To the Editor:

 American Electric Power (AEP) is raising its electricity rates in Ohio on June 1 by 28%. On top of that huge increase AEP Ohio is proposing an additional 5% rate hike to take effect in 2024 with a continued annual increase until 2030. AEP Ohio is asking the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to approve these increases. Representatives from PUCO came to Marietta on May 1 for a public hearing on this proposed rate increase. I attended this hearing, which was held at Washington State CC, and was one of only two people to give testimony—both of us spoke in opposition to this rate hike.

 AEP made huge profits in 2022. Their CEO made $16 million in that year. While raking in these exorbitant profits, AEP shut off power to 164,000 Ohioans in that year. Electricity is a necessity for all Ohioans; high profits and big salaries are not.

 Rate payers are being asked to cover the costs for AEP Ohio’s outdated and irrelevant coal-fired power plants at the level of $211 million. Coal is far mor expensive as an energy source than alternatives such as natural gas and renewables. Ohio electricity consumers should not be asked to subsidize an energy source of the 20th century while more affordable options for 21st energy sources are available.

 Another consideration is that AEP is still being investigated for corruption surrounding the HB6 legislation that was designed to underwrite Ohio’s nuclear energy plants and manipulated through the legislature by former Speaker Householder.

 Here is the short testimony I presented at the Marietta hearing arranged by PUCO:

 “I oppose these electricity supply and distribution rate increases because my wife and I are both over 80 years old and are living on a fixed income. While most of us in Washington County struggle (our average income is lower than the state average), AEP makes huge profits for its shareholders. Its former CEO made $16 million in 2022. AEP makes the ill-advised decision to continue to operate its inefficient and costly coal-fired power plants while the rest of us are trying to make reasonable decisions about our personal budgets. Renewable sources of energy are more affordable, earth friendly, and more stable than fossil-fuel sources.”

 It is still possible for Ohio electricity consumers to express their thoughts on this proposed rate hike. Send your message to: ContactThePUCO@puco.ohio.gov. Or you can send a letter to PUCO, referencing Case 23-23 to: PUCO, 180 E. Broad St., 11th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215.

George Banziger

Marietta