



Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

Your Residential Utility Consumer Advocate

CONSUMERS' FACT SHEET

Utility questions, concerns or complaints?

CALL TOLL FREE:

1-877-PICKOCC

(1-877-742-5622)

or (614) 466-8574

Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

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Suite 1800, Columbus, OH
43215-3485

EMAIL:

occ@occ.state.oh.us

WEBSITE:

www.pickocc.org

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel Saving Ohio's Residential Utility Customers \$10 Billion in 35 Years

The OCC is the unique representative for Ohio's 4.5 million residential utility customer households

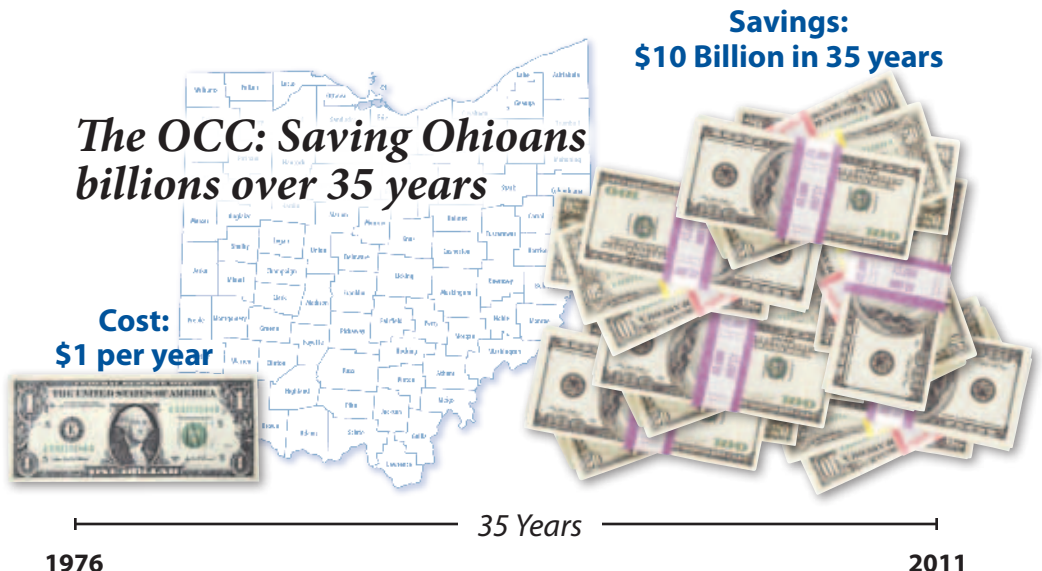
- ▶ Serves all Ohioans - Ohio has 4.5 million households served by investor-owned utility companies;
- ▶ Solid 35-year history - In 1976, the General Assembly created the OCC to represent residential customers of Ohio's electric, natural gas, telephone and water services. In 2011, the OCC is marking its 35th year advocating for residential customers;
- ▶ Distinct, unique advocacy/services for Ohioans - The OCC services are distinct from the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO). The PUCO is the adjudicator balancing the interests of all parties; the OCC represents residential customers advocating on their behalf for affordable rates and quality services.

The OCC's funding is not from Ohio's General Revenue Fund

- ▶ Non-GRF funding - The OCC is not funded through Ohio's General Revenue Fund. The OCC is funded by an assessment on utility companies;
- ▶ Cutting the OCC budget does not help state budget - Any cuts in the OCC's budget flows back to the utilities, not the customers.

The OCC is affordable and has saved customers billions of dollars in avoided utility costs in 35 years

- ▶ \$1 per year/household - The cost of OCC's budget is \$1 per household per year.
- ▶ \$10 billion in savings over OCC's 35-year history - Since 1977, OCC has played a substantive role in providing benefits for residential and non-residential customers that total more than \$10 billion;



2011

Continued on back

**SAVING OHIO'S RESIDENTIAL
UTILITY CUSTOMERS
\$10 BILLION IN 35 YEARS**

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The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts.

The state agency also educates customers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues and resolves complaints from individuals.

To receive utility information, brochures, schedule a presentation or file a utility complaint, residential consumers may call 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free in Ohio or visit the OCC website at www.pickocc.org.



The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

- ▶ \$171 million direct & \$6.4 billion shared savings since 2004 - Since 2004 when Janine Migden-Ostrander became Consumers' Counsel, the OCC has directly saved utility customers more the \$171 million and an additional \$6.4 billion in shared savings with other parties, where the OCC played a major role or led a coalition of advocates;
 - ▶ To date, \$54.8 million saved by the OCC directly; \$1.9 billion in collaboration with other parties in SFY10-11 - Since July 1, 2009, the beginning of the current SFY10-11 (July 1, 2009-June 30, 2011). biennium, OCC has directly saved utility customers \$54.8 million and \$1.9 billion in collaboration with other parties where the OCC has taken a lead role;
 - ▶ More with less - The OCC's current budget is 8.5 percent less than the budget in 2004 when Janine Migden-Ostrander became Consumers' Counsel. During that six-year period, the OCC's case load has more than doubled, demonstrating that the OCC employees are doing more for less and operating a lean, efficient and accountable agency for Ohioans;
 - ▶ The OCC's advocacy helps all utility customers - Savings sought by the OCC help not only residential utility customers but also commercial and industrial customers as well.
- The Consumer Services Division responds to between 3,500 to 5,500 customer contacts per month. These interactions include complaint handling, assisting customers facing service disconnection and customer education;
- ▶ Since 1996, the OCC has been the statewide resource for education about utility issues and resources - During the past biennium, the OCC's outreach and education staff has participated in more than 2,600 events with nearly 90,000 customers in attendance. These events include speeches, training programs for Ohio's social service providers and community visits. At these events and through other methods, the OCC distributed approximately 500,000 pieces of educational materials to utility customers;
 - ▶ Input from Ohioans statewide - In each of Ohio's five regions, the OCC has well-established Consumer Advisory Panel whose members provide insight and feedback to the agency about issue of particular concern or interest to residential utility customers. The OCC is fortunate to have this key connection to Ohioans via these dedicated professionals;
 - ▶ Key residential utility customer resource for educational materials about electric, natural gas, telecommunication and water issues - The OCC's Communications staff has also responded to approximately 1,500 media inquiries, issued 200 news releases about key utility customer issue and issued its popular Consumer Corner newsletter to 100,000 subscribers 12 times during the past biennium. The agency also educates customers with fact sheets, other publications and via its popular website at www.pickocc.org.

The OCC is committed to providing Ohioans with superior customer service and education

- ▶ The OCC helps thousands of residential utility customers each month - The OCC's Consumer Services Division assists individual customers through a toll-free hotline addressing question and concerns regarding their utility services.