to AG 1-76. The entire exhibit is attached hereto as "Appendix A."

In recent years, many utilities throughout the country which have sought a straight-fixed variable rate design (SFV) or other variations or aspects of decoupling allege they have a disincentive to encourage DSM programs, that sales volumes have been declining when in fact they have been holding steady or growing, and emphasize the importance of encouraging DSM programs while in actuality offering only token programs. This pattern of utilities seeking SFV or other aspects of decoupling was denounced in a resolution adopted by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates, a copy of which is attached hereto as "Appendix-B." Owen's testimony and responses to data requests in the instant case have generally fallen within this same pattern. Owen's DSM offerings to date have been exceptionally minimal, at best.¹¹ The Attorney General believes the Commission should not overlook this fact, as the General Assembly undoubtedly enacted the DSM statute to provide incentives for conservation and energy efficiency without the unnecessary need to engage in unprecedented steps to tinker with traditional rate design that has heretofore served the ratepayers and utility companies well for generations. Indeed, over the course of two successive cases, Owen has repeatedly claimed that it is subject to a "throughput disincentive" (despite acknowledging that it owes a fiduciary duty to meet its ratepayers' best interests12); that its sales volumes are at risk of declining; and that it emphasizes the importance of DSM, whereas its actual

¹¹ Even for those few programs which Owen offers, customer participation levels have been insignificant. Moreover, Owen has yet to conduct any California tests of the programs it offers. V.R. beginning at approximately 14:41:53.

¹² See Company's response to AG 1-40.

offerings illustrate mere token acceptance of the concept of a longstanding mechanism to achieve the conservation that Owen purports to encourage. ¹³

The fiduciary duty Owen acknowledges it owes its customers – to act in their best interests – outweighs any other factor which Owen cites. In other words, an RECC that satisfies its fiduciary duty would not be selling any more, nor any less electricity than its member-owners require; hence any issue of throughput incentive in the facts of this case should be moot. The imposition of a SFV rate design would preclude the ability of Owen's customers to control most of the amount of their utility bill, and would send inappropriate pricing signals which would enhance sales at the expense of conservation. Such results can hardly be said to meet the ratepayers' best interests. Most importantly for purposes of this case, the evidentiary record fails to support the alleged need for the SFV rate design which Owen seeks, and accordingly should be denied.

B. Owen's Filing is Arguably Not Revenue-Neutral for the Company and Clearly is Not Revenue-Neutral for its Customers

Owen has further alleged that it is seeking no new revenues in the instant case, and that thus its filing is "revenue neutral." However, it is rates and not revenues that the Commission regulates. These regulated rates are determined in the simplest terms as revenues divided by billing determinants (KWH sales and number of customer bills). If KWH sales are low based on recent history as evidenced by the use of the 2009 data, the resulting rates are abnormally high if

¹³ During cross-examination, Mr. Stallons attempted to shift responsibility for the lack of DSM filings from Owen and instead blamed EKPC's rate structure. V.R. at approximately 10:36:40.
¹⁴ Id.

revenues will be purportedly the same as Owen would appear to infer in its filing. To crystallize this point, under Owen's rate design, the rates are based on abnormally low KWH sales. Consequently, because revenues will likely increase or remain the same as experienced in years before and after the 2009 test year, Owen's distribution rates will remain abnormally high, if not unreasonable. Thus, it is questionable whether the rates are truly revenue neutral.

The lack of revenue neutrality to Owen's customers' bills has been patently admitted in the company's response to PSC 1-16, wherein the company acknowledged that as many as 26,000 residential customers and 1,100 small commercial customers could receive an increase in their bills. While the new rates may, or may not prove to be revenue neutral to the *company*, nonetheless Owen acknowledges that this would not necessarily be the case for more than one-half of its *customers*. In fact, 52.1% of residential bills would increase under Owen's proposal, if approved and unless customers elect one of the alternative proposed tariffs. The residential cost savings to customers that Owen purports these alternative tariffs will have is simply a question that cannot be answered with certainty, especially for all those affected. 16

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¹⁵ Importantly, Owen's initial notice to its customers of the rate case filing indicated there would be no impact on the average bill. However, the Attorney General objected to the adequacy of the notice and moved to dismiss the case, whereupon Owen agreed to re-notice the hearing with accurate information pertaining to the average increase on the bills. Despite the fact that Owen may have satisfied the minimum legal requirements regarding adequate notice, the question remains whether the ratepayers can accurately determine what impact, if any, the rate design changes will have on their bills and whether it would be advantageous to choose one of Owen's proposed alternative rates.

¹⁶ See Attorney General's Pre-Filed Written Direct testimony, p. 3.

C. Owen's Proposed Rate Increase is Anything But Gradual

In Case No. 2011-00035,¹⁷ involving another RECC, Vice Chairman Gardner wrote a separate dissenting opinion in which he agreed with the reasonableness of the increase in distribution base rates, but dissented as to the allocation of the increase.¹⁸ The Vice Chairman opined that energy efficiency and DSM programs will play a critical role in maintaining low electricity bills. He further stated:

"In the absence of substantial DSM and energy efficiency programs, I cannot support a rate structure which increases the cost of electricity to residential customers regardless of the amount of energy consumed, particularly those customers who are able to reduce usage through their own energy efficiency efforts." ¹⁹

In the instant case, Owen clearly lacks substantial DSM programs, contrary to the Commission's demands in Owen's last rate case, yet seeks to implement a rate design that greatly increases the fixed customer charge regardless of consumption. The fact that Owen has failed to avail itself of any meaningful relief through the DSM statute is very telling.

In another recent ruling, the Commission in Case No. 2011-00036 ²⁰ found that two special contract smelter customers were subsidizing the rural (residential) class by \$13.5 million, but disallowed the smelters' proposal to

¹⁷ In Re: Application of Kenergy Corp. for an Adjustment of Existing Rates, Final Order dated Nov. 17, 2011, pp. 8-10.

¹⁸ Id. at 9.

¹⁹ Id. at 9-10.

²⁰ In Re: Application of Big Rivers Electric Corp. for a General Adjustment in Rates, Order dated Nov. 17, 2011 (however, Big Rivers has filed a petition for rehearing which the Commission has granted, while KIUC has filed a separate appeal in the Franklin Circuit Court, both of which are still pending at the time this brief was filed).

remove 100% of the subsidy in that case.²¹ In doing so, the Commission found that: "[s]uch an action would be inconsistent with our long-standing practice of employing the principle of gradualism in moving toward cost-of-service-based rates." ²²

Owen states that its proposed increase would occur only gradually through five (5) annual step increases. In its last rate case, Case No. 2008-00154, Owen obtained approval to increase its customer charge from \$5.64 to \$11.30, an increase of 100.35%. In the present case, Owen proposes to increase its customer charge from \$11.30 to \$15.00 in just one year, an increase of 32.74%. Over the five-year span of rate increases, Owen proposes to increase its customer charge from the current \$11.30 to \$25.00, an increase of 121.24%. Thus, if the Commission should approve the current application, Owen's customer charge will have skyrocketed from \$5.64 when its 2008 rate case was filed, to \$25.00 at the conclusion of the step increases in the current case -- a period of only eight (8) years -- a whopping 343.26% increase. This pattern of rapid, significant increases can hardly be said to be gradual; indeed, it more closely resembles radical growth.

D. Owen's SFV Rate Design is Designed To Eliminate its Risk and Will Only Encourage Consumption

Owen has repeatedly stated that the SFV rate design it seeks to impose is designed to incentivize the company to create energy innovation by offering

²¹ Id. at 29-30.

²² Id. at 30.

efficiency, conservation and demand response programs.²³ Owen identifies several risk factors which it states will prevent it from offering such programs, among them: temperature fluctuations, fuel and construction costs, climate change legislation, and environmental regulations.²⁴ Owen believes eliminating these risk items will leave it with a stable revenue stream.²⁵

Owen is a monopoly service provider and its ratepayers are captive customers. Rate regulation is intended to be a substitute for competition, hence the enactment of KRS Ch. 278. This principle of regulation was designed to stimulate a utility to act as it would if it was in a competitive industry, i.e., to make a profit, or in the case of Owen maintain a reasonable TIER and continue its financial viability. In the event an adequate TIER is not met, KRS 278.190 provides the remedy by allowing for an adjustment in rates. But Owen's attempt to increase its customer charge to the excessive extent it seeks is tantamount to reimbursement ratemaking, and virtually guarantees that the company will earn its TIER. Such would represent a clear and indeed radical departure from generally accepted ratemaking foundations. Competitive entities do not have any such guarantees. Since regulation is supposed to be a substitute for competition, regulated entities should not receive guaranteed recovery of costs if such guarantees are not available in the competitive marketplace.

²³ Stallons testimony, p. 7.

²⁴ See, e.g., Stallons testimony pp. 7 and 12.

²⁵ Stallons cross examination, V.R. 12:01:55 through 12:02:10.

The regulatory compact under which Owen is operating dictates that the utility must provide safe, adequate and reliable service, and in exchange is allowed an opportunity to earn a reasonable TIER and return on investment, while the ratepayers are required to pay rates that are fair, just and reasonable and represent the lowest possible cost. Thus, the regulatory compact calls for a balancing of interests between a utility and its ratepayers with both benefits and detriments to be shared in an appropriate manner. An imbalance occurs when all of a rate increase is placed on the customer charge because the company virtually eliminates its financial risk while the ratepayer is trapped with a bill over which he has virtually <u>no control</u>. Owen's SFV rate design thus clearly rewards the company by freeing it from risk to the greatest degree possible, but it transfers that risk to the ratepayers.

Stated another way, the company would be guaranteed its income regardless of whether its management operates the company in a manner prudent enough to provide safe, adequate and reliable service at the lowest possible cost. Under Owen's current regulatory compact, an increase in costs in any one area should stimulate cost cutting elsewhere as the Company strives to attain its TIER goals. However, this crucial incentive will be abolished if the customer charge is increased to the levels Owen seeks, and will essentially render KRS 279.190 a nullity as applied to the company for the foreseeable future.

While Owen's financial position would doubtlessly be dramatically improved under its proposal, its customers, however, would be forced to bear costs incurred by an Owen management team freed of its responsibility to avoid imprudent costs. In practical terms, it is axiomatic that customers dictate how much energy will be used, not the utility. Flattening electric rates to make them more closely resemble cable television rates eliminates the incentives consumers need to conserve. Indeed, as pointed out in the Attorney General's pre-filed testimony, the SFV rate design's ultimate result is to send price signals designed to *increase* consumption.²⁶ Absent incentives targeted to *customers* as well as the utility, the cause of energy efficiency which Owen is correct to trumpet so strongly will simply *not* be accomplished.

The fact that customers need to be incentivized was recognized in EKPC's "Wholesale Cost of Service Analysis and Rate Design" report, where it was stated that decoupling, which includes SFV rate designs such as that which Owen seeks to impose in the instant case, "... would also diminish the incentive from the customer's perspective to participate in energy efficiency programs."²⁷ The report goes on to state that "[a]brupt departures from historical rate structures and policies should be avoided," and that "... rate designs should promote the efficient use of energy and capacity by providing appropriate price

²⁶ Attorney General's Pre-Filed Testimony of Glenn Watkins, pp. 9-10.

²⁷ Owen's Supplemental Response to AG DR 1-16, EKPC's "Wholesale Cost of Service Analysis and Rate Design," Bates stamped pages 384-385 of 449.

signals."²⁸ Clearly, Owen's customers, if forced into a risk-shifting SFV rate design, would have no incentive to participate in DSM programs. Such a design would just as clearly constitute a marked departure from the recommendations in EKPC's report which cautioned against abrupt changes which fail to provide appropriate price signals.

Finally, the Commission itself has repeatedly advised utility customers, in public meetings and on its web site, that the most effective way to lower utility bills is to *conserve*. For example, Commission staff made several public presentations to customers of another electric utility in which staff appropriately emphasized the importance of conservation.²⁹ Under Owen's proposal, however, any monetary savings resulting from customer conservation would, by definition, be vastly diminished and would consequently fail to yield the same level of savings that could be achieved under a traditional rate design in which the preponderance of the utility's costs are placed in the energy charge component. The goal of empowering customers to conserve in order to save is a fundamental principle that the Commission and consumer advocates, like the Attorney General, must address as affordability of utility services is rapidly

²⁸ <u>Id</u>. at Bates stamped page 381.

²⁹ See slide presentation given by Kentucky Public Service Commission Staff on or about March 10, 2011, entitled "Understanding Your Electric Bill," copy attached hereto as "Appendix C"; see especially slides 30-36.

becoming a major issue -- if not *the most important issue* -- for the Commonwealth's utility customers.³⁰

Customer-initiated conservation in reaction to appropriate price signals is currently, and will *always* remain the most efficient means of conserving energy. As utilities engage in more and more DSM and EE programs, their rate base grows, allowing them greater returns than if they had never engaged in the programs. Ideally, conservation costs for ratepayers should offset the programs' costs. However, the notion that DSM and EE programs alone, without actual customer-initiated conservation, can both reduce consumption *and* save customers money will not likely occur. Under any regulatory approach in which DSM is the sole or even primary means of conservation, customers would likely end up paying more because program costs could easily outweigh conservation savings. Such a result cannot be allowed to occur given the enormous cost increases of a truly fixed nature (e.g., environmental, fuel, and potential costs for construction of new generation) that ratepayers will soon be forced to bear.

Owen has repeatedly stated that when the company is "freed" from its existing rate design, it will be able to pursue significant efforts designed to yield efficiency and conservation – yet it has failed to produce any sort of quantification of any such alleged savings. The record is void of any nexus between SFV and conservation-initiated savings. Indeed, Owen's attempt to do

³⁰ The number of Owen's customers receiving LIHEAP assistance has increased dramatically, up 54.3% increase from 2008 to 2010. Source: Company's response to PSC 1-11 (a).

so flies in the face of other utilities which have been able to achieve conservation through DSM and EE programs without resort to the radical departure from traditional cost of service studies and rate design which Owen seeks to employ. Owen's attempt to shift its business risks to ratepayers will increase the company's sales and rate base while throwing conservation out the window, adding insult to injury in such financially trying times.

E. Owen's Proposed Optional Residential Rate Structures Should be Rejected or Significantly Revised

As an alternative to its SFV rate design, Owen is proposing three seasonal time-of-use ("TOU") rate schedules, as well as an inverted usage block schedule. Owen's proposed customer charge for the TOU schedules is \$25. This cost is excessive, does not comport with gradualism, and as set forth above, is another attempt to free the company of risk it normally would bear and transfer that risk to its customers. Accordingly, the Attorney General believes the customer charge for the TOU rates should be reduced to a range of between \$11.30 to \$17.00 per month.³¹

Owen's proposal to employ an optional inverted block rate structure is directed toward customers who use less than 500 KWH monthly. This structure is inappropriate for the following reasons. First, customers in this category have high load factors because they rarely use air conditioning. Inverted block structures are generally not very effective in cases such as Owen's proposal in

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³¹ See Attorney General's pre-filed direct testimony, p. 17.

which the average and marginal cost of providing service to the eligible customers increase as KWH usage increases. Such a design will not be very efficient when, such as here, it is targeted to customers with high load / low usage characteristics.³² Second, the proposed fixed monthly customer charge of \$15.78 is excessive and should not exceed \$11.30. Third and most importantly, Owen's proposed energy charge for the first consumption block of 0-300 KWH does not even meet the company's variable cost of providing energy.³³ Ironically, Owen would thus have the Commission approve a rate with a built-in subsidy -- a result that is untenable and that should not be allowed.

From a general perspective, inclining block rate structures have significant merit when applied across entire customer classes. Additionally, such measures have the potential to yield major conservation and efficiency, when applied in an otherwise appropriate manner. The Attorney General encourages Owen to consider re-filing the inclining block concept for application across the entire residential class in a manner designed to encourage conservation and efficiency.

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³² Id. at 17-18.

³³ Id. at 18.

F. Owen's Bonus Plan Should Not be Recovered in its Rate Base to the Extent it is Based on the Company's Financial Performance

As established in responses to data requests and during cross-examination during the evidentiary hearing, Owen maintains a bonus incentive plan which is based in part upon the company's financial performance.³⁴ Details regarding the company's performance plan were established in Case No. 2008-00154, in the company's response to PSC 2-27. Owen' witness Witt acknowledged that the plan continues in force through the present time.³⁵

However, the Commission has a well-established precedent that performance incentive plans based on the financial performance of the company should not be included in rate base. In Union Light Heat & Power Company's ("ULH&P"36) 2005 base rate case, Case No. 2005-00042, the Commission disallowed 100% of that utility's LTIP incentive compensation that was entirely based on Total Shareholder Return performance. The Commission also disallowed portions of ULH&P's AIP incentive compensation program to the extent that the AIP program was based on corporate financial performance goals. In the three ULH&P base rate cases³⁷ prior to Case No. 2005-00042, the Commission disallowed 100% of ULH&P's incentive compensation expenses based on its finding, among other things, that the corporate performance goals in ULH&P's incentive compensation plan placed more weight on the interest of

³⁴ See company's response to AG 1-56; see also Case No. 2008-00154, company response to PSC 2-27, p. 1 of 2.

³⁵ V.R. from approximately 15:59:40 through approximately 16:03:45.

³⁶ N/k/a Duke Energy of Kentucky.

³⁷ Case Nos. 2001-092, 92-346 and 91-370.

shareholders than customers. In addition, while the Attorney General in Kentucky American Water Company's ("KAWC") 2004 rate case (Case No. 2004-00103) recommended the disallowance of 60% of KAWC's incentive compensation (representing the portion of KAWC's incentive compensation program that was a function of the achievement of corporate financial performance goals), the Commission went further and disallowed 100% of KAWC's incentive compensation expenses.

Although those precedents involved investor-owned utilities ("IOUs"), the principle is even *more* important in the case of RECCs, which as Owen has acknowledged owe a fiduciary duty to their customers to care for the latter's best interests. Implementing a bonus program designed to incentivize workers to enhance the company's bottom line clearly poses a direct conflict to Owen's fiduciary duty. Other aspects of the incentive program, such as those based on worker safety levels, reliability and customer service clearly do meet the ratepayers' interests and should be maintained. Accordingly, Owen should be required to remove those sums paid under the financial incentives portion of the program from its rate base, and should do likewise in its next base rate case.

CONCLUSION

Since Owen's own data has established that its sales have grown over the past ten years, and are projected to continue that trend, no factual basis exists for the relief Owen seeks. The record also establishes quite starkly both that Owen's

filing is not revenue neutral to its customers, and that the proposed increase in its customer charge, well in excess of 300%, is anything but gradual.

In its last rate case, Owen claimed it needed to increase its customer charge as a prerequisite to offering more DSM programs and encouraging customer participation in such programs. Yet Owen's continuing response is meager DSM offerings with uninspiring customer participation levels. Owen's proffering of identical arguments over two successive cases while both failing to initiate the promised changes, and now seeking approval of a SFV rate design, should make it abundantly clear that Owen is attempting to shift as much utility-business risk as it possibly can from the company to its beleaguered ratepayers. The Commission should not assist Owen in this endeavor.

Imposing a SFV rate design would severely inhibit the ability of Owen's ratepayers to limit the amount of their utility bills. Since affordability has rapidly emerged as the most crucial issue facing the Commonwealth's ratepayers, now is not the time to impose a rate design which sends pricing signals antithetical to conservation. Massive new cost increases for environmental compliance, construction, and fuel volatility which Owen's ratepayers are facing should clearly outweigh any need Owen believes it has to shift its risks.

Owen has offered several alternative rate designs (TOU and inclining block) to its SFV design which it states could yield savings for eligible customers. Since only a veritable handful of customers around the entire Commonwealth have chosen TOU rates, there is no reason to assume, as Owen would have the Commission to do, that the results on its system would differ in any significant manner. Further, it is quite ironic that Owen would fashion an inclining block design which contains a built-in subsidy for a segment of its customer base that rarely uses space heating or air conditioning.

The Commission should take careful note that this is not a mere revenue stability case. There is absolutely no evidence that Owen's revenues will not remain stable for at least the short-term. Moreover, Owen is always free to file a base rate case if it believes it needs additional revenue.

Finally, the Commission should keep in mind that this case could pose far-reaching repercussions for ratepayers throughout the Commonwealth. Should the Commission in the instant case approve Owen's request to earn its "profit" from its sales, then most if not all electric utilities will seek the same or a similar decoupling mechanism. Such a result would translate into ratepayers being forced to pay extremely high energy bills in the months when they are using very little energy, and will be subjected to even higher bills in the heating and cooling months when their efforts to conserve and lower their bills will be severely limited, if not utterly thwarted.

In the event the Commission is still persuaded to grant any aspect of the relief Owen seeks, the Attorney General recommends that the Commission consider the following alternative relief options: (a) a one-time increase in the customer charge of no greater than 30% above its current level; (b) decrease the proposed customer charge for the TOU rates to a range of \$11.30 to \$17.00 per

month; (c) strike the inclining block rate design; and (d) require the company to re-file this case no later than two (2) years from the date of the final order in the instant case to allow the Commission to review the relief requested in order to insure the Company is not over-earning.

WHEREFORE, the Attorney General respectfully requests as follows:

- 1. That the Commission: (a) DENY that portion of Owen's request pertaining to the straight-fixed variable rate design; (b) grant that portion of the filing pertaining to the TOU rates, but reduce the proposed customer charge to a range of \$11.30 to \$17.00 per month; and (c) order that the Company cease to include in its rate base the costs of that portion of its incentive-based compensation which is based upon the company's financial performance.
- 2. In the event the Commission desires to grant Owen's straight fixed variable rate design, the Attorney General respectfully requests in the alternative that: (a) any increase in Owen's customer charge for residential service be granted solely on a one-time basis, and that the customer charge not exceed a sum 30% greater than the current amount; (b) the company be required to re-file this case no later than two (2) years from the date of the final order in the instant case in order to insure that the Company is not over-earning.

Respectfully submitted,

JACK CONWAY ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Certificate of Service and Filing

Counsel certifies that an original and ten photocopies of the foregoing were served and filed by hand delivery to Jeff Derouen, Executive Director, Public Service Commission, 211 Sower Boulevard, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601; counsel further states that true and accurate copies of the foregoing were mailed via First Class U.S. Mail, postage pre-paid, to:

Hon. James M. Crawford Crawford and Baxter, P.S.C. 523 Highland Avenue P.O. Box 353 Carrollton, KY 41008

Mark Stallons President Owen Electric Cooperative, Inc. P. O. Box 400

Owenton, KY 40359

this $\int \mathcal{L} day$ of December, 2011.

Assistant Attorney General

Case No. 2011-00037 ATTORNEY GENERAL'S POST-HEARING BRIEF APPENDIX A

OWEN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Residential KWH Consumption (2002-2010)

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	Build >=15KW (Class 41)	Dill	DIIIS		1,887 1,997 2,376 2,447 2,787 3,389 4,279 4,799 5,040
	Build >=	THEFT	KWH		938,548 987,923 11,031,731 11,036,580 11,150,617 11,318,056 11,514,139 11,624,693 11,825,084
	<u> </u>	ļ	Avg. Use		273 278 277 280 264 277 277 265
	Misc. Small (Class 40)		Bills		43,368 44,684 45,796 46,812 48,008 48,270 48,065 47,683 46,703
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		31)	- 1	Avg. Use	832 789 785 832 775 858 853 796
		(CIO)	Apartments (Class 51)	Bills	30,963 37,018 38,305 39,520 40,305 41,072 41,243 41,488
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Source: Owen response to OAG Item No. 76.

Case No. 2011-00037 ATTORNEY GENERAL'S POST-HEARING BRIEF APPENDIX B

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UTILITY CONSUMER ADVOCATES RESOLUTION 2007-01

NASUCA ENERGY CONSERVATION AND DECOUPLING RESOLUTION

Whereas, the provision and promotion of energy efficiency measures are increasingly viewed by state commissions as a necessary component of utility service;

Whereas, many states are now encouraging rate-regulated utilities to adopt energy efficiency programs and other demand-side measures to decrease the number of units of energy each utility's customers purchase from the utility;

Whereas NASUCA has long supported the adoption of effective energy efficiency programs;

Whereas recent proposals by rate-regulated public utilities for the initiation or expansion of energy efficiency measures have featured utility rate incentives or revenue "decoupling" mechanisms that guarantee utilities a predetermined amount of revenues regardless of the number of units of energy sold;

Whereas, the utilities proposing decoupling measures seek guarantees from public utilities commissions that they will receive their allowed level of revenues;

Whereas, these utilities justify this departure from traditional rate-making principles on the theory they are being asked to help their customers purchase fewer energy units from them by promoting energy efficiency measures and other demand-side measures, thereby reducing their revenues and, consequently, their returns to their shareholders, and that decoupling mechanisms compensate utilities for revenues lost due to conservation;

Whereas, these utilities contend that because these measures reduce their revenues, they have a disincentive to encourage programs that aid their customers in purchasing fewer units of energy;

Whereas, historically, rates have been set in periodic rate cases by matching test-year revenues with test-year expenses, adding pro forma adjustments and allowing the utilities an opportunity to earn a reasonable rate of return on their investments in exchange for a state-protected monopoly;

Whereas revenue guarantee mechanisms allow rate adjustments to occur based upon one element that affects a utility's revenue requirement, without supervision or review of other factors that may offset the need for such a rate change;

Whereas, historically, rate-regulated utilities were not guaranteed they would earn the allowed return; rather, earnings depended on capable management operating the utilities in an efficient manner;

Whereas, many utilities proposing revenue decoupling request compensation for revenue lost per customer, implying that sales volumes are declining, when in fact these utilities' total energy sales revenues are stable or increasing;

Whereas, there are a number of factors that may cause a utility to sell fewer units of energy over a period of time, including weather, changing economic conditions, shifts in population, loss of large customers and switches to other types of energy, as well as energy efficiency and other demand-side measures;

Whereas many utilities have been offering cost-effective energy efficiency programs and actively marketing these programs for years without proposing or implementing rate incentives or revenue guarantee mechanisms such as decoupling, and have continued to enjoy financial health;

Whereas past experience has shown that revenue guarantee mechanisms such as decoupling may result in significant rate increases to customers;

Whereas some utilities have referenced the benefit of encouraging energy efficiency programs as a justification for revenue guarantee mechanisms without in fact offering any energy efficiency programs, indicating that the revenue guarantee mechanisms are attractive to utilities for reasons other than their interest in promoting energy conservation;

Whereas past experience has shown that rate increases prompted by revenue guarantee mechanisms such as decoupling are often driven not so much by reduced consumption caused by utility energy efficiency programs, as by reduced consumption due to normal business risks such as changes in weather, price sensitivity, or changes in the state of the economy;

Whereas utilities are better situated than are consumers or state regulators to anticipate, plan for, and respond to changes in revenue prompted by normal business risks, and the shifting of normal business risks away from utilities insulates them from business changes and reduces their incentive to operate efficiently and effectively;

Whereas the traditional ratemaking process has historically compensated utilities for experiencing revenue variations associated with normal business risks;

NOW THEREFORE NASUCA RESOLVES:

To continue its long tradition of support for the adoption of effective energy efficiency programs;

And to oppose decoupling mechanisms that would guarantee utilities the recovery of a predetermined level of revenue without regard to the number of energy units sold and the cause of lost revenue between rate cases;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

NASUCA urges Public Utilities Commissions to disallow revenue true-ups between rate cases that violate the matching principle, the prohibition against retroactive ratemaking, the prohibition against single-issue ratemaking, or that diminish the incentives to control costs that would otherwise apply between rate cases;

NASUCA urges State legislatures and Public Utilities Commissions to, prior to using decoupling as a means to blunt utility opposition to energy efficiency and other demandside measures, (1) consider alternative measures that more efficiently promote energy efficiency and other demand side measures; (2) evaluate whether a utility proposing the adoption of a revenue decoupling mechanism has demonstrated a commitment to energy efficiency programs in the recent past; and (3) examine whether a utility proposing the adoption of a revenue decoupling mechanism has a history of prudently and reasonably utilizing alternative ratemaking tools;

If decoupling is allowed by any state commission, NASUCA recommends that the mechanism be structured to (1) prevent over-earning and provide a significant downward adjustment to the utilities' ROE in recognition of the significant reduction in risk associated with the use of a decoupling mechanism, (2) ensure the utility engages in incremental conservation efforts, such as including conservation targets and reduced or withheld recovery should the utility fail to meet those targets, and (3) require utilities to demonstrate that the reduced usage reflected in monthly revenue decoupling adjustments are specifically linked to the utility's promotion of energy efficiency programs.

NASUCA authorizes its Standing Committees to develop specific positions and to take appropriate actions consistent with the terms of this resolution to secure its implementation, with the approval of the Executive Committee of NASUCA. The Standing Committees or the Executive Committee shall notify the membership of any action taken pursuant to this resolution.

Approved by NASUCA:

Submitted by:

Denver, Colorado

NASUCA Consumer Protection Committee

June 12, 2007

June 11, 2007

Opposed:

Abstained:

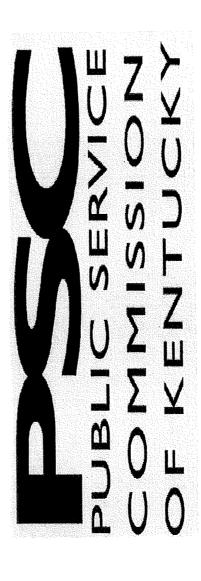
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Case No. 2011-00037 ATTORNEY GENERAL'S POST-HEARING BRIEF APPENDIX C

UNDERSTANDING BINDING LECTRIC

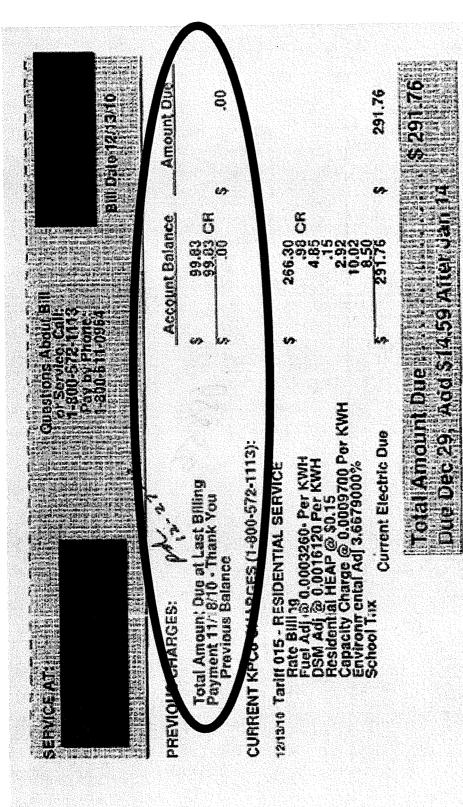




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Residential HEAP @ \$0.15
Capacity Charge @ 0.0009700 Per KWH
Environmental Adj 3.6679000%
School Tix
Current Electric Due

\$ 99.83 CR \$.00 \$ 266.30 CR \$.00 \$ 2.98 CR \$.00 10.02 & 85 8.50 & 291.76

The Unit of State of

\$8.33 is your average daily cost for current electric service

34 Billing Days Next Scheduled Read Date 01/14/11 Metered Usage JULY KNH 1,0000 Tiod Prev CD Pres CD 13/10 03723 R 06730 R **Vervice Period** CD - Read Code: R = RI Read 11,09/10 Meter Number 533584495

Month Leader Total Usage (Past 12 Months): 25087 KWH Month at 10 Month Leage 1221 Month Avarage Monthly Usage: 2090 KWH 如巾 Month Usage Dec 09 O. LI

Amount Due		
Account Balance \$ 99.63 CR \$	2 26.30 10.02 4.85 CH	
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\$8.33 is your average daily cost for current electric service

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\$3.33 is your average daily cost for current electric service

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\$8.33 is your average daily cost for current electric service

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\$3.33 is your average daily cost for current electric service

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291.76 A KERE our average daily cost for current electric service Totall Amdunt Due!! Due Dec 29; | And SI DSM Adj & 0.0016120 Per KWH
Residential HEAP @ \$0.15
Capacity Charge @ 0.0009700 Per KWH
Environir ental Adj 3.6679000% Arrent Electric Due \$8.33 in

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November Degree Days

Jackson 477 (-45) -9%

Huntington 557 (-3) 0%

Louisville 450 (-77) -15%

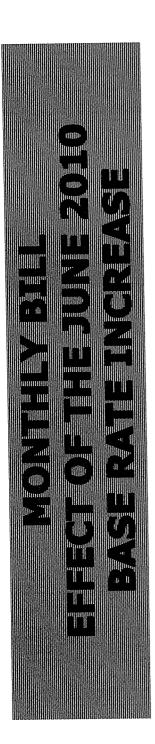
Louisville **December Degree Days**

Jackson 1133 (+308) +37%

Huntington 1118 (+265) +32%

Louisville 1053 (+215) +26%

November to December
Degree Days
Jackson +656 +137%
Huntington +561 +101%
Louisville +603 +134%



MONTHLY CHARGE

PER KWH RATE

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\$.0859 (8.59 cents)

DIFFERENCE

\$2.14

CALCULATING THE EFFECT OF THE RATE INCREASE

(Change in monthly charge + electricity consumed times change in KWH rate) times environmental surcharge factor equals total impact

(\$2.14 + (KWH used x .014)) x 1.037735 = rate increase effect

Capacil Environ School	Residential HEAR Capacity Charge Environmental Ac School Tat	ntial HEAP @ \$0.15 by Charge @ 0.0009700 P nmental Adj 3.7735000% Tay. Current Electric I	ntial HEAP @ \$0.15 ty Charge @ 0.0009700 Per KWH nmental Adj 3.7735000% Tan. Current Etectric Due	b	2000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 00		396.31
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\$12.02 is your		daily cos	average daily cost for current electric service	stric servit	90		
JSAGE: Meter Number	Service Period	Period To	Meter Reading Prev CD Pres CD		Multiplier 1.0000	TE TE	Me ed Usage 4112 KWH

CALCULATING THE EFFECT OF THE RATE INCREASE

(\$2.14 + (KWH used x .014)) x 1.037735 = rate increase effect

(\$2.14 + (4112 x .014)) x 1.037735 = rate increase effect (\$2.14 + (\$57.57)) x 1.037735 = rate increase effect

(\$59.71) x 1.037735 = rate increase effect

Rate increase effect = \$61.96

\$8.33 is your average daily cost for current electric service

ISAGE

RECALCULATED TO OLD RATE \$291.76 - \$45.86 = \$245.90

\$12.02 is your average daily cost for current electric service

USAGE:

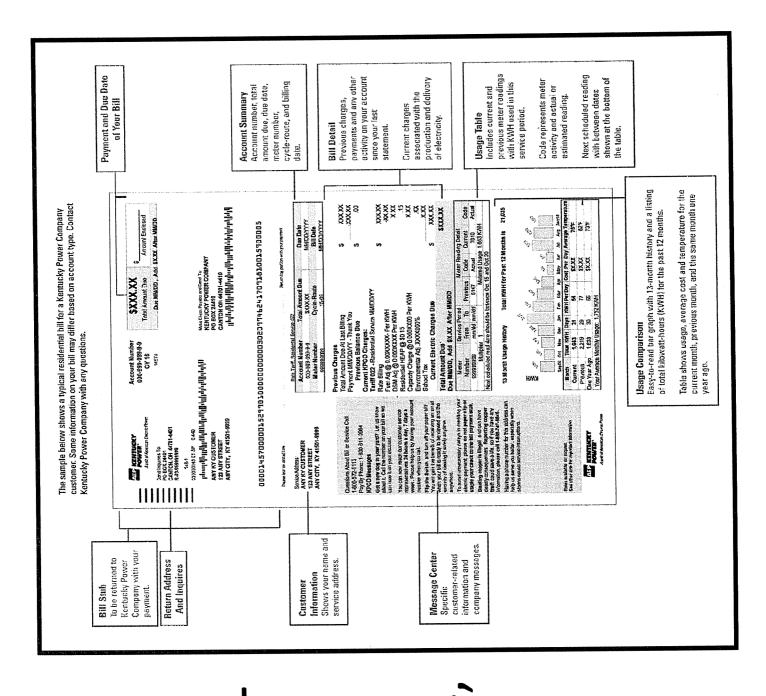
RECALCULATED TO OLD RATE \$396.31 - \$61.96 = \$334.35

MONTH-TO-MONTH INCREASE - OLD RATE \$334.35 - \$245.90 = \$88.45 MONTH-TO-MONTH INCREASE - NEW RATE \$396.31 - \$291.76 = \$104.55

MONTH-TO-MONTH INCREASE DUE TO \$104.55 - 88.45 = \$16.10RATE CHANGE

MONTH-TO-MONTH INCREASE DUE TO \$104.55 - \$16.10 = \$88.45**HIGHER USAGE**

AEP – NEW BILL FORMAT AS OF MARCH 4 2011



If you have questions or concerns about your bill:

- Contact your utility company's customer service department
- 2. If you are unable to resolve the issue with your utility, contact the Kentucky Public Service Commission by:
- Calling the PSC Consumer Services Division at 800-772-4636
- Sending an e-mail from: http://psc.ky.gov/cis/inquiry.aspx

your electric bill Reducing

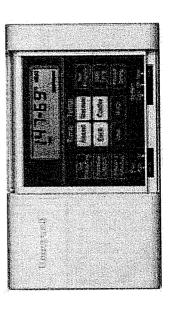
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Conservation

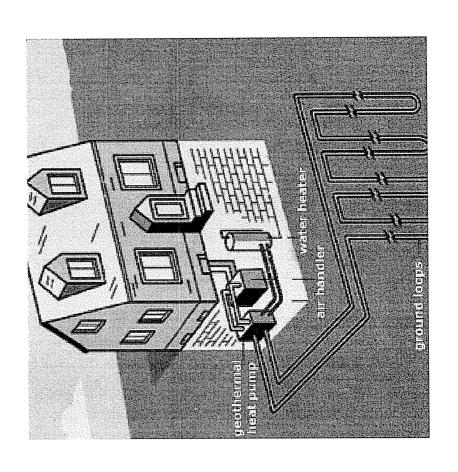
- Turn down thermostat
- degrees can save 15% or more on your - Going from 72 degrees to 68 heating bill



WALCO C **(1)**

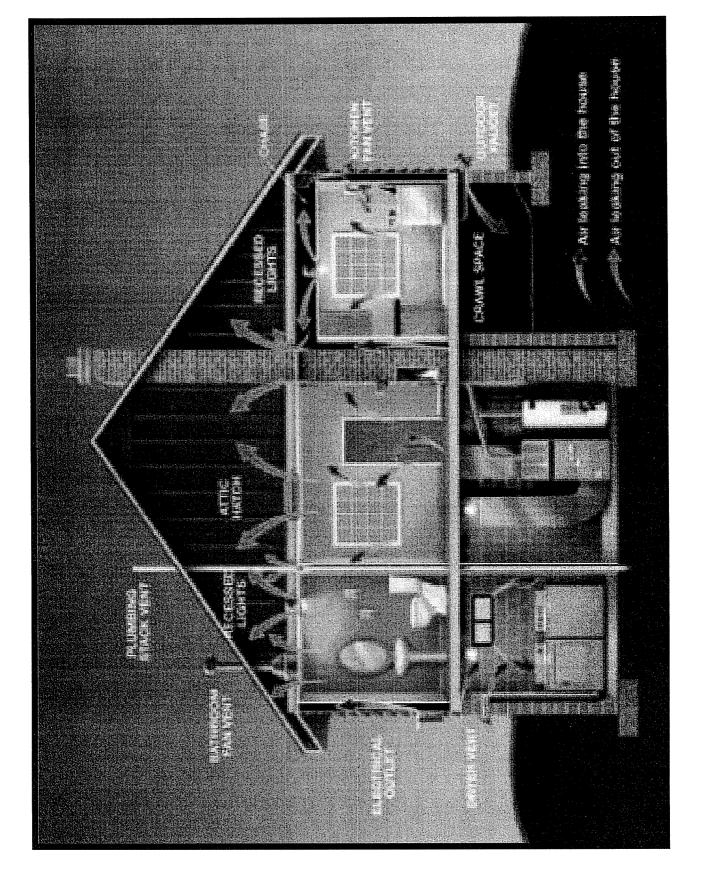
Efficiency

Consider
 switching to more energy-efficient appliances,
 & cooling units,
 water heaters and refrigerators



Energy audits

- Identify problem areas
- Suggest corrective actions
- Offered by most major utilities
- Often free or nominal charge



Weatherization

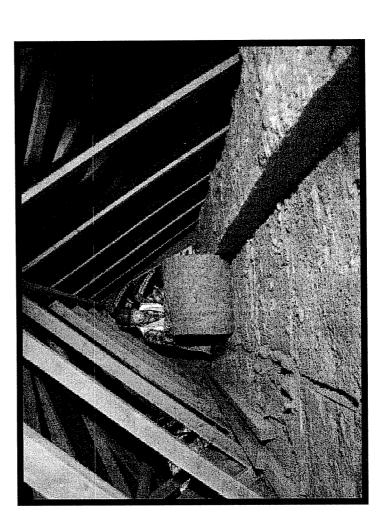
Substantial saving are possible if you:

- Caulk around windows, doors
- Replace worn
- weather stripping
- Seal openings



Weatherization

- Install storm windows
- Cover windows
- with plastic
- Add insulation



utility costs Managing

Budget billing

- Annual averaging of monthly bill
- Removes seasonal fluctuations
- Allows predictable budgeting
- Annual or rolling "true up"
- Does NOT cut costs

Low-income Assistance

- Administered through Cabinet for Health & Family Services - local Community Action Agencies
- Weatherization assistance eligibility based on income; many utilities provide matching funds

Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Low-Income Home Energy

- 150,000 households each year
- Two programs Subsidy & Crisis
- Subsidy Nov.-Dec.
- Crisis Jan.-March

(Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) - Kentucky Power; Winterhelp agencies. Utility companies also have low-income assistance programs Low-income assistance also is provided by many local non-profit – LG&E, Atmos Cares, etc)

Energy efficiency/conservation http://energy.ky.gov/efficiency/

Assistance programs.

http://www.communityactionky.org/WhatWeDo/EnergyAssistance/Weat herization/tabid/356/Default.aspx

hittip#//enifs.lky/gjov/(dc.bs//dfs//_IIHEAP.Intm

Contact information:

211 Sower Boulevard, Frankfort KY 40602 **Kentucky Public Service Commission** Andrew.Melnykovych@psc.ky.gov **Communications Director Andrew Melnykovych** 502-564-3940 x208

Governed by statute - KRS 278

- Rates must be "fair, just and reasonable"
- Investors are entitled to an opportunity to earn a return on equity

Two-part process

- Revenue requirement
- Rate design

Intervenors

- Kentucky Office of Attorney General has statutory right to intervene to represent ratepayers in general
- unique interests and will contribute evidence Other parties may be granted intervention that otherwise might not be brought before upon showing that they are representing the PSC
- PSC may grant limited intervention those parties do not put on evidence

Settlements

- Must be unanimous all full intervenors agree
 - Settlements typically are "black boxes" they
 - do not always specify details of trade-offs in areas such as expenses and rates of return
- However, resulting rates must still meet the test
 - of "fair, just and reasonable"

Revenue requirement

- actual numbers from a previous 12-month period, but Calculated over a "test year" that most often uses may also be forecasted
- Certain expenses are not allowed promotional advertising, executive bonuses, etc.
- Unusual or one-time costs or revenue are excluded
- Final revenue requirement is based on a company's allowable expenses - operations and maintenance, capital costs, etc – and the opportunity to earn a reasonable rate of return

Rate design

- Allocates revenue over various rate classes residential, commercial, industrial, etc.
- "cost of service" study that determines how much it As part of rate application, utilities must submit a costs to serve each rate class
- PSC uses cost of service study as a guideline, but rates are not rigidly set to reflect costs
- Some rebalancing of costs and rates typically occurs in every rate case

Why the increases were not the same The Kentucky Power Rate case: for all classes of rate payers

- either 3.6% or 6.6%, depending on type of service customers) had 17% increases- industrials up by All but two classes (both for large industrial
- residential service, and earning 4% or more on other Prior to the rate increase, Kentucky Power was losing nearly 3% (based on return on equity) on classes of service
- residential service was set at 1%, and at 8% or more After the rate increase, opportunity for ROE on for other rate classes