

Written Testimony of Angela S. Beehler
Senior Director, Energy Regulation and Legislation
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
Before the Ohio Senate Finance Committee
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Chairman Widener, Vice Chairwoman Jones, and distinguished members of the Committee, it is an honor and privilege to submit this written testimony before you today regarding the recommended biennial budget for the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Council.

My name is Angela S. Beehler, and I am Senior Director, Energy Regulation and Legislation, for Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. My business address is 2010 SE 10th Street, Bentonville, Arkansas, 72716-0550. I am responsible for the implementation of Wal-Mart's strategic energy vision for all United States facilities through regulatory proceedings, legislative discussion, and working closely with government agencies, utilities, and non-governmental organizations.

Walmart has a large presence in Ohio, including 127 Walmart Supercenters and 17 Discount Stores, 29 Sam's Clubs and four distribution centers.¹ In total, Walmart employs over 51,000 associates in the state. Walmart also supports other businesses and jobs in the state of Ohio. In fiscal year ending 2010, Walmart spent \$185 billion for merchandise and services with 5,797 Missouri suppliers, supporting over 3.5 million supplier jobs in the state.

Managing energy cost is important to our business. Walmart aggressively pursues energy efficiency, demand response, advanced metering, and renewable energy opportunities in order to reduce our energy consumption and cost and work towards our corporate goal of being supplied 100 percent by renewable energy.

Additionally, involvement in the utility ratemaking process is integral to managing our energy cost, and Walmart actively participates in cases before state utility regulatory commissions concerning utility requests to change rates charged to customers. In fact, in just the last four years we have intervened in rate-related proceedings in 35 states, including Ohio. I have also had the opportunity to personally work closely with Janine Migden-Ostrander on state and national energy issues, and she is a passionate, dedicated, and extremely capable advocate for Ohio consumers. It is from this experience and perspective that I present my comments on House Bill 153 to you today.

Utility regulatory proceedings routinely deal with issues that have millions of dollars of impact to Ohio customers, and it is important that the interests of customers be vigorously represented. The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Council is that advocate for Ohio's residential customers, and their advocacy has provided customers with approximately \$54 million in direct financial savings and \$1.9 billion in financial savings due to their work with other partner organizations.²

While Walmart is not directly represented by the OCC, Ohio's residential customers are our customers, so the impacts of the OCC's efforts extend beyond the residential customer's utility bill.

¹ See <http://walmartstores.com/pressroom/StateByState/State.aspx?st=OH>

² Office of Ohio Consumers' Counsel Media Advisory, May 7, 2011

Additionally, many issues in utility regulatory proceedings impact all customer classes, so the OCC's efforts provide benefits to commercial and industrial customers as well, and for Walmart that helps us to better serve our customers with every day low prices on the products we sell in our stores.

HB 153 recommends cutting the budget of the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel by over fifty percent. This would diminish the ability of the OCC to participate in utility regulatory proceedings and protect Ohio's residential customers, and ultimately all Ohio utility customers. We ask the Senate to carefully consider the negative impact of passing HB 153.