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June 18, 2026

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor of Ohio
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Governor DeWine:

I am writing on behalf of thousands of residents across Hamilton County to express deep concern regarding Duke Energy's continued rate increases and the growing financial strain they are placing on our community. My office is being flooded with calls and concerns from constituents who are struggling to keep up with rising utility costs. Families, seniors, veterans, small businesses, and working people throughout the region are all feeling the impact and finding it increasingly difficult to stay afloat.

These increases come at a time when Ohioans are already facing rising property taxes, higher gas and grocery prices, increased healthcare costs, and growing economic uncertainty. For many residents living on fixed incomes or paycheck to paycheck, another increase in utility costs is simply unsustainable.

I am particularly disappointed by the recent decision of the Ohio Supreme Court to clear the way for Duke Energy to move forward with additional rate increases. This decision ignores the financial realities facing everyday Ohioans and raises serious questions about whether the interests of ratepayers are being adequately protected. Duke Energy already received a significant rate increase in 2021. Yet, despite that increase, the company is once again seeking to pass additional costs on to consumers.

Equally troubling is that the proposed increases have been opposed by the Ohio Consumers' Counsel, the state agency charged with representing the interests of residential utility customers. The Consumers' Counsel has raised concerns regarding whether certain infrastructure investments and system upgrades are necessary, prudent, and in the best interest of ratepayers. Ohio families should not be forced to finance costly projects that may provide limited benefit to consumers while generating higher returns for utility companies.

At a time when residents are struggling to make ends meet, the State of Ohio has a responsibility to act. Ohio currently maintains a Budget Stabilization Fund, commonly known as the Rainy-Day Fund, with approximately \$3.9 billion, the largest balance in state history.

If there was ever a rainy day for working families, seniors, and vulnerable residents facing impossible choices between paying utility bills, purchasing groceries, obtaining medication, or keeping a roof over their heads, it is now.

Therefore, I respectfully call upon your administration to take immediate action by:

Moratorium

1. Implement a moratorium on additional utility rate increases at this time until a comprehensive review of Duke Energy's proposals can be conducted and their necessity fully justified.

PUCO

2. Advocate that your appointees on the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) prevent rate increases and prioritize affordability.

Rainy Day Fund

3. Allocate an additional \$1 million to Hamilton County, possibly from the Rainy-Day Fund, to assist our residents in paying high utility costs.

As a former State Representative, former President of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, and currently Vice President of the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners, I have consistently fought for policies that reduce costs for families and improve affordability for taxpayers. Hamilton County has invested millions of dollars in relief efforts, including partnerships with organizations like the Council on Aging serving seniors and vulnerable residents who struggle to afford utility payments. We remain committed to doing our part, but local governments cannot solve this crisis alone.

Ohioans deserve a government that places people before profits. They deserve utility rates that are fair, reasonable, and affordable. Most importantly, they deserve leaders willing to stand up for them instead of placing additional financial burdens on households already stretched to their limits.

I urge you to take immediate action to protect Ohio consumers and ensure that no family is forced to choose between keeping the lights on and meeting their basic needs.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your response and to working together to provide meaningful relief for Ohio families.

Sincerely,



Alicia Reece
Vice President
Hamilton County Board of Commissioners