



## Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

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September 21, 2023

Via Email – [PUCNominatingCouncil@puco.ohio.gov](mailto:PUCNominatingCouncil@puco.ohio.gov)

Mr. Gregory Lashutka, Chair  
(Dept. of Aging Appointee, per O.R.C. 4901.021(A)(12))  
c/o Jeffrey Jones, Nominating Council Coordinator  
Public Utilities Commission Nominating Council  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Meeting Request for Reforms for the Public Utilities Commission Nominating Council

Dear Chair Lashutka (and PUCO Nominating Council Members):

I am writing to request a meeting of the PUCO Nominating Council to consider reforms of its processes given the scandals involving FirstEnergy, including but not limited to FirstEnergy and former PUCO Chair Randazzo (*who was a nominee of the Nominating Council*). See “Money paid, favors done. Messages detail relationship between Ohio regulator and energy executives,” Ohio Capital Journal (Aug. 8, 2023); <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2023/08/08/money-paid-favors-done-messages-detail-relationship-between-ohio-regulator-and-energy-executives/>.

I requested a Nominating Council reform meeting in 2022 and did not receive a response from you. I requested reform meetings in 2020 and 2021, which were declined by then Chair Mike Koren and not supported by Council members.

Respectfully, I’m asking that you exercise your discretion as Nominating Council Chair to promptly call a special public meeting of the Council. As I have done in each of the preceding three years, I invite other members of the Nominating Council – a body created four decades ago ostensibly for reform of the PUCO – to support this request. O.R.C. 4901.021 requires the Chair to call the meeting if requested by merely two Nominating Council Members. The membership list of the Nominating Council is attached from the PUCO’s website.

For such a meeting the public notice, per O.R.C. 4901.021(C), should be sufficient for the Nominating Council to consider reforms of the Council’s process for evaluating applicants for appointment as PUCO commissioners and to consider other general business. Among other things, the Nominating Council should consider reforming its process so as to allow for interviews of PUCO commissioner candidates to be publicly conducted (instead of in private executive session). Further, the Nominating Council should consider reforming the application process to require more detailed disclosures from applicants (and Nominating Council members) about past or current relationships with utilities and their affiliates. Full disclosures from applicants (and Council members) should be required to include their (and their family members) past and present direct and indirect financial relationships, if any, with utilities and their affiliates.

I have copied Mr. Jeffrey Jones, the Nominating Council Coordinator, on this letter. I ask that Mr. Jones please forward this letter to Chair Lashutka and the Nominating Council members, as contact information for the members is not provided on the PUCO’s website. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael Watkins, Nominating Council member and Chair of the Ohio Consumers’ Counsel Governing Board

Cc: Nominating Council Members (via distribution by Council Coordinator Jeffrey Jones)  
Jeffrey Jones, Nominating Council Coordinator

Attachment

**Membership List  
PUC Nominating Council  
January 2023**

Speaker of the House's Appointee  
Steve Cuckler  
Columbus

President of the Ohio State Bar Assoc./Designee  
Kimberly W. Bojko, Esq.  
Columbus

President of the Ohio Municipal League  
Carrie M. Schlade  
Bryan

Ohio Department of Aging's Appointee  
Gregory S. Lashutka  
Columbus

Board Chairman of Accountancy Board/Designee  
John Patterson  
Columbus

Designee for Chairman of State Board of Registration  
for Professional Engineers and Surveyors  
Megan O'Callaghan  
Dublin

President of the Senate's Appointee  
Louis Blessing Jr.  
Cincinnati

Governor's Appointee/Representative of  
Regulated Utilities  
Cheryl Burchard  
Hillard

Director of the Ohio Development Services  
Agency/Designee  
Matt McClellan  
Columbus

Governor's Appointee/Organized Labor  
Vacant

Governor's Appointee/Representative of  
The Business Community  
Stuart Young  
Yellow Springs

Chairman of Ohio Consumers' Counsel  
Governing Board  
Michael Watkins  
Lima