

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

OF WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON

MONONGAHELA POWER COMPANY and\*

THE POTOMAC EDISON COMPANY \* 17-0296-E-PC

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

HEARING TRANSCRIPT

\* \* \* \* \*

BEFORE: MICHAEL A. ALBERT, Chairman  
RENEE A. LARRICK, Commissioner  
BROOKS F. MCCABE, JR., Commissioner

HEARING: Tuesday, September 12, 2017  
6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Monongalia County Judicial Center  
Judge Tucker's Courtroom, Third Floor  
75 High Street  
Morgantown WV

Reporter: Guy Starrett

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CHAIRMAN:

What I said earlier was we're going to try to move along because we've been advised that we have to clear the building by eight o'clock this evening. So that give us two hours. That's been about what these hearings have been running. I'm putting it in my mouth. I can't get it much closer. Is that any better? Testing one, two, three, four. Feel free to holler out if I'm not coming across.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

It's not loud enough.

CHAIRMAN:

I'm going to try to speak up. As far as I know, that's as loud as I can get it to go. I've turned the volume all the way up. I've got --- and the little green light is on, which should indicate that it's working. I apologize if it's not reaching the back of the room.

Good evening. I'm Mike Albert. I'm Chairman of the West Virginia Public Service Commission. With me on my left is Commissioner Brooks McCabe. And on my right is Commissioner Renee Larrick. We are here this evening to take public comment in PSC Case Number

1 17-0296-E-PC, which is our Commission case designated  
2 Monongahela Power Company and Potomac Edison petition for  
3 approval of generation resource transaction and related  
4 relief.

5           This case involves a proposal filed by  
6 Mon Power and PE for consent approval to purchase the  
7 Pleasants power station from AE Supply for \$195 million.  
8 The companies have requested a temporary transaction  
9 surcharge to be implemented at the closing of the  
10 transaction, if the transaction is approved, that would  
11 remain in place until new base rates are implemented. In  
12 addition to that surcharge, the company has proposed an  
13 off-setting ENEC, which stands for expanded net energy  
14 charge decrease, until the next ENEC adjustment, expected  
15 in January 1, 2019.

16           If approved, the company seeks rates  
17 implemented at closing that will result in a net increase  
18 of 1.6 percent --- a net decrease in 1.6 percent of rates  
19 by the off-set of the surcharge with the expected ENEC  
20 decrease. The Commission granted intervenor status to a  
21 group of folks. And we have some of them here tonight.  
22 Those intervenors are the Consumer Advocate Division, the  
23 West Virginia Energy User's Group, the West Virginia  
24 Solar United Neighborhoods, West Virginia Citizen's  
25 Action, Longview Power, Sierra Club, Harrison County

1 Power, LLC and Brook County Power, LLC and the West  
2 Virginia Business and Industry Council.

3 To date, the case has received  
4 approximately 995 signatures in protest of the transfer  
5 and 36 signatures in support. Those have been from  
6 petitions, faxed letters, online letters, emails to us,  
7 and form letters. This is not an evidentiary hearing.  
8 It's a public comment hearing. We are here to listen to  
9 your comments. We're here to try to find out what it is  
10 that your feelings are about this proposal. We believe  
11 the Commission Staff and Utility representatives will  
12 stay after to talk with you further about any specific  
13 questions you may have. Our aim tonight is to find out  
14 what it is that you feel about this.

15 My understanding is that if you have  
16 customer complaints about service or rates, for instance,  
17 there are Mon Power and PE representatives out this door  
18 and to the left, who will try to be available to respond  
19 to your questions, or at least take information. I don't  
20 think they've been able to hook up electronically. So  
21 they will at least take information about your complaints  
22 and get back to you. We will see that that occurs.

23 If something is raised by these public  
24 comments that are not addressed in or clarified at the  
25 hearing, we may ask the utility, and we likely will ask

1 the utility to address that at the later evidentiary  
2 hearing. We frequently get matters of substance that are  
3 raised in these public comment hearings that we ask the  
4 witness, who appeared for the company or others on Cross  
5 Examination or Commission questioning.

6           There are some attorneys here. I'm  
7 going to introduce some of the counsel. And I know that  
8 Jack Clark for the PSC is here. If you'll stand, Mr.  
9 Clark. Heather Osborn from the Consumer Advocate  
10 Division is here. And Gary Jack with Mon Power and PE is  
11 here.

12           Let me say if you have already filed a  
13 written protest, that's the same and as good as making a  
14 statement this evening. If you want to make a statement  
15 at the hearing, that's fine. I'm just telling you that  
16 it doesn't add any more impact or import than your other  
17 statements that may have been filed. Filing a protest;  
18 however, does not prevent you from making statements this  
19 evening, if you so desire. We're only taking comments  
20 from members of the public.

21           If you're a member of a group that is  
22 an intervenor in this case, you will not be allowed to  
23 make comments in this public comment hearing. The reason  
24 is that you're represented by counsel. You're permitted  
25 to go to the hearing. You're permitted to cross examine.

1 You're permitted to put on witnesses. So having the  
2 right to make a public comment is a little superfluous.  
3 We want to hear from the people who are here that are not  
4 otherwise represented in a proceeding.

5           Because of the crowd and because of the  
6 limited timeframe, there's a couple things we want to get  
7 straight. If you have a phone with you, please silence  
8 it, turn it off, or put it on vibrate. If you need to  
9 make a call, take it outside of the hearing room. As I  
10 indicated, we have to clear this building at the request  
11 of the building owners by eight o'clock. We want to hear  
12 from as many of you as possible, but please be brief and  
13 concise, and limit your comments. We've put a clock up  
14 here to help you in that. We think three minutes is  
15 about a reasonable time for public comments. I don't  
16 think it's been a problem for those that appeared at the  
17 hearings in Pleasants or in the Eastern Panhandle.

18           This is our court reporter. His job is  
19 terribly difficult. He has to listen to what you say.  
20 He then repeats it into that mask and it's recorded. So  
21 while you're only one person talking, he repeats  
22 everything I say, and everything the witnesses say. And  
23 it is very important that he have silence, and that he  
24 has the ability to hear people. He doesn't type these  
25 words as you've seen on TV. So it's very difficult for

1 him if people talk, laugh, or otherwise generate noise  
2 because it makes it all the more difficult for him.  
3 Obviously, he can't take down comments by more than one  
4 person. And cannot transcribe the proceedings while  
5 others are talking or laughing or otherwise making noise.

6 I have a list that's been given to me  
7 by our clerk of names of people who have indicated they  
8 want to speak. We're going to just start down that list.  
9 I'm going to take them in order. I realize there are  
10 some public officials here this evening. But from the  
11 looks of the ones that I can identify, they're not so far  
12 down the list that taking them out of turn is going to be  
13 that much of a problem.

14 If you have not signed up and wish to  
15 speak tonight, you can raise your hand and Kurt will  
16 bring the sign-up sheet to you. We're going to be hard-  
17 pressed to get through the names that we have however.  
18 But we will try to move along. The first name that I  
19 have is Patsy Trecost, Trelost, Trevost. Yes.

20 MR. TRECOST:

21 Where you would like me to stand?

22 CHAIRMAN:

23 I'm sorry?

24 MR. TRECOST:

25 Where would you like me to stand, Mr.

1 Chairman?

2 CHAIRMAN:

3 Right at that microphone there.

4 MR. TRECOST:

5 Thank you, sir. I'm here to speak in  
6 favor. I want you to know that I see this as an  
7 opportunity, a good opportunity. We have something that  
8 we take for granted and we don't want to lose it. And we  
9 never want to have the shortfall. You know, we take for  
10 granted heating, cooling, cooking. We take for granted  
11 that light switch we flip on every morning. And we never  
12 want to run short on that. I read past studies and I've  
13 read the newspaper what's going on. And this affects 240  
14 individual jobs possibly. And that seems like a small  
15 number when you're talking about 1.8, 1.9 million people  
16 in West Virginia.

17 But it's not 240 individuals. It's 240  
18 families, middle-class families that have a good job  
19 right now, a middle class job with benefits. And we  
20 don't want to lose that because it's families that go to  
21 the grocery store. Those families that work at the  
22 grocery store then go to the car lot. And those families  
23 at the car lot then go purchase property. And then they  
24 decide to hire a contractor to build a new home and start  
25 a life for themselves and the families. And then they go

1 pay the contractor and he goes and buys supplies. So  
2 that number that was 240, that was real small on a piece  
3 of paper, and that's what the newspaper says as well,  
4 just became bigger and bigger and bigger.

5           So there's two impacts as to what I'm  
6 saying right now. One, we never want to have a shortfall  
7 of energy of what we take for granted. And two, we want  
8 to make sure in West Virginia, we keep good jobs. The  
9 big picture for me right now is easy. We want to work  
10 together and we want to keep that here. We read all the  
11 time and we hear every day about Mother Earth. And we  
12 all as individuals should be concerned about that. It's  
13 our free gift from God for us to live here. But at the  
14 same time, we don't want to go backwards. And  
15 FirstEnergy and these companies that we're working with  
16 right now are leaders in that. And what I mean by that  
17 is they want to be clean and efficient as well. So let's  
18 leave it in the hands of the people that know what  
19 they're doing.

20           Let's continue to move forward. And  
21 please let us not move backwards. We don't want to move  
22 backwards in any way in West Virginia for what we  
23 deserve, a good quality of life for things that we take  
24 for granted, power, jobs, and an economic flow that keeps  
25 us moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1                   CHAIRMAN:

2                   Thank you, sir. Eric Croasman.

3                   MR. CROASMAN:

4                   Good evening. Thank you to the Public  
5 Service Commission for holding the public hearing so you  
6 can hear from those who care about this transaction. My  
7 name is Eric Croasman. And I am the principal of Belmont  
8 Elementary School in Pleasants County. And I am also a  
9 resident of the county as well.

10                   Every day I see the impact of the  
11 Willow Island Power Plant on our small community. I see  
12 the children in my school of parents who work at the  
13 plant. I see services and supplies made possible because  
14 of the tax revenue the power plant generates. I see  
15 community activists that would not --- community  
16 activities, excuse me, that would not be possible if it  
17 weren't for the plant support of the Pleasants County  
18 community. As our partner in education at Belmont  
19 Elementary, the Pleasants power station has provided  
20 numerous amounts of financial support for our school.  
21 And in times of funding cuts from the government, it has  
22 allowed us to continue providing programs for students  
23 that make a positive difference in our student's  
24 educational experience. For example, this summer workers  
25 from a plant led a service project to fix outdoor areas

1 of our playground, outdoor fitness area, and also our  
2 parking lot. Not only did they provide the workers, but  
3 the power plant financed this project 100 percent. This  
4 was not something that could have been done with our  
5 current budget.

6 In Pleasants County, we've made strides  
7 in expanding our role as an energy leader by opening a  
8 hydroelectric plant, as well as a natural gas-fired power  
9 plant. But even with these expansions in energy, the  
10 demand for energy cannot be met with these plants alone.  
11 And the Willow Island Power Plant continues to be a  
12 critical piece of infrastructure that meets or exceeds  
13 all EPA standards. And is more than necessary to keep up  
14 with the need for electricity. Some may disagree with  
15 what coal-fired electricity means to West Virginia. And  
16 we likely disagree about basic economics.

17 But this plant matters to our  
18 community. The 240 jobs matter to our community. The  
19 power plant that provides matters to our community ---  
20 matters to our community. The businesses that would  
21 suffer the loss of the plant matter to our community.  
22 Some of the small business owners, they have children in  
23 my school. I cannot allow those who oppose this  
24 transaction to say that these factors don't matter.  
25 Because the taxes and opportunities that the power plant

1 provide for our school system matters to our community.  
2 And it matters to the children I serve as a principal.

3           The Public Service Commission exists to  
4 protect the interest of the public. And from my  
5 perspective as a resident and as an educator in Pleasants  
6 County, the best interest of our public is to allow the  
7 sale to take place. It will lower the electric power  
8 rates to more than half a million homes and businesses.  
9 And it will preserve jobs that will allow families to  
10 live their best in West Virginia and in Pleasants County.  
11 I remind the Commission that this is a huge impact on my  
12 county, on my children in my school. Because, again,  
13 this power plant allows things for us to do through the  
14 finances, through the tax-base and other things that they  
15 provide for us.

16           Please approve this transaction and let  
17 the people continue working and providing for these  
18 families in Pleasants County. Thank you.

19           CHAIRMAN:

20           Thank you, Mr. Croasman. Sheila  
21 Coleman-Castells.

22           MS. COLEMAN-CASTELLS:

23           Good evening, Mr. Chairman and  
24 Commissioners. Thank you for hearing from me. I'm the  
25 executive director of the West Virginia Home Builder's

1 Association Foundation. We are the non-profit arm of the  
2 HBA of West Virginia, the Trade Association.

3 I'm here as both the executive  
4 director, but also a ratepayer. I live in Preston  
5 County, West Virginia, Eglon. Population 150. 500 cows.  
6 As a ratepayer, I have been in FirstEnergy's area 12  
7 years now. And my electric bill has gone up over 250  
8 percent over that time with no change in the way my house  
9 is built or anything like that. Although, I intend to do  
10 something about it this year. Because it is so bad  
11 sometimes that it costs more to run the electric for 12  
12 months than it does to buy propane. And any time that  
13 propane is more expensive than electric, given that heat,  
14 propane heat is what I use for my home, that's pretty  
15 bad.

16 And it's been very difficult for me as  
17 a professional single mother with a son to be able to  
18 afford that bill. I have no problem admitting that. And  
19 so, I would ask that as a ratepayer, you consider the  
20 fact that many middle class families like me, have a hard  
21 time paying these bills. I don't understand why. I look  
22 back. I used to --- I come from Washington, D.C.  
23 originally. And my bill in Washington, D.C. many years  
24 ago for a house that was double the size is less than  
25 what I'm paying now. So it is for a house that is half

1 the size.

2           So ultimately, I think we have to make  
3 a decision as to whether or not these extraneous rate  
4 increases help middle class families or they hurt them.  
5 And I'm here to tell you as a ratepayer, they greatly  
6 hurt us.

7           From a builder's point of view,  
8 however, there's another issue. We are under the 2009  
9 IECC, the International Energy Conservation Code, which  
10 is the law of the state. And builders build to that. We  
11 are actively trying to convince our consumers that buy  
12 homes from us, that energy efficiency is a good  
13 investment. Not just now because you will pay less in  
14 energy rates, but as you grow older in that home. Energy  
15 rates don't go down. They only go up regardless of what  
16 kind of energy you use. And so we want to make sure that  
17 people can grow old in their homes. That they are safe.  
18 That they are comfortable. And that they're able to pay  
19 these bills as they grow older. You would be surprised  
20 the number of people who have to move out of their homes,  
21 not because they're able to --- they're unable to take  
22 care of their home, but because the energy cost has  
23 gotten too much as they grow older.

24           So we find that, again, extraneous rate  
25 hikes like this, go against the builder who is trying

1 desperately to build to a higher energy-efficient  
2 standard. We have Maryland on our northern border, who  
3 has much higher energy-efficient standards than we do in  
4 West Virginia, and even Kentucky on our southern or  
5 southwestern border that has higher energy efficiency  
6 standards. And it is very difficult for us to keep  
7 people in West Virginia building homes here and living  
8 here if indeed they can get a better value, a more  
9 energy-efficient home right across the border and still  
10 commute to work.

11                   So this actually does impact small  
12 business and all of my organization. Eighty-five (85)  
13 percent of the home builders of West Virginia are small  
14 businesses, not the Dan Ryan's of the world and the large  
15 businesses. Very small businesses that hire four to ten  
16 people per crew. They need to continue to build homes  
17 that are energy-efficient. If they don't do that, they  
18 will be out paid by other jurisdictions. We need this in  
19 West Virginia. The home building industry is already in  
20 a bad state because of the recession. We encourage you  
21 as Commissioners to please consider that this not only  
22 hurts ratepayers like myself, but also builders who are  
23 trying to build more energy-efficient homes for West  
24 Virginia consumers. Thank you very much.

25                   CHAIRMAN:

1 Thank you, ma'am. Jeff, is it Raper,  
2 Raper, R-A-P-E-R, Raper.

3 MR. RAPER:

4 Good evening, sir.

5 CHAIRMAN:

6 Good evening.

7 MR. RAPER:

8 My name's Jeff Raper.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

10 Speak up, please.

11 MR. RAPER:

12 My name's Jeff Raper. I am off-tech  
13 floor operator at Pleasants power station. I've been  
14 working there, say October will be 40 years. So I've  
15 seen a lot in the power plant. And I'd like to share  
16 some of this with you, some of the things about Pleasants  
17 power station. We are a member of the volunteer  
18 protection program, and a member with OSHA for 15 years,  
19 excuse me. And we've been recertified three times. We  
20 have excellent safety records, which we've had three  
21 years without a reportable. Also, and I'd like to share  
22 with you some information also, a bullet here is that  
23 Pleasants employs approximately 200 people, offers  
24 family-sustaining wages and benefits, and helps support  
25 the local and state economy, including West Virginia's

1 coal production.

2           The Pleasants plant created a total  
3 economic impact of nearly \$400 million in 2015 alone.  
4 And according to West Virginia University research, the  
5 plant directly and indirectly supports 600 jobs. I hear  
6 also Mon Power will sell much of Pleasants coal  
7 combustion bi-products for manufacturing such as Gypsum.  
8 Which I'm sure they need it in Texas and Florida right  
9 now. And cement and concrete block and materials to  
10 treat snow and ice covered roads.

11           I've heard people say about it being  
12 antiquated. But really what does that actually mean?  
13 When I was hired --- I know the power plant's 40 years  
14 old. But when I was hired there, I was 26. It kind of  
15 makes me feel kind of old, you know. But actually  
16 antiquated is only when it hasn't been improved upon and  
17 is really not worth anything anymore. But ever since  
18 I've been there for almost 40 years, we've made  
19 improvements in every area. So I don't think that they  
20 can call it quite antiquated yet. So that's all I have  
21 to say.

22                           CHAIRMAN:

23                           All right. Thank you, Mr. Raper.  
24 Appreciate your comment. Doug Renner.

25                           MR. RENNER:

1 Good evening.

2 CHAIRMAN:

3 Good evening.

4 MR. RENNER:

5 I root for happiness. And God bless  
6 you in your decision you make. It ultimately relies on  
7 your guidance and the decision you make. And one of the  
8 things, I'm a Pleasants County resident. And Pleasants  
9 power station has impacted my family now for probably  
10 going on 40 years. And the 200 families that Mr.  
11 Croasman here mentioned, it's going to impact way more  
12 than 250 families. It's a trickle on down effect like he  
13 mentioned here earlier, it's going to impact towns as far  
14 as Marietta, Ohio, Parkersburg, West Virginia. It's  
15 going to slip on down to Ripley, West Virginia.

16 Speaking for the condition of the  
17 plant, I happen to work at that plant. I'm a mechanic at  
18 that plant. We maintain our equipment the way that we're  
19 supposed to. We don't shortcut things as far as safety.  
20 Probably one of your safest, more environmental-friendly  
21 plants that you have in West Virginia for its age. All  
22 the safety is in compliance. All the environmental is in  
23 compliance. And when you talk about the --- I'm not paid  
24 by FirstEnergy. I am a mechanic.

25 When you talk about the families that

1 it will impact, Pleasants County with their work in the  
2 school system, each kid that comes to St. Mary's High  
3 School is issued a laptop. This has been going on for  
4 many, many years now. I wish that all of West Virginia  
5 could feel that effect and what it's done for our  
6 students. We graduate usually around 90-some kids. You  
7 can do the statistics on it, we're looking at 30 kids,  
8 it's a 28 ACT or higher. Remove all that money from that  
9 system and watch it go backwards. Watch it falter.  
10 There will be your trickle down effect, I guarantee you.  
11 A brand new high school that was just built for the  
12 Pleasants County residents is taken care of.

13 I'm sure each and every one of you has  
14 watched Andy Griffith over the years. I tell everybody  
15 that comes to my town, that comes to my church, Pleasants  
16 County has the least amount of crime of any county in the  
17 State of West Virginia per capita of people. And West  
18 Virginia has the least amount of crime in any state in  
19 the country per capita of people. This is our own little  
20 Mayberry. I guarantee it. I guarantee it. If that  
21 place shuts down or if it's removed, that place will  
22 cease to exist. It will become a ghost town. It'll be  
23 moved into an intercity Parkersburg or up towards  
24 Wheeling.

25 Also I am a penny-pincher. I watch

1 every dime that my family spends. And I try to spend ---  
2 I try to send my money back to God who give it to me.  
3 And also, I try to send it out into public works. And  
4 I've watched every dime that my money goes for.

5 I have never seen a 200 percent  
6 increase in my life. Let alone 250 percent. There is  
7 something fictitious with their numbers. I implore your  
8 guy's job. And I know that you'll do it. Look at the  
9 numbers. And if their numbers are wrong, and I happen to  
10 agree with that lady, they're wrong. By doing your job  
11 and looking at the numbers, that's all you guys can do.  
12 I would like to see it stay there. I would like to see  
13 this succeed.

14 I work for a good company. And I'm  
15 very happy to be here and given the right to speak. No  
16 matter which side of the aisle we're on, we're still  
17 American citizens to have that right to speak. And as  
18 far as the rates, the rates are what they are, not 250  
19 percent. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN:

21 Thank you, Mr. Renner. Mr. Fantasia.

22 MR. FANTASIA:

23 Good evening.

24 CHAIRMAN:

25 Good evening.

1                   MR. FANTASIA:

2                   Mr. Chairman, Madame Commissioner,  
3 Senator McCabe, I want to thank you for giving me the  
4 opportunity to speak this evening. My name is Nick  
5 Fantasia and I'm president of the Marion Regional  
6 Development Corporation. We're a community-based  
7 economic development agency in Marion County. And our  
8 project, one of our major projects you drove by on the  
9 way here, which was the High Tech Park.

10                   I'm speaking on behalf of the proposal  
11 and hope that you can see your way to pass the  
12 acquisition. From an economic development standpoint, we  
13 need a stable and growing grid for years to come in West  
14 Virginia to grow West Virginia. Of course, you all know  
15 that. Senator McCabe wrote the book on that. Power is  
16 the foundation block in any economic development project.  
17 But it's even more than that.

18                   When you went by our High Tech Park,  
19 you saw earth stations. And those earth stations feed a  
20 NOAA supercomputer. That NOAA supercomputer runs off a  
21 stable grid that Mon Power provided for our community.  
22 And this project will enhance the stability and the  
23 growth of that grid. Those satellites and that  
24 supercomputer are the supercomputers that predicted the  
25 hurricanes that Florida and Houston faced earlier.

1 They're the same satellites that predicted the storms  
2 that Mannington faced earlier in the summer. And that  
3 grid that Mon Power provided the stability to allowed for  
4 basements to get pumped, and streets to be cleaned, and  
5 lives to get back in order. It's more than a yes. It's  
6 about quality of life issues for our county and for other  
7 counties around us. Mon Power's been an excellent  
8 corporate citizen in Marion County. I could talk to you  
9 about when I was young, power trucks putting lights up  
10 off their buckets so we could play baseball. I could  
11 talk to you about how when storms came through and there  
12 were two or three houses at the end of the road, they  
13 went to the end-degree to make sure a senior could get  
14 their refrigerator back on.

15                   But the corporate-citizen aspect of  
16 what they do very well is only part of it. They've been  
17 a good neighbor to our community. I can tell you when  
18 the United Way got into trouble, Holly rolled up her  
19 sleeves and was the first to answer at our Dancing with  
20 the Stars competition to help the United Way get monies  
21 to our food pantry and to our Hope, Incorporated  
22 facilities. The other evening you could have got to see  
23 Gary Polka as Mannington's St. Patrick's Church was  
24 raising money to put on a new roof. I mean, they are  
25 great corporate citizens in my life, in Marion County,

1 and as the past mayor of Fairmont, any time we have  
2 picked up the phone and been in need, they have always  
3 answered the call. And that is because they're our  
4 neighbors and they're part of our community.

5 It's my hope that you can see your way  
6 to vote in favor of their acquisition. It adds to our  
7 community. It adds to our grid. It adds to our quality  
8 of life. And I view it as a positive outcome for our  
9 area. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN:

11 Thank you, Mr. Fantasia. John Jacobs.

12 MR. JACOBS:

13 Thank you. Can you hear me?

14 CHAIRMAN:

15 I can hear you fine, sir.

16 MR. JACOBS:

17 Thank you for giving me this  
18 opportunity to speak to you tonight. This kind of thing  
19 is among our most cherished liberties. And welcome to  
20 Morgantown. Although I've lived in Preston County now  
21 for 37 years, I grew up right here.

22 CHAIRMAN:

23 I spent a year or two there myself.

24 MR. JACOBS:

25 I'm sorry?

1                   CHAIRMAN:

2                   I said I spent a year or two here  
3 myself.

4                   MR. JACOBS:

5                   Yeah. And I still think of this as my  
6 hometown. So I hope that you're comfortable tonight and  
7 that you enjoy your stay. And with that, let me get to  
8 cases. I've been in business my whole life. I was born  
9 into it. My grandfather ran our --- a man with an  
10 eighth-grade education ran our small family business  
11 through the Great Depression just a block from here. But  
12 I'll tell you I think that he was always marked by that  
13 experience. He hated debt. He would have nothing of it.  
14 And everybody else that I met from that, excuse me, from  
15 that generation and who had that experience, they felt  
16 exactly the same way.

17                   FirstEnergy has too much debt. I'm  
18 sure you've seen the numbers. FirstEnergy solutions  
19 bonds trade for 40 percent of our distress levels. I  
20 think my grandfather knew that a company with too much  
21 debt was like a prized spider with a glass jar. Can't  
22 take a punch. FirstEnergy is not going to lead us into a  
23 stable energy grid future, like Mr. Fantasia argued just  
24 a moment ago.

25                   Paul Krugman, another mentor if you

1 want to say so, I've never met the gentleman. He's a  
2 Nobel Laureate and a columnist for the New York Times,  
3 formerly of Princeton University and MIT, described what  
4 he calls the roadrunner effect. Willie E. Coyote has  
5 been chasing roadrunner all morning on borrowed money.  
6 And everything seemed great until he went over the edge.  
7 And even after going over the edge, things seemed alright  
8 for a moment. But then he looked down and there was  
9 nothing under his feet. FirstEnergy is having one of  
10 Paul Krugman's Willie E. Coyote moments. And at the  
11 moment, they see West Virginia's regulated markets and  
12 their salvation.

13                   But West Virginia has to face this same  
14 problem that FirstEnergy is looking at. We have the same  
15 problems to face. The coal industry's in a depression.  
16 Our miners are broke. Their employees are out of work.  
17 Employee tensions and healthcare are on relief. And the  
18 tax revenues that would support that kind of thing,  
19 that's gone, too. In order for us to diversify our  
20 economy and create a more resilient grid, we will be  
21 better ahead revenue to finance this bailout, \$200  
22 million more of borrowed money. \$400 million more  
23 expenses according to one report. Who knows how much  
24 more that can cost. We will be better ahead to keep our  
25 local utilities, Mon Power and Potomac Edison, with

1 strong balance sheets able to adjust to and profit from  
2 the coming economy that is facing us. So I would ask you  
3 to please reject this proposal. I believe that there is  
4 nothing in it that's in our public interest. We will be  
5 much better ahead to see the new future that is in front  
6 of us.

7           The gas, where we know that it is. We  
8 know where the gas is. We know how to get to it. We  
9 understand the economics that will come out of the  
10 ground. And it would be far better for us to depend on  
11 that and the wind and the solar energy, which are right  
12 behind it competitive already. Coal is past, it's had  
13 its time in West Virginia.

14           I'm over time. I'm sorry. Thank you  
15 very much again for allowing me to speak. I hope that  
16 I've carried this off at some level.

17           CHAIRMAN:

18           Okay. Thank you, Mr. Jacobs. Joey  
19 James. Try to stay within your three minutes, people.  
20 We've got a lot of people who want to speak.

21           MR. JAMES:

22           Joey James. I'm the chairman of the  
23 Morgantown Municipal Green Team and Advisory Board to the  
24 City Council. I'm here tonight to speak in rejection of  
25 this proposal.

1 West Virginia has the highest per  
2 capita energy consumption of any Appalachian state. And  
3 Appalachia is not a very efficient place. Before we  
4 mountaineers go bailing out in Ohio corporation that has  
5 made a bad investment, I'd hope that we ask that same  
6 corporation to assess the long-term costs and risks of  
7 making an equal investment in energy efficiency, a  
8 virtually untapped resource that we have here in West  
9 Virginia. The cost to operate coal-fired power plants is  
10 becoming less and less competitive. And knowing this do  
11 we really want to put West Virginians on the line for  
12 something that is almost 40 years old.

13 Just the other day, I saw that the West  
14 Virginia DEP has issued a public notice for the  
15 construction of a 600 mega-watt natural gas combined  
16 cycle plant in Harrison County. While I cannot say that  
17 myself as an individual necessarily is afford --- one  
18 form of energy over another, I do support a diverse  
19 energy portfolio. And so I ask that you reject this  
20 proposal.

21 CHAIRMAN:

22 All right. Thank you, sir. Tina  
23 Oldfield.

24 MS. OLDFIELD:

25 Thank you. Hello. And thank you for

1 allowing me to address the Public Service Commission  
2 tonight.

3 CHAIRMAN:

4 Speak up into the microphone, please.  
5 Thank you.

6 MS. OLDFIELD:

7 Thank you. My name is Tina Oldfield.  
8 And I'm the County Administrator for Pleasants County,  
9 West Virginia. You've heard from one of our  
10 Commissioners during the Parkersburg public hearing. One  
11 of them actually said he would pray for you. I don't  
12 know if you remember that.

13 CHAIRMAN:

14 I commented that I don't get that very  
15 much. So I remember.

16 MS. OLDFIELD:

17 I remember that. And while his  
18 statement did make you laugh, there's a lot of truth in  
19 that. We have done a lot of praying. And I've been  
20 praying about this as well. People opposed to this  
21 transaction have had plenty of opportunities to skew the  
22 facts about the finances involved, make unfounded  
23 accusations about power companies, and generally condemn  
24 West Virginia's business community. Last night in  
25 Martinsburg, they went as far as to say the jobs in

1 Pleasants County stations that they provide aren't really  
2 that important.

3           Well, in Pleasants County, we root for  
4 all West Virginia because we believe that a rise in tide  
5 would solve this. When the Eastern Panhandle secured the  
6 massive Proctor and Gamble investment, we cheered for  
7 them. But today, when we're fighting to secure the  
8 continued operation of one of the biggest employers in  
9 our county, we're told by our neighbors in the East that  
10 these jobs don't matter.

11           I hope that the Public Service  
12 Commission can see past the manufactured opposition and  
13 remember what's important to the public. Affordable,  
14 reliable electric power and jobs that allow families to  
15 provide healthcare, education, and good quality of life  
16 for our children. Those who oppose the sale may be able  
17 to turn out hundreds of identical form letters, and bring  
18 lots of people to public hearings to speak against coal-  
19 fire power. But the rest of us have to make a sacrifice  
20 to be here because of our daily responsibilities. And  
21 this transaction is worth that sacrifice.

22           Pleasants County also has a population  
23 of around 6,500 people. That's based on the 2010 census.  
24 And by going with the 2016 population estimates, those 18  
25 and under equal around 1,551. And those 65 and over

1 equal around 1,228. That leaves just around 4,800 of us  
2 in the workforce. That's the entire county guys, 4,800.  
3 I want everybody to hear that. If Pleasants County loses  
4 240 jobs, the first thing it will effect is our highest  
5 employer. That's our school district. Student  
6 enrollment will go down, which affects the student-aid  
7 formula, and again, the number of teachers. In fact,  
8 you're even creating even more job loss. And that's just  
9 one example of the trickle-down effect.

10 This is not just about coal-fired power  
11 plant. This is about people and children and families,  
12 and they do matter. So I'm asking you to please approve  
13 the sale. West Virginia jobs do matter, especially in  
14 Pleasants County to us. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN:

16 Thank you, Ms. Oldfield. Randy Smith.

17 SENATOR SMITH:

18 Good evening. I want to take the  
19 opportunity to thank the Public Service Commission for  
20 letting me express my support for Mon Power's purchase of  
21 the Pleasant Power Station at Willow Island. My name's  
22 Randy Smith. I'm a state senator, one of the state  
23 senator's from the 14th District, and also an underground  
24 coalminer for 38 years. So to say that I don't have the  
25 best interests of the coalminers in mind would be an

1 understatement. It's the same as saying that I don't  
2 know a little bit about coal mining would be an  
3 understatement, because it's been basically my whole  
4 adult life. I'm also the chairman of the Senate Energy  
5 Committee where we deal with all types of energy, coal,  
6 gas, solar, wind. And all these play a big factor in our  
7 power grid.

8                   And I want to say the thing that  
9 troubles me is when I hear people say we are only talking  
10 240 jobs. I mean, these are people. I'm one of these  
11 people. You know, I never thought in my adult life that  
12 I would ever have to beg, plead, and fight for just an  
13 opportunity to make a living, an honest living. It's  
14 hard work. It's a hard job. But it's an honest living.  
15 And I'm proud. And no one in this group, in this  
16 building could ever make me apologize for being an  
17 underground coalminer, or being a support of coal and  
18 coal power.

19                   I come from a community that lost a  
20 power plant. So again, I know a little bit what I'm  
21 talking about. When the shut down the Albright Power  
22 Plant in Preston County, it devastated our county. And  
23 we still haven't recovered from it. And it's been over  
24 15 years. And we still as a county have not overcome  
25 that because of the jobs we lost, our education systems,

1 our EMS systems suffered. Every aspect of county  
2 government suffered because we only lost 100 jobs. And,  
3 you know, to say you only lost 100 job is asinine. And  
4 so these people that are against us sort of reminds me of  
5 a person that likes to eat beef. They love beef until  
6 they have to be the one to look the beef in the face and  
7 slaughter it. And then they would change their mind.  
8 The beef wouldn't taste as good.

9 I would like to fill this room with the  
10 people, the 240 employees that this is going to effect  
11 and let them look at them, the husbands, the wives, the  
12 children, the grandchildren. Look them in the face and  
13 tell them your job doesn't matter to us. I would love to  
14 be able to do that. But I couldn't bring --- I tried to  
15 bring two with me tonight. But guess what? They're too  
16 busy working.

17 So a few years ago, we had a polar  
18 vortex. And you can ask any of the power officials.  
19 Within minutes of the power grid crashing on the East  
20 Coast, at that time we had 230 coal-fired power plants  
21 producing and running at least 90 percent. Since then, I  
22 don't know the exact number, but 100 of them have been  
23 shut down. So if we ever go through, and God forbid, we  
24 ever go through another polar vortex, try to find the  
25 energy to keep people from freezing to death on the East

1 Coast.

2 I could talk all night, but I'll be  
3 respectful. And I urge you to make the right decision.  
4 And I just hope and pray that common sense prevails  
5 because I consider myself a common sense individual. And  
6 I hope that common sense prevails with the Public Service  
7 Commission on this. And God bless West Virginia, God  
8 bless the United States of America. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN:

10 Thank you, Senator. Tim Zickafoose.

11 MR. ZICKAFOOSE:

12 Good evening. I want to thank you guys  
13 for letting me come up and speak. My name is Tim  
14 Zickafoose. And I am the general manager of an  
15 industrial parts company that has locations all over West  
16 Virginia. And we wholeheartedly support FirstEnergy in  
17 this move. And we hope that they get what they want.

18 I want to talk to you a little bit  
19 something that has affected me. And that is the loss of  
20 --- seeing the loss in business with all the coal-powered  
21 power plants that have closed. I called on machine  
22 shops. I called on the local motor shops. I called on  
23 local support business. And I've seen it in my own  
24 company, and I've seen it in my own family. And it's  
25 been very painful to watch. West Virginia has been

1 beaten down of the last couple years. And the coal  
2 business has suffered. And we need this power plant to  
3 stay in business.

4 My area is hit hard. It's been, like I  
5 said it's been a real big down. I'm just asking you, and  
6 I'm going to keep it short, to please approve the  
7 transaction. And allow this good company to keep that  
8 plant open. Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRMAN:

10 Jason Lockard.

11 MR. LOCKARD:

12 Good evening. My name is Jason Lockard  
13 and I represent SLS Land and Energy Development. And we  
14 are a West Virginia based company that serves clients in  
15 oil, gas, coal industry, the West Virginia Department of  
16 Transportation, and the West Virginia Department of  
17 Environmental Protection.

18 To us, the Pleasants power station  
19 transaction represents the chance to secure existing,  
20 high quality utility jobs that support hundreds, possibly  
21 thousands of jobs at companies that service the plant.  
22 This transaction also allows one of the state's major  
23 electric power utilities to preserve reliable, affordable  
24 energy for its residential and industrial customers for  
25 the foreseeable future.

1           Our customers depend on affordable  
2 energy cost. So the importance of securing low-cost  
3 power can be critical in sustainable operations. This  
4 sale will allow Mon Power to avoid the price volatility  
5 that comes with purchasing power in the open market. And  
6 instead, lock-in reliable, affordable rates for their  
7 customers as the energy demands continue to grow.

8           SLS provides itself on environmental  
9 stewardship. Our staff is in the field every day and we  
10 cherish West Virginia's natural beauty. Thankfully, West  
11 Virginia is blessed with the ability to produce  
12 environmental safe low-cost fossil fuel energy. The  
13 Public Service Commission can rest assured that approving  
14 this transaction will allow exceptional power plant, one  
15 that already exceeds environmental-friendly standards to  
16 continue operating in West Virginia. The public will be  
17 well-served by this sale. Customers will have access to  
18 low-cost, reliable power. Hundreds of good jobs will be  
19 preserved. Thank you for your attention.

20           CHAIRMAN:

21           Thank you, sir. Megan Smith.

22           MS. SMITH:

23           Hi, I'm Megan Smith from Morgantown,  
24 West Virginia. This is my daughter, Rosie. You want to  
25 say hi. She wanted to come up, but she's shy. So I just

1 wanted to speak as a ratepayer in the State of West  
2 Virginia and as a West Virginian. We've heard a lot from  
3 administrators of this company who stand to gain profit  
4 from this. We've heard from shareholders that may make  
5 profit. But as a ratepayer, I understand that this is  
6 basically a bum deal that we're getting, just to use  
7 layman's terms.

8                   So basically what's happened is a bad  
9 investment has been made in a market that makes them  
10 compete. In West Virginia, the energy companies don't  
11 have to compete. We have to make a certain profit margin  
12 here because we're a regulated market. So basically,  
13 they're passing on this non-competitive plant to us, to  
14 West Virginians. And ratepayers will pay the benefit. I  
15 care about those 200 families, right. And I care about  
16 all the families in West Virginia. And creating a rate  
17 increase that's based on a failing plant that's not good  
18 for West Virginia is not good for any West Virginian.  
19 Not just those 240 families, but anyone.

20                   And I appreciate that you would just  
21 think about this as a bad deal. It happened to us before  
22 not too long ago with the Harrison County plant. We've  
23 seen the evidence of what happens. Our rates go through  
24 the roof as West Virginians. And I just don't think  
25 that's fair. Thank you.

1                   CHAIRMAN:

2                   Thank you, ma'am. Alan Collins.

3                   MR. COLLINS:

4                   My name is Alan Collins. I'm a  
5 ratepayer here for Mon Power and I'm also a professor at  
6 West Virginia University. I oppose this power plant  
7 purchase for the following reasons. One, Mon Power  
8 already has the overwhelming amount of coal-fired power  
9 plants as part of its generation capacity. Over 95  
10 percent of electricity comes from coal-fired power  
11 plants. We need to diversify as individual consumers.  
12 We need to diversify our own portfolio investments. I  
13 think Mon Power should do the same for their energy  
14 generation.

15                                 Also, if Mon Power wants an additional  
16 extra 1,300 megawatts of electricity generation. Maybe  
17 they can built gas-fired power plants or a combination of  
18 gas-fired power plants and renewable energy, like  
19 renewable electricity plants. They can --- FirstEnergy  
20 can keep the Pleasants power station and we could have  
21 both new development, as well as existing coal-fired  
22 power plants.

23                                 However, coal-fired power plants like  
24 Pleasants power station has been losing money. Harrison  
25 power plant, if you look at that purchase for Mon Power,

1 Kathy Kunkel did a nice analysis. She showed that rate  
2 payers are paying out \$60 million a year in additional  
3 expenses because of that power plant has been losing  
4 money, and in terms of the whole sale, electricity  
5 markets.

6 This purchase of a Pleasants power  
7 station only protects Mon Power, the ratepayers from  
8 increases in prices of wholesale electricity. However,  
9 wholesale electricity prices have been turning downward  
10 over the past decade. And so this purchase does nothing  
11 to protect us or to actually save us money, as those  
12 electricity wholesale rates have been going downward.

13 The biggest beneficiaries of this  
14 particular purchase are the stakeholders --- or excuse  
15 me, the stockholders of FirstEnergy, as well as  
16 electricity consumers outside the State of West Virginia.  
17 And so back of the envelope analysis I did on this in  
18 terms of the rate savings would be between around ---  
19 it's a big range between \$20 million and over \$300  
20 million. But those are savings that we as ratepayers  
21 here in West Virginia do not receive, because we're  
22 paying for the power station. By keeping that station  
23 open, the Pleasants power station saves money for the  
24 ratepayers around the region, the PGM region.

25 And so in conclusion, I'm opposing this

1 particular purchase because it benefits the FirstEnergy  
2 stockholders, as well as ratepayers around the region.  
3 But for the rest of us consumers, we pay the cost of this  
4 electricity. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN:

6 Thank you, sir. Kevin Campbell.

7 MR. CAMPBELL:

8 Good evening. I object to the sale of  
9 this power plant as a West Virginian, as a business  
10 owner, and as a senior on a fixed income. As some of the  
11 previous speakers have mentioned, the stranded cost that  
12 came from the Harrison deal are affecting ratepayers now.  
13 And they can't afford more stranded cost to be dumped on  
14 them. I feel for the people of Pleasants County and I  
15 would like to see them all keep their jobs. And they can  
16 do that as long as FirstEnergy of Ohio hangs on to their  
17 plant. If it's so good, they should keep it.

18 But to dump it on West Virginia  
19 ratepayers and expect us to cover the bill so that their  
20 stockholders can get dividends is just wrong. This plant  
21 does not benefit the people of West Virginia. It  
22 benefits the Ohio stockholders. And it's not our job to  
23 support them. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN:

25 Thank you, sir. April Keating.

1                   MS. KEATING:

2                   Hi, I want to thank you for having this  
3 hearing and letting us speak. I wanted to respond, first  
4 of all, to some of the comments that have been made. And  
5 I'll try to keep this brief.

6                   The first speaker talked about how we  
7 take energy for granted, and that is certainly true. We  
8 do take energy for granted. We don't think about where  
9 it comes from or what it takes to produce it. And we  
10 don't really think about the secondary effects of fossil  
11 fuel development.

12                  And so we know though from scientific  
13 studies, from hospital records, from things that have  
14 happened, that coal does toxify the environment wherever  
15 it's been brought out of the ground, wherever it's been  
16 used in a plant. The coal ash is usually dumped on  
17 communities of color or poor communities. There are only  
18 certain places that will tolerate that. And people who  
19 don't have money to fight have to put up with the coal  
20 ash in their communities. Those people have cancer.  
21 I've visited people in those communities. I've talked to  
22 them and I've heard from them. And I know their stories.  
23 And a lot of them are very sick. People in Southern West  
24 Virginia where coal has been the predominant industry are  
25 sick at a greater rate than people in other areas where

1 coal is not pre-dominant.

2           So we ask ourselves, you know, is any  
3 energy okay, are any jobs okay? Some people believe that  
4 certain jobs are wrong, such as selling drugs or  
5 prostitution or whatever you think is wrong. Would you  
6 do those jobs, would you create a job in that for people,  
7 200 jobs? Would it be okay if 200 people had a job doing  
8 something that you thought was unethical?

9           So my argument is that we have to watch  
10 out for our water and our public health. And we know  
11 with clear and precise evidence that coal poisons  
12 communities. And we also know that as a sustainable and  
13 just transition requires that we develop our energy  
14 system in a different way. And we do not want to lock  
15 ourselves into doing the same thing expecting a different  
16 result.

17           I had a lot more on here, but I'm  
18 running out of time. You know, regulations, somebody  
19 said that this plant follows all the regulations and this  
20 industry follows all the regulations. But we know that a  
21 lot of the regulations are not sufficient. I could give  
22 you examples from the gas industry, which is a different  
23 industry. But we have rules in place that are not  
24 sufficient to protect people. And then we don't have  
25 enough inspectors to walk around and make sure that these

1 companies are doing the best that they can by people.  
2 And so people are losing their water, and their health,  
3 and their lives because of the toxification. A law is  
4 only go good as its enforcement. And sometimes the  
5 regulations aren't strong enough. So we can say we  
6 follow the regulations. But if they don't protect  
7 people, they're not really worth much.

8 So in addition to everything else that  
9 people had said here today about rates, which I agree  
10 with as well, I would urge you to think about the balance  
11 between our lives and our power. And I think that we can  
12 develop our power in ways that don't make people sick.  
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN:

15 Thank you for your comment. John Bird.

16 MR. BIRD:

17 Hello. First of all, I want to thank  
18 you for having this meeting. I think hopefully you'll  
19 get some new ideas. I have four things I want to talk  
20 about. The first is that West Virginia really doesn't  
21 need any more coal plants, I don't think, for health  
22 reasons. The particular matter that they don't capture  
23 the PM2.5 is a health risk to people. I've read that in,  
24 you know, the schools, the main cause of students missing  
25 school is asthma. And apparently, they can trace that to

1 particulate matter. Not only from cars, but from the  
2 coal-fired plants.

3 Energy-efficiency can reduce the need  
4 for more electricity and help low-income families. And I  
5 think you need to require more of that. Renewables are  
6 supplying significant power in many states. Renewables  
7 are cost-effective or shortly will be. Why not  
8 renewables in West Virginia? I understand that Texas and  
9 I think it was Iowa gets significant power from wind.  
10 California has lots of sun, of course, and gets  
11 significant power. And those are clean and job-creating  
12 industries.

13 Both energy efficiency and renewables  
14 create jobs. And probably far more than would be  
15 displaced. And again, our hearts go out to people that  
16 lose their jobs. But other jobs would be created,  
17 probably far more. And West Virginia kind of should be  
18 keeping up with the rest of the country in terms of  
19 renewables.

20 The last is FERC. That's the Federal  
21 Energy Regulatory Commission has just been instructed by  
22 the U.S. Court of Appeals, I think out of Washington, to  
23 --- was instructed to better consider climate change when  
24 permitting CO2-generating infrastructure. Climate change  
25 is real according to tens of thousands of climate

1 scientists. And I think the PSC should consider CO2  
2 reduction in this in all of its permitting of energy-  
3 related plants. Climate change will be getting worse.  
4 It will be very costly and very ugly in the future. I've  
5 got a two-year-old, three-year-old granddaughter who's  
6 going to see it. I won't. But you need to think about  
7 the future of West Virginia and that include climate  
8 change. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN:

10 Thank you. David Bott.

11 MR. BOTT:

12 Okay. My name is Dave Bott. In the  
13 '90s when the Clean Air Act was amended, Mon Power chose  
14 to scrub the Harrison power plant and go low sulfur coal  
15 with the Fort Martin plant. And try to sell  
16 environmental clearance on the commodities market. And  
17 they were developed. And they didn't make any money.  
18 When they had to scrub the Fort Martin plant, it costed  
19 triple and we got a rate increase.

20 In the 2000s, they invested in Enron.  
21 Lost tens of millions of dollars. Had to sell their  
22 property holdings to survive and we got a rate increase.  
23 We're starting to see a pattern of poor management with  
24 lack of vision at Mon Power. And they did it again just  
25 recently with the purchase of the Harrison power plant,

1 which they told us our rates will go down. No, we got a  
2 rate increase.

3           The Point Pleasant power plant sale  
4 goes against nature. Darwinism and the survival of the  
5 fittest is the very foundation of the free market. And  
6 if PSC keeps bailing out Mon Power and bailing out  
7 FirstEnergy, the market never has a chance to work. In  
8 this case, I think you need to allow the market to work.  
9 And maybe the Boards and the investors will demand  
10 management teams that will have vision, instead of  
11 looking tomorrow and quick dollars, looking down the road  
12 and how we can stabilize our industry.

13           I was a coal miner for 22 years. I  
14 appreciate Mr. Smith's comments. I'm a laid off coal  
15 miner. I worked in the mines last 1996. The coal mines  
16 shut down. It's a natural progression. People move on.  
17 All the people in this area, I mean, thousands of coal  
18 miners that lost their jobs in the '90s. We adjusted.  
19 We moved on. And that has to happen here. It's  
20 unfortunate, but FirstEnergy still owns the Point  
21 Pleasant power plant. If FirstEnergy wanted to make it  
22 efficient, if they could, they could continue to operate  
23 it if they want to. This is a bail-out and it should not  
24 be allowed. Thank you.

25           CHAIRMAN:

1 Thank you. James Van Nostrand.

2 MR. VAN NOSTRAND:

3 Good afternoon, Chairman Albert,  
4 Commissioner McCabe, Commissioner Larrick. I spent a lot  
5 of time looking at this filing. I've spent --- at  
6 FirstEnergy's integrated resource plan that was filed in  
7 December 2015, I approach it with almost 35, over 35  
8 years' experience as a utility lawyer, both working for a  
9 Commission, working for a utility, representing utility,  
10 and as an environmental advocate in New York. And I also  
11 come to this proceeding also from the prospective of a  
12 land-granting institution, faculty member of WVU. A role  
13 that we take very seriously under the leadership of  
14 President Gordon Gee. One element of our mission as a  
15 land-grant institution is to lead transformation in West  
16 Virginia and the world through local state and global  
17 engagement.

18 In looking at that transaction through  
19 that lens, does this transaction make sense for the  
20 average West Virginian, which is a far different  
21 consideration than what serves the interest of  
22 FirstEnergy shareholders, very few of whom live in West  
23 Virginia. Along these lines, we have a project called  
24 West Virginia Forward, which President Gee rolled out of  
25 the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce business somewhat a

1 couple weeks ago. It's a collaboration between WVU and  
2 Marshall University, with the help of consultants at  
3 McKinson Company. The goal is to address why West  
4 Virginia lags behind a growing national economy and what  
5 we can do to put the state on a road to prosperity.

6           The report identifies new sections of  
7 the state can capture the promised high growth, including  
8 cloud services and data centers, as well as life sciences  
9 and automotive assembly. What do we know about the  
10 energy requirements of cloud services and data centers,  
11 and these other potential employers? They want three  
12 things. They want renewable electricity. They want low-  
13 cost electricity, and they want reliable electricity.

14           Why renewable? Most of them have  
15 corporate sustainability objectives. They have a certain  
16 percentage of power they want to procure from renewable  
17 sources. For example, Microsoft, Google, Amazon,  
18 Facebook, they all have corporate renewable energy  
19 objectives that they're trying to serve. It's not just  
20 the new energy economy companies. The old economy  
21 business that also have renewable energy chemicals,  
22 Walmart, Toyota, Proctor and Gamble, Dow Chemical, Owens  
23 Corning, the headquarters in Texas, 100 percent renewable  
24 energy. Proctor and Gamble, 30 percent renewable in all  
25 of its plants by 2020.

1                   Why do we care? If you want to attract  
2 those jobs to our state, we need to convince those  
3 employers they'll have access to renewable energy. How  
4 does this transaction stack up with respect to meeting  
5 this consumer-driven need? It is a striking mismatch,  
6 sheer madness. Buying a huge 40-year-old coal plant,  
7 which respectively precludes Mon Power from ever  
8 acquiring any renewable resources, and virtually assures  
9 it's going to continue the almost 100 percent coal-fired.

10                   The second requirement, low-cost  
11 electricity. How does this transaction stack up with  
12 respect to meeting this consumer-driven need? Very  
13 badly. It's a terrible deal for ratepayers, a great deal  
14 for FirstEnergy shareholders. Pleasants station is  
15 uneconomic. It simply can't compete in the ruthlessly  
16 competitive wholesale markets. That's why FirstEnergy's  
17 merchant subsidiary is trying to force it back onto the  
18 Mon Power ratepayers. It's more power than Mon Power  
19 needs. The excess cannot be sold on the wholesale  
20 market. So the ratepayers will bear the consequences and  
21 subsequent e-neck filings. It's sheer madness, contrived  
22 load forecasting. Pay the purchase price to acquire  
23 this plant, which is what it's worth. Inaccurate gas  
24 price forecast, unrealistic optimistic wholesale price  
25 cost forecast, and under-estimating plant operating

1 costs.

2                   This whole filing is a house of cards  
3 bid on a series of incredible projections and  
4 assumptions, all of which would have to come true. If we  
5 have to make any economic sense for the ratepayers,  
6 virtually none of the elements of this filing, however,  
7 hold up to any scrutiny.

8                   Finally, reliable electricity. These  
9 local economy industries are energy-attentive. And they  
10 require reliable electricity supply. Whether Mon Power  
11 owns this plant has nothing to do with reliability of the  
12 grid, which is the responsibility of PJM. If this plant  
13 is truly necessary for good reliability, then PJM has the  
14 authority. The evidentiary reliability must run their  
15 RMR arrangement.

16                   The question is who bears the risk of  
17 this plant being uneconomical. Currently that list is  
18 borne by FirstEnergy shareholders and that is where it  
19 belongs. The Commission should reject this application.  
20 I can't imagine a transaction that is less in line with  
21 the direction this state needs to go. It is West  
22 Virginia Forward --- it's West Virginia Backward, not  
23 West Virginia Forward. Thank you.

24                   CHAIRMAN:

25                   Paul Luttamus.

1                   MR. LAUTTAMUS:

2                   Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you for  
3 your time. My name's Paul Lauttamus. I'm from Weirton,  
4 West Virginia. I'm the president of Lauttamus  
5 Communication, Lauttamus Holding, and Lauttamus Security.  
6 I happen to be 44 years old. And if you listen to  
7 everybody in the background, I'm old. I still have half  
8 my lifetime to live. And to say that this plant is old,  
9 it's only half-way through its lifecycle 44 years. To  
10 me, that's telling me I've died. I'm extinct. I don't  
11 think that's accurate.

12                   I came from a community that had 13,000  
13 employees. And it was at one time FirstEnergy's largest  
14 customer called Weirton Steel Corporation. And we've had  
15 to reinvent Weirton. And I'm one of the companies that  
16 has been able to reinvent it by basically creating jobs  
17 for West Virginia.

18                   FirstEnergy and Mon Power creates four  
19 to five jobs of those 600 that West Virginia University  
20 says that they create. And if that plant was to go away  
21 and FirstEnergy was to go away, all of my high-paying,  
22 high tech jobs would go away. That really bothers me.  
23 I'm very passionate because my company's been able to  
24 grow into 32 states. And a lot of that growth that I've  
25 been able to have was for my core customers, Middle

1 Steel, Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel, and FirstEnergy. Two  
2 of the three aren't there anymore. You're going to take  
3 away the third one, that's going to be a very hard hit on  
4 my company.

5 My company underrates West Virginia  
6 211. We do it in over 1,682 calls in 2017 where people  
7 who needed help paying their utility bill. Those people  
8 needed help because they didn't have the money to pay the  
9 utility bill. They may have lost their jobs. Jobs are  
10 what's most important in this prospect with what's going  
11 on. And I don't want to see any jobs lost. There's got  
12 to be a way to be able to keep this plant open, and  
13 create jobs, and create clean energy.

14 I own a portfolio of communication  
15 towers that serve public safety, public education. Every  
16 one of those tenants on my towers has an electrical  
17 utility meter. These are fire, police, EMS, and school  
18 systems. They're on our tower. They're going to save  
19 money with their rates that they're going to be paying.  
20 And for that savings, that's going to go back. And  
21 consider the amount of proliferation of communication  
22 towers and all the public safety agencies in West  
23 Virginia, not just public safety. You see the police,  
24 fire, EMS, school systems, just to name a few. That's  
25 substantial savings that they're going to have.

1 I believe if we lose a community  
2 partner like FirstEnergy, it's going to be devastating to  
3 West Virginia. Our economy, especially with the budget  
4 deficits that we've recently had, the reduction of  
5 services that we're seeing, and West Virginia's credit  
6 rating, we can't afford that. For me, it's personal. I  
7 recently serve as the president of my Weirton Heights  
8 Rotary Club. I called on FirstEnergy to contribute to  
9 the construction of the new breast care center. You know  
10 who the first one to step up was? FirstEnergy, Mon  
11 Power. And I think if we lose that, we're losing the  
12 foundation of the core of what services West Virginia and  
13 what makes us all great, and why we're here today. I'm  
14 asking each of you to support me, support the first  
15 responders, support the school systems. Because this  
16 bill has to go through. And I think it's important for  
17 Mon Power to be able to continue to give back like they  
18 do to our community. Thank you for your consideration  
19 and your support.

20 CHAIRMAN:

21 Thank you, Mr. Lauttamus. Barry  
22 Wendell.

23 MR. WENDELL:

24 Hello, I'm Barry Wendell. I live in  
25 Morgantown. And I serve on the Morgantown City Council

1 representing the Seventh Ward. The City Council's going  
2 to take this up at our next meeting. So I'm not  
3 authorized to speak for the Council, but only for myself.  
4 So that's what I'm doing.

5           The real issue here is who's paying for  
6 this plant. Right now it's up to FirstEnergy  
7 shareholders to make sure that this plant makes a profit.  
8 And they're saying well, maybe it can't make a profit.  
9 So we want to sell it to our own subsidiary and make the  
10 ratepayers in Mon County and the City of Morgantown make  
11 sure that we make a profit. That's not how it's supposed  
12 to work. It's supposed to work that the company is  
13 supposed to take the risk, not the people who live in the  
14 city that's serviced by them. FirstEnergy has had the  
15 opportunity to upgrade their plants, to use renewable  
16 energy, to change to gas. They can do all of that.

17           I'm sorry for the people who might lose  
18 their job if the plant closes. But that's on the company  
19 because they didn't keep up with the times, and do what  
20 they needed to do to make sure that that plant was  
21 competitive and could stay open. I don't want my  
22 constituents to have to pay for the mistakes of  
23 FirstEnergy. And I'm going to end there. Thank you.

24           CHAIRMAN:

25           Thank you, sir. John Hobday.

1                   MR. HOBDAY:

2                   Hi, I'm John Hobday. I've looked at  
3 this since it's been in the news from kind of a distance.  
4 And really, my concern is everything that I've seen as a  
5 reason for this sale is because we need more power. Now,  
6 I haven't checked recently, but I have previously. And  
7 West Virginia has all the power it can use plus. Better  
8 than 75 percent of our power gets sold out-of-state. So  
9 I don't know how you can make a case West Virginia needs  
10 power. They've got enough power to feed us for a long  
11 time.

12                   The other thing is on the same line, I  
13 don't think there's any guarantee in what they're  
14 offering, that that plant will continue to operate. And  
15 by the same token, if the sale goes through, I don't  
16 think there's any guarantee that it won't be shut down or  
17 that it will continue to operate. I don't think that's  
18 part of their proposal. They're not offering any  
19 guarantees.

20                   The other thing is we have power plants  
21 that aren't operating, that we're paying for already  
22 because we paid for environmental issues with them. And  
23 we're still paying for those plants. If they need more  
24 power, why don't they restart those? I mean, it doesn't  
25 --- I don't see anything presented anywhere that makes

1 any sense as to why West Virginia needs additional power.  
2 The power is there. We belong to a grid. If we need it,  
3 we can buy power from the grid. We could get power from  
4 that same plant by going to the grid.

5 So I don't see any justification  
6 whatsoever for approving this deal. And if I was sitting  
7 in your chair, my recommendation would be you guys  
8 haven't furnished enough information. Come back with  
9 something better when you've got something better.

10 CHAIRMAN:

11 Thank you, Mr. Hobday. Bill Ham.

12 MR. HAM:

13 Good evening. My name is Bill Ham. I  
14 only heard about this late this afternoon so I'll be  
15 short and to the point.

16 CHAIRMAN:

17 Good.

18 MR. HAM:

19 I've lived in West Virginia for 43  
20 years. All I've heard about and seen has been coal.  
21 Whether it's out there in the barges on our rivers, in  
22 the railroad hoppers, or on the stockpiles. It takes  
23 coal to fire these plants. At this time, we currently  
24 have agencies working towards providing these plants  
25 clean coal. I do believe that will happen in the future.

1 My electric bill comes to me in the  
2 mail from Mon Power. So I see no reason why at this time  
3 Pleasants power plant should not be allowed to follow the  
4 guidance and control of Mon Power so it can continue to  
5 operate. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN:

7 Todd Wofring.

8 MR. WOFRING:

9 Good evening. I am Todd Wofring and  
10 I'm here to support the sale of Pleasants power plant.  
11 As a resident of West Virginia, I feel it is so important  
12 to keep as many of our West Virginia families working.  
13 The sale would help lower our electric bills a little  
14 each month. And with the price of healthcare insurance  
15 skyrocketing for most of us, anything we can save is a  
16 great help. I've done a lot of business with FirstEnergy  
17 and Pleasants power plant since 2003. Not to mention  
18 that my dad, Ron Wofring retired from FirstEnergy.

19 Over that time, I've met a lot of  
20 friends at the Pleasants power plant. And I don't want  
21 to see this plant close and any of my friends lose their  
22 jobs and businesses like what's happened to some of my  
23 friends in the coal industry. I'm scared to death that  
24 if this sale is not approved, some small businesses like  
25 the one I've worked for for the last 16 years will be

1 affected, too. And this could lead to myself and some of  
2 my co-workers possibly losing our jobs because a partner  
3 like Pleasant power plant is not there anymore to work  
4 with us and buy the products we sell. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN:

6 Thank you. Andrew Cockburn.

7 MR. COCKBURN:

8 Hi. My name is Andy Cockburn. I  
9 appreciate the opportunity to address you. I'm an  
10 investor. I live here in Morgantown. So I'm a  
11 ratepayer. But I'm interested in the business side of  
12 these things. I understand that all three of you  
13 Commissioners have business background, so I want to talk  
14 about that.

15 To me, it's really obvious what's going  
16 on here. The management and the Board of FirstEnergy has  
17 made this proposal. The management and Board of  
18 FirstEnergy is responsible to the shareholders of  
19 FirstEnergy. They're not responsible to the ratepayers  
20 of West Virginia. If this was a bad deal for the  
21 shareholders, they would be out of their minds to do  
22 this. They provided public information that could be  
23 used to sue them in the shareholders suit if this turned  
24 out to be a bad deal. It's not a bad deal. I trust the  
25 professionalism of the FirstEnergy Board and management.

1                   And we can see that from the Harrison  
2 County Harrison Plant that they knew what they were  
3 doing. They came up with a bunch of, you know, BS and  
4 told us and the PSC that this would be a good deal for  
5 West Virginia ratepayers. It wasn't. It's already cost  
6 us a couple hundred million dollars. And it's going to  
7 cost us a couple hundred million dollars down the road.  
8 And from their perspective, that's exactly what they  
9 should be doing. They should be trying to bring more  
10 money into the shareholders and sock it to the  
11 ratepayers. We're seeing the same thing, you know. They  
12 can sit there and make arguments about it. But again, it  
13 would be crazy to be trying to offload a profitable plant  
14 onto the ratepayer of West Virginia if they could keep  
15 that in their own portfolio and profit off of it for  
16 their own shareholders. So thank you.

17                   CHAIRMAN:

18                   Thank you. Bill Reger-Nash.

19                   MR. REGER-NASH:

20                   Bill Reger-Nash. I'm pretty much a  
21 life-long resident of West Virginia. I was born in  
22 Wheeling. Served as a representative of Wheeling, Ohio  
23 County in West Virginia legislature. And I've had the  
24 good fortune of seeing the energy industry at work in our  
25 state capitol. We've heard a lot of pious platitudes

1 here about First Energy. And I know they are a  
2 responsible company. But they are responsible to their  
3 shareholders. They have vigorously opposed renewable  
4 energy in the State of West Virginia because they see it  
5 as hurting their bottom line. It certainly makes sense  
6 for them, for FirstEnergy of Ohio to offload this plant.

7           If, in fact, this plant were as  
8 effective as it is, they would be keeping it. They have  
9 failed to invest in upgrading this. This is not peculiar  
10 to FirstEnergy. It's peculiar to the whole country. We  
11 are not investing in our infrastructure. And that plant  
12 could be made to be very efficient, could be made to be  
13 clean energy. But it would have a cost associated with  
14 it. No, let's shift it over to West Virginia. It's  
15 like, you know, okay, our rates will go up a little bit.  
16 We'll bear with it. But it's like you put a frog in a  
17 pot of water, you heat it up, it will stay there until it  
18 boils to death.

19           In fact, the ratepayers are going to be  
20 paying a tremendous amount over the long-term because  
21 we'll have another albatross wrapped around us. I oppose  
22 this sale.

23                           CHAIRMAN:

24                           Thank you. Elizabeth I'm sorry,  
25 Sneathen, Sneathen?

1                   MS. SNEATHEN:

2                   Yes, I'm not going to talk.

3                   CHAIRMAN:

4                   All right. Micah Weglinski.

5                   MR. WEGLINSKI:

6                   Hello. My name is Micah Weglinski. I  
7 live in Cheat Lake area here. I'd like to thank Chairman  
8 Albert, Commissioner Larrick, and Commissioner McCabe for  
9 opening up this hearing for public comments. I'll be as  
10 quick as I can.

11                   Mon Power's already meeting the  
12 demands. If this sale goes through, then we'll have  
13 excess supply. And if we can't sell that, what happens?  
14 We're responsible for it. And we're the ratepayers. And  
15 that's just basic supply and demand. We're already  
16 meeting the needs. We get this extra capacity. They  
17 can't sell it.

18                   Now, I pay for it in my electric bill.  
19 In this application, FirstEnergy has valued the Pleasants  
20 plant at \$150 per kilowatt when every other coal plant is  
21 valued in our area between \$64 and \$108. So if the  
22 demand is so high that we need this extra capacity, and  
23 the price is so high that they can sell it for it, why  
24 would they sell it? They would keep it. They would make  
25 that money. Why would they sell it to us? It doesn't

1 make any sense.

2                   And on a personal note, I work with a  
3 few organizations in town that helps homeless people,  
4 veterans who need help. And we've got calls lately from  
5 veterans who are living out of their cars and people who  
6 are recently homeless because they lost one of their  
7 three jobs, and they can't pay their bills. And this  
8 extra charge that's going to be on our backs is going to  
9 affect the people in our state. People here are hurting  
10 to make ends meet and this will only make it harder.

11                   In closing, I listened to the testimony  
12 today and I've been reading things online. It seems like  
13 everyone who stands to make money on this deal is for the  
14 sale. Everyone who's going to pay for that seems to be  
15 against it. I hope you'll side with the people who will  
16 be paying for it and reject the sale. Thank you.

17                   CHAIRMAN:

18                   Thank you, sir. John Lozier.

19                   MR. LOZIER:

20                   Thank you very much. I came without  
21 any written notes. I've listened to what I heard. I  
22 think I can wrap up my point in a couple of sentences. I  
23 oppose this sale. I oppose this purchase. And I  
24 strongly oppose it for a lot of reasons that the folks  
25 have just mentioned. I'm going to use a couple of

1 slogans.

2                   One is follow the money. Follow the  
3 money. That's exactly what these last couple of three  
4 speakers have been saying. And sure enough, you look  
5 around and you see where the money is. Who's wearing the  
6 suits? You know, who's got their notes already written  
7 out for them and handed to them so they could come up  
8 here and say what they want to have said. So that's one  
9 of the slogans is follow the money. And when we follow  
10 the money, it's pretty clear, like what Micah Weglinski  
11 just said. FirstEnergy's doing what they're supposed to  
12 do. They're trying to make it safe for the investors.

13                   Now, the second slogan I want to use  
14 is, it was used by one of the earlier people. A rising  
15 tide lifts all boats. That's great if you have a boat.  
16 But, you know, that particular little line coming at a  
17 time when we're dealing with the results of Harvey and  
18 Irma in the last few days, it's pretty obvious there's a  
19 lot of irony involved in using the slogan a rising tide  
20 lifts all boats. A rising tide ruins people's homes.

21                   Anyway, so that just calls up --- you  
22 know, there's a whole lot of denial going on here.  
23 People are denying that, in fact, coal is on its way out.  
24 In fact, fossil fuels are on their way out. And in fact,  
25 alternative renewables are coming on. Global warming is

1 real and people realize it. I think even the deniers,  
2 even the most conspicuous deniers like some of the people  
3 in our federal government has put in position, there's a  
4 lot of denial going on. But we're all catching on.  
5 We're catching on. Global warming is real and we have to  
6 fix it by adopting better energy policy. And one of the  
7 important things to do is get rid of fossil fuel.  
8 Measure and get it out, work it out so that they can  
9 phase it out. And have a better way going forward.

10 Thank you very much for this  
11 opportunity and please reject this offer to sell the  
12 plant.

13 CHAIRMAN:

14 Thank you, sir. Natalie Stone.

15 MS. STONE:

16 Good evening, Commissioner. My name is  
17 Natalie Stone. And I'm the executive director for the  
18 Northcentral Building Trades. And you've heard about  
19 several --- from several people about the jobs that are  
20 in the Pleasants power station.

21 What I'm here to speak about is the  
22 construction jobs that come from the maintenance and the  
23 outages that take place at those plants. There are  
24 hundreds of man-hours every year and thousands of  
25 families that are affected by that work. They're good

1 paying jobs. We have good benefits. We have health  
2 insurance for our families. And when you're making your  
3 consideration on this project, I hope that you take that  
4 into thought, that there's a lot of spin-offs and there's  
5 a lot of other jobs other than those 246. And I know  
6 that none of my members would like to lose their jobs  
7 either. Thank you for your time.

8 CHAIRMAN:

9 Thank you, ma'am. John Bolasko.

10 MR. BOLASKO:

11 Thank you, Commissioners for being here  
12 tonight. I have attended several of these meetings and  
13 usually all I see is at most one Commissioner, and most  
14 of the time an administrative law judge. So I really  
15 appreciate you all being here.

16 Tonight, I'm going to talk about the  
17 value of the modeling and predictions made by those who  
18 have a vested interest in the electric utility industry,  
19 and those who serve the industry for financial gain. The  
20 first prediction that I'd like to talk about was  
21 presented as expert testimony during the Trans-Allegheny  
22 interstate transmission line, case number 070508E-CN.

23 In expert testimony in the evidentiary  
24 hearings in 2007 and 2008, Steven Hurley, then vice-  
25 president for planning at PJM, and Scott Glass, principal

1 consultant for Power Gem both predicted significant  
2 growth in peak-summer demand in the mid-Atlantic region  
3 as justification for constructing the line. Scott Glass  
4 predicted a 15.3 percent increase in projected peak loads  
5 between 2006 and 2015. That never happened. The highest  
6 peak summer demand of electricity in PJM was 166,000  
7 megawatts in 2006. Last summer, demand peaked at 151,907  
8 megawatts on August 11th. That's 14,000 megawatts or 8.5  
9 percent lower.

10                   The trail line was approved and  
11 constructed to account for the increased demand that  
12 never occurred. In that same case, expert testimony was  
13 presented by opponents of the trail line that predicted  
14 growth and demand in the Mid-Atlantic region was way  
15 overstated. It turned out that those predictions by  
16 those opposing the trail were right. In the present  
17 case, Jay Roberto, director of regulated generation  
18 dispatch, FirstEnergy Service Company, predicts the  
19 capacity shortfall of 850 megawatts during the winter  
20 peaking period of 2027. Will he be right? If not,  
21 ratepayers will be paying hundreds of millions of dollars  
22 for the purchase and maintenance of the Pleasant plant.

23                   In short-term --- in the short-term,  
24 PJM predicts that power-generation in Pennsylvania and  
25 Ohio using natural gas will increase and provide low-cost

1 electricity. And by the way, in that previous case, it  
2 was assumed to some extent that there would be four IGC  
3 plants built and constructed in West Virginia. That  
4 never occurred either. If two of those had been, perhaps  
5 we wouldn't be in the situation we are right now.

6           Also in the present case or this case,  
7 expert testimony presented by the West Virginia Bureau of  
8 Business and Economic Research was presented by the West  
9 Virginia Bureau of Business and Economic Research, John  
10 Deskins, director, was asked to present an economic  
11 forecast for Mon Power's West Virginia territory from  
12 2016 to 2031. The Bureau's outlook model, and I quote  
13 for the most part, consists of 121 equations that are  
14 then combined with a series of other equations into a  
15 model totaling more than 800 equations that uses  
16 statistical algorithms to forecast each successive  
17 quarter in a recursive manner based upon the statistical  
18 relationship that we estimated using historical data.  
19 Wonder why predictions fails?

20           In summary, I trust the Commissioners  
21 will make a decision that is for the public good and give  
22 expert testimony concern in growth in electricity use the  
23 weight that it deserves. Thank you very much.

24           CHAIRMAN:

25           Thank you, sir. Mark.

1                   MR. BRAZAITIS:

2                   Brazaitis maybe.

3                   CHAIRMAN:

4                   I'm sorry?

5                   MR. BRAZAITIS:

6                   Did you say Mark Brazaitis?

7                   CHAIRMAN:

8                   I didn't say it yet.

9                   MR. BRAZAITIS:

10                  I'm so used to people not getting my  
11 name right that I'm jumping in for you.

12                  CHAIRMAN:

13                  I'm glad you said it.

14                  MR. BRAZAITIS:

15                  Yeah.

16                  CHAIRMAN:

17                  Mark, you can proceed.

18                  MR. BRAZAITIS:

19                  Thank you for having me. I'm Mark  
20 Brazaitis. I am the deputy mayor of Morgantown. I'm  
21 also a professor at West Virginia University. And I  
22 speak in opposition tonight.

23                  Four points. One, this is a clear,  
24 this would be a clear economic burden on the people of  
25 West Virginia. I don't understand why we are being asked

1 to take on this burden for an Ohio-based company. Why do  
2 we have to prop up the big boys in this situation? We  
3 are a struggling state. We don't need to be handing out  
4 corporate welfare. It's not fair and it's not helpful to  
5 our state. We need to attract top companies to our state  
6 and many of them do have policies in place, do have  
7 philosophies in place in which they want renewable  
8 energies. This purchase would be a step backward, a step  
9 away from attracting those companies we desperately need  
10 to employ our citizens.

11           Number three, the health consequences  
12 here should be taken into account. Big polluters lead to  
13 big health problems. That's a tax on our citizenry.  
14 Those trips to the doctor cost money. They cost time  
15 away from our jobs. They cost time away from schools.  
16 That's a huge burden we've been suffering. We shouldn't  
17 be doing it anymore. We shouldn't have that placed upon  
18 us.

19           Last point, the jobs absolutely matter.  
20 Of course they matter. They matter desperately to our  
21 economy. But let's focus on the jobs of the future that  
22 can employ people over the next 50 years. China has  
23 invested \$337 billion in development of renewable energy.  
24 That is \$50 for everyone in the world. They are going to  
25 unemploy us all if we're not looking ahead. We as a

1 state need to look ahead. This purchase would be looking  
2 way back. Let's look ahead. Thank you very much.

3 CHAIRMAN:

4 Thank you, sir. That's everybody who  
5 has signed up.

6 MS. DACKS:

7 Sorry. Are you taking volunteers now?

8 CHAIRMAN:

9 I'm sorry?

10 MS. DACKS:

11 Are you taking --- I would like to  
12 speak, if that's possible.

13 CHAIRMAN:

14 As far as making remarks, as we said  
15 originally, we have to vacate the building by eight  
16 o'clock. So I think these will be the last of the  
17 remarks. And after this, we will adjourn.

18 MS. DACKS:

19 Well, thank you for your patience. I  
20 know it's been a long night for all of you. I'll make it  
21 really quick. My name is Penny Dacks and I live here in  
22 Morgantown.

23 CHAIRMAN:

24 Please spell your last name.

25 MS. DACKS:

1 D-A-C-K-S.

2 CHAIRMAN:

3 Thank you.

4 MS. DACKS:

5 And I'm a scientist. And I want to  
6 echo what was just spoken. We've been hearing within the  
7 scientific community, we've had people talking about how  
8 incredible the investments are in China and everybody  
9 should move there. I'm not joking. That is the  
10 perceptive that has been raising. And obviously, most  
11 people aren't moving. But there is a big shift and it is  
12 extremely alarming to see this general change of America  
13 no longer being considered really one of the foremost  
14 leaders in a lot of science in the world.

15 That's not really the primary point  
16 though right now. The point is that this is a power  
17 plant, right. If we're thinking about our economy, I  
18 just think that we need to be thinking about basic  
19 principles of diversification. I don't really see any  
20 rationale why this should move forward. I think it's bad  
21 for West Virginia. I don't think it's moving forward in  
22 terms of making sure that we're going to have the jobs in  
23 our society that we need in the future. And that's not  
24 the kind of place --- it's not the kind of deal that I  
25 want for my kids. I'll tell you that. But I'll leave it

1 at that. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN:

3 All right. Thank you.

4 MS. REILLY:

5 Good evening. My name is Moira Reilly.

6 I live here in Morgantown. And I appreciate you have  
7 this public hearing.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

9 Louder.

10 MS. REILLY:

11 My name is Moira Reilly.

12 CHAIRMAN:

13 Hold on just a second. We circulated a  
14 list. We circulated the list to the people.

15 MS. REILLY:

16 Yes, sir. I signed that list.

17 CHAIRMAN:

18 Well, I must have missed you. I  
19 apologize.

20 MS. REILLY:

21 Do you have that list?

22 CHAIRMAN:

23 I have the list. I'm reading from the  
24 list. And that's why I'm --- all right. Finish your  
25 remarks.

1                   MS. REILLY:

2                   Okay. Again, thank you for having this  
3 hearing.

4                   CHAIRMAN:

5                   Yes, ma'am.

6                   MS. REILLY:

7                   I'm a member of the Catholic Committee  
8 of Appalachia. And we protest this transfer of the  
9 Pleasants power plant to subsidiary Potomac Edison. Our  
10 faith calls us to promote the common good and a  
11 preferential option for all.

12                   The supply and demand of energy in West  
13 Virginia has shifted. Coal is no longer king. And the  
14 open energy market, which FirstEnergy operates reflects  
15 this, energy costs are steady. There is a plentiful  
16 supply of natural gas and renewables. It is in this  
17 climate that FirstEnergy seeks to offload its  
18 increasingly expensive coal-fired Pleasants plants to the  
19 regulated Mon Power and Potomac Edison markets.

20                   This would force consumers to pay the  
21 cost for electricity for \$150 per kilowatt ton from  
22 Pleasants plant when regional plants energy assigned for  
23 \$64 to \$108 per kilowatt ton. This is not only  
24 foolhardy, it's immoral. Passing these costs on to  
25 consumers, many of whom are struggling to make ends meet

1 as it is.

2 Further, the Pleasants plant is  
3 currently only operating at 75 percent capacity. If  
4 demand fails to increase at the rates FirstEnergy is  
5 projecting, net losses are inevitable. In the regulated  
6 Mon Power and Potomac Edison utilities, these losses  
7 would be passed on to every household. And experts  
8 project a cost of \$800 per household over the life of the  
9 plant.

10 Meanwhile, FirstEnergy stockholders  
11 will pocket cash from the same. Our values of  
12 preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, for the  
13 common good, we need support for West Virginians who are  
14 struggling the most, not the greed of corporate  
15 shareholders. Jesus abhorred the greed of the money  
16 cheaters in the temple. We abhor the greed of  
17 FirstEnergy stockholders. And we call for you, Public  
18 Service Commission to reject this proposal. Thank you  
19 very much.

20 CHAIRMAN:

21 Thank you. That's everybody that's on  
22 the list and then some. Like I said, we're --- I've got  
23 7:40. They want us out of the building by 8:00. And I  
24 appreciate everybody's comments. We take them to heart.  
25 You've raised items that we will be thinking about and

1 reading testimony about, I guarantee you over these next  
2 few hearings beginning on the 26th, 27th, and 28th of  
3 this month. We have literally thousands of pages of  
4 testimony and exhibits. We will have three days of  
5 hearings at a minimum, I suspect. And the comments that  
6 are given tonight, I understand that people feel very  
7 strongly about both sides. We have the unenviable task  
8 of trying to decide how this thing is going to go down.

9           But these comments are helpful to us.  
10 They give us an indication of what your feelings on  
11 things. You raise issues that we sometimes don't think  
12 about. You raise issues that we will raise with company  
13 personnel when they're before us. And we appreciate your  
14 comments. I want to thank you all for coming out  
15 tonight. And with that, we will adjourn.

16  
17           \* \* \* \* \*

18           HEARING CONCLUDED AT 7:41 P.M.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify, as the stenographic reporter, that the foregoing proceedings were taken stenographically by me, and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction; and that this transcript is a true and accurate record to the best of my ability.

I certify that the attached transcript meets the requirements set forth within article twenty-seven, chapter forty-seven of the West Virginia Code.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Court Reporter