

# CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO

## Resolution of Expression



*To express support for the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel and urge the Ohio General Assembly to preserve the mission of the OCC by restoring funding to their budget.*

**WHEREAS**, in 1976, The Ohio Consumers' Counsel was created by the Ohio General Assembly to represent the interests of Ohio's residential utility customers in matters relating to regulated public utility services; electric, natural gas, water and telephone and the activities of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO); and

**WHEREAS**, funded independently by mandatory assessments on utilities and not by taxes, the Ohio Consumers' Counsel's budget does not affect the State's General Revenue Fund; and

**WHEREAS**, the Ohio Consumer's Counsel's current operating budget is approximately \$8.5 million per year; however, under the proposed biennial budget, their budget would be reduced to \$4.1 million per year; and

**WHEREAS**, the Ohio Consumers' Counsel 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; and

**WHEREAS**, 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 and furthermore, 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; and

**WHEREAS**, any budget reduction to the Ohio Consumers' Counsel 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; and

**WHEREAS**, three budget amendments are proposed that would further inhibit the Ohio Consumers' Counsel's ability to represent the best interest of utility customers. These proposed amendments would prohibit the OCC from operating a call center, remove OCC contact information from bills and notices, and prohibit it from advocating a position that conflicts with the development of competitive markets in the utility industry; now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:**

That Columbus City Council does hereby support the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel and urges the Ohio General Assembly to preserve the mission of the OCC and restore funding to their budget.



INTRODUCED BY:

  
MARCEL F. CRAIG, PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE


  
ZACHARY M. KLEIN, MEMBER OF COUNCIL

  
TROY MILLER, MEMBER OF COUNCIL

  
MICHELLE M. MILLS, MEMBER OF COUNCIL

  
EILEEN Y. PALEY, MEMBER OF COUNCIL

  
PRISCILLA R. TYSON, MEMBER OF COUNCIL

  
ANDREA BLEIVINS, CITY CLERK

  
ANDREW J. GINTTER, PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL