

Invited Testimony Before the Ohio House Public Utilities Committee
Amy Spiller, President of Duke Energy Ohio & Duke Energy Kentucky
Introduction & Overview of Duke Energy Ohio

March 1, 2023

Chair Stein, Vice Chair Robb Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee,

Good morning. My name is Amy Spiller, and I am President of Duke Energy Ohio and Duke Energy Kentucky. In this role, I lead the Company's business, regulatory, and state government affairs functions that facilitate the provision of safe, affordable, and reliable energy solutions for our 770,000 electric and 443,000 natural gas customers in southwest Ohio, just as Duke Energy Ohio and our predecessor companies have been doing for over 185 years. Headquartered in Cincinnati, Duke Energy Ohio has the distinction of being the only dual-service regulated utility remaining in the state. I appreciate the opportunity to provide you with some general background about our Company and the good work that our more than 1,870 Ohio employees are doing in the communities we serve.

We are not just a utility service provider in southwest Ohio. We are part of the fabric of our communities, investing in our region's vitality through charitable grants from the Duke Energy Foundation and individual volunteerism by employees and retirees. Over the past five years alone, the Duke Energy Foundation has awarded over \$7,700,000 to organizations within our Ohio service territory. Our grantees include those focused on workforce development, nature, urban revitalization, and education. And over the last three years, we have been increasingly intentional about

supporting our small businesses, including those that are owned by women, minorities, and veterans. From a pandemic to inflation to workforce and supply chain issues, these entrepreneurs have been particularly challenged.

At Duke Energy Ohio, we view the electric and natural gas services we provide our customers as the lifeblood of our economy. As we all know, in Ohio, we make things. And, whether those things take physical or intellectual form, they all have something in common: *making them requires available, affordable, and reliable utility service*. Given this reality, utility infrastructure can be a powerful machine to be leveraged at the state and local levels to attract businesses of many types and sizes. Intel and Honda provide prime examples of how utility service translates to economic development successes, the results of which support the lives and lifestyles of the customers and constituents that we both serve. We should all strive to build upon those experiences and bring even more prosperity to the state.

Duke Energy Ohio's economic development efforts have included:

- Strategic partnerships with local, state and regional organizations to promote southwest Ohio and attract and retain investments in the region; and,
- Site readiness and business development efforts in preparation for future investments.

But core to what we do and who we are is the delivery – every day – of safe, reliable, and affordable electric and natural gas service. And we strive to

meet our customers' expectations for an energy future that is smarter, cleaner, and stronger.

For our electric customers, this means modernizing the transmission and distribution grids so that we can continue to deliver reliable power while providing customers with more choice, convenience, and control over their energy use.

In recent years, we have increased our capital investments in technology across our electric systems, including smart meters, and the installation of self-healing and self-optimizing components on the distribution grid. These data-driven investments have produced great benefits for our customers. In 2022 alone – a year that saw three tornadoes touch down in Clermont County – these smart technologies helped customers avoid over 99,000,000 minutes without power. But the story doesn't end there. Over the next decade, Duke Energy Ohio will continue to invest in our electric infrastructure to decrease outage frequency and duration, reduce restoration costs, and improve overall service reliability.

As I mentioned before, Duke Energy Ohio is a dual-service utility, and our natural gas distribution business is equally essential to the customers and communities we serve. Thus, we are committed to modernizing and expanding our infrastructure to bolster reliability, improve service for existing customers, and to attract new businesses and jobs to the region.

This commitment is most recently evidenced by the completion of our Central Corridor Pipeline project in 2022. The construction and operation of this distribution artery allowed us to decommission geological caverns

containing liquid propane that was used to supplement supply during the coldest of winter days. Central Corridor also opened our system to new sources of natural gas in the northern part of our service territory, thereby diversifying our supply options. And we are about to begin construction of a pipeline in Clermont County that is needed to serve new load in that part of the state.

These projects are critical to supporting new economic development opportunities. New or expanding companies consistently identify ready sites as a top priority in making a decision about where to locate. And by ready sites, I mean those for which infrastructure is already in place or, with a reasonable degree of certainty, can be expeditiously placed in service. And when those reasonable assurances cannot be provided or the timeline is too protracted, Ohio is not chosen. But by working together, we can ensure Ohio sites are selected, not eliminated.

Before concluding, I would be remiss if I did not address the impact that recent volatility in energy markets has had on our customers. Fallout from international events, abnormal weather conditions, and constraints in the production and transportation of fuels have driven energy prices to historically high levels, leading to higher utility bills for our retail customers. Prices have retreated from those highs, but the impacts on our customers linger. In response to this situation, Duke Energy Ohio engaged in a comprehensive high-bill campaign to educate customers about money-saving programs and to provide them with tips to better manage energy usage and reduce bills. We have also implemented outreach efforts designed to encourage energy efficiency and to share the many forms of financial

assistance available to qualifying customers. And we will continue to engage with our customers to address all of their energy needs.

Chair Stein, Vice Chair Robb Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee, on behalf of Duke Energy Ohio, I appreciate the opportunity to share with you an overview of our Company and look forward to working with you and other officials on the policies that define our industry and shape the future for our customers, communities, and state.