

**Before the  
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee**

**April 2, 2019**

**Prepared Statement of Sam Randazzo**

Good morning Chairman Wilson, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams and Members of the Committee.

I am here today because Governor DeWine appointed me to the position of Commissioner of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("PUCO") and because of my interest in being confirmed by the Ohio Senate for a five-year term commencing April 11, 2019.

The process that brings me here is not new.

As you know, there is a governmental agency known as the PUCO Nominating Council. The Nominating Council works to assess applicant qualifications and experience for the purpose of making recommendations to the Governor.

The PUCO Nominating Council met on Thursday, January 31, 2019, interviewed nine of the twenty-some applicants and then voted to send four names to the Governor for his consideration. My name was one of the names sent to the Governor. I am pleased to say that I received unanimous support from the members of the Nominating Council.

Prior to submitting my application to the Nominating Council and my appointment, my wife, Carol, and I were headed in a different direction.

As 2018 was coming to a close, I was scheduled to retire from my law firm, McNees Wallace & Nurick. My retirement was no surprise; it was part of a succession plan that had been in place for a few years. That transition plan resulted in me handing over work to other attorneys in the office who assumed responsibility for client representation. As a result of this transition, I have not been, with one exception, actively involved in litigation at the PUCO for the last couple of years. The one exception involved

representation of a local citizens group before the Ohio Power Siting Board in a case regarding a proposed Huron County wind farm. For what it may be worth, I took on this representation, in part, because this citizens group did not have the resources to pay for effective representation.

To complete my transition from the private practice of law to my retirement phase and early in 2019, I formally withdrew from active participation in PUCO unclosed cases in which I had participated at some time in the past (distant past in some cases).

After retirement from the law firm, I hoped to do some consulting work and continue as General Counsel for the Industrial Energy Users-Ohio, a trade association I helped found in 1992. And I also expected to be spending more time in Florida.

Then Governor DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Husted won the election.

Then I got a call from the transition team asking me if I would be willing to meet and review some of the big picture energy and utility issues currently in play or on the horizon. Eventually, this conversation shifted to see if I might be interested in going back to government service at the PUCO. I say "going back" because I began my work in the energy/utility space in the early 1970s as a PUCO technical staffer and then Assistant Attorney General assigned to the PUCO Section of the Attorney General's office.

So, after discussions with my better-half, Carol, I notified the Governor's team that I would apply to be considered for possible service as a PUCO Commissioner and more specifically for the five-year term commencing April 11, 2019.

On Monday, February 4, 2019, the current PUCO Chair, Asim Haque, announced that he would be leaving the PUCO effective March 1, 2019 to take an important job with PJM Interconnection, LLC.

Chairman Haque inherited leadership of an agency that was struggling, in part, because of rapid turnover in the Chair position at the PUCO with each new Chair sometimes pushing or pulling the PUCO in a different direction. Prior to Chairman Haque's appointment, those of us who worked at the PUCO and care about its health were concerned about staff morale. He

leaves the PUCO in a much better place than he found it and for that we should all be grateful.

Anyway, about six hours after Chairman Haque announced that he would be leaving, Governor DeWine announced that he had appointed me to the PUCO Commissioner slot currently held by Commissioner Tom Johnson, another able gentleman. As you may know, the Governor can make any one of the five PUCO Commissioners the PUCO Chair. In appointing me, Governor DeWine also said that I would become the Chairman of the PUCO when my term commences on April 11, 2019.

Very humbling stuff!

With your permission, I will make a couple more points before doing my best to respond to your questions.

First, I regard the conversations I have recently had with Governor Mike DeWine, Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted, Chief of Staff Laurel Dawson and others in the Governor's office as among the highest quality conversations I have ever had with elected officials and their team. The same is true for the conversations I have had with each member of this Committee since my appointment. They were never political and always focused on what is best for Ohio. This motivated and motivates me.

Second, I have been an advocate for positions and outcomes during a career that spans five decades. I have lobbied and litigated for particular stakeholders — mostly consumers, mostly business consumers, on occasion, a utility or competitive supplier or two and also other stakeholders such as the Huron County citizens group that I mentioned earlier. I have participated in state and federal proceedings and before appellate courts such as the Ohio Supreme Court, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court. As a PUCO Staffer, Assistant Attorney General and private practitioner, I have had the benefit of seeing how stakeholders with different perspectives are affected by the price and availability of utility services and the actions the PUCO or other regulatory agencies take or do not take. I have attempted to transfer the useful knowledge I have gained through educational programs such as the Manufacturers' Education Council's annual energy conference which I helped to launch about 23 years ago.

But, the Governor's appointment means I have a different job now. I understand that my new job is very different than the job I had prior to retirement and I understand why it must be different.

I have one client now and my client is Ohio, the state where I was born, completed my education, raised a family, played and rooted for sport teams and have called home for almost 70 years.

Thank you for your service and the time and attention you have given me today.

Now, I will do my best to respond to any questions.