Resolution

Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel Governing Board

In support of protections for consumers who purchase public utility services through master-meters and/or submeters

WHEREAS, Public utility services are essential for Ohioans; and

WHEREAS, Ohioans need affordable, reasonably priced public utility services; and

WHEREAS, Residential consumers in many of Ohio's apartments, condominiums, manufactured homes, and other housing communities are not directly billed for utility services (such as electricity or water) by the public utility, electric cooperative, or municipality (or other provider certified by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("PUCO")); instead, these consumers are charged by their property owner, condominium association, or other third party for utility service that is received at a master meter and/or submeter; and

WHEREAS, Residential consumers who are charged for resold utility services, through a master meter and/or submeter, lack the regulatory protection of the PUCO and lack the protection of competitive markets for these services; and

WHEREAS, Charges from a property owner, condominium association, or other third party for resold utility services, through a master meter and/or submeter, can result in significantly higher bills for residential consumers than what they would otherwise pay if they were provided service directly by the public utility, electric cooperative, or municipality (or other PUCO-certified provider) and also can result in the loss of other consumer protections; and

WHEREAS, Some residential consumers may not be aware when signing a lease or a housing agreement that the utility services they use will be resold to them through a master meter and/or submeter, without the rights and protections (including pricing protections) that are afforded to other customers; and

WHEREAS, Pricing protections and other protections are needed for residential consumers who are charged for utility services, through a master meter and/or submeter, by their property owner, condominium association, or other third party.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Governing Board of the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel recommends that the Ohio General Assembly and the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio institute price protections and other protections for Ohioans who are charged for public utility services through a master meter and/or submeter by their property owner, condominium association, or other third party connected with their housing.

I verify that the Ohio Consumers' Counsel Governing Board approved this Resolution on the 21st day of July 2015.

Gene Krebs, Chairman
Ohio Consumers' Counsel Governing Board