



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 0018X-2026, **Version:** 1

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To encourage the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio to take measures to protect Ohio residents, including residents of Columbus, from rising electricity bills

**WHEREAS**, Columbus residents have seen significant increases in both distribution and generation rates over the last few years, and the fact that energy costs will continue to rise due to capacity constraints in the PJM marketplace; and

**WHEREAS**, this Council urges the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to implement no rate increases in 2026 for AEP Ohio; and

**WHEREAS**, to the extent that rate hikes are necessary, to consider moving any increased costs for residential consumers out to 2027, in light of the urgent energy affordability crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, the PUCO recently approved several AEP Ohio rate increases and are currently reviewing two rate requests:

2023: AEP's Electric Security Plans case increased rates by 4.5% over 4 years

2024: AEP's gridSMART Phase 3 case incrementally adds charges to residential bills starting at \$.20/month until it reaches \$1.42 a month in six years

2025: AEP also asked the Commission to recover another \$34 million of costs after the legislature repealed their statutory right to recover those costs. (still waiting on a decision)

2025: AEP asked the commission to drastically lower the amount of money they have to pay to residential customers who put power back into the grid through solar panels

**WHEREAS**, the Ohio Consumers Counsel believes that ratepayers would see an increase in their monthly bill after additional riders are added following AEP Ohio's proposed settlement in recent applications for electricity rate increases, even though AEP Ohio claims ratepayers would see a potential decrease with this application; and

**WHEREAS**, this Council urges the PUCO to extend all disconnection protections, establish additional disconnection protections and extend the special reconnect order through summer; and

**WHEREAS**, this Council urges the PUCO to conduct a study on the rate impacts of data centers on residential customers, addressing concerns we hear from constituents every day; and

**WHEREAS**, this Council urges the PUCO to revive the summer crisis program to provide Ohioans with cooling assistance during the summer months, and expand the program to include all families with children younger than three; and

**WHEREAS**, this Council applauds the efforts of the PUCO and AEP Ohio in implementing the first-of-its-kind data center tariffs policy to ensure that ratepayers and communities do not unfairly shoulder the burden of costs of major new

infrastructure investments that allow more data centers to come online; and

**WHEREAS**, this Council shares the sentiments of the bipartisan members of the Ohio House Energy Committee who have asked the PUCO to reject weakening the state's electric reliability standards at the request of FirstEnergy at this time; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Columbus is thankful for the long standing community support from AEP Ohio, the city does call for AEP Ohio to study the ongoing effects of future rate increase proposals on the residents of Columbus; and

**WHEREAS**, this Council urges other local governments across Ohio to discuss the energy affordability crisis, the impacts of data centers and large load developments, and explore solutions to address the needs of Ohioans; now therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Council of the City of Columbus calls for the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio to take measures to protect Ohio residents from rising electricity bills.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, urging them to take immediate action to protect Ohioans, including Columbus residents.