

Date: May 3, 2011

Resolution No. 11-395

Title: Expressing Support for the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) and Urging the Ohio Legislature to Preserve the Mission of the OCC by Restoring Funding To Their Budget

Department/Agency: Commissioners

Contact: Commissioner Skeldon Wozniak

Summary/Background: The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is a statewide agency created by law in 1976 to represent Ohio's 4.5 million residential customers in matters relating to their public utility services – gas, electric, telephone and water.

The Ohio Consumers' Counsel has a current operating budget of approximately \$8.5 million per year; however under the proposed biennial budget, the OCC's budget would be reduced to \$4.1 million per year.

The OCC staff, which includes attorneys, accountants, economists, engineers, investigators and other highly skilled professionals participate in legal proceedings, analyze utility issues, educate customers, resolve informal complaints relating to utility services through the highly effective Consumer Call Center, and advocates on behalf of Ohio's residential households

In the current biennium, the Ohio Consumers' Counsel has saved customers \$54.8 million directly through its advocacy, and an additional \$1.9 billion in shared savings with other partners. During the past 35 years the Ohio Consumers' Counsel has saved utility customers \$10 billion in avoided utility costs, thus the savings have far exceeded the costs.

Any budget reduction to the OCC would not go back to the taxpayers, but would go to the utility companies, and the proposed budget cuts would have a detrimental impact on the residential utility customers of the State of Ohio and the ability of the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel to effectively advocate on their behalf

Budget Impact: None

Statutory Authority/ORC:

Commissioner Skeldon Wozniak offered the following resolution:

WHEREAS, in consideration of the above, NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners, Lucas County, Ohio, that:

Section 1. The Board of Lucas County Commissioners recognizes the vital work of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel as a strong consumer advocate and only statutory entity representing the interests of residential utility consumers.

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Section 2. The Board further recognizes that statewide, all departments must endure some level of cuts to their budget; however we are urging the Ohio Legislature to place a more reasonable cut so as to preserve the mission of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel.

Section 3. This Board finds and determines that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board and that all deliberations of this Board that resulted in those formal actions were in a meeting open to the public in compliance with the law.

Section 4. This resolution shall be in full force and effect from and immediately upon its adoption.

Action Taken:

Commissioner Skeldon Wozniak voted yes

Commissioner Contrada voted yes

Commissioner Gerken voted yes

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jody L. Balogh". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Jody L. Balogh, Clerk