

GWM
J.P. RAY

RESOLUTION NO. 25 -2011

EXPRESSING Council's support for the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel and urging the Ohio General Assembly to preserve the mission of the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel by restoring funding to their budget.

WHEREAS, in 1976, the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel ("OCC") was created by the Ohio General Assembly to represent the interests of Ohio's residential utility customers in matters relating to their public utility services, including electric, natural gas, water and telephone; and

WHEREAS, funded solely by assessments on utilities and not by taxes, OCC's budget does not affect the State's General Revenue Fund; and

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

WHEREAS, 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 advocate on behalf of Ohio's residential households; and

WHEREAS, in the current biennium, OCC has directly saved customers \$54.8 million through its advocacy and an additional \$1.9 billion in shared savings with other partners; and

WHEREAS, during the past 35 years, OCC has saved utility customers \$10 billion in avoided utility costs, resulting in savings that have far exceeded the costs; and

WHEREAS, any budget reduction to OCC would not go back to the taxpayers, but would go to the utility companies; and

WHEREAS, though budget cuts will inevitably affect many state agencies, the proposed budget cuts to OCC's budget would have a detrimental impact on the residential utility customers of the State of Ohio and the ability of OCC to effectively advocate on their behalf; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That Cincinnati City Council recognizes the vital work of the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel as a strong consumer advocate and the only statutory entity representing the interests of residential utility consumers.

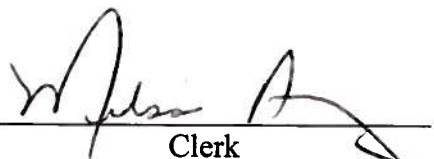
Section 2. That Cincinnati City Council urges the Ohio General Assembly to reduce the amount of proposed cuts to the budget of the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel so as to preserve the agency's honorable mission.

Section 3. That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of Council and that copies be sent to Governor John Kasich; William G. Batchelder, Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives; Senate President Thomas E. Niehaus; State Senator Eric Kearney; State Senator Bill Seitz; State Representative Denise Driehaus; State Representative Alicia Reese; State Representative Dale Mallory; and State Representative Peter Stautberg.

Passed: May 11, 2011



Mayor

Attest: 

Clerk

Submitted by Vice Mayor Roxanne 