

National endorsements of plan reaffirms OCC commitment to energy efficiency

COLUMBUS, Ohio July 31, 2006 Ohio's residential utility consumers could benefit from the billions of dollars saved in the United States over the next 10-15 years through the wider use of energy efficiency. Today, more than 50 organizations, including the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), declared their support for the new National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency. The plan seeks to help offset the nation's growing demand for energy by residential, commercial and industrial users through the implementation of energy efficiency programs.

The action plan was released at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners summer conference by Diane Munns, NARUC president, and James Rogers, Duke Energy CEO. The National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency was developed by a leadership group that includes 23 electric and gas utilities, seven state utility regulators, two consumer advocacy agencies and more than 30 other organizations.

Consumers' Counsel Janine Migden-Ostrander

was a part of the leadership team that helped develop this comprehensive action plan that could result in the delivery of energy efficiency measures on a national level. The plan, if fully implemented, could help defer the need for 40 new 500-Megawatt power plants, avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 35 million vehicles, lower the costs of air pollution controls and reduce prices for natural gas.

"It is very important that Ohio partner with the rest of the nation as we look to implement measures to reduce our dependence on non-renewable resources, like coal and natural gas, to supplement our energy needs," Migden-Ostrander said. "By implementing energy efficiency programs, consumers can begin to reduce their energy consumption and gradually lower their energy bills."

The OCC, the residential utility consumer advocate, has worked with Ohio's major natural gas and electric utility companies over the last two years to institute energy efficiency programs that will benefit residential consumers.

Duke Energy has committed \$70 million over five years for the installation of energy efficient appliances, weatherization and alternative rates that encourage customers to use less energy during high demand. Vectren Energy Delivery of Ohio also has earmarked \$4.87 million over two years for similar programs. The programs are pending approval at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO).

The National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency has the support of utility commissions from more than 40 states as well as numerous other stakeholders, including Duke Energy. This largescale endorsement reaffirms the OCC's commitment to institute more energy efficiency programs throughout the state. The National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency brings together leading energy sector organizations representing different stakeholder perspectives to determine how to promote greater investment in energy efficiency by the customers of electric and natural gas utilities. This collaborative approach is essential as a greater investment in en-

ergy efficiency requires a concerted effort by consumers, utilities, regulators, states and other stakeholders.





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