ORIGINAL

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

Columbus Southern Power Company And Ohio Power Company,	)	Supreme Court Case No. 2009-2060
Appellants,	)	Appeal from the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
v.	)	Case No. 09-119-EL-AEC
The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio	)	
Appellee.	)	

MERIT BRIEF OF INTERVENING APPELLEE INDUSTRIAL ENERGY USERS-OHIO

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INTRODUCTION

Amended Substitute Senate Bill 221 ("SB 221") created an opportunity for mercantile customers[1] to establish a reasonable arrangement with an electric distribution utility ("EDU") for a service relationship that deviates from the otherwise applicable standard service offer ("SSO") tariff. R.C. 4905.31, Appellant's Appendix at 4. Such a mercantile customer proposal is not lawful unless it is filed with and approved by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("Commission" or "PUCO") pursuant to an application that is submitted by the mercantile customer or group of mercantile customers. *Id.* Upon approval of a mercantile customer-proposed reasonable arrangement, the EDU is required to conform its schedules of rates, tolls, and charges to such arrangement. *Id.* Moreover, every such reasonable arrangement continues to be under the supervision and regulation of the Commission, and is subject to change, alteration, or modification by the Commission. *Id.*

Columbus Southern Power Company ("CSP") and Ohio Power Company ("OP"), collectively American Electric Power Ohio ("AEP-Ohio" or "Appellants"), would have this Court render R.C. 4905.31 senseless by ruling that the General Assembly intended to give Ohio EDUs an absolute veto power over the Commission when it approves a mercantile customer-proposed reasonable arrangement pursuant to R.C. 4905.31. Further, AEP-Ohio asserts that it is authorized as a matter of law to recover both 100 percent of any delta revenue that results from a reasonable arrangement and 100 percent of its charges for being the provider of last resort ("POLR") or default electric service provider for a customer taking service pursuant to a Commission-approved reasonable arrangement whereby the customer agrees not to shop for electric generation service. AEP-Ohio is simply wrong on all three assertions as a matter of law

[1] *See* note 11, *supra.*

and reasonableness. For the reasons discussed below, the Court should affirm the decision of the Commission.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

A. Ohio's Electricity Restructuring Law and AEP's POLR Charge

In 1999, Ohio enacted electric restructuring law, Amended Substitute Senate Bill 3 ("SB 3") that was designed and enacted on the assumption that the wholesale market would be sufficiently robust and mature to provide a reliable supply and a transparent and source of reasonable prices after a market development period. However, as the end of the market development period approached, it became evident that the benefits of competition anticipated at the time that SB 3 was enacted were not coming to fruition.[2] As a result of the collective realization that competition had not arrived as planned, the Commission requested that Ohio's EDUs file plans to establish the default, or SSO, rates that reasonably approximated future market conditions, were reasonable in magnitude, would spur competition, and protect customers from the risks and dangers associated with price volatility and a nascent competitive market.

As part of its rate stabilization plan ("RSP"), AEP-Ohio proposed to defer the costs of several items during the RSP that it argued were new, significant costs that could not be capitalized and were not built into AEP-Ohio's then-current rates.[3] AEP-Ohio estimated the total

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[2] *In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company for Approval of a Post-Market Development Period Rate Stabilization Plan*, PUCO Case No. 04-169-EL-UNC, Opinion and Order at 27 (January 26, 2005) (hereinafter "AEP's RSP Case") (IEU-Ohio Appendix at 27).

[3] The costs that AEP-Ohio proposed to defer included:

(a) Regional transmission organization ("RTO") administrative charges (adjusted for net congestion costs) from the time of integration into PJM through 2005, plus a carrying charge (based on the weighted average cost of capital).

amounts of these proposed deferrals over the three-year RSP to be over $241 million. While the Commission denied AEP-Ohio's request to defer RTO administrative charges and CWIP for recovery after the RSP, it directed AEP-Ohio to recover those same amounts through a non-bypassable POLR rider applicable to all distribution customers. *Id.* at 27 (IEU-Ohio Appendix at 27). The Commission's justification for allowing AEP-Ohio to institute a new charge on all customers was that the RTO charges had been instrumental in enabling AEP-Ohio to efficiently fulfill its POLR responsibilities and other EDUs were permitted to recover POLR costs during the RSPs. Thus, a POLR charge for AEP-Ohio customers was born out of AEP-Ohio's desire to defer the above-mentioned costs.

As this Court recognized in its decisions responding to appeals from the RSPs authorized by the Commission, the mismatch between expectations about the development of a competitive electric market that existed when SB 3 was enacted and the actual results thereafter had reached a level appropriate for the attention of the Ohio General Assembly.[4] Thereafter, the General

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(b) The 2004 and 2005 equity carrying charges on expenditures begun in 2002 through 2005 for expenditures located in Account 107, construction work in process ("CWIP").

(c) The full carrying charges (based on the weighted average cost of capital) on expenditures begun in 2002 through 2005 for all functions in Accounts 101 (electric plant in service) and 106 (completed construction not classified), except line extension expenditures, which are already subject to carrying cost deferrals.

(d) Consumer education, customer choice implementation, and transition plan filings through 2005, plus a carrying charge.

(e) Consumer education, customer choice implementation, and transition plan filing costs incurred after 2003, and all RSP filing costs, plus a carrying charge.

Id. at 23-24 (IEU-Ohio Appendix at 23-24).

[4] *Ohio Consumers' Counsel v. Pub. Util. Comm.*, 114 Ohio St.3d 340, 2007-Ohio-4276, at ¶41.

Assembly enacted SB 221, which Governor Strickland signed on May 1, 2008, becoming effective on July 31, 2008.[5]

Upon SB 221 becoming effective, AEP-Ohio filed its electric security plan ("ESP") case on July 31, 2008.[6] While SB 221 was enacted between the approval of AEP-Ohio's RSP and the time when AEP-Ohio filed its ESP Application, nothing else changed. OP and CSP, as Ohio EDUs, had the obligation to provide default generation service prior to the enactment of SB 221, and they would have carried the same legal obligation even had they gone to market-generation supply pricing under SB 3, and they continue to have the obligation post-SB 221 enactment.[7]

Nonetheless, in its ESP case, which is now before this Court on appeal, AEP-Ohio requested to recover a distribution non-bypassable POLR rider, asking for $169.1 million **annually** to cover its alleged POLR risk.[8] This time around, AEP-Ohio characterized its POLR

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[5] Rather than leaving the Commission with only the market-based approach that was the focus of the version of R.C. 4928.14 created by SB 3, SB 221 created two avenues by which the Commission was authorized to establish pricing for the SSO: 1) SB 221 preserved SB 3's market-based approach (now called the "market rate offer" or "MRO") in R.C. 4928.142; and, 2) SB 221 added R.C. 4928.143 to give the PUCO authority, subject to specific statutory criteria, to deviate from the market-based approach in response to an EDU application seeking approval of an ESP.

[6] *In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern Power Company for Approval of an Electric Security Plan; an Amendment to its Corporate Separation Plan; and the Sale or Transfer of Certain Generating Assets,* PUCO Case Nos. 08-917-EL-SSO, *et al.*, Columbus Southern Power Company's and Ohio Power Company's Application (July 31, 2008) (hereinafter "AEP ESP Case").

[7] Former R.C. 4928.14(A) read "After its market development period, each electric distribution utility shall provide consumers, on a comparable and nondiscriminatory basis within its certified territory, a market-based standard service offer of all competitive retail electric services necessary to maintain essential electric service to consumers, including a firm supply of electric generation service." Nearly identical language now resides in R.C. 4928.141. (Appellant's Appendix at 17).

[8] AEP ESP Case, Opinion and Order at 38 (March 18, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 151).

risk as a put (the risk of customers leaving AEP-Ohio's SSO) and a call (the risk of customers returning to AEP-Ohio's SSO), comparing customers' rights to leave AEP-Ohio and return to the SSO price to a series of options on power. AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 20-23.[9]

Over the objections of intervenors, the Commission found that AEP-Ohio does have some POLR risk. The Commission then gave AEP-Ohio a revenue allowance of approximately $152.2 million annually using the hypothetical market price and the workings of the blackbox known as the Black-Scholes model.[10] The Commission's Opinion and Order on AEP-Ohio's ESP states, based on the Commission's belief that AEP-Ohio has some risks associated with customers switching to competitive retail electric supply ("CRES") providers and returning to the EDU's SSO rate, that this risk is equivalent to 90% of AEP-Ohio's hypothetical quantification of such alleged risk.[11] The POLR revenue allowance authorized by the

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[9] *See* AEP ESP Case, Opinion and Order at 39 (March 18, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 152). For a discussion on the unreasonableness and unlawfulness of AEP-Ohio's POLR charge, *see Industrial Energy Users-Ohio v. Public Utilities Commission of Ohio*, Case No. 2009-2022, Merit Brief of Appellant Industrial Energy Users-Ohio at 16-30 (January 25, 2010). It is worth noting here, however, that AEP-Ohio asserted that its proposed ESP was better for customers in the aggregate than the alternative MRO option, thereby effectively acknowledging that its ESP proposal carried little risk that customers would go shopping for generation service. Also, the only service that consumers can shop for is generation service so that so-called POLR risk is really a generation supply risk rather than any risk related to the distribution function. AEP-Ohio's requested distribution revenue allowance was not cost-based, but rather relied on a model called the Black-Scholes model to hypothetically select a market price to value AEP-Ohio's alleged risk. Importantly, the hypothetical costs arrived at through the Black-Scholes model and approved by the Commission do not vary regardless of whether 5% or 95% of customers shop and return to AEP-Ohio for generation service. And, AEP-Ohio made it clear that even if the Commission granted its requested POLR-related revenue allowance, it was not going to actually purchase insurance to manage the alleged risk.

[10] AEP ESP Case, Opinion and Order at 40 (March 18, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 153).

[11] *Id.* All intervenor Applications for Rehearing related to the POLR revenue authorization were summarily denied by the Commission in its Entry on Rehearing. Appeals on AEP-Ohio's ESP case were filed by IEU-Ohio and the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel ("OCC").

Commission in AEP-Ohio's ESP case is 180% greater than the annual POLR revenue allowance that AEP-Ohio collected under its RSP.

AEP-Ohio's ability to lawfully collect the POLR revenue the Commission authorized in AEP-Ohio's ESP case is being challenged by IEU-Ohio contemporaneously in a separate appeal. Specifically, it is IEU-Ohio's position that AEP-Ohio is not lawfully entitled to an 180% increase POLR revenue and nothing in this case should be construed as a modification of that position.[12]

B. Ormet's Reasonable Arrangement

Given the steep rate increases effectuated by the Commission's approval of AEP-Ohio's RSP and ESP proposals, customers are seeking alternatives to alleviate some of the impact on their businesses and are turning to a modified statutory provision regarding reasonable arrangements. A reasonable arrangement is essentially a customized service arrangement for a mercantile customer or group of mercantile customers[13] that, with the approval of the Commission, allows the EDU to deviate from the requirements of the otherwise applicable standard tariff provided by the EDU. With the enactment of SB 221, R.C. 4905.31 was modified to give customers, as opposed to only EDUs, the opportunity to propose a reasonable arrangement with an EDU for approval by the Commission. R.C. 4905.31 permits the prices,

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[12] *Industrial Energy Users-Ohio v. Public Utilities Commission of Ohio*, Case No. 2009-2022, Merit Brief of Appellant Industrial Energy Users-Ohio at 16-30 (January 25, 2010).

[13] "Mercantile customer" means a commercial or industrial customer if the electricity consumed is for nonresidential use and the customer consumes more than seven hundred thousand kilowatt hours per year or is part of a national account involving multiple facilities in one or more states. R.C. 4928.01(A)(19) (Appellant's Appendix at 5).

terms and conditions of the EDU's service to be enabled through a "reasonable arrangement" provided that the arrangement is filed with and approved by the Commission.[14]

Ormet Primary Aluminum Corporation ("Ormet") is an AEP-Ohio customer who unilaterally proposed a reasonable arrangement and obtained Commission approval of its unilaterally proposed reasonable arrangement.[15] The Commission-approved reasonable arrangement under which Ormet is currently operating is a long-term arrangement meant to supersede a previously approved temporary reasonable arrangement.[16] The reasonable arrangement is a full requirements contract that provides Ormet, under defined circumstances, generation service priced at a different rate than would otherwise apply under AEP-Ohio's

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[14] R.C. 4905.31 permits a mercantile customer to establish a reasonable arrangement with that EDU providing for any of the following:

(A) The division or distribution of its surplus profits;
(B) A sliding scale of charges, including variations in rates based upon stipulated variations in cost as provided in the schedule or arrangement.
(C) A minimum charge for service to be rendered unless such minimum charge is made or prohibited by the terms of the franchise, grant, or ordinance under which such public utility is operated;
(D) A classification of service based upon the quantity used, the time when used, the purpose for which used, the duration of use, and any other reasonable consideration;
(E) Any other financial device that may be practicable or advantageous to the parties interested.

[15] In fact, the substantial electricity requirements of the Ormet facility and the energy-intensive nature of its aluminum smelting process have previously permitted Ormet to obtain service through a reasonable arrangement submitted to and approved by the Commission pursuant to R.C. 4905.31. *In the Matter of the Application of Ormet Primary Aluminum Corporation for Approval of a Unique Arrangement wi.th Ohio Power Company and Columbus Southern Power Company,* PUCO Case No. 09-119-EL-AEC, Opinion and Order (July 15, 2009) ("Ormet Case") (Appellant's Appendix at 34).

[16] *In the Matter of the Joint Application of Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company and Ormet Primary Aluminum Mill Products Corporation for Approval of a Temporary Amendment to their Special Arrangement,* PUCO Case No. 08-1339-EL-UNC, Finding and Order (January 7, 2009).

applicable tariffs. In general terms, the structure of the contract provides Ormet with a lower price for electricity when aluminum prices are lower and a higher price for electricity when aluminum prices are higher.

The difference between what Ormet would pay under the otherwise applicable SSO tariff and what Ormet pays under the reasonable arrangement is commonly referred to as delta revenue.[17] R.C. 4905.31(E) states, in pertinent part, that reasonable arrangements "may include a device to recover costs incurred in conjunction with any economic development and job retention program of the utility within its certified territory, including recovery of revenue foregone as a result of any such program...." The same section also states that every reasonable arrangement "shall be under the supervision and regulation of the commission, and is subject to change, alteration, or modification by the commission."

Under the Commission-approved reasonable arrangement, other AEP-Ohio customers pay AEP-Ohio for the delta revenue. In the approved reasonable arrangement, the PUCO required AEP-Ohio to credit any POLR charges paid by Ormet to AEP-Ohio's economic development rider (the delta revenue recovery mechanism) in order to reduce the recovery of delta revenue from other ratepayers inasmuch as the Commission determined that AEP-Ohio does not have any risk that Ormet will shop for generation supply and then return to AEP-Ohio as the default service provider.[18]

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[17] The Commission recently adopted a definition of "delta revenue" in Rule 4901:1-38-01, Ohio Administrative Code, as "the deviation resulting from the difference in rate levels between the otherwise applicable rate schedule and the result of any reasonable arrangement approved by the commission." (IEU-Ohio Appendix at 41).

[18] Ormet Case, Opinion and Order at 13-14 (July 15, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 46-47).

The Commission's decisions regarding its authority to modify and approve a reasonable arrangement are grounded in Ohio law and are reasonable. AEP-Ohio has failed to demonstrate otherwise. Accordingly, the Court should affirm the Commission's decision.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

R.C. 4903.13 states that "[a] final order made by the public utilities commission shall be reversed, vacated, or modified by the supreme court on appeal, if, upon consideration of the record, such court is of the opinion that such order was unlawful or unreasonable." With regard to the Commission's determinations regarding questions of fact, the Court has held that it "will not reverse or modify a [commission] decision as to questions of fact where the record contains sufficient probative evidence to show that the determination is not manifestly against the weight of the evidence and is not so clearly unsupported by the record as to show misapprehension, mistake, or willful disregard of duty."[19] The appellant "bears the burden of demonstrating that the commission's decision is against the manifest weight of the evidence or is clearly unsupported by the record."[20] As to matters of law, the Court has "complete and independent power of review of all questions of law" in appeals from the Commission.[21]

As AEP-Ohio noted, the facts of this case are not in dispute. The questions raised by AEP-Ohio on appeal hinge on questions of law. As demonstrated below, the Commission's Orders in this proceeding are lawful and reasonable.

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[19] *The Cincinnati Gas & Elec. Co. v. Pub. Util. Comm.*, 86 Ohio St.3d 53, 58, 711 N.E.2d 670 (1999).

[20] *Constellation NewEnergy v. Pub. Util. Comm.*, 104 Ohio St.3d 530, 2004-Ohio-6767, at ¶50.

[21] *Ohio Edison Co. v. Pub. Util. Comm.*, 78 Ohio St.3d 466, 469, 678 N.E.2d 922 (1977).

ARGUMENT

PROPOSITION OF LAW I:

The Commission has statutory authority to approve a reasonable arrangement filed without the support or consent of the electric distribution utility.

AEP-Ohio is correct that prior to the enactment of SB 221, R.C. 4905.31 allowed only a "public utility" to file a schedule or enter into "any reasonable arrangement" with another public utility or with "its customers, consumers or employees" providing for certain enumerated outcomes, including variable rates and different classifications of service. AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 41. The statute also provided that no "such arrangement" or "schedule" is lawful until it was filed with and approved by the Commission and that the public utility was required to conform its rates to the arrangement upon Commission approval. R.C. 4905.31. (Appellant's Appendix at 4). AEP-Ohio is also correct that SB 221 amended R.C. 4905.31 to permit mercantile customers to seek approval of a reasonable arrangement or schedule where only the EDUs were permitted to do so before. AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 41.

However and even though the meaning of R.C. 4905.31 is not ambiguous, AEP-Ohio spends a significant portion of its Merit Brief to concoct a statutory interpretation that would have this Court conclude that no reasonable arrangement or schedule can be enabled without the EDU's consent and acceptance. AEP-Ohio's Merit Brief at 41-48. In other words, AEP-Ohio urges this Court to find that AEP-Ohio has an absolute veto over the authority delegated to the Commission by R.C. 4905.31 to enable a reasonable arrangement or schedule that is filed by a mercantile customer or group of such customers. The Commission has already rejected

AEP-Ohio's invitation to modify SB 221.[22] The relief AEP-Ohio seeks on appeal is unlawful and it does not take an exercise in statutory interpretation to conclude as much.

SB 221 explicitly expanded the persons eligible to submit such an arrangement or schedule for the Commission's consideration and approval by adding mercantile customers to the category of entities that are entitled to submit a proposed reasonable arrangement to the Commission for its consideration and approval. Specifically, as a result of SB 221, R.C. 4905.31(E) now states:

> No such schedule or arrangement is lawful unless it is filed with and approved by the commission pursuant to an application that is submitted by the public utility ***or the mercantile customer or group of mercantile customers of an electric distribution utility*** and is posted on the commission's docketing information system and is accessible through the internet. (Emphasis added.)

Tellingly, despite expanding the scope of persons eligible to submit a proposed reasonable arrangement or schedule to the Commission, the General Assembly did not modify the requirement that upon Commission approval of such a reasonable arrangement, "[e]very such public utility is required to conform its schedules of rates, tolls, and charges to such arrangement, sliding scale, classification, or other device, and where variable rates are provided for in any such schedule or arrangement, the cost data or factors upon which such rates are based and fixed shall be filed with the commission in such form and at such times as the commission directs." R.C. 4905.31(E). (Appellant's Appendix at 4). There is no new language that says, "***upon the agreement of the public utility with the Commission-approved reasonable arrangement***, the public utility is required to conform its rates to the arrangement." The General Assembly could have included such a requirement and it did provide, effectively that is, an EDU with a regulator-

[22] Ormet Case, Entry on Rehearing at 17-18 (September 15, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 93-94).

disabling veto where the Commission modifies (acting under R.C. 4928.143) a proposed electric security plan. But, the General Assembly did not delegate authority to AEP-Ohio or any other EDU the right to trump a Commission determination rendered pursuant to R.C. 4905.31.

The clear and plain language in R.C. 4905.31 states that: (1) either an electric utility, mercantile customer or group of mercantile customers may submit a proposed reasonable arrangement or schedule to the Commission for the Commission's consideration and approval; (2) the proposed reasonable arrangement may become lawful and effective only upon Commission approval; and, (3) the utility must then conform its rates to the Commission-approved reasonable arrangement.

Every public utility has an obligation to furnish necessary and adequate service and facilities to the public. All charges made or demanded by a public utility for any service rendered must be just and reasonable and not more than the charges allowed by law or order of the Commission. A public utility is specifically prohibited from charging or demanding any unjust or unreasonable charge or a charge in excess of the charge authorized by the Commission. *See* R.C. Sections 4905.22 and 4909.17. (IEU-Ohio Appendix at 43, 45, respectively). Before a public utility can bill and collect charges for the services it provides, it must have the required regulatory approvals to impose such rates and charges and it must publish the rates and charges in a schedule that is on file with the Commission. R.C. 4905.30. (IEU-Ohio Appendix at 44). Only the Ohio Supreme Court has the power to review, suspend or delay any order made by the Commission. R.C. 4903.12. (IEU-Ohio Appendix at 42). Thus, AEP-Ohio's request – first communicated at the rehearing phase of this proceeding – that the Commission rewrite R.C. 4905.31 to equip AEP-Ohio with an absolute veto over the Commission's authority to determine, in accordance with the law, the rates and charges that a utility must use for billing purposes is

also in direct conflict with the clear and plain requirements of other Sections of the Revised Code. Accordingly, the Court should affirm the Commission's decision.

PROPOSITION OF LAW II:

The Commission has statutory authority to determine the extent to which an EDU may recover foregone revenue resulting from a reasonable arrangement.

AEP-Ohio asserts that the Commission does not have discretion to grant or deny recovery of revenue foregone. AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 13-19. AEP-Ohio's assumed right to collect all delta revenues associated with Ormet's reasonable arrangement is not found in R.C. 4905.31 or any Commission precedent. It is, once again, based upon AEP-Ohio's tortured and contrived statutory interpretation. *Id.*

Quite simply, R.C. 4905.31 grants the Commission discretion to consider and address issues related to requests to recover delta revenue. Specifically, R.C. 4905.31(E) states that a schedule or arrangement concerning a public utility "***may*** include a device to recover costs incurred in conjunction with any economic development and job retention program of the utility within its certified territory, including recovery of revenue forgone as a result of any such program." (Emphasis added). As the Commission previously found, the word "may" in R.C. 4905.31 indicates that the collection of delta revenue by a public utility is a matter for the Commission's discretion.[23]

This Court should affirm the Commission's straight-forward, reasonable and lawful ruling regarding its discretion to award the collection of delta revenue.

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[23] Ormet Case, Entry on Rehearing at 10-11 (September 15, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 86-87).

PROPOSITION OF LAW III:

The Commission's decision to require AEP-Ohio to credit its POLR revenue against the delta revenue resulting from the reasonable arrangement is reasonable and lawful.

The Commission held that, because AEP-Ohio will be Ormet's exclusive service provider for the term of the reasonable arrangement, there is no risk that Ormet will shop for a competitive supplier during the term of AEP-Ohio's ESP and return to AEP-Ohio's SSO, and therefore AEP-Ohio will incur no costs for providing POLR service that can be recovered under R.C. 4905.31.[24] Accordingly, the Commission directed AEP-Ohio to credit the full amount of the POLR component of the tariff rate that would otherwise apply to Ormet on a per megawatt hour basis to the economic development rider that recovers the delta revenue. *Id.* at 18.

Despite acknowledging that "the Commission is permitting recovery of the majority of the revenues foregone[25] relating to the compulsory contract adopted in the case below," AEP-Ohio argues that the Commission's decision conflicts with its decision in AEP-Ohio's ESP case that made the POLR charge non-bypassable for SSO customers and Ohio's policy set forth in R.C. 4928.01. AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 18-19.

Setting aside for the sake of argument the fact that IEU-Ohio believes that the Commission's decision authorizing AEP-Ohio to recover 180% more POLR revenue than previously authorized is unlawful, AEP-Ohio's argument regarding its entitlement to POLR revenue in this case is flawed and incorrect.

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[24] Ormet Case, Entry on Rehearing at 11 (September 15, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 87).

[25] In fact, the only "revenue foregone" that AEP-Ohio is not permitted to retain is the POLR revenue pursuant to AEP-Ohio's ESP, which terminates on December 31, 2011.

First, AEP-Ohio incorrectly assumes that there is "foregone revenue" at issue. Specifically, because the Commission determined that there is no risk that Ormet will shop for a competitive supplier during AEP-Ohio's current Commission-approved ESP, AEP-Ohio has not and will not incur any costs for providing POLR service during its ESP that can be recovered under R.C. 4905.31.[26]

Notwithstanding the fact that there are no "costs incurred" or "foregone revenue" that can be recovered under R.C. 4905.31, AEP-Ohio is also incorrect that the Commission's decision conflicts with its ESP decision. Specifically, AEP-Ohio argues that the Commission's decision to require AEP-Ohio to credit POLR revenues against the delta revenue resulting from Ormet's reasonable arrangement conflicts with the Commission's decision in AEP-Ohio's ESP case that customers taking SSO service could not avoid paying the POLR charge by agreeing not to shop. AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 22-24.

The Commission succinctly and completely addressed this issue and identified that there is no conflict inasmuch as its ESP decision applied to customers taking service under AEP-Ohio's SSO and Ormet is not taking AEP-Ohio's SSO service. Thus, the Commission specifically distinguished its ruling regarding POLR charges for customers taking service pursuant to Commission-approved reasonable arrangements in the Ormet case. Specifically, the Commission stated:

> [U]nder the terms of the unique arrangement AEP-Ohio will be the exclusive supplier to Ormet. Therefore, there is no risk that Ormet will shop for competitive generation and then return to AEP-Ohio's POLR service. If AEP-Ohio were to retain these charges, AEP-Ohio would be compensated for a service it would not be providing. Moreover, our decision in the AEP-Ohio electric security plan is inapplicable to this case because that holding addressed customers receiving service under AEP-Ohio's standard service offer rather than a customer

[26] Ormet Case, Entry on Rehearing at 11 (September 15, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 87).

> receiving service under a unique arrangement specifically approved by the Commission.[27]

Similarly, in its Entry on Rehearing, the Commission stated:

> Under the unique arrangement, Ormet will *not* be receiving service under AEP-Ohio's standard service offer; instead, Ormet will be receiving service under a unique arrangement. Although AEP-Ohio posits that this is a distinction without a difference, the Commission notes that service under a unique arrangement is authorized by a different statute, Section 4905.31, Revised Code, than service under a standard service offer, Section 4928.141, Revised Code. By its very nature, service under a unique arrangement provides for service under different prices, terms, and conditions than service under a standard service offer. In fact, in this proceeding, AEP-Ohio, enumerating several factors that it believes distinguishes Ormet from customers who are on the standard service offer, has argued that Ormet should not receive standard service offer terms for security deposits and advance payments. The Commission agrees that Ormet is different from customers on the standard service offer, and one of those differences is that Ormet has committed to AEP-Ohio to be its exclusive supplier. Therefore, since there is no risk that Ormet will shop during AEP-Ohio's ESP, Ormet does not present the same POLR risk as customers on the standard service offer as claimed by AEP-Ohio.[28]

AEP-Ohio fails to address this important and pivotal distinction. The Court should affirm the Commission's decision.

Finally, and again notwithstanding the fact that there is no "revenue foregone" and that Ormet is not an SSO customer, AEP-Ohio argues that AEP-Ohio's ESP, as a package, is more favorable, in the aggregate, than the expected results of an MRO and by modifying the POLR piece of the package, the Commission undermines the balance of interests reached in the ESP

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[27] Ormet Case, Opinion and Order at 13-14 (July 15, 2009) (citation omitted) (Appellant's Appendix at 46-47).

[28] Ormet Case, Entry on Rehearing at 11 (September 15, 2009) (emphasis in original, citation omitted) (Appellant's Appendix at 87).

case. AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 25. AEP-Ohio's argument is erroneous at best for several reasons.

First, as the Commission noted, its decision that AEP-Ohio's ESP was more favorable in the aggregate than the expected results that would otherwise apply under the MRO option "does not imply that the electric utility's ESP is the only basis for setting rates. The rates established by a reasonable arrangement under Section 4905.31, Revised Code, will frequently differ from the rates established under an ESP."[29]

Second, AEP-Ohio has not accepted the ESP. In fact, AEP-Ohio has appealed a portion of its ESP to the Court itself.[30] It is beyond reason for AEP-Ohio to argue that the overall package and balancing of interests reached in the ESP cases is undermined by a POLR offset to recovery of revenues when AEP-Ohio has not yet accepted the ESP and is itself challenging the "balance."

Third, in the ESP Case, AEP-Ohio argued that "[t]he public interest is served if the ESP is more favorable in the aggregate than the expected results of an MRO."[31] AEP-Ohio calculated that the ESP is more favorable than an MRO by approximately $292 million for CSP and $262 million for OP.[32] Similarly, the Commission concluded, "Based upon our opinion and order and using Staff witness Hess' methodology of the quantification of the ESP v. MRO comparison, as modified herein, we believe that the cost of the ESP is $673 million for CSP and $747 million

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[29] Ormet Case, Entry on Rehearing at 11-12 (September 15, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 87-88).

[30] *Columbus Southern Power Company v. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio,* Case No. 09-2292, Notice of Appeal of Columbus Southern Power Company (December 22, 2009).

[31] AEP ESP Case, Opinion and Order at 69 (March 18, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 182).

[32] *Id.* at 72 (Appellant's Appendix at 185).

for OP, and the cost of the MRO is $1.3 billion for CSP and $1.6 billion for OP." *Id.* Clearly no level of offset to the POLR charges in this case would reach the level of tipping the scale towards an MRO being more favorable than AEP-Ohio's unaccepted ESP. In fact, even if the entire POLR revenue requirement for CSP of $97.4 million and $54.8 million for OP was wiped out, according to AEP-Ohio's own calculations, the ESP would still be more favorable in the aggregate than an MRO.

For these reasons, AEP-Ohio's argument that the Commission's decision in this case conflicts with the Commission's decision on its ESP is irrelevant and incorrect. The Court should affirm the Commission's decision.

Finally, AEP-Ohio argues that, because the reasonable arrangement includes an exclusive supplier clause, the Commission's decision violates the policy of the State to ensure diversity of electricity supplies and suppliers, to recognize the continuing emergence of competitive electricity markets through the development and implementation of flexible regulatory treatment, and to ensure effective competition in the provision of retail electric service. AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 28-29. AEP-Ohio characterizes the Commission's decision on this issue as "summarily dismiss[ing] the significance of its competitive restriction" and declining to "pursue the matter further simply because AEP Ohio did not hire an independent expert witness and present written testimony on this subject." AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 31-32. Both AEP-Ohio's characterization of the Commissions rationale and AEP-Ohio's argument that a reasonable arrangement with an exclusive supplier clause necessarily violates the policy of the State are incorrect.

The Commission pointed out that R.C. 4905.31 specifically states that nothing in Chapter 4928, Revised Code, "including the policy provisions of Section 4928.02, Revised Code, should

be construed as prohibiting a reasonable arrangement for the supply of retail electric service."[33] The Commission also noted that this is "not an instance in which the electric utility is seeking to become a customer's exclusive electric supplier as a condition of a unique arrangement. Rather, it is Ormet who is committing to AEP-Ohio to be its exclusive electric supplier. In a competitive retail market, a consumer has the right to choose to enter into a long-term forward contract for generation service."[34] Thus, the Commission concluded that the reasonable arrangement does not violate the State policy.

Additionally, AEP-Ohio asserts that exclusive supplier provisions contradict "the public interest, as expressed in Ohio's policy adopted in SB 3 and SB 221" and it recommends that the Court consider exclusive supplier provisions "void against public policy and unenforceable." AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 32. But, the authorities cited by AEP-Ohio, specifically, a section from Williston on Contracts and *Taylor Building Corp. of America v. Benfield,* 117 Ohio St.3d 352 (2008) (hereinafter "*Taylor*"), do not stand for such assertions. Specifically, *Taylor* does not stand for the proposition that contracts must be declared unconscionable and void where the contract purports to violate important public policies. In fact, in *Taylor,* the Court found that the contract language in question (an arbitration clause), supported the public policy in favor of arbitration and, thus, was not unconscionable despite other questionable aspects of the clause. *Taylor* at 357, 368. Additionally, the portion of Williston referenced does not address a situation in which there are conflicting public policies and statutory authority specifically enabling the contract, such as the case here. AEP-Ohio's reliance on Williston and *Taylor* are misplaced.

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[33] Ormet Case, Entry on Rehearing at 13 (September 15, 2009), (Appellant's Appendix at 89). *See also*, Ormet Case, Opinion and Order at 13-14 (July 15, 2009), (Appellant's Appendix at 46-47).

[34] Ormet Case, Entry on Rehearing at 13 (September 15, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 89).

Finally, this is not an instance where AEP-Ohio is being penalized for not hiring an expert witness. As the Commission noted:

> AEP-Ohio does not cite to any evidence in the record of this proceeding to support its claim that the exclusive supplier provision of the proposed unique arrangement violates state policy.... There is ***no testimony*** in the record that the exclusive supplier provision will adversely impact the diversity of electric suppliers and supplies. There is ***no evidence*** that the proposed unique arrangement fails to recognize the continuing emergence of competitive markets or adversely impacts the development and implementation of flexible regulatory treatment. There is ***no testimony*** cited by AEP-Ohio regarding the impact of the exclusive supplier provision upon competition in the provision of retail electric service. (Emphasis added).[35]

Despite the fact that AEP-Ohio had company witnesses in this case and had opportunities to present evidence or solicit through cross-examination the impact of this reasonable arrangement on competition, it failed to do so. Nonetheless, despite its failure to present any evidence in the PUCO proceeding, AEP-Ohio, for the first time, offers such extra-record evidence in its Merit Brief. AEP-Ohio Merit Brief at 31.

The Court should reject AEP-Ohio's argument that an exclusive supplier provision in a reasonable arrangement violates Ohio law and Commission precedent and affirm the Commission's decision.

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[35] Ormet Case, Entry on Rehearing at 12-13 (September 15, 2009) (Appellant's Appendix at 88-89).

CONCLUSION

The Commission has correctly applied the law and its discretion to modify and approve reasonable arrangements proposed by mercantile customers and Ormet specifically. Therefore, the Commission's orders challenged by AEP-Ohio on appeal should be affirmed in all respects.

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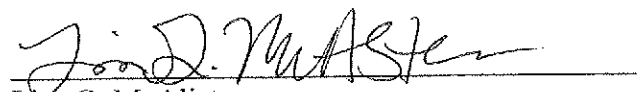
I hereby certify that copies of this *Merit Brief of Intervening Appellee, Industrial Energy Users-Ohio,* has been served by first class mail, postage prepaid, or hand-delivered to the following parties of record, this 4th day of March, 2010.



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Appellants,	)	Appeal from the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
v.	)	Case No. 09-119-EL-AEC
The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio	)	
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APPENDIX

APPENDIX ..... APP. PAGE

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OHIO CASE

In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company for Approval of a Post-Market Development Period Rate Stabilization Plan
PUCO Case No. 04-169-EL-UNC, Opinion and Order, (January 26, 2005) 1

STATUTES

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BEFORE

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Application of Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company for Approval of a Post-Market Development Period Rate Stabilization Plan.	))))	Case No. 04-169-EL-UNC

OPINION AND ORDER

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OPINION AND ORDER

The Commission, having considered the evidence, the arguments of the parties, and the applicable law, hereby issues its opinion and order in this proceeding.

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OPINION

I. Background

In June 1999, the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation (Amended Substitute Senate Bill No. 3 of the 123rd General Assembly, referred to as SB3) requiring the restructuring of the Ohio electric utility industry and providing for competition for the generation component of electric service. That legislation was signed by the governor in July 1999. Pursuant to SB3, the Commission received and reviewed proposed plans by Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company (collectively AEP) to transition from the then-existing regulatory framework to the restructured SB3 framework. *In the Matter of the Applications of Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company for Approval of Their Electric Transition Plans and for Receipt of Transition Revenues*, Case Nos. 99-1729-EL-ETP and 99-1730-EL-ETP, Opinion and Order (September 28, 2000) and Entry on Rehearing (November 21, 2000).

Ohio electric choice (a short-hand term for the competitive electric generation component in Ohio) began on January 1, 2001. Under Section 4928.40, Revised Code, a period of time was established to allow a competitive electric market to develop for the generation component of electric service (market development period, MDP). The default expiration date of the MDPs was December 31, 2005, unless otherwise determined by the Commission in conformance with certain statutory criteria. Since electric choice began, three competitive retail electric service providers have been certified to serve customers in AEP's service territories, with only one actually serving customers (nonresidential) (Tr. I, 34, 127). There has been at most 3.4 percent shopping in Columbus Southern's service territory and zero percent shopping in Ohio Power's territory (Tr. II, 175; OCC Ex. 8; GMEC Ex. 5, at first set discovery requests 25 and 26 and third set discovery requests 1 and 2). AEP's MDP is currently scheduled to expire on December 31, 2005.

In September 2003, the Commission (while addressing a proposed stipulated plan for the competitive market in The Dayton Power and Light Company service territory) encouraged all other electric distribution utilities (EDUs) in the state to consider continuation of their MDPs, a plan for rate stabilization, and/or a market-based standard service offer as a means for allowing time for their competitive electric markets to grow. *In the Matter of the Continuation of the Rate Freeze and Extension of the Market Development Period for The Dayton Power and Light Company*, Case No. 02-2779-EL-ATA, Opinion and Order at 29 (September 2, 2003). Then later that month, the Commission elaborated further that such proposals should balance three objectives: rate certainty, financial stability for the EDU, and further competitive market development. *In the Matter of the Application of FirstEnergy Corp. on Behalf of Ohio Edison Company, The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, and The Toledo Edison Company for Approval of Tariff Adjustments*, Case No. 03-1461-EL-UNC, Entry at 4-5 (September 23, 2003).

On February 9, 2004, AEP filed an application with the Commission for approval of a rate stabilization plan (RSP) to follow its competitive electric MDP. AEP proposes a plan to substitute for a post-MDP, market-based standard service offer and to eliminate a competitive bidding process from 2006 through 2008.

Twenty-five entities filed motions to intervene in this proceeding. Those requests were all granted and the intervenors are:

Appalachian People's Action Coalition (APAC)[1]	Buckeye Power Inc.
Calpine Corporation	City of Dublin
City of Upper Arlington	Constellation NewEnergy Inc.[2]
Constellation Power Source Inc.	Green Mountain Energy Company (Green Mountain or GMEC)
Industrial Energy Users-Ohio (IEU-Ohio)	The Kroger Company
Lima/Allen Council on Community Affairs	MidAmerican Energy Company
National Energy Marketers Association (NEMA)	Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC)
Ohio Energy Group (OEG)[3]	Ohio Hospital Association
Ohio Manufacturers' Association	Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy (OPAE)
Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives Inc.	PJM Interconnection L.L.C. (PJM)
PSEG Energy Resources and Trade LLC (PSEG)	Strategic Energy LLC
Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation	WPS Energy Services Inc.
WSOS Community Action	

By entry dated March 11, 2004, the Commission established a procedural schedule for this proceeding. A technical conference was held on March 24, 2004. Objections to the application were filed on April 8, 2004. By entry dated April 27, 2004, the examiner slightly modified that procedural schedule, changing deadlines for prefiling expert testimony, discovery cut-off, the local hearing dates (to be held in Canton and Columbus), and the evidentiary hearing date. In May 2004, the parties prefiled their expert testimony under the revised schedule.

Pursuant to the revised schedule, the local, public hearing in Canton, Ohio, was conducted on May 19, 2004. However, the examiner discovered after that hearing that the Commission had not properly sent any of the publication notices to the newspapers in AEP's service territory. Therefore, the examiner scheduled another local hearing in Canton, Ohio, for July 7, 2004, and rescheduled the local hearing in Columbus for July 1, 2004.

On May 24, 2004, OCC filed a motion to dismiss the application on various legal grounds. On May 25, 2004, AEP filed a motion to extend the time to respond to OCC's motion. IEU-Ohio supported an extension of the time to respond to OCC's motion. By

1 Appalachian People's Action Coalition, Lima/Allen Council on Community Affairs, Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy, and WSOS Community Action are collectively referenced in this decision as the low-income advocates or LIA.

2 Constellation NewEnergy Inc., MidAmerican Energy Company, Strategic Energy LLC, and WPS Energy Services Inc. are collectively referenced in this decision as the Ohio Marketers Group or OMG.

3 OEG is composed of AK Steel Corporation, BP Products North America Inc., The Procter and Gamble Co., Ford Motor Company, and International Steel Group Inc.

entry dated June 1, 2004, the examiner granted the request to defer a ruling on OCC's motion to dismiss, stating that all parties shall have the opportunity to argue the legality of AEP's proposal in post-hearing briefs.

The evidentiary hearing began on June 8, 2004, and continued to June 14, 2004. AEP presented the testimony of five witnesses. The staff and OCC each presented the testimony of two witnesses. APAC, Lima/Allen Council on Community Affairs, and WSOS Community Action jointly sponsored the testimony of one witness and OEG presented the testimony of one witness. At the July 1 and 7, 2004 local hearings, three people provided testimony in opposition to AEP's proposed RSP. The parties filed post-hearing briefs on July 13 and 30, 2004.

II. The Law

Section 4928.14, Revised Code, states in pertinent part:

(A) After its market development period, an electric distribution utility in this state shall provide consumers, on a comparable and nondiscriminatory basis within its certified service territory, a market-based standard service offer of all competitive retail electric services necessary to maintain essential electric service to consumers, including a firm supply of electric generation service....

(B) After that market development period, each electric distribution utility also shall offer customers within its certified territory an option to purchase competitive retail electric service the price of which is determined through a competitive bidding process....At the election of the electric distribution utility, and approval of the commission, the competitive bidding option under this division may be used as the market-based standard offer required in division (A) of this section. The commission may determine at any time that a competitive bidding process is not required, if other means to accomplish generally the same option for customers is readily available in the market and a reasonable means for customer participation is developed.

Also relevant, the Commission approved a request filed by AEP to temporarily waive the need for it to propose a market-based standard service offer and/or competitive bidding process (CBP). *In the Matter of the Request for a Temporary Waiver by Columbus Southern Power Company and Ohio Power Company from the Requirements of Chapter 4901:1-35, Ohio Administrative Code*, Case No. 04-888-EL-UNC, Entry (June 23, 2004). The Commission agreed that AEP need not make such proposal(s) until 30 days after the final order is issued in this proceeding.

III. Certain Elements of the Approved Electric Transition Plan

In moving to electric choice in Ohio, the Commission had to address a number of financial and regulatory concerns so that each of the electric utilities could transition into

utilities providing monopoly distribution service, while competing to provide the generation component. In the course of making that transition, the bundled rates and services of the electric utilities had to be separated, or unbundled, into generation, distribution and transmission components in the electric transition plan (ETP) proceedings.

Most of the parties to the AEP ETP proceedings agreed upon a resolution of the issues. The Commission reviewed that proposed resolution and approved it, with some minor modifications and with a reservation of a ruling upon the independent transmission plan. For purposes of better understanding the proposed RSP, several relevant components of the ETP are:

(1) All distribution rates effective December 31, 2005 will be frozen through 2007 for Ohio Power and 2008 for Columbus Southern. However, during that period, distribution rates can adjust to reflect costs of complying with certain changes (e.g., environmental, tax and regulatory changes) and for relief from storm damage or emergencies.

(2) Columbus Southern and Ohio Power agreed to absorb the first $20 million of actual consumer education, customer choice implementation and transition plan filing costs, but the remainder of such were permitted to be deferred, plus a carrying charge, as regulatory assets for recovery in future distribution rates (via a rider).

(3) Regulatory asset recovery was approved for the companies' MDP and for the subsequent three years for Columbus Southern and the subsequent two years for Ohio Power. Recorded regulatory assets at the beginning of the MDP, which exceeded specific regulatory asset dollar amounts in the stipulation, were amortized during the MDP and recovered through existing frozen and unbundled rates.

(4) Columbus Southern made available to the first 25 percent of the switching residential customers a shopping incentive. Any unused portion of that incentive as of December 31, 2005, will be credited to Columbus Southern's regulatory transition cost recovery.

(5) AEP reduced by five percent its generation component (including the regulatory transition costs). AEP agreed to not seek to reduce that five percent reduction for residential customers during the MDP. The first 20 percent of Ohio Power residential customer load as of December 31, 2005, that switches will not be charged the regulatory transition charge in 2006 and 2007.

(6) AEP shall transfer, by no later than December 15, 2001, operational control of its transmission facilities to a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved regional transmission organization (RTO). AEP established a fund (up to $10 million) for costs associated with transmission charges imposed by PJM and/or the Midwest

Independent System Operator (MISO) on generation originating in the service territories of PJM or MISO as such costs may be incurred.

IV. Elements of the Proposed Rate Stabilization Plan

AEP proposes a plan from 2006 through 2008 to substitute for a post-MDP market-based standard service offer and to eliminate a competitive bidding process (Tr. I, 27). The RSP states that all provisions of the approved ETP that are not changed by the RSP will not be changed. The RSP proposal can be quickly summarized as follows:

(1) Keeps distribution rates in effect on December 31, 2005, frozen through 2008, except for changes allowed by 12 categories.

(2) Continues to defer pre-2006 consumer education, customer choice implementation and transition plan filing expenses beyond $20 million. Defer post-2005 consumer education, customer choice implementation and transition plan filing expenses and all RSP filing costs. All will be recovered as distribution regulatory assets, along with carrying charges, after the RSP.

(3) Allows deferral and recovery in RSP distribution rates of: (a) RTO administrative charges from the date of integration in PJM through 2005, along with a carrying cost; (b) full carrying charges for construction expenses in Accounts 101 (electric plant in service) and 106 (completed construction not classified) from 2002 through 2005; and (c) 2004 and 2005 equity carrying charges for expenditures from 2002 through 2005 in Account 107 (construction work in progress).

(4) Increases generation rates for all customer classes by three percent for Columbus Southern and seven percent for Ohio Power each year of the plan. Also, generation rates can be adjusted in the event that any of five situations arise, but the sum of the generation increases shall not be greater than seven percent for Columbus Southern and 11 percent for Ohio Power in any one of the years. As an alternative to the increases for residential customers, AEP offers that the Commission can terminate the five percent residential generation rate discount on June 30, 2004 (which will, instead, increase generation rates for residential customers by 1.6 percent for Columbus Southern and 5.7 percent for Ohio Power each year of the plan). These generation rate increases are avoidable for customers who choose another competitive generation supplier.

(5) Allows adjustments of transmission components for changes in costs directly or indirectly imposed on the companies during the RSP.

(6) Recovers amortized generation-related transition regulatory assets under the ETP rates.

(7) Makes the Columbus Southern 2.5 mills per kilowatt-hour (kWh) shopping incentive available during the RSP to the first 25 percent of the Columbus Southern residential load. Any unused portion will not be credited to the regulatory asset charge, but will become income to Columbus Southern. Still for 2006 and 2007, the first 20 percent of Ohio Power residential load that switches will not be charged the regulatory asset charge.

(8) Includes other terms addressing post-RSP Commission action, functional separation, an allowance for AEP to participate in the CBPs of other companies, and minimum stay requirements for all categories of customers.

AEP provided estimated revenue amounts expected from the fixed generation rate increases and the new deferrals to be recovered during the RSP (AEP Ex. 3, at 10):

Company	2006	2007	2008	Total
Columbus Southern	$48 million	$74 million	$100 million	$222 million
Ohio Power	$112 million	176 million	$247 million	$535 million

If the potential four percent generation increase were also added to the calculation, AEP acknowledges that the total estimated revenue amount combined for both companies becomes $1.17 billion (Tr. II, 78).

V. OCC's Motion to Dismiss

As noted earlier, OCC filed, on May 24, 2004, a motion to dismiss the application in this proceeding on two grounds, namely that the application will violate several statutes and it illegally proposes to repudiate the ETP stipulation. In the context of describing the various components of the RSP, we will also explain and address the legal and policy arguments raised by the parties, including the specific arguments made by OCC.

VI. Positions of the Intervening Parties and Commission Discussion

Of the parties who have expressed a position in this proceeding, nearly all agree that a competitive market has not adequately developed in AEP's service territories (AEP Ex. 1, at 4; AEP Ex. 2, at 24; Tr. I, 201; Staff Ex. 2, at 3; Tr. IV, 151; OEG Ex. 2, at 5; Tr. III, 208; GMEC Initial Br. 2, 5; IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 8-10; LIA Reply Br. 2, 9). Moreover, many also believe that some action needs to be taken by the Commission to avoid a "flash-cut" in 2006 to a freely competitive electric generation market (OEG Ex. 2, at 5; Tr. III, 208; 7/7/04 Tr. 6-7, 9; IEU-Ohio Reply Br. 7). Some of these parties openly fear that, without some Commission action, generation rates will escalate and fluctuate dramatically, which could hurt consumers, hurt the development of a competitive market, and harm the market participants (AEP Ex. 1, at 4; Staff Ex. 2, at 7; Staff Initial Br. 1, 12). The disagreement here is over the specific approach that the Commission should take to spur competition in AEP's service territories, while balancing the interests of the different market participants. As already noted, the Commission has determined that the objectives

of an RSP are to develop a plan providing for: rate certainty, financial stability for the EDU, and further competitive market development.

A. Market-Based Standard Service Offer and Competitive Bidding Process

AEP has not conducted any studies or surveyed the market to determine the impact of its RSP upon shopping or participation by competitive suppliers (Tr. II, 177; GMEC Ex. 2). However, AEP believes that the proposed rate increases will create some opportunity for increased shopping (Tr. II, 178). Staff also agreed (Tr. IV, 23, 243-244). Moreover in AEP's view, its RSP will cover AEP's need to spend approximately $1.3 billion on environmental controls after 2005 and address AEP's environmental expenditures of roughly $1.0 billion between 2002 and 2004 (AEP Ex. 3, at 8, 11; Tr. I, 234-235). Additionally, AEP states that the RSP addresses transmission expenses, customer switching and future uncertainty (AEP Initial Br. 11). It is for those reasons that AEP believes its RSP is a reasonable proposal and good substitute for a market-based standard service offer and CBP.

AEP's RSP contains no CBP; instead, AEP seeks to substitute its RSP for a CBP. AEP takes the position that a CBP is not practical and not worth the effort (Tr. I, 96-97, 104-105). As noted earlier, the Commission has waived, temporarily, the current requirement for the filing of a CBP while the proposed RSP is under consideration. AEP believes that its proposed increased generation rates are reasonable substitutes for market-based rates. In AEP's view, if the market exceeds those rates, customers will benefit by having a fixed rate and, if the market rates fall below the increase levels, customers can avoid them by switching to another supplier (AEP Initial Br. 23, 65-66). Staff concurs that the generation rates constitute a reasonable proxy of market-based rates because of prices in the current wholesale market, prices in AEP's area, and shopping levels (Tr. IV, 20-21, 26-27, 244; Staff Initial Br. 4, 6). Moreover, staff believes that a next step (RSP) that provides generation rate stability and gradual, predictable increases is the best approach (Staff Reply Br. 3).

OEG and IEU-Ohio agree with the Commission's stated objectives and the concept of an RSP. However, neither agrees with AEP's RSP. Instead, they each advocate that their own proposed rate plan be adopted by the Commission (OEG Ex. 2, at 7-9; OEG Initial Br. 15-18; IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 6, 14, 37-40). OEG's rate plan basically provides: (a) no new transmission and distribution deferrals beyond that authorized in the ETP decision; (b) no transmission and distribution increases except for costs to comply with environmental (distribution-related), tax and regulatory laws or regulations, relief from storm damage expenses, or an emergency; (c) transmission and distribution rate increases after 2005 only upon a fully evaluated rate case; and (d) fixed generation rate increases after 2005 through a monthly rider designed to recover incremental environmental and governmentally mandated costs that have passed an earnings test (OEG Ex. 2, at 7-9; OEG Initial Br. 15-18). OEG's plan also addresses allowed components of rate base, components of operating expenses and rate of return (OEG Initial Br. 23-26).[4] OEG considers its plan to appropriately balance several things: (a) new environmental and

[4] Green Mountain disagrees with OEG's proposed RSP because the increases are cost-based, not market-based (GMEC Reply Br. 6).

generation-related costs are balanced with timely recovery, while the rates increase to reasonable levels based upon earned returns; (b) allows gradual and steady monthly rate increases when needed for financial stability; (c) ensures market development through moderate generation rate increases; and (d) ensures that earned returns do not increase through piecemeal, single-issue, distribution rate increases (*Id.* at 18; OEG Reply Br. 23-24).

IEU-Ohio recommends various modifications to AEP's RSP that focus upon the price certainty and financial stability objectives identified by the Commission (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 38-40). In particular, IEU-Ohio recommends that: (a) AEP establish its standard service offer prices as the current generation charge[5] of each rate schedule; (b) AEP continue to collect transition costs; and (c) AEP be permitted to seek adjustment of the current generation charges (either as confiscatory or as requiring increases due to increased jurisdictional costs from fuel prices, environmental actions, tax laws, or judicial/administrative orders).[6] In the alternative, IEU-Ohio urges the Commission to consider extending and lowering the current fixed rates, as was found to be acceptable in Virginia (IEU-Ohio Reply Br. 11). AEP responds to both OEG's and IEU-Ohio's proposed plans, stating among other things that those parties simply want to keep AEP's low rates for another period of time and their plans do not take into account all three Commission goals (AEP Reply Br. 14, 25-26).

OCC argues that AEP's proposed RSP does not meet the requirements of Sections 4928.02 or 4928.14, Revised Code, because the RSP is not a market-based standard service offer and/or a CBP (OCC Motion to Dismiss 3-4, 11; OCC Initial Br. 35-36; OCC Reply Br. 22). Thus, in OCC's view, the Commission has no authority to approve the RSP. Similarly, OCC argues that the generation rate component of the RSP is improper because it contains no CBP, as required by Section 4928.14(B), Revised Code (OCC Initial Br. 35). Also, OCC contends that, since the RSP addresses service during the MDP that conflicts with the approved ETP, it violates Section 4928.33(C), Revised Code (OCC Motion to Dismiss 12). OMG, NEMA, PSEG, Green Mountain, and LIA concur with these criticisms (OMG/NEMA Initial Br. 2-6, 15; OMG/NEMA Reply Br. 3-5; PSEG Br. 3-4, 8-9; GMEC Initial Br. 6; GMEC Reply Br. 4; LIA Initial Br. 9-11). In their view, the RSP cannot be an acceptable substitute because it is not based on market prices. OCC, OMG and NEMA acknowledge that the RSP was proposed as an alternative to the market-based standard service offer, but argue that, legally, an alternative cannot be substituted because the statute does not allow for such (OCC Initial Br. 38; OMG/NEMA Initial Br. 5-6; OMG/NEMA Reply Br. 4-5). LIA and Green Mountain state that, instead of illegally seeking RSP proposals, the Commission should have followed the path set forth in Section 4928.06, Revised Code, and provided an evaluation to the legislature (LIA Initial Br. 12-14; LIA Reply Br. 8; GMEC Reply Br. 6). OCC recommends that a CBP be filed as soon as

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5 In IEU-Ohio's proposal, it references the "little g" instead of current generation charges. When AEP's rates were unbundled prior to the start of electric choice, the amounts that were categorized as generation-related (or the "big G") were the amounts not distribution-related, transmission-related, other unbundled amounts, and tax valuation adjustments. Section 4928.34(A)(4). Revised Code. For AEP, the "little g" is the difference between the "big G" and the amounts allotted for the regulatory transition charge. The "little g" is what is reflected in AEP's charges as the current generation charges.

6 Green Mountain also disagrees with IEU-Ohio's proposed RSP because the MDP rates are not market-based rates (GMEC Reply Br. 5).

possible and recommends a particular format (OCC Ex. 10, at 10, Attach. A; OCC Reply Br. 24-25).

PSEG and OEG argue that the Commission's goals for a RSP are not fulfilled by AEP's proposal. Specifically, PSEG states that rate certainty is not assured because of the many exceptions that are contained in the RSP for possible future events (PSEG Br. 6). OEG states that rate stability is not included in the RSP because the $1.17 billion potential increase cannot constitute stability (OEG Initial Br. 5). Next, they both contend that the RSP really just provides financial stability to AEP and PSEG believes it will benefit AEP's competitive activities, rather than financial stability of its regulated functions (PSEG Br. 7; OEG Initial Br. 5). Moreover, PSEG claims that the RSP will do nothing to foster development of the competitive electric market (PSGE Br. 8). OCC quantifies the impact on the residential class for some of the costs over the three years as $266 million if the additional generation increase is not included and $410 million if it is included (OCC Ex. 5, at 3-4, Schedule FRP-1). OCC recommends that the entire RSP be rejected (OCC Initial Br. 64)

If the RSP is not rejected for failure to use market-based rates, OMG, NEMA and PSEG recommend that the Commission require a competitive bid to test the market (as it did with the FirstEnergy EDUs) and establish a basis for that market's prices (OMG/NEMA Reply Br. 6-8, 11; PSEG Br. 9).[7] Moreover, OMG and NEMA point out that, pursuant to Section 4928.14(B), Revised Code, AEP must either provide for a competitively bid generation service or demonstrate that such would be duplicative to available services. They argue that AEP cannot make such a demonstration and, therefore, a CBP must be scheduled like the Commission has done with other EDUs (OMG/NEMA Reply Br. 8-9). If the Commission decides to require a CBP, Green Mountain advocates a retail CBP (bidding for customers) as done in Pennsylvania, instead of a wholesale CBP (bidding to provide generation) (GMEC Reply Br. 10-12). IEU-Ohio took the opposite position, stating that providing customers with a CBP in the current state of the market would elevate form over substance (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 40). Instead, IEU-Ohio believes the Commission should ask the legislature to delay the CBP option until the Commission concludes that the market is sufficiently mature to warrant the time and resources needed for CBPs (*Id.*).

Commission Discussion

At the outset, we will note that AEP proposed an RSP because we requested it. All parties to this proceeding are aware of the direction that this Commission has taken and the concerns it has with the post-MDP competitive electric environment. In fact, many of

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7 The Commission ordered a CBP for the FirstEnergy EDUs in *In the Matter of the Applications of Ohio Edison Company, The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company and The Toledo Edison Company for Authority to Continue and Modify Certain Regulatory Accounting Practices and Procedures, for Tariff Approvals and to Establish Rates and Other Charges Including Regulatory Transition Charges Following the Market Development Period*, Case No. 03-2144-EL-ATA (June 9, 2004). On December 8, 2004, the CBP took place (an auction). The Commission concluded, on December 9, 2004, that the CBP auction price should be rejected because the previously approved RSP price is more favorable for consumers than the clearing price of the auction, which represented the best available market-based price to cover FirstEnergy's retail load. *In the Matter of the Application of Ohio Edison Company, The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company and The Toledo Edison Company for Approval of a Competitive Bid Process to Bid Out Their Retail Electric Load*, Case No. 04-1371-EL-ATA, Finding and Order.

the parties in this proceeding have participated in several other proceedings involving the MDPs and post-MDP activities for other EDUs. Many of the parties readily acknowledge that a competitive electric generation market has not developed thus far in AEP's service territories and will not adequately develop by the time AEP's MDP expires in December 2005. With so few participants, so very little shopping having taken place in Columbus Southern's territory and no shopping at all having taken place in Ohio Power's territory, we do not want to simply allow market forces to be unfettered. We believe, in AEP's territory, a controlled transition is not only appropriate, but very much needed. We also believe that many, if not all parties, agree with this fundamental starting point.

The difference of opinion occurs with the manner in which to handle the near term. OCC, OMG, NEMA and LIA argue that Section 4928.14, Revised Code, provides the only mechanisms available to the Commission (adoption of a market-based standard service offer and a service developed through a CBP) and the proposed RSP is neither. Even with those two mechanisms identified in Section 4928.14, Revised Code, the parties disagree what should be done. However, AEP, staff, OEG and IEU-Ohio believe greater flexibility is available, namely, the Commission can adopt an RSP. We agree. AEP takes the position that a CBP is not practical and not worth the effort. Staff and IEU-Ohio agreed. We also agree and, as is within our authority, we conclude that a CBP is not warranted for AEP at the conclusion of its MDP. The record reflects that, in the past several years, only three competitive suppliers have been certified to provide competitive electric service in AEP's territory and only one is actually serving customers (Tr. I, 34, 127). Plus, there has been at most 3.4 percent shopping in Columbus Southern's service territory and zero percent shopping in Ohio Power's territory (Tr. II, 175; OCC Ex. 8; GMEC Ex. 5, at first set discovery requests 25 and 26 and third set discovery requests 1 and 2). This level of inactivity leads us to seriously doubt the efficacy of initiating a competitive bid. Instead, we conclude that an RSP (and in particular the one we adopt today) will accomplish, generally, the same as a CBP for customers and provide a reasonable means for customers to participate in that competitive environment as it continues to develop. As further explained in this decision, we agree to increase generation rates (which are avoidable to customers who choose another competitive generation supplier). These components of the RSP, along with continuation of the unaffected provisions of the ETP, we believe will prompt the competitive market and continue to provide customers a reasonable means for customer participation. Therefore, we conclude that, at this time, a CBP is not required for AEP between 2006 and 2008.

Many parties argue that AEP's proposed RSP is not a market-based standard service offer because it is not based upon the market. OMA and NEMA have argued that the RSP is not based upon a willing buyer and a willing seller. AEP proposes its RSP as a substitute for a market-based standard service offer (Plan at 3). Staff presented evidence that the RSP is a reasonable proxy of market-based rates based upon its evaluation (Tr. IV, 20-21, 26-27, 244). OCC's witness acknowledged that the Commission has the discretion to determine an appropriate proxy for a market-based standard service offer, given that both the retail electric choice market and the wholesale market have not sufficiently developed (Tr. III, 147). For the period involved (2006 through 2008), we conclude that the generation rates that we approve in this RSP today will constitute an appropriate market-based standard service offer, as required by Section 4928.14(A), Revised Code. We will evaluate any subsequent, additional generation rate adjustments (which are limited to only the

enumerated categories). Additionally, we conclude that the RSP that we approve today complies with the requirements of Section 4928.14, Revised Code. None of the arguments raised to the contrary convinces us otherwise. Finally, we note that there is greater flexibility under Section 4928.14, Revised Code, than what some parties have advocated in this proceeding. The Ohio Supreme Court recently recognized, in *Constellation NewEnergy, Inc. v. Pub. Util. Comm.*, ____ Ohio St.3d ___, 2004-Ohio-6767 (December 17, 2004), that an RSP could satisfy Section 4928.14, Revised Code.

Next, we conclude that our decision today will fulfill our previously identified RSP goals. Throughout this decision, as we address the various components of the proposed RSP, we specifically explain how and why we believe that various approved components are acceptable, including how they meet or fulfill our intended goals.

B. Generation Rates and Charges (Provisions Two and Three of the RSP)

1. Three and Seven Percent Increases

AEP proposes in the RSP that, for all customer classes, the generation rates will increase each year (2006, 2007, and 2008) by three percent for Columbus Southern and by seven percent for Ohio Power. These increases will generate $151 million for Columbus Southern and $376 million for Ohio Power (AEP Ex. 3, at 10). AEP contends that the three and seven percent generation rate increases are reasonable to address the Commission's three objectives of a RSP. These generation rate increases are based upon the companies' judgment (AEP Ex. 2, at 12). Given that AEP has low generation rates currently, AEP contends that fixed increases will spur market competition and be preferable to customers, rather than imposition of full market-based rates (*Id.* at 13). AEP further notes that the generation rate increases complement the companies' substantial investments to comply with environmental requirements. AEP noted that it plans to spend $1.3 billion beyond normal capital expenditures after 2005 on generation-related environmental controls (AEP Ex. 2, at 14; AEP Ex. 3, at 11). Next, AEP points to other EDU generation rates and contends that its increased rates would still be below the current lowest average residential generation rates of those EDUs (AEP Ex. 5, at 13; Tr. III, 31).[8] When that comparison is made, AEP argues that its proposed generation rate increases are reasonable (AEP Ex. 5, 13; AEP Initial Br. 24, 67-68).

Staff supports the fixed generation rate increases as reasonable in magnitude and because they are completely avoidable if a competitor can beat the price and customers shop (Staff Ex. 2, at 8; Tr. IV, 152, 154-155, 163-164, 248-249; Staff Reply Br. 4). Staff evaluated this portion of the plan in the context of the current market, the expectation that generation rates will rise and the magnitude of the proposed numbers for company financial integrity (Tr. IV 156, 158; Staff Ex. 2, at 8). Moreover, staff noted that AEP's rates are low compared to the Ohio market and keeping them frozen would impede supplier entry in the territory (Tr. IV, 248).

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8 Staff notes that AEP is distinguishable from other EDUs in Ohio because it has lower cost generation supplies and has an infrastructure to allow it to move power within a seven-state region (Staff Initial Br. 4). Staff suggests that AEP's proposal here should be evaluated separately from the other RSPs (*Id.*).

OEG, Green Mountain, LIA, OCC, and IEU-Ohio disagree with the proposed fixed, generation rate increases. OEG and IEU-Ohio object to the three and seven percent generation rate increases on the ground that they will generate excessive earnings, while AEP has been already receiving very healthy returns (OEG Ex. 2, at 14-16; OEG Reply Br. 4, 6; IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 7). OEG contends that the fixed generation increases will engender 3.6 times more revenues than the companies' projected costs for the environmental expenditures identified (OEG Ex. 2, at 15). OEG and OCC are also skeptical that customers will really avoid the increased generation rates on the ground that the market is defective now and even AEP anticipates that it will remain defective for a period of time (OEG Reply Br. 22-23; OCC Reply Br. 20). Thus, in OEG's and OCC's view, customers will only have an option to shop in a defective market or take generation service from AEP at increasing rates (*Id.*). Moreover, OCC highlights that the identified projected costs for the environmental expenditures are not costs just for these companies; rather, they will be allocated throughout the entire AEP system, but AEP did not account for such allocation (Tr. I, 79; OCC Ex. 10, at 8; OCC Initial Br. 28). AEP and staff respond that, after the MDP, generation service is no longer subject to cost-based regulation and, thus, AEP's generation rates and charges need not be cost-based (AEP Initial Br. 31; Staff Initial Br. 4; Tr. IV, 154, 158, 165-166, 245). OEG counters by noting that AEP justified many aspects of the proposed RSP by relying solely on the cost of service for those items (e.g., additional generation-related expenses to be recovered through generation rate increases and deferrals) (OEG Reply Br. 17-18).

Green Mountain argues that the RSP's rates are below market (GMEC Initital Br. 8). Green Mountain further argues that AEP should be required to prove the cost basis of its generation rates (and distribution and transmission rates) since AEP has justified its RSP by pointing to various costs/expenses and Section 4905.33(B), Revised Code, prohibits service for less than actual cost for purposes of destroying competition (*Id.* at 18).

IEU-Ohio contends that justification for the fixed generation rate increases is weak because it is not clear that AEP will spend all estimated amounts on environmental compliance, the estimated expenditures only modestly affect production costs during the RSP period, and those expenditures will be allocated among the various operating companies as production costs (Tr. I, 58-60; IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 5-6). IEU-Ohio points out that the proposed fixed generation rate increases will allow AEP to collect $527 million more than current generation rates allow, in addition to the $702 million in transition costs allowed under the ETP decision (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 3). IEU-Ohio points out that this RSP asks the Commission to approve generation rate increases on the basis that the current generation rates are below market, while in 1999, AEP claimed that the generation component was at above-market prices and, therefore, asked for regulatory transition costs (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 17-18, 22; IEU-Ohio Reply Br. 7).

IEU-Ohio acknowledges that electric generation service (after the MDP) shall not be subject to traditional cost-of-service supervision or regulation, but it also believes that the Commission has a duty to ensure that the standard service offer prices are just and reasonable (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 25-29; IEU-Ohio Reply Br. 3-5). In IEU-Ohio's view, the RSP's proposed generation rates are too high and not reasonable, particularly since AEP's financial condition has been very favorable over the last few years. Next, IEU-Ohio contends that these rate increases will simply fund investments and growth on earnings

and are not necessary for financial stability (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 30-31). IEU-Ohio also noted that, in Virginia, price caps have been extended and Ohio should realize that raising retail prices in Ohio (while other states extend rate caps) will not benefit Ohio as it strives to compete in the global economy (IEU-Ohio Reply Br. 8).

OCC argues that this portion of the RSP violates Section 4928.38, Revised Code, because it seeks recovery of additional generation-related costs not authorized in the ETP at the time when AEP is supposed to be on its own with respect to recovery of generation-related costs (OCC Motion to Dismiss 5). OCC further argues that these fixed generation rate increases are not cost-based or justified because a complete picture of current costs has not been made (some prior costs may no longer exist, while some new costs and benefits have developed) (Tr. I, 173-174, 222; OCC Initial Br. 28-31; OCC Reply Br. 16, 17). OCC supports OEG's estimated rates of return and argues that they demonstrate that the fixed generation rate increases alone will cause extremely high returns for AEP that should not be permitted (OCC Initial Br. 32, 39; OCC Reply Br. 16-17). In other words, OCC states that AEP should not be earning higher returns on equity than they could possibly be allowed in a regulatory environment when a developed competitive market is absent (*Id.* at 39).

LIA also disagrees with the generation rate increases in the RSP (LIA Initial Br. 16). On legal grounds, LIA argues that, since the RSP involves an increase in rates, AEP has violated Sections 4909.17 and 4909.19, Revised Code, by not following rate increase procedures (*Id.* at 9). Moreover, LIA contends that AEP's actions/inactions regarding RTO membership have caused a competitive market to not develop and, therefore, AEP does not have "clean hands" and should not be rewarded with excessive increases in rates (LIA Reply Br. 2). From a public policy perspective, LIA contends that the companies already have high profit margins and do not need rate increases, and yet do not propose any programs to mitigate the impact of the RSP on low-income customers (LIA Initial Br. 16, 20, 31; LIA Reply Br. 3-4, 6). LIA notes that AEP is the only Ohio utility to ever terminate funding for low-income energy efficiency programs (APAC Ex. 1, at 7; Tr. IV, 182; LIA Initial Br. 32). LIA further contends that the RSP will exacerbate the already high amounts of percentage of income payment plan (PIPP) arrearages for AEP customers (*Id.* at 26). If the Commission proceeds with an RSP, LIA and OCC argue the Commission must consider the impact of the RSP on the low-income consumers and vulnerable populations in order to promote rate stability and certainty (*Id.* at 20, 34; OCC Initial Br. 62). Specifically, LIA urges: (a) the Commission to allow PIPP customer pools to participate in CBPs during the RSP; (b) AEP to negotiate with the Ohio Department of Development, Commission staff, and low-income intervenors to develop "an approach to arrearages that reinforces good payment behavior by PIPP program participants and reduces the PIPP debt to a manageable level that can conceivably be repaid"; and (c) the Commission require funding by AEP of $1.5 million per year for a low-income energy efficiency program in AEP's service territory (APAC Ex. 1, at 8, 12; Tr. IV, 197, 201; LIA Initial Br. 29, 32; LIA Reply Br. 7-8). OCC supports these three recommendations (OCC Initial Br. 62).

Commission Discussion

Certainly, to some extent, the generation rate increases will provide additional funds to the companies and assist in their financial stability. As noted, AEP will be incurring large generation-related expenses above normal capital expenditure levels during the RSP period. However, we also believe that the RSP package as a whole supports our goals of helping to develop the competitive market and providing some rate stability. We reach this conclusion because we believe that the generation rate increases are a reasonable approximation of the future market conditions. With the RSP's structured, periodic generation rate increases, customers will not be subjected to significant swings in generation rates in an emerging competitive market for AEP. We believe this provision is not only very important to spurring a competitive market, but also to protecting customers from the risks and dangers associated with price volatility and a nascent competitive market.

We also accept our staff's conclusion that the percentage increases are reasonable in magnitude. Many of the parties object to this provision because they contend that AEP is already earning too much. However, these parties seem to forget that, with the expiration of the MDP, generation rates are subject to the market (not the Commission's traditional cost-of-service rate regulation) and that the plan was an option that AEP voluntarily proposed. Section 4928.05(A)(1), Revised Code. We make this observation to point out that, under the statutory scheme, company earnings levels would not come into play for establishing generation rates - market tolerances would otherwise dictate, just as AEP argued (AEP Reply Br. 26-27). We are strongly committed to encouraging the competitive market in AEP's service territories as it is the policy of this state, per Section 4928.02, Revised Code. Given that commitment, we do not feel that the earnings levels evidence or cost-based analyses and arguments presented by OEG, OCC, IEU-Ohio or LIA justify rejection of this provision. We believe that this provision will establish generation rates that are appropriate for the RSP period, spur the competitive market, and also protect customers from dramatic or volatile generation rate price changes. We do not agree that this provision violates any of the cited statutes.

While we have found the proposed generation rate increases to be reasonable, both in concept and in number, it is also appropriate to point out that these increases will be avoidable during the rate stabilization period. Customers who choose another competitive generation supplier can avoid AEP's increased generation rates (because those customers will pay, instead, the rates of their chosen supplier). We believe this is an important point to note.

We do realize that rate increases can be difficult for some customers to handle, as LIA has argued. We are not ignoring these concerns. In fact, we believe that the structured nature of the generation rate increases will be more helpful to the low-income customers in AEP's territory than would otherwise likely occur without the RSP. Ideally, we agree that rate increases are not preferred, but we are weighing and balancing several competing interests and we believe that the proposed generation rate increases will result in the most balanced and reasonable generation rates for all customers in AEP's service territories during the three years following the MDP. For these additional reasons, we

accept this provision. Despite that conclusion, we agree that low-income customers, in particular, can be disproportionately affected by the RSP. To alleviate that concern, we conclude that low-income customers should receive some additional assistance. Therefore, we have provided for additional funding of low-income and economic development programs during the RSP period as set forth in Section VI.G of this decision.

2. Elimination of Five Percent Residential Discount

For all residential customers, AEP proposes an additional generation rate increase each year of 1.6 percent for Columbus Southern and 5.7 percent for Ohio Power, if the five percent generation discount terminates on June 30, 2004. This would end the five percent residential rate reduction 18 months earlier than what was agreed upon in the ETP stipulation (Tr. I, 28). If elimination of the five percent discount to residential customers is included, AEP calculates that the generation rate increases will be 8.5 percent for Columbus Southern residential customer and 13.2 percent for Ohio Power residential customers in 2006 (AEP Ex. 2, at 11). This would amount to roughly a $6 million increase for residential rates (Tr. I, 29). AEP supports this proposal by noting that Section 4928.40(C), Revised Code, allows the Commission to terminate the discount if it is "unduly discouraging market entry by [...] alternative suppliers." Despite the proposed June 30, 2004 date having passed, AEP has noted that the alternative is still viable, but the later termination of the discount (still prior to the end of the MDP) will result in reduced fixed increases for residential customers (AEP Initial Br. at footnote 11). AEP, staff and Green Mountain believe that the current generation rates, along with the existing temporary discount, unduly discourages market entry because of the small price differential between AEP's generation rates and others' generation supplies (AEP Ex. 2, at 12; Tr. IV, 23; GMEC Br. at 16-17). Staff and Green Mountain urge the Commission to eliminate the temporary discount (Staff Ex. 2, at 9; GMEC Initial Br. 17).

OCC opposes elimination of the five percent discount on the ground that the ETP stipulation requires the companies to retain the discount for residential customers through the MDP (OCC Initial Br. 32; OCC Reply Br. 17).[9] The ETP stipulation states that the companies will "not seek to reduce the [five percent] reduction in the generation component rate reduction for residential customers during the market development period" (OCC Ex. 1, at 6). OCC also contends that AEP has not demonstrated that the discount is unduly discouraging market entry, as required by Section 4928.40(C), Revised Code (OCC Ex. 10, at 5; OCC Reply Br. 18). In fact, AEP could not say that elimination of the discount would result in suppliers entering the residential market (AEP Ex. 2, at 12; Tr. I, 137-138). AEP contends that its RSP does not ask to remove the five percent discount during the MDP; it only noted that it was an option that the Commission could consider in the context of the RSP's proposed generation rate increases (AEP Initial Br. 27-28, 68, 78).

IEU-Ohio states that the Commission should consider elimination of AEP's five percent residential discount in a "stand-alone" proceeding that is "focused on the

9 OCC argues that the Commission lacks authority to approve any portion of the RSP that impacts any term in the ETP decision (OCC Motion to Dismiss 2; OCC Initial Br. 2-3). Staff disagrees with that argument because the Commission retains ongoing jurisdiction over its orders, including the authority to change or modify its earlier decisions as it deems necessary in the best interests of the utility and customers (Staff Initial Br. at footnote 1).

residential customer sector and the full range of conditions that are affecting market entry by alternate suppliers" (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 41).

Commission Discussion

OCC correctly cites the ETP stipulation. We also believe that AEP's argument that its RSP does not ask to remove the five percent discount is an attempt at "hair-splitting". AEP's RSP proposed eliminating the five percent discount and it previously agreed that it would not make such a request during the MDP.

Notwithstanding the language in the ETP stipulation and our acceptance of that stipulation, we have the ability to evaluate the impact of the five percent residential discount under Section 4928.40(C), Revised Code. Section 4928.40(C), Revised Code, gives the Commission the flexibility to eliminate the five percent residential discount if it unduly discourages market entry in AEP's service territories. We believe that an early ending to the discount is not warranted and, rather, it is appropriate that the five percent residential discount in both companies' territories, end effective December 31, 2005. We further note that ending the five percent residential discount on December 31, 2005, is in keeping with SB3 (including Section 4928.40, Revised Code) and is consistent with the timing required of the residential discounts of four other EDUs. *Ohio Edison*, Case No. 03-2144-EL-ATA, *supra* at 24-25 and *In the Matter of the Application of The Cincinnati Gas & Electric Company to Modify its Nonresidential Generation Rates to Provide for Market-Based Standard Service Offer Pricing and to Establish an Alternative Competitive-Bid Service Rate Option Subsequent to the Market Development Period*, Case No. 03-93-EL-ATA, Opinion and Order at 36-37 (September 29, 2004).

3. Additional Generation Rate Increases

AEP's RSP allows generation rates to further increase, after a Commission hearing, for: (a) increased expenditures incurred through an affiliate pooling arrangement for complying with changes in laws/rules/regulations related to environmental requirements, security, taxes, and new generation-related regulatory requirements imposed by statute/rule/ regulation/administrative order/court order; or (b) customer load switches that materially jeopardize either company's ability to recover the anticipated generation revenues. Total generation rate increases cannot be greater than seven percent for Columbus Southern and 11 percent for Ohio Power in any given year (if the five percent residential discount is not eliminated).[10] The additional generation adjustments are effectively capped at four percent. The RSP proposes a 90-day time frame, after which the proposed increase will become effective on an interim basis until the Commission's final order is implemented.

AEP points out that this aspect of the RSP only gives the company the flexibility to ask for additional, limited generation rate increases in the event of changes in the two enumerated categories; it does not pre-approve or guarantee rate increases (AEP Ex. 2, 16-

10 If the five percent residential discount would have been eliminated as of June 30, 2004, any additional generation rate increases would be at most four percent above the residential customers' fixed annual increase, which would be at most 5.6 percent for Columbus Southern residential customers and 9.7 percent for Ohio Power residential customers (AEP Ex. 2, at 18).

17; AEP Initial Br. 35). AEP characterizes this provision as a means to manage the risk it faces relative to the fixed generation rate increases (AEP Reply Br. 28). At this point in time, AEP does not expect to ask for additional rate increases (Tr. I, 198). Also, AEP mentions that any additional increases that might be authorized by the Commission could be avoided for customers who choose another competitive supplier (AEP Initial Br. 35).

Staff, Green Mountain and IEU-Ohio do not fully support or fully object to this provision. They believe that any request for additional generation rate increases should be evaluated by looking at the company's overall financial health (not just the events that triggered the proposed further increase) and not be limited to four percent (Staff Ex. 2, at 9-10; GMEC Reply Br. 12-13; IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 42; Tr. IV, 33, 153, 231, 245). Staff recognizes that the proposed additional generation increases would be sought for many of the same reasons that AEP had based its proposed three and seven percent increases and, thus, believes automatic additional increases should only be considered after looking at the whole company (Tr. IV, 153, 245-247). AEP responded by stating that a look at the overall financial health of the company is contrary to Section 4928.05(A)(1), Revised Code, because generation pricing will not be subject to cost-of-service ratemaking principles (AEP Initial Br. 38). Additionally, AEP predicts that holding generation rates down because of a strong "wires business" is likely to result in rate shock in 2009, which is what the Commission is trying to avoid today (*Id.*; Tr. I, 247).

OCC argues that the proposed four percent additional increase does not result from changes in market prices and, thus, is not market-based (OCC Ex. 10, at 9). Like staff, OCC characterizes this provision as improper single-issue ratemaking and also criticizes the ambiguity of the phrase "materially jeopardizes either or both companies' ability to recover the increased revenues" (*Id.*).

OEG worries that this portion of the RSP could permit recovery twice for the same expenses; essentially that the same costs used to justify the fixed increases arguably could justify the proposed additional increases (OEG Ex. 2, at 16-17). Plus, because the companies will continue to have very high earnings, OEG believes that the additional generation rate increases are not needed to maintain financial stability (OEG Initial Br. 8). AEP notes that this criticism is really a concern over the Commission's ability to judge any proposed additional generate rate increase and not a sufficient basis for rejecting this portion of the RSP (AEP Initial Br. 39).

Commission Discussion

We find this portion of the RSP to be acceptable. We agree with AEP that this portion of the RSP will allow AEP to seek additional generation rate increases; it does not pre-approve them (although it does limit any approved amount). We understand staff's and IEU-Ohio's preference that subsequent generation rate increases be viewed in the context of the company's overall financial health, but that position ignores the requirements of Section 4928.05(A)(1), Revised Code. Thus, we find this portion of the RSP to appropriately temper potentially large generation rate increases (by limiting the dollar amounts), while also recognizing AEP's interest in financial stability. This provision is a compromise position that takes into consideration the competing interests. We understand the criticism raised with the phrase "materially jeopardizes either or both

companies' ability to recover the increased revenues." In the event that further increases are requested by AEP, we will evaluate this. Similarly, we understand OEG's concern that AEP could request further generation-related rate increases for items that it is already recovering. But, as AEP states, the concern does not justify rejecting the provision; it is really a question of whether the proposed further increase is properly evaluated. For these reasons, none of the comments raised in this proceeding convinces us that this portion of the RSP should be rejected.

C. Distribution Rates and Charges (Provision One of the RSP)

Under the RSP, AEP distribution rates and charges in effect on December 31, 2005, would remain in effect through 2008 (except for the universal service fund rider, energy efficiency fund rider, and certain cost-based charges such as right-of-way charges). These "frozen" distribution charges could be also adjusted in the event of an emergency, changes in transmission/distribution allocations under the FERC's seven-factor test, or if the companies experience increased distribution-related expenses due to: (a) changes in laws/rules/regulations related to environmental requirements; (b) security; (c) taxes; (d) O&M due to new requirements imposed by federal or state legislative or regulatory bodies after March 31, 2004; and (e) major storm damage service restoration. Furthermore, the "frozen" distribution rates will be adjusted, if the Commission approves, to recover certain deferred RTO administrative costs (deferred in 2004 and 2005) plus carrying costs and certain deferred carrying costs on certain environmental expenditures since 2002, plus carrying costs.

AEP points out that the RSP only freezes distribution rates for an additional one-year period for Ohio Power, because the ETP froze them previously (AEP Ex. 2, at 5). AEP acknowledges that, in addition to what is contained within the ETP, the RSP would add some additional categories for which the "frozen" distribution rates would/could be adjusted (*Id.*; Tr. I, 31-32). AEP contends that, at least with the proposed adjustments for security expenses and the specified O&M expenses, they are justified because of the unforeseen security issues that previously developed and the likelihood that O&M expenditures will be needed since the ETP was approved (AEP Ex. 2, at 6).

Staff, IEU-Ohio and OEG state that a distribution rate case should be conducted, instead of freezing distribution charges from 2006 to 2008 (Staff Ex. 2, at 7-8; Tr. IV, 230; IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 42; OEG Ex. 2, at 22-23). They reach this conclusion because these distribution rates were established in 1991 and 1994 rate cases (Staff Ex. 2, at 8). More specifically, OEG believes that AEP's returns on common equity have been very high over the last several years and the proposed RSP will only perpetuate them (OEG Ex. 2, at 11-14). AEP took issue with OEG's rate of return calculations, alleging a number of errors (AEP Initial Br. 31-35).

OCC also opposes this provision. OCC contends that the additional exceptions to the distribution rate freeze (security and O&M expenses) are unwarranted (OCC Ex. 10, at 6). In OCC's view, AEP accepted the risk that increasesd expenses for these two items would occur when it signed the ETP stipulation and AEP should not now be permitted to illegally attempt to modify the ETP or violate Sections 4909.18 and 4909.19, Revised Code

(OCC Ex. 10, at 6-7; OCC Motion to Dismiss at 9).[11] Moreover, OCC contends that these exceptions to the distribution rate freeze constitute single-issue ratemaking, which is not appropriate public policy because the exceptions do not recognize other cost-related changes (OCC Ex. 10, at 6-7; Tr. III, 187-188). In response, AEP states that OCC's position conflicts with its position that the Commission set a post-MDP generation rate at something other than market levels (AEP Initial Br. 14).

LIA disagrees with the distribution rate provision in the RSP because it will also allow rate increases (LIA Initial Br. 16).

Commission Discussion

We find that Provision One of the RSP is acceptable. The additional exceptions to the distribution rate freeze are, in the context of considering the RSP as a package, reasonable. We understand OCC's contention that the additional exceptions to the rate freeze can be considered single-issue ratemaking, but we also must point out that OCC previously agreed to other exceptions to the distribution rate freeze, which can also be considered single-issue ratemaking. The next question then is whether the additional exceptions are justified. We do accept AEP's contention that, in 1999 and 2000, security expenses and the specified O&M expenses were not fully foreseeable. In this respect, we believe that allowing for these additional exceptions to the distribution rate freeze during the RSP is acceptable. We view the extension of the distribution rate freeze as a positive aspect of the RSP, which meets our goal of fostering a competitive market and still balancing rate stability with financial certainty for AEP.

We appreciate the position taken by staff, IEU-Ohio and OEG about the need for a distribution rate case. They have correctly noted that a rate proceeding has not taken place for either company for a period of time. AEP believes that, after the RSP, it would be appropriate for the Commission to initiate rate proceedings (Tr. I, 102). AEP explained that a rate proceeding at this point would frustrate the Commission's goals of rate stability and financial stability over the next few years (*Id.*). We agree that embarking on a rate proceeding at this point could run counter to our ultimate goals. Therefore, we do not accept that position.

D. Deferral Requests (Provisions One, Five and Six of the RSP)

The companies propose to defer the costs of several items during the RSP (AEP Ex. 2, at 8-9; AEP Ex. 4, at 4-6, 10-12). These items are:

(a) RTO administrative charges (adjusted for net congestion costs) from the time of integration into PJM[12] through 2005, plus a carrying charge (based on the weighted average cost of capital).

(b) The 2004 and 2005 equity carrying charges on expenditures begun in 2002 through 2005 for expenditures located in Account 107, construction work in process (CWIP).

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11 OCC contends that, after the MDP, EDU distribution rates can only be adjusted through properly filed applications under Chapter 4909, Revised Code (OCC Motion to Dismiss 10).

12 AEP integrated into PJM on October 1, 2004.

(c) The full carrying charges (based on the weighted average cost of capital) on expenditures begun in 2002 through 2005 for all functions in Accounts 101 (electric plant in service) and 106 (completed construction not classified), except line extension expenditures, which are already subject to carrying cost deferrals.

(d) Consumer education, customer choice implementation, and transition plan filings through 2005, plus a carrying charge.

(e) Consumer education, customer choice implementation, and transition plan filing costs incurred after 2005, and all RSP filing costs, plus a carrying charge.

Most of the expenditures in the second and third categories are associated with environmental control equipment (nitrogen oxide burners, flue gas desulphurization, and selective catalytic reduction) for generation facilities (Tr. II, 14-18; OCC Ex. 3). AEP estimated the total amounts of these proposed deferrals over the RSP as follows (AEP Ex. 4, at 3, 6-7; AEP Ex. 3, at 4-5, 7; AEP Ex. 2, at 8):

Proposed Deferral	Columbus Southern	Ohio Power
RTO Admin. Costs[13]	$11.9 million	$15.6 million
RTO Admin. Costs Carrying Costs	2.5 million	3.2 million[14]
CWIP Carrying Costs	1.0 million	9.0 million
In-Service Plant Carrying Costs	13.0 million	50.0 million
Addl. Carrying Costs for CWIP and		
In-Service Plant	2.0 million	9.0 million[15]
Pre-2006 Education, Choice		
Impl. and Transition Plan		
Filing Costs[16]	40.6 million	45.5 million
Post-2005 Education, Choice		
Impl., Transition Plan Filing		
and all RSP Filing Costs[17]	18.2 million	19.7 million
Total	$89.2 million	$152 million

13 These estimates do not include an adjustment for congestion costs, as those are unknown (AEP Ex. 3, at 3; AEP Ex. 2, at 8).

14 AEP's estimate of the RTO administrative costs totaled $14.4 million for Columbus Southern and $18.8 million for Ohio Power, while the revenues to be produced by this aspect of the RSP are estimated to be $48 million for Columbus Southern and $60 million for Ohio Power (AEP Ex. 3, at 7, 10). However, we note that AEP's brief reflects instead that the anticipated revenues to be produced by this aspect of the RSP will be $16.8 million for Columbus Southern and $20.7 million for Ohio Power (AEP Initial Br. Attachment A at 3 and Attachment B at 3).

15 AEP's estimates of the carrying costs of the CWIP and in-service plant totaled $16 million for Columbus Southern and $68 million for Ohio Power, while the revenues to be produced by this aspect of the RSP are estimated to be $23 million for Columbus Southern and $99 million for Ohio Power (AEP Ex. 3, at 7, 10).

16 These estimates were made by AEP in May 2000 (OCC Ex. 1, at 4). They do not include carrying charges. No updated estimates were presented as evidence in this proceeding.

17 The companies did not estimate RSP filing costs (AEP Ex. 3, at 5).

In AEP's view, these are new, significant costs that cannot be capitalized and were not built into current rates (AEP Ex. 4, at 7). It should be noted, however, that AEP would amortize these new deferrals over the three-year RSP and begin recovering those amounts as regulatory assets through distribution charges in 2006, except for the consumer education, customer choice implementation, transition plan filing costs incurred, and all RSP filing costs, plus a carrying charge (AEP Ex. 2, at 21; AEP Ex. 4, at 4).

1. Regional Transmission Organization Administrative Costs

Staff calculated an average of the RTO deferral rider to be .27 mills/kWh for both companies and found it to be a reasonable level for what it considers to be a new service (Tr. IV, 63-64, 67-68, 112, 253). OMG and NEMA do not fully object to this proposed deferral, but contend that recovery of it during the RSP will cause some shopping customers to be charged twice for those same costs (OMG/NEMA Initial Br. 9-11). OCC also agrees with this criticism, but still otherwise objects to the deferral, as detailed further below (OCC Initial Br. 8-9; OCC Reply Br. 8). More specifically, OMG and NEMA explain that any shopping customer will pay the pre-2006 RTO administrative charges to his/her generation supplier as part of the cost of receiving that generation supply and, then, also pay AEP when it assesses the deferral during the RSP. OMG and NEMA state that an easy solution is to require that AEP customers who shop after October 1, 2004, get a credit for PJM administrative charges until the end of the MDP, but impose the deferrals upon them during the RSP (OMG/NEMA Initial Br. 11-12). Green Mountain agrees (GMEC Reply Br. 9). AEP responds to this suggestion, stating that it is impossible to segregate how much each customer's bill will recover the deferral and, thus, the suggestion is not possible (AEP Reply Br. 19-20).

OCC objects to the RTO administrative cost deferral for several other reasons. OCC first contends that this proposed deferral should be rejected because it violates the intent of the distribution service rate cap (set forth in Section 4928.34(A)(6), Revised Code); it is simply an attempt to recover costs that were to be recovered by the capped distribution rates (OCC Ex. 10, at 7; OCC Initial Br. 5-6, 9; OCC Reply Br. 2-3; OCC Motion to Dismiss 7). OCC also considers this provision to violate the part of the ETP decision which freezes distribution rates beyond the MDP. OCC points out that a utility can recover transmission costs through an increase to the transmission component, which will correspondingly decrease the distribution component during the MDP (OCC Initial Br. at 6). AEP even acknowledged this possibility (Tr. I, 171). Second, OCC argues that AEP is proposing single-issue ratemaking contrary to Chapter 4909, Revised Code (OCC Initial Br. 7; OCC Reply Br. 12-13). OCC does not believe that the Commission should consider this single ($33.2 million) charge in isolation of overall transmission rates.

OCC next contends that the proposed deferral of the RTO administrative charges would improperly allow AEP to recover transmission-related expenses through nonbypassable distribution rates (OCC Reply Br. 7-8). AEP acknowledges that the RTO administrative charges are transmission-rated (AEP Ex. 2, at 7; AEP Ex. 4, at 16; Tr. I, 240). However, AEP contends that these costs benefit all customers (switching and non-switching customers) because all customers benefit with AEP's participation in an RTO. AEP explains that the only means to allocate cost recovery among all customers in a

competitively neutral fashion is a nonbypassable distribution charge (AEP Ex. 2, at 7; AEP Ex. 4, at 18). AEP also explained that, without the requested authority or FERC authority, the RTO administrative charges would not be recovered (Tr. I, 237). Moreover, AEP stated that, while the RTO administrative costs could be recovered via a change in state transmission charges (and thereby reduce distribution rates), AEP would effectively not be able to recover those transmission expenses (Tr. I, 238). Finally, in OCC's view, it "strains credibility that the companies did not know there would be RTO administrative costs when they agreed to join an RTO in the ETP stipulation" (OCC Initial Br. 10). OCC also does not consider the RTO administrative costs to be a new service, as staff indicated, or rate stabilization charges. OCC believes these are MDP-incurred transmission charges proposed to be recovered through a distribution rider after the MDP (*Id.*).

LIA argues that a deferral of the pre-2006 RTO administrative costs is tantamount to an increase in the MDP-capped distribution rates (LIA Initial Br. 4, 6). LIA states that Section 4928.38, Revised Code, prohibits the creation of new deferrals associated with distribution service construction, and Section 4928.34(A)(6), Revised Code, and the ETP decision are also violated (*Id.* at 5, 7). In LIA's view, this deferral constitutes a "back door" attempt to raise distribution rates, regardless of when the deferral is collected (*Id.* at 6).

OEG contends that the RTO administrative cost deferral proposes to adjust frozen distribution rate under circumstances not permitted by the ETP decision (OEG Initial Br. 13). OEG also believes that the effect of the deferral request is to avoid a rebalancing of transmission and distribution rate levels, which is required by Section 4928.34(A)(1), Revised Code, to remain at the MDP levels (*Id.*). Next, OEG takes issue with the dollar amounts in this proposed deferral for two reasons. OEG points out that AEP does not plan to recognize, in the amount of RTO administrative deferrals, the benefit that AEP will receive from making additional off-system sales as a member of PJM (Tr. I, 173). Further, OEG highlights that these administrative costs will include costs related to the companies' efforts to participate in the MISO (Tr. I, 248; OEG Initial Br. 14).

IEU-Ohio states that these RTO administrative costs were considered when transition costs were developed in the ETP proceeding and the companies' current financial condition does not justify creation of new regulatory assets (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. at 44). For this reason, IEU-Ohio contends that the proposed deferral should be denied. IEU-Ohio also noted that, in July 2004, an AEP affiliate in Virginia agreed to forego recovery of RTO administrative costs, certain congestion costs, and ancillary service cost increases, except through a base rate case (IEU-Ohio Reply Br. 7-8, Attachment). That affiliate also agreed to not seek to defer such Virginia-specific costs. Furthermore, that affiliate agreed to not seek to recover development and implementation costs that were then being deferred, other than through a base rate case. IEU-Ohio makes the point that other treatment of RTO administrative costs has been agreeable to an AEP company.

Commission Discussion

The RTO administrative charges involved in this proposed deferral will be charges incurred from October 2004 through 2005. We do not believe that this proposed deferral is a rate increase. Accord, *Consumers' Counsel v. Pub. Util. Comm.* (1983), 6 Ohio St.3d 377. Recovery of the deferred RTO administrative charges would be based upon accruals during AEP's MDP. As a result, we will not approve the proposed deferral of 2004 and 2005 RTO administrative charges.

The Commission recognizes that AEP's expenditures for RTO membership during the MDP have been and will continue to be instrumental in enabling AEP to efficiently fulfill its provider of last resort (POLR) responsibilities during the rate stabilization period. AEP is required to provide that function after the MDP. Section 4928.14(A) and (B), Revised Code. The Commission has also recognized in other cases that the POLR responsibility of the EDU is one for which the EDU incurs necessary costs and which warrants compensation during rate stabilization periods. See, *Dayton, supra* at 28, and *Ohio Edison*, Case No. 03-2144-EL-ATA, *supra* at 23-24. The Supreme Court of Ohio recently upheld an earlier Commission conclusion that the existence of POLR costs makes it reasonable to apply a charge to customers during a RSP period. *Constellation, supra*. Our staff also made this argument in this proceeding (but in relation to the CWIP and in-service plant deferrals). We believe the proposed RTO administrative charge amounts for collection during the rate stabilization period constitute reasonable and not excessive compensation to AEP for part of the cost of fulfilling its POLR responsibilities and, accordingly, approve the collection of these amounts as part of a POLR charge. This POLR charge will be established as part of a separate unavoidable rider that is applicable to all distribution customers.

We reach this conclusion based upon the specific circumstances before us in this proceeding. Nothing in this decision is intended to be precedent-setting or to be construed as ruling upon the other RTO charge-related deferral requests that we have recently received from other EDUs. See, *In the Matter of the Application of The Dayton Power and Light Company for Authority to Modify its Accounting Procedures*, Case No. 04-1645-EL-AAM, and *In the Matter of the Application of Ohio Edison Company, The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, and The Toledo Edison Company to Modify their Accounting Procedures*, Case No. 04-1931-EL-AAM.

2. Carrying Costs of Construction Work in Progress and In-Service Plant Expenditures

Staff supports the CWIP and in-service plant deferrals as well (Staff Ex. 2, at 11). Staff considers such deferrals to be equivalent to POLR charges (Tr. IV, 108-109, 147, 148, 171). Staff reaches this conclusion because the RSP is providing an option to switch and avoid charges for AEP customers and creating a risk for AEP that customers will switch, for which it is reasonable, in staff's view, for AEP to collect POLR charges (Tr. IV, 149-150). AEP concurs that these costs function as POLR costs (AEP Initial Br. 47, 79; AEP Reply Br. 16). Moreover, staff noted that, when compared to similar charges proposed by other EDUs, staff felt that AEP's proposed levels were reasonable (*Id.*). Staff calculated the

amounts per kWh to be .38 mills for Columbus Southern and 1.16 mills for Ohio Power, for an average of .84 mills (Tr. IV, 108-109). Staff also stated that allowing AEP to recover a part of what it would be able to obtain under traditional regulatory process when competition has not really arrived is reasonable (Staff Ex. 2, at 11). Staff further acknowledges that, if these costs are allowed as rate stabilization charges, it is fair for the charges to be bypassable (that is to say, a customer who chooses another supplier and is not returning would not be subject to the charge while purchasing another's generation) (Tr. IV, 254-255).

OCC objects to this portion of the RSP for a host of reasons. OCC argues that, if these generation-related deferrals are permitted for recovery after the MDP, then the rate freeze is meaningless (OCC Initial Br. at 14, 51; OCC Reply Br. 2-3). OCC believes that, after the MDP, new distribution deferrals are not permitted under Ohio law because distribution rates are subject to rate regulation under Chapter 4909, Revised Code (OCC Initial Br. 14-15, 52). Additionally, OCC contends that AEP assumed the risk of these expenditures when it agreed to freeze distribution rates in the ETP proceeding (*Id.* at 15, 17-19). OCC points to OEG's evidence that AEP does not need the deferrals to provide financial stability. OCC also claims that distribution rates should not be increased to recover generation costs, per the ETP decision and Sections 4928.15, 4928.17(A), 4928.34(A)(6) and 4928.38, Revised Code (*Id.* at 15-16; OCC Motion to Dismiss 8; OCC Reply Br. 10-11). Like the RTO administrative costs, OCC contends that the Commission should not approve these single-issue ratemaking deferrals without looking at the full picture and because shopping customers will then pay a portion of AEP's generation costs even though they will be taking generation service from a competitor (OCC Initial Br. 15, 22; OCC Reply Br. 12-13).

OEG and OCC argue that these deferrals constitute retroactive ratemaking (a rate increase during the MDP) because the deferral relates to amounts in existence prior to the date of the decision in this case (OEG Ex. 2, at 18-19; OCC Initial Br. 17-19). Also, OEG and LIA contend that these two deferrals take away one of the primary incentives of implementing electric choice in Ohio (a cap on distribution rates during the MDP) contrary to Section 4928.34(A)(6), Revised Code (OEG Initial Br. 9-11; LIA Initial Br. 4). Further, OEG, LIA and OCC believe these deferrals violate the ETP decision because they are generation-related expenses used to adjust distribution rates during the period allowed by the ETP decision for frozen distribution rates (LIA Initial Br. 5, 7; OEG Initial Br. 12-13; OCC Initial Br. 16). AEP disagrees, noting that the Commission has allowed deferrals for periods that precede the date of a decision (AEP Initial Br. 46). Also, AEP argues that accounting deferrals are not rate increases and, thus, cannot constitute retroactive ratemaking (*Id.*; AEP Initial Br. 70; AEP Reply Br. 17).

OEG also argues that these deferrals do not recover distribution-related costs and should not be deferred for recovery in distribution charges (OEG Ex. 2, at 20-22). AEP agrees that these deferrals are not recovering distribution costs and, thus, argues that the distribution rate freeze cannot preclude them (AEP Initial Br. 47). In AEP's and staff's view, recovery of these deferrals will function as POLR charges, not distribution service charges (*Id.*; AEP Reply Br. 16; Tr. IV, 108, 147).

Green Mountain has a different point of view. It argues that generation-related increases should not be as limited as set forth in the RSP (GMEC Initial Br. 15-16). Instead, Green Mountain contends that any generation-related costs that AEP seeks to recover should be included in generation rates. However, if the Commission accepts another recovery mechanism (such as the proposed deferrals), then the established recovery mechanism should be bypassable (*Id.*; GMEC Reply Br. 9).

IEU-Ohio states that these CWIP and in-service plant expenditures were considered when transition costs were developed in the ETP proceeding and the companies' current financial condition does not justify creation of new regulatory assets (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. at 44). For this reason, IEU-Ohio contends that these proposed deferrals should be denied.

Commission Discussion

Similar to our reasoning for the RTO administrative charges, we do not believe that this proposed deferral is a rate increase. However, recovery of the deferred CWIP and in-service plant carrying charges would be based upon accruals during AEP's MDP. The Commission recognizes that AEP's expenditures for CWIP and in-service plant during the MDP have been and will continue to be instrumental in enabling AEP to efficiently fulfill its POLR responsibilities during the rate stabilization period, which warrants compensation during rate stabilization period. Section 4928.14(A) and (B), Revised Code, requires AEP to provide that function after the MDP. We believe these carrying charge amounts proposed for collection during the rate stabilization period constitute a reasonable and not excessive compensation to AEP for part of the cost of fulfilling its POLR responsibilities and, accordingly, approve the collection of these amounts as part of a POLR charge. As noted earlier, this POLR charge will be established as part of a separate unavoidable rider that is applicable to all distribution customers.

3. Consumer Education, Customer Choice Implementation, Transition Plan Filing Costs, and all Rate Stabilization Plan Filing Costs

Staff supports this deferral provision (Staff Ex. 2, at 10). IEU-Ohio does not believe that the Commission needs to address most of this deferral because it was already addressed in the ETP decision (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 43). Also, IEU-Ohio does not believe that the Commission should authorize increases for isolated categories of costs, even if expected (*Id.* at 44). OCC argues that, aside from the agreement in the ETP decision to allow some of these deferrals, the Commission should reject additional deferrals in this case (OCC Initial Br. at 52). OCC reaches this conclusion because new distribution deferrals and rate riders for single issues have no basis in Ohio law; the Commission can only adjust regulated distribution rates through a properly filed rate case.

Commission Discussion

We already allowed deferral for most of the costs in this category (in the ETP proceeding). This RSP provision would further defer those costs and also allow deferral of the RSP filing costs. In the context of considering the RSP package and our stated RSP goals, we are willing to accept this provision of AEP's plan.

E. Transmission Rates and Charges (Provision Four of the RSP)

This part of the proposed RSP states the AEP may adjust state transmission charges (attributable to the applicable company, affiliated company or RTO open access transmission tariff [OATT]) to reflect FERC-approved rates and charges during the RSP, whether imposed directly on the companies or through an approved RTO. These include RTO administrative changes imposed, amortization of RTO start-up costs, and/or surcharges for recovery of lost transmission revenues. Such rate changes would be effective 30 days after filing, unless delayed by the Commission (but no longer than a period of 60 days).

AEP characterizes this portion of the RSP as an affirmation of the companies' existing right to make a filing for recovery of FERC-approved costs (AEP Initial Br. 40, 60). AEP believes the proposed expedited review process of such applications is warranted because the Commission should look at new transmission charges and should allow the pass-through of FERC-approved transmission charges (Tr. I, 242-243). Furthermore, AEP believes these costs will be significant, new costs, which are not currently in rates (AEP Ex. 3, at 4; AEP Initial Br. 40). A preliminary estimate of at least some of the anticipated costs in this area is $10.4 million per year for Columbus Southern and $13.1 million per year Ohio Power (AEP Ex. 3, at 4).

Staff expressly supports this provision of the RSP (Staff Ex. 2, at 10). IEU-Ohio recommends that this provision be rejected because transmission costs were taken into consideration when the ETP decision was issued and there are indications that AEP's integration into PJM will create additional transmission revenues. Thus, IEU-Ohio believes that there is no need for this provision (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 43). Similarly, OEG and OCC argue that this provision will allow AEP to be reimbursed for RTO expenses, but it does not take into account certain savings that will simultaneously be realized, e.g., off-system sales (OEG Reply Br. 19; OCC Reply Br. 13-14). OEG contends that the corresponding savings should be recognized so that the provision is truly a "pass through" (*Id.*). Also, OCC contends that there should be no authorization for additional transmission charges that have not been authorized by FERC or that AEP selects apart from charges in the PJM RTO OATT (OCC Initial Br. 46).

Commission Discussion

We find that this provision of AEP's RSP is reasonable, except as discussed below. In concept, any FERC-approved transmission rates and charges during the RSP should be passed through. We will look at them and ensure that "pass through" is appropriate. Despite IEU-Ohio's, OEG's and OCC's comments, we believe this aspect of Provision Four is appropriate. We do, however, have concerns with the Commission review process set forth in Provision Four. If viewed in isolation, we would not necessarily believe that the 30-day/60-day automatic process was problematic. However, we and our staff will be receiving similar types of applications from more than just AEP. For that reason, we believe that the time period proposed is not as workable as it should be. Therefore, we conclude that the applications to adjust state transmission charges (attributable to the applicable company, affiliate company or RTO OATT) to reflect FERC-approved rates and

charges during the RSP (whether imposed directly on the companies or through an approved RTO) shall be automatically approved on the 61st day after filing, unless the Commission rejects, modifies or suspends the filing. We believe this approval process fairly and adequately balances: (1) the desire for a definitive conclusion from the Commission in a prompt manner, (2) the ability of other interested persons to participate, and (3) the concerns for adequate amounts of time to review the anticipated applications in the context of other Commission work.

F. Current Regulatory Asset Recovery (Provision Five of the RSP)

The RSP proposes that AEP continue to recover amortized generation-related transition regulatory assets under the approved ETP. Staff accepts this provision, describing this term as simply continuing practices established in the ETP decision (Staff Ex. 2, at 10). OCC supports this portion of the RSP because it continues one part of the ETP decision. However, OCC does argue that, if the Commission will not require AEP to keep the rest of the ETP bargain, the Commission should revisit this and other aspects of the ETP decision (OCC Ex. 10, at 4; OCC Initial Br. 47). To this argument, AEP contends that an examination of the regulatory assets recovery should not be a consequence of filing the RSP as requested (AEP Reply Br. 42). OCC notes that the bulk of the transition regulatory assets for Ohio Power (associated with mining operations) may no longer represent a liability to Ohio Power (Tr. II, 27, 36). IEU-Ohio is not opposed to this provision, if the Commission accepts its proposed RSP (IEU-Ohio Reply Br. 10, Footnote 11).

Commission Discussion

We also agree with Provision Five and find it appropriate to allow AEP to continue to recover amortized generation-related transition regulatory assets under the approved ETP. We note that no direct opposition to this portion of the RSP was raised by any of the parties.

G. Shopping Incentives and Credits (Provision Seven of the RSP)

AEP proposes in the RSP that Ohio Power will still not charge the regulatory asset charge rider, from January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2007, to the first 20 percent of the Ohio Power residential customer load that switches, as was agreed in the ETP stipulation.[18] Columbus Southern will, through the MDP and 2008, make available to the first 25 percent of the residential class load an incentive of 2.5 mills/kWh that the qualifying customers will receive as a credit. Any unused amount of the incentive money at December 31, 2005, will not be credited to regulatory asset charge recovery. Thus, as proposed under the RSP, Columbus Southern will receive as income any unused shopping incentive balance and not offset the incentive balance against the transition regulatory asset.

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18 Although both the ETP stipulation and the RSP state that there will be no shopping incentive for Ohio Power customers, the provision to not charge certain shopping Ohio Power customers the regulatory asset charge rider was included in the RSP's Provision Seven under the heading "Shopping Incentives". Nothing in our decision should be construed as converting that term into a shopping incentive or characterizing it otherwise. We have simply chosen to discuss the entirety of Provision Seven at one time.

Columbus Southern's unused shopping incentive through January 2004 was roughly $12.9 million (Tr. II, 108; OCC Ex. 4). The RSP extends the Columbus Southern shopping incentive through 2008. As a trade off, AEP also proposes to alter the manner in which the unused portion of Columbus Southern's shopping incentive is handled (AEP Ex. 2, at 23-24; AEP Ex. 4, at 5; Tr. I, 33). To be clear, AEP's proposal to extend this shopping incentive is tied to the new proposed treatment of its unused balance (AEP Reply Br. 32). AEP argues that the extended shopping incentive, along with increased generation rates, should result in more shopping (AEP Initial Br. 48).

Staff believes that the unused Columbus Southern shopping incentive should be treated as a regulatory liability and flowed back to customers (Staff Ex. 2, at 12). IEU-Ohio concurs (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 45). AEP believes that this position does not adequately acknowledge that the companies are proposing to extend the shopping incentive (AEP Initial Br. 49).

OCC believes Provision Seven of the plan violates the ETP decision by altering the treatment of the unused Columbus Southern shopping incentive (OCC Ex. 10, at 8; OCC Initial Br. 53). AEP points out that the effect of OCC's position is that no shopping incentive would be available to Columbus Southern residential customers during the RSP (AEP Initial Br. 49).

Green Mountain contends that the RSP's shopping incentive will be inadequate to spur shopping. AEP calculated that the average residential price to compare for the generation component (under the RSP and its shopping incentive terms) will be as follows (GMEC Ex. 5, at fourth set discovery request 1):

Company	2006	2007	2008
Columbus Southern			
With Three Percent Increase	4.26	4.38	4.51
With Termin. of Resid. Discount	4.20	4.27	4.33
Ohio Power			
With Seven Percent Increase	3.73	3.98	3.94
With Termin. of Resid. Discount	3.69	3.89	3.79

In Green Mountain's view, the residential incentive values may be at their highest during the RSP, but they will still not spur shopping (GMEC Initial Br. 10; GMEC Reply Br. 8). In addition to greater shopping incentives, Green Mountain also advocates for shopping credits (avoidable charges) set at market prices (GMEC Initial Br. 11). Green Mountain further advocates that the $10 switching fees be waived, market support generation be provided, a voluntary enrollment process be instituted, new partial payment priority changes be made, and reasonable/nondiscriminatory credit arrangements be created (*Id.* at 10-15, 19-20). AEP states in response to these additional requests that there is no evidence to support them and they should be rejected (AEP Reply Br. 40-14).

Commission Discussion

First, we accept again the term of this provision related to Ohio Power's residential customers who shop in 2006 and 2007. We continue to believe that this term will be beneficial to Ohio Power customers in the near future. No arguments were raised against this part of Provision Seven, except those raised by Green Mountain (in relation to the amount and impact), which we address further below.

The first criticism raised about Provision Seven of the RSP is that AEP proposes to not credit the unused Columbus Southern shopping incentive to regulatory asset charge recovery (and instead extends the incentive through 2008, with any remaining amounts becoming income to Columbus Southern). AEP correctly notes that, if the Commission does not accept this aspect of Provision Seven, there will be no shopping incentive for Columbus Southern's residential customers. Shopping credits and incentives were established to promote customer switching and effective competition. Sections 4928.37 and 4928.40, Revised Code. Accord, *Constellation, supra*. Shopping credits and incentives are not mandated by statute after the MDP. Certainly, however, the idea of having a Columbus Southern shopping incentive during the RSP is attractive, particularly since we are trying to spur further development of the competitive market in AEP's service territories. However, we must weigh that against AEP's clear statements that its proposed extension of the Columbus Southern shopping incentive is contingent upon any remaining amounts at the end of the RSP becoming income to Columbus Southern.

We do not agree that the unused amount of the Columbus Southern shopping incentive at the end of the RSP should become income to that company on the basis that it is a fair trade-off to offering to extend that incentive during the period, as AEP has argued. Under the ETP, Columbus Southern was not going to receive income if that shopping incentive was not completely used during the MDP. Instead, AEP previously agreed to flow those dollars back to customers (by making a reduction to the remaining regulatory asset amounts equivalent to the amount of the unused shopping incentive). Moreover, we do not believe that Columbus Southern should earn income when customers have not shopped sufficiently to utilize the same shopping incentive over an extended period. Furthermore, as explained below, we do not believe that the RSP must include a shopping incentive for Columbus Southern customers either. Therefore, the proposed Columbus Southern shopping incentive portion of Provision Seven of the RSP is rejected.

As previously noted, the ETP decision requires that the unused balance of the Columbus Southern shopping incentive at the end of the MDP be credited back to Columbus Southern customers (via an adjustment to the level of regulatory asset recovery). We agree that customers should benefit in the event that Columbus Southern customers do not shop sufficiently by the end of this year (which is the end of the MDP). We believe that most parties, if not all, would agree that sufficient shopping is very unlikely to occur by the end of the MDP and, thus, an unused dollar amount will exist. However, we conclude a redirected application of the unused shopping incentive monies is more appropriate, while yet still in line with the goal of benefiting customers. LIA and OCC have asked in this proceeding for specific dollars targeted to low-income customer issues because that segment of the customer base may be disproportionately affected by

the RSP. As we noted in section VI.B.1 of this decision, we believe that it is appropriate to assist the AEP low-income customers. Therefore, we conclude that $14 million should be should be allotted by AEP for the benefit of the Columbus Southern and Ohio Power low-income customers, as well as for economic development during the RSP period. We will require AEP to work with our Service Monitoring and Enforcement Department staff to develop the details for the use of those sums. Our staff will consult with the Ohio Department of Development in relation to the use of that money in AEP's service territories.

Green Mountain has alleged that the shopping incentives (as identified for Columbus Southern customers above and a zero incentive for Ohio Power customers) will not be sufficient to spur shopping in either company's territory. As we have already noted, shopping incentives are not mandated after the MDP. In any event, the shopping incentives are only one manner of further developing the competitive market and we believe that, in the full context of the proposed RSP, our decision to require monetary assistance for low-income and economic development issues is an appropriate conclusion. With regard to Green Mountain's argument related to partial payment priority, the Commission is not willing to alter its established payment priority scheme just because AEP is seeking to establish a RSP. Green Mountain has also asked for several other specific alterations (establish other credits via avoidable charges, waiver of the $10 switching fees, provision of market support generation and institution of a voluntary enrollment process). We do not believe that these items are needed at this point. Accordingly, we will not adopt them.

H. Other Items (Provisions Eight through Eleven of the RSP)

1. Additional Future Proceedings

AEP recommends (in Provision Eight) that the Commission conduct a proceeding to determine the "manner in which electric generation service should be provided to the companies' customers" after the RSP and report the results to the legislature by December 31, 2005. AEP explains that this provision is intended to avoid facing the same situations at the end of the RSP as we face today (AEP Ex. 2, at 24-25). Staff and IEU-Ohio agree (Staff Ex. 2, at 13; IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 45). OMG and NEMA also appear to agree. Specifically, OMG and NEMA state that, if the Commission approves a RSP for AEP, it should establish a re-opener during 2007 in order to make adjustments to assist market development and to plan for the end of the rate stabilization period (to meet the statutory goals of market-base rates) (OMG/NEMA Initial Br. 12). OCC disagrees that the Commission should complete a report by 2005, arguing that any report completed by that date will not likely provide any valuable information for the post-RSP period (OCC Initial Br. 55-56).

Commission Discussion

This provision of the RSP is acceptable as a recommendation on steps the Commission should consider by the end of the RSP period. The Commission has a mandate to consider all possible options for implementation at the end of the rate stabilization period.

2. Functional Versus Structural Separation

In Provision Nine, the companies would continue functional separation (one corporate entity with separate groups to handle each function). AEP explained that it has not yet received authorization from the Securities and Exchange Commission to structurally separate, although AEP has made that request (AEP Ex. 2, at 25-26). At this point, AEP "does not contemplate structurally separating" the generation assets (*Id.*) because restructuring has slowed down. Staff concurs with this provision, particularly since structural separation could limit or preclude options in the future (Staff Ex. 2, at 13; Tr. IV, 250). IEU-Ohio does not oppose this provision (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 45).

OCC, OMG, NEMA and Green Mountain state that AEP must structurally separate per Section 4928.17, Revised Code (OCC Initial Br. 56; OMG/NEMA Initial Br. 13-14; GMEC Initial Br. 21). PSEG states that it makes little sense for the Commission to approve the RSP based upon risks/volatility of the competitive market and not protect customers by requiring AEP to implement corporate separation (PSEG Br. 7-8). Green Mountain argues that to continue functional separation seeks something that AEP never lawfully had (because the ETP approved only structural separation) (GMEC Initial Br. 21). Green Mountain states that the Commission should not permit AEP to continue functional separation if the RSP is not implemented (*Id.*).

Commission Discussion

We are willing to accept this term of the RSP for several reasons. First and foremost, AEP has been unable to structurally separate, as it had planned, because it does not have the necessary federal authority to do so. We simply cannot force structural separation when other agencies also must give their approval and that approval has not been forthcoming. Second, we would be remiss if we did not recognize that many expectations surrounding a competitive electric market in Ohio and around the country have changed from 2000, which is when we approved AEP's plan in its ETP proceeding to structurally separate its generation functions from the remainder of its functions. Third, Sections 4928.17(C) and (D), Revised Code, allow the Commission to modify a previously approved corporate separation plan. OCC, OMG and NEMA seem to have overlooked that aspect of the corporate separation statute. More specifically, we conclude that good cause has been shown to allow AEP to operate on a functional separation basis for the RSP period and such functional separation can still provide compliance with the state's policies associated with competitive retail electric service, as enumerated in Section 4928.02, Revised Code.

3. Participation in Other CBPs

Provision 10 of the RSP allows the companies to submit bids in other EDU's CBPs. AEP argues that Section 4928.14(B), Revised Code, compels the Commission to grant this provision of the RSP and the Commission has acknowledged such previously (AEP Initial Br. 52). Staff agrees with this provision and IEU-Ohio believes current law already allows AEP to participate in the CBPs of other EDUs (Staff Ex. 2, 13; IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 46).

Green Mountain contends that AEP should not be permitted to participate in other CBPs until it has structurally separated (GMEC Initial Br. 21-22).

Commission Discussion

AEP correctly notes that we have refused to limit participation in CBPs to non-EDU affiliate participants because of the language in Section 4928.14(B), Revised Code. *In the Matter of the Commission's Promulgation of Rules for the Conduct of a Competitive Bidding Process for Electric Distribution Utilities Pursuant to Section 4928.14, Revised Code*, Case No. 01-2164-EL-ORD, Finding and Order at 9 (December 17, 2003). We find this provision of the RSP to be reasonable. Nothing that Green Mountain has argued on this provision convinces us that this aspect of the RSP should not be approved.

4. Minimum Stay Requirements

Also, the RSP addresses in Provision 11 the topic of minimum stay. It provides that, during the RSP, residential and small commercial customers that return to the standard service must remain through April 15 of the following year, if the customer took generation service from the company between May 16 and September 15. During the RSP, a 12-month minimum stay would be required for large commercial and industrial customers that return under the standard service tariff.

This RSP provision corresponds with AEP's current minimum stay tariff provisions, but those tariff provisions have not been in effect due to a Commission moratorium.[19] AEP believes that minimum stay requirements are needed to avoid seasonal impacts of switching when AEP's prices are essentially annual average rates (AEP Ex. 5, at 5). Staff finds AEP's approach to be reasonable, but also recommends that the alternative mentioned in those tariffs be more fully detailed (Staff Ex. 2, at 14).

OMG and NEMA argue that, before the minimum stay provisions are triggered, the Commission should require that shopping customers be able to return to the standard service offer three times (OMA/NEMA Initial Br. 15). They note that AEP agreed to such a term in its ETP and, since no real shopping has taken place, it makes sense to require this term during the RSP (*Id.*). AEP points out that the Commission did not accept this part of the ETP settlement and nothing was presented in this proceeding to warrant its acceptance now (AEP Reply Br. 39).

IEU-Ohio contends that this topic should be addressed by the Commission on a generic basis, not in this RSP proceeding (IEU-Ohio Initial Br. 46). OCC contends that AEP has not demonstrated a need for the minimum stay or any harm from the moratorium (any alleged harm will only occur if customers actually shop and then return to AEP) and, therefore, the moratorium should remain in place (OCC Initial Br.60).

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[19] The Commission issued a moratorium on any minimum stay requirements for residential and small commercial customers on March 21, 2002, in *In the Matter of the Establishment of Electronic Data Exchange Standards and Uniform Business Practices for the Electric Utility Industry*, Case No. 00-813-EL-EDI. That moratorium has continued indefinitely. While another proposal is pending before the Commission on the matter, we have not issued a definitive ruling on the matter.

Commission Discussion

We are willing to accept this provision of the RSP. We realize that we still have not addressed the pending minimum stay proposal (which differs from AEP's minimum stay requirements) in the generic proceeding. For the short three-year period of the RSP, we are willing to allow AEP to implement these minimum stay requirements. It will allow us the opportunity to evaluate participation, gaming of enrollments, and the impact of our originally approved minimum stay requirements. We consider this approval to essentially test the debate that has been raised with us for quite a period of time.

VII. Conclusion

Based upon the foregoing, we conclude that the proposed RSP should be adopted (with the exception of the RSP's proposed elimination of the five percent residential discount in Provision Two, the proposed deferral of RTO administrative charges, the proposed deferral of CWIP and in-service plant carrying charges, the proposed review period associated with FERC-approved transmission rate changes, and the proposed treatment of the Columbus Southern shopping incentive) for the reasons set forth herein. We also conclude that OCC's motion to dismiss the application should be denied. Additionally, we conclude that, AEP shall allot $14 million for low-income customers and economic development, and work with our Service Monitoring and Enforcement Department staff to work out the details for those dollars. AEP is, furthermore, allowed to establish a POLR charge.

As we have already mentioned, we believe certain changes are warranted as the MDP ends for AEP. This decision will move AEP to market-based rates for the 2006-2008 period in an appropriate and balanced fashion and conforms with the state's electric policy (Section 4928.02, Revised Code) and this Commission's stated goals. Circumstances are not the same as when we issued our ETP decision and we recognize that fact and have reached conclusions today that we believe are most appropriate for the 2006-2008 period. To the extent any arguments were raised in this proceeding and they are not expressly addressed in this decision, they have been rejected.

As noted earlier in this Order, AEP will be held forth as the POLR to consumers who either fail to choose an alternative supplier or who choose to return to AEP's system after taking service from another energy company. Consistent with Ohio law, the POLR designation places expectations upon EDUs; the companies must have sufficient capacity to meet unanticipated demand. Additionally, the Commission is among many state agencies that have been charged by the Governor to enhance the business climate in Ohio as it competes on a regional, national, and global basis for economic development projects. One of the Commission's roles in this endeavor has been to focus on reliable energy. We believe that, consistent with Section 4928.02, Revised Code, Ohio consumers are entitled to a future secure in the knowledge that electricity will be available at competitive prices. We also feel strongly that electric generators of the future should be both environment-friendly and capable of taking advantage of Ohio's vast fuel resources. With the recognition that new technologies must be forthcoming to replace the utilities' aging generation fleet, we urge AEP to move forward with a plan to construct an integrated gasification combined-cycle (IGCC) facility in Ohio. AEP should engage the Ohio Power

Siting Board in pursuit of such a plant. We are encouraged by emerging information that suggests that the IGCC technology will be economically attractive. It is worth noting that the Commission is exploring regulatory mechanisms by which utilities, given their POLR responsibilities, might recover the costs of these new facilities.

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

(1) On February 9, 2004, AEP filed an application with the Commission for approval of a rate stabilization plan for the period 2006 through 2008.

(2) Twenty-five entities filed motions to intervene in this proceeding. All those requests were granted.

(3) A technical conference was held on March 24, 2004. Objections to the application were filed on April 8, 2004.

(4) A local, public hearing in Canton, Ohio, was conducted on May 19, 2004. However, the Commission had not properly sent any of the publication notices to the newspapers in AEP's service territory. Therefore, the examiner scheduled another local hearing in Canton, Ohio, for July 7, 2004 and rescheduled the local hearing in Columbus, Ohio, for July 1, 2004. At the July 1 and 7, 2004 local hearings, three people provided testimony.

(5) On May 24, 2004, OCC filed a motion to dismiss the application on various legal grounds. By entry dated June 1, 2004, the examiner deferred a ruling on OCC's motion to dismiss, stating that all parties shall have the opportunity to argue the legality of AEP's proposal in post-hearing briefs.

(6) The evidentiary hearing began on June 8, 2004, and continued through June 14, 2004. AEP presented the testimony of five witnesses. The staff and OCC each presented the testimony of two witnesses. APAC, Lima/Allen Council on Community Affairs, and WSOS Community Action jointly sponsored the testimony of one witness and OEG presented the testimony of one witness.

(7) The parties filed post-hearing briefs on July 13 and 30, 2004.

(8) AEP's MDP will end on December 31, 2005.

(9) AEP's proposed elimination of the five percent residential discount in provision two is precluded by the ETP decision.

(10) OCC's motion to dismiss the application should be denied.

(11) We adopt all provisions of the proposed RSP with the exception of the:

(a) RSP's proposed elimination of the five percent residential discount in Provision Two,
(b) Proposed deferral of RTO administrative charges in Provisions One and Six,
(c) Proposed deferral of CWIP and in-service plant carrying charges in Provisions One and Six,
(d) Proposed review period associated with FERC-approved transmission rate changes in Provision Four, and
(e) Proposed treatment of the Columbus Southern shopping incentive in Provision Seven.

(12) Our adopted provisions of the proposed RSP, our decision to require AEP to allot $14 million for low-income customers and economic development, our decisions to require AEP to work with our Service Monitoring and Enforcement Department staff to work out the details for those dollars, and our decision to allow AEP to establish a POLR charge, taken together, appropriately balance three objectives: (a) rate certainty, (b) financial stability for AEP, and (c) the further development of the competitive electric market. Moreover, the combination of the approved components of the RSP, along with the additional conditions of our decision and continuation of the unaffected provisions of the ETP, will prompt the competitive market and continue to provide customers a reasonable means for customer participation in the electric competitive market.

ORDER

It is, therefore,

ORDERED, That OCC's motion to dismiss this application is denied. It is, further,

ORDERED, That AEP's application is approved, subject to the modifications set forth in this decision. It is, further,

ORDERED, That AEP work with our Service Monitoring and Enforcement staff to work out the details for the allotted low-income and economic development dollars. It is, further,

ORDERED, That a copy of this opinion and order be served upon all 28 parties to this proceeding and any interested persons of record.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

Alan R. Schriber, Chairman

Ronda Hartman Fergus

Judith A. Jones

Donald L. Mason

Clarence D. Rogers, Jr.

GLP;geb

Entered in the Journal

JAN 26 2005

Reneé J. Jenkins
Secretary

4901:1-38-01 Definitions.

(A) "Affidavit" means a written declaration made under oath before a notary public or other authorized officer.

(B) "Commission" means the public utilities commission of Ohio.

(C) "Delta revenue" means the deviation resulting from the difference in rate levels between the otherwise applicable rate schedule and the result of any reasonable arrangement approved by the commission.

(D) "Electric utility" shall have the meaning set forth in division (A)(11) of section 4928.01 of the Revised Code.

(E) "Energy efficiency production facilities" means any customer that manufactures or assembles products that promote the more efficient use of energy (i.e., increase the ratio of energy end use services (i.e., heat, light, and drive power) derived from a device or process to energy inputs necessary to derive such end use services as compared with other devices or processes that are commonly installed to derive the same energy use services); or, any customer that manufactures, assembles or distributes products that are used in the production of clean, renewable energy.

(F) "Mercantile customer" shall have the meaning set forth in division (A)(19) of section 4928.01 of the Revised Code.

(G) "Nonfirm electric service" means electric service provided pursuant to a schedule filed under section 4905.30 or 4928.141 of the Revised Code, or pursuant to an arrangement under section 4905.31 of the Revised Code, which schedule or arrangement includes conditions that may require the customer to curtail or interrupt electric usage during nonemergency circumstances upon notification by the electric utility.

(H) "Staff" means the staff of the commission or its authorized representative.

Effective: 04/02/2009

R.C. 119.032 review dates: 09/30/2013

Promulgated Under: 111.15

Statutory Authority: 4905.04, 4905.06

Rule Amplifies: 4905.31, 4928.02

4903.12 Jurisdiction.

No court other than the supreme court shall have power to review, suspend, or delay any order made by the public utilities commission, or enjoin, restrain, or interfere with the commission or any public utilities commissioner in the performance of official duties. A writ of mandamus shall not be issued against the commission or any commissioner by any court other than the supreme court.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

4905.22 Service and facilities required - unreasonable charge prohibited.

Every public utility shall furnish necessary and adequate service and facilities, and every public utility shall furnish and provide with respect to its business such instrumentalities and facilities, as are adequate and in all respects just and reasonable. All charges made or demanded for any service rendered, or to be rendered, shall be just, reasonable, and not more than the charges allowed by law or by order of the public utilities commission, and no unjust or unreasonable charge shall be made or demanded for, or in connection with, any service, or in excess of that allowed by law or by order of the commission.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

4905.30 Printed schedules of rates must be filed.

Every public utility shall print and file with the public utilities commission schedules showing all rates, joint rates, rentals, tolls, classifications, and charges for service of every kind furnished by it, and all rules and regulations affecting them. Such schedules shall be plainly printed and kept open to public inspection. The commission may prescribe the form of every such schedule, and may prescribe, by order, changes in the form of such schedules. The commission may establish and modify rules and regulations for keeping such schedules open to public inspection. A copy of such schedules, or so much thereof as the commission deems necessary for the use and information of the public, shall be printed in plain type and kept on file or posted in such places and in such manner as the commission orders.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953

4909.17 Approval required for change in rate.

No rate, joint rate, toll, classification, charge, or rental, no change in any rate, joint rate, toll, classification, charge, or rental, and no regulation or practice affecting any rate, joint rate, toll, classification, charge, or rental of a public utility shall become effective until the public utilities commission, by order, determines it to be just and reasonable, except as provided in this section and sections 4909.18 and 4909.19 of the Revised Code. Such sections do not apply to any rate, joint rate, toll, classification, charge, or rental, or any regulation or practice affecting the same, of railroads, street and electric railways, motor transportation companies, telegraph companies, and pipe line companies. Any change of any rate, joint rate, toll, classification, charge, or rental, or any regulation or practice affecting the same, of telegraph companies, may be made in the same manner as such changes may be made by railroad companies. All laws respecting such changes by railroad companies apply to such changes by telegraph companies.

Effective Date: 10-01-1953