



Public Utilities Commission

**ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2024**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

To Whom it May Concern,

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's mission is to assure all residential and business consumers access to adequate, safe and reliable utility services at fair prices, while facilitating an environment that provides competitive choices. The PUCO impacts every Ohioan every day by regulating essential utility services and monitoring commercial transportation safety.

The PUCO is funded through utility assessments, registrations and fees, and does not obtain any revenue support from Ohio's general revenue fund (GRF).

As directed by R.C. 4935.01 this report highlights emerging trends specific to Ohio's long-term energy needs.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions about this report or the PUCO.

Sincerely,
Jenifer French

PUCO COMMISSIONERS



Chair Jenifer French

Term ends: April 10, 2029



Commissioner Daniel R. Conway

Term ends: April 10, 2027



Commissioner Lawrence K. Friedeman

Term ends: April 10, 2025



Commissioner Dennis P. Deters

Term ends: April 10, 2026



Commissioner John D. Williams

Term ends: April 10, 2028

CASES FILED IN FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024

In a balanced and transparent manner, the PUCO decides matters ranging from rate cases to service complaints. Regulated utilities, consumers and interested parties regularly participate in the proceedings. During FY 24, 1,123 cases were filed. Each category of utility, along with the number of formal cases opened in fiscal year 2024 in each category, is represented below.

Industry Code	Industry	Number
AU	More than two utilities	11
EL	Electric	512
GA	Gas	181
GE	Gas & Electric	11
HT	Heating	2
PL	Pipeline	10
RC	Radio Common Carriers	3
RR	Railroad	56
ST	Sewage Treatment	3
TP	Telephone	123
TR	Transportation	205
WS	Water & Sewer	1
WW	Waterworks	5
Total cases filed		1,123*

*No cases were filed in the following industry codes for FY 24: BR (Bridge); BS (Bus); BT (Bus & Truck); CC (Cooling Company); CT (Competitive Telephone); DE (Depot); HC (Heating and Cooling); Non-regulated industries; UN (Industry not regulated by the PUCO); WT (Water Transportation).
Approximately 55 cases were voided, resulting in 1,068 total cases filed (compared to 1,058 from FY 23).

All FY 24 PUCO cases and related documents are available online on the [Docketing Information System \(DIS\)](#). DIS allows users to subscribe and receive notifications about specific cases as well as view daily reports and search previous cases.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FISCAL YEAR 2024

Revenues FY 2024	
Assessment to utilities	\$39,247,368
Federal gas pipeline safety	\$1,167,958
Federal motor carrier safety	\$5,631,513
Federal HazMat carrier inspection	\$17,274
Gas pipeline assessment	\$318,429
Hazardous materials and civil forfeitures	\$4,549,385
Fines and penalties - Attorney General collected	\$412,359
Miscellaneous revenues	\$595,950
Motor carrier registration	\$5,580,632
Power siting	\$1,057,803
State grade crossing protection	\$1,200,000
Telecommunication relay service	\$217,745
Underground facilities protection	\$241,761
Total revenues received by the PUCO	\$60,238,177
Revenue contributed to the General Revenue Fund	\$2,612,468

Expenditures FY 2024	
Personnel service - payroll	\$42,742,604
Purchased personal services	\$2,315,914
Supplies and maintenance	\$8,284,086
Equipment	\$1,628,282
Subsidies and shared revenue	\$2,087,971
Transfers	\$7,445,249
Total expenditures by the PUCO	\$64,504,106

PUCO OUTREACH

ONLINE OUTREACH

Online outreach is one of the key ways that the PUCO connects with consumers across Ohio. On Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram, the PUCO regularly posts updates on cases, key consumer information and educational materials.

In FY 24, the PUCO used its social media to provide critical information on utility issues. With over **9,000** followers across all social platforms, consumers were able to watch virtual commission meetings, stay up-to-date on rising energy costs and learn more about assistance programs.

In addition to social media, the PUCO website is one of the first places that consumers turn to when they need assistance. www.PUCO.ohio.gov received over **476,000** visitors and more than **1.9 million** page views.

The PUCO also maintains the Ohio Power Siting Board website, which received **37,667** visitors as well as the Energy Choice Ohio website, which received **1.13 million** visitors.

The PUCO serves over **64,000** individual consumers and stakeholders through email lists with an average engagement rate of **67.2%**. These lists publish consumer updates, job opportunities and keep businesses informed on required filings.

PUCO CALL CENTER SAVES OHIOANS MONEY

Throughout FY 24, the PUCO Call Center received **56,128** calls, emails, letters, faxes and walk-in inquiries from consumers. Many of these consumers have a question a representative can quickly handle. In other instances, issues require a closer examination. At that point, a PUCO investigator is assigned to look into the matter. In FY 24, the PUCO Call Center saved Ohio consumers a total of **\$1,883,339**.



RATE CHANGE ALERTS

Customers of PUCO-regulated electric and natural gas companies can sign up to receive instant notification through text or email when their utility's default rate changes. Customers are on the default rate if they choose not to shop for an alternative supplier. These Rate Change Alerts are often sent monthly, quarterly or semiannually.

In FY 24, over **16,000** new individuals signed up to receive Rate Change Alerts. In total, Rate Change Alerts are sent to **78,208** consumers and have an average engagement rate of **45%**.

ACROSS THE STATE

As the state agency that regulates public services, the PUCO often provides Ohioans with helpful information on a variety of utility issues.

Outreach events across the state focus on a variety of topics, from energy choice and government aggregation to motor carrier training.



Here are some of the ways that the PUCO reached out to consumers in FY 24:

- 110** speeches and presentations
- 29** local public hearings
- 12** public information meetings
- 25** exhibits at fairs and festivals, totalling 55 days of exhibiting
- 5** workshops

Consumers can always request a speaker or presentation from the PUCO online or through our Consumer Call Center.



PUCO RECOMMENDS \$11.4 MILLION FUNDING FOR GRID RESILIENCY PROJECTS

The PUCO authorized the submission of seven grants totalling \$11.4 million in funding to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) under its Grid Resilience Formula Grant Program.

Grant applicants include:

- AEP Ohio, \$3,788,413 for undergrounding and relocating distribution lines in Athens, Chillicothe, Canton, and Columbus.
- City of Columbus, \$1.5 million for replacing poles and other distribution infrastructure to improve a poorly performing circuit.
- Duke Energy Ohio, \$3,594,640 for transmission and distribution line work in the Butler County area
- Ohio Edison, \$1,547,157 for upgrading poles, conductors, and other equipment within the Akron and Youngstown areas.
- South Central Power Company, \$37,730 for upgrades to facilitate remote restoration on the distribution system in Fairfield, Pickaway, and Hocking counties.
- South Central Power Company, \$678,000 for reconstructing and undergrounding distribution lines in Ross County.
- Village of New Knoxville, \$238,338 for undergrounding a section of distribution line that supplies the Village of New Knoxville in Auglaize County.

Applicants must demonstrate proposed projects will support electric reliability and benefit the local community in the project area, with emphasis on disadvantaged communities, as identified by the U.S. DOE.

KEY CASES 2024

PUCO AUTHORIZES THREE ELECTRIC SECURITY PLANS

AES Ohio

In August 2023, the PUCO authorized AES Ohio to implement a 3-year electric security plan (ESP) that began September 1.

The settlement incentivized off-peak electric vehicle charging, economic development opportunities and customer and community assistance programs. The bill impact of the ESP for a residential consumer using 1,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) per month was a reduction of \$2.71.

AEP Ohio

In April 2024, the PUCO authorized AEP Ohio to implement a 4-year ESP that began June 1.

AEP Ohio began offering new rates to incentivize off-peak charging for electric vehicles, as well as a new smart thermostat demand response program. A residential customer using 1,000 kWh per month saw a total monthly bill reduction of \$30 due to falling prices for electricity.

FirstEnergy

In May 2024, the PUCO authorized an ESP for FirstEnergy's three Ohio companies: Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, Ohio Edison and Toledo Edison. The ESP will be in effect for five years, beginning June 1.

The PUCO reduced costs eligible to be included in FirstEnergy's current delivery capital recovery rider, saving customers approximately \$51 million over the course of the ESP.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, the PUCO authorized several arrangements between utilities and other facilities, such as factories and plants. These arrangements allow for the manufacturers to participate in grid reliability programs while committing to investments in employment and capital infrastructure.

These arrangements include:

- L-H Battery Company, a joint venture between LG Energy Solution and Honda Motor Co., and Northeast Ohio Natural Gas
 - L-H Battery, located in Jeffersonville, Ohio, plans an overall investment of \$4.4 billion and the creation of 2,200 jobs.
- North Star BlueScope, a steel facility in Delta, Ohio, and Toledo Edison
 - North Star BlueScope plans \$100 - 150 million in capital investment, in addition to a previous \$735 million expansion that created 150 new jobs.
- JSW Steel, in Mingo Junction, Ohio, and AEP Ohio
 - JSW Steel plans a \$160 million expansion that is expected to add 26 new full-time jobs.
- PRO-TEC Coating Company, in Leipsic, Ohio, and AEP Ohio
 - PRO-TEC plans \$6.5 million in capital investment and 20 high-skilled jobs, in addition to the \$700 million in investment and 427 jobs retained during a previous arrangement.
- Presrite Corporation, located in northeast Ohio, and The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company
 - Presrite is a metal forging company and plans to make an additional \$5 million in investments and maintain 400 jobs, in addition to the \$30 million in investment made during a previous arrangement.

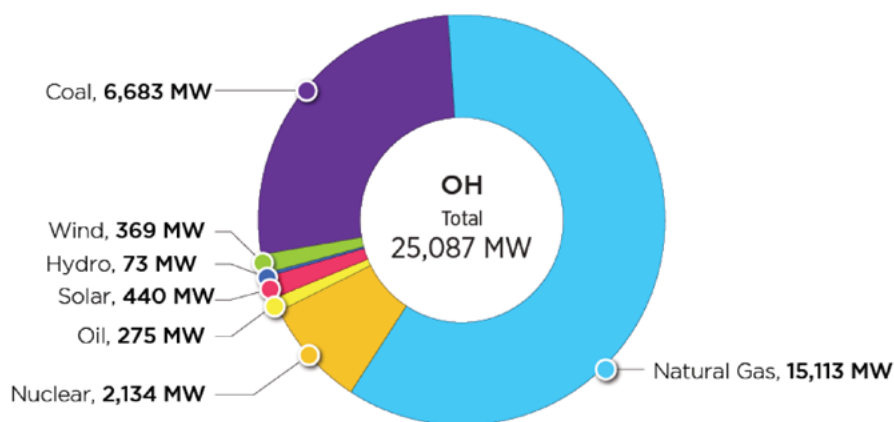
EMERGING TRENDS 2024

Per Ohio law, the PUCO provides the following information identifying emerging trends related to energy supply, demand, and costs of energy to consumers, and specifying statewide and regional energy needs.

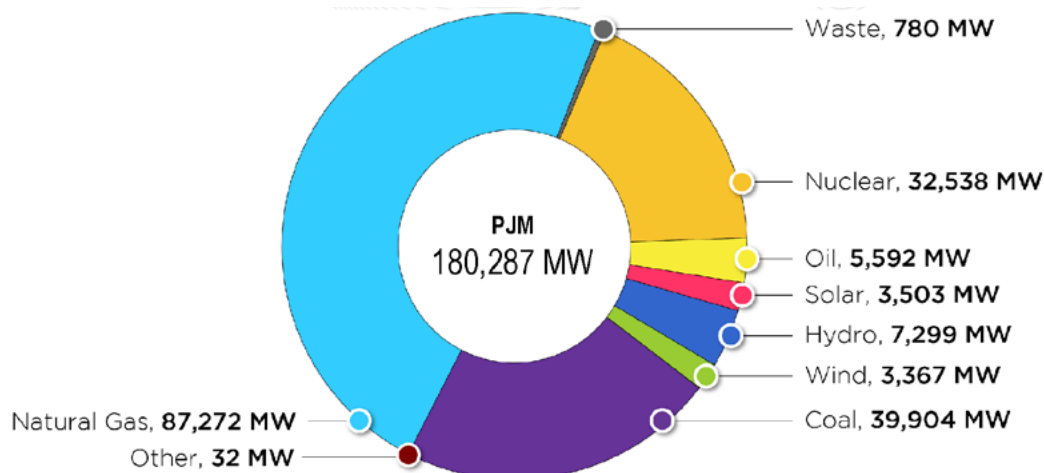
Ohio is part of a regional electric market served by PJM Interconnection — the regional transmission operator. The region includes 13 states and the District of Columbia wherein PJM is responsible for maintaining the reliability of the grid, developing regional transmission expansion plans, and administering wholesale energy, capacity, and ancillary services markets.

Generally on an annual basis, PJM procures enough electric supply resources (capacity) to ensure reliability three years ahead. The reliability target includes an excess reserve margin to address unforeseen widespread outages. As of June 1, 2024, PJM's projections indicate a 20.4% reserve margin, with a peak load forecast of 150,640 megawatts (MW). Beginning June 1, 2025, PJM projects an 18.5% reserve margin, with a peak load forecast of 153,883 MW. Existing installed capacity for Ohio and PJM as of December 31, 2023 is shown in the charts on this page.

*Ohio - Existing Installed Capacity (MW) by Fuel Type
as of Dec. 31, 2023*



*PJM Existing Installed Capacity Mix
(CIRs —as of Dec. 31, 2023)*



MONITORING SAFETY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ohio is home to more than 75,000 miles of regulated gas pipelines and 88,000 miles of electric overhead distribution. The PUCO employs field inspectors who perform compliance inspections of gas pipelines and electric distribution facilities to ensure they are following design, construction, operation and maintenance safety regulations.

Each year, PUCO field inspectors work to ensure the safety of gas pipelines and electrical equipment all over the state. During FY 24, staff completed **232** different audits of gas pipeline operators and spent **1,162** total days inspecting electrical infrastructure.

The PUCO also annually inspects water and wastewater systems with most inspections occurring in the second half of a calendar year. In FY 24, inspectors visited **44** water facilities and **13** wastewater facilities.

Additionally, the PUCO spent **15** days inspecting telecommunications infrastructure.



ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REDUCTION

Senate Bill 9, passed in 2022, requires each state agency to reduce the regulatory restrictions contained in its rules by 30% by June 2025. Each year requires a 10% reduction to total the 30% in 2025. The PUCO surpassed both the 2023 and 2024 goals and reduced restrictions by **33%** in total.

AQUA OHIO RATE CASE

In September 2023, the PUCO approved unopposed settlement agreements that set new rates for water for Aqua Ohio and sewer service for Aqua Ohio Wastewater.

The settlement called for Aqua to provide shareholder funding to its low-income water assistance program and make customer disconnection data publicly available on its website.

The average residential user saw a \$2.89 - \$3.55 increase in their monthly water bill and a \$4.05 - \$4.75 increase in their sewer bill, depending on service territory.

SPECIAL RECONNECT ORDER

The Special Reconnect Order (SRO) allows customers who have had their home heating service disconnected for nonpayment or who have been threatened with disconnection the opportunity to pay a maximum of \$175, plus a reconnection fee, to restore or maintain their utility service. Customers who use the SRO are required to make payment arrangements with their natural gas or electric company on any outstanding balance.

During the 2023–2024 heating season, **214,107** consumers utilized the Special Reconnect Order. Of the customers that used the SRO, **75,308** were PIPP Plus customers.

The PUCO has also ordered Ohio's investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities to suspend disconnections of customers for nonpayment if the customer has taken steps to apply for energy assistance bill payment programs.

Utilities will now be prohibited from disconnecting for nonpayment for 30 days after a customer has applied for Winter and Summer Crisis programs, Home Energy Assistance Programs (HEAP), or the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP).

PUCO TAKES ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AGAINST ELECTRIC AND NATURAL GAS SUPPLIERS

The PUCO certifies competitive electric and natural gas suppliers and enforces the consumer protection rules that apply to these companies.

RPA Energy

In October, the PUCO assessed a \$1.44 million fine to RPA Energy, also known as Green Choice Energy, for violating consumer protection rules and revoked RPA Energy's authority to do business in Ohio.

A PUCO staff investigation revealed 159 violations, such as forged customer signatures, misleading statements, altered sales call recordings and more.

"There is no room for misleading or deceptive practices in Ohio's competitive electricity or natural gas markets," stated PUCO Chair French. RPA Energy was also required to refund affected customers.

Direct Energy

The PUCO accepted a settlement agreement resolving alleged marketing, solicitation and enrollment violations by Direct Energy Services. Direct Energy was required to pay a \$275,000 civil forfeiture to the state of Ohio and make a one-time contribution to a bill payment assistance nonprofit.

Xoom Energy

The PUCO also approved a settlement resolving alleged enrollment violations by Xoom Energy Ohio. Xoom was required to pay a \$120,000 civil forfeiture to the state of Ohio and make a one-time \$100,000 contribution to a bill payment assistance nonprofit. Xoom Energy was also required to identify impacted customers, offer to switch them back to the local utility's rate and offer refunds or credits.

PUCO HOSTS NORTH AMERICAN INSPECTORS CHAMPIONSHIP

In August 2023, the PUCO Transportation Department hosted the North American Inspectors Championship (NAIC) in partnership with the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA).

The NAIC is the "only event that tests, recognizes and awards commercial motor vehicle inspector excellence," as described by the CVSA.

The championship took place in downtown Columbus over the span of four days. PUCO Commissioner John Williams gave remarks during the opening ceremony, in which all 49 competitors were recognized.

PUCO Safety Investigator Matthew Leite was chosen to represent Ohio across the written exams and competitive safety inspections.

The Grand Champion Award is the highest honor for roadside inspectors and is awarded to the contestant with the highest overall score. 2023's Grand Champion winner was Tomasz Krolak from the Minnesota State Patrol.



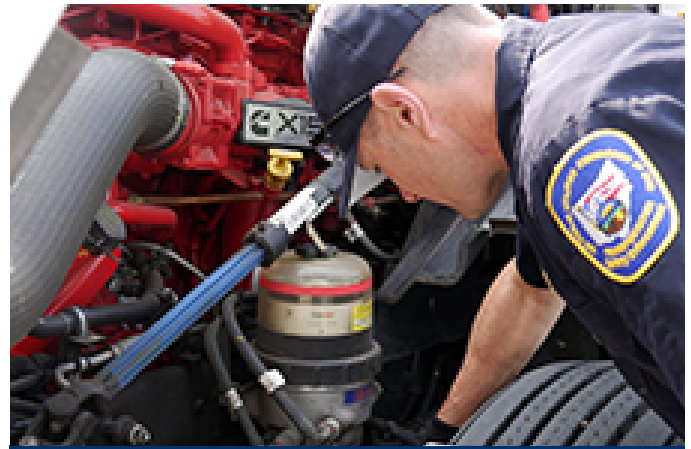
PUCO AWARDS HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRAINING GRANTS

Throughout FY 24, the PUCO awarded 21 hazardous materials training grants totaling **\$800,000**. The funds will be used to train **3,312** public safety and emergency services professionals in Ohio. The PUCO awards hazardous materials planning and training grants to local government subdivisions, educational institutions and state agencies. Funds for these grants comes from fines paid by hazardous material carriers and shippers. Individual grants are based upon applications to the PUCO and are awarded on a reimbursement basis. The grant funds are used for emergency response planning and proper techniques for the management of hazardous material releases.



RAIL CROSSING SAFETY UPGRADES AND INSPECTIONS

The PUCO ordered a total of **118** rail crossing safety upgrades during FY 24, including the installation of lights and gates, supplemental assistance upgrades and circuitry upgrades. These upgrades are funded through federal, state and local monies. The rail division also conducted **928** federal rail safety inspections and **5,629** grade crossings in the state were inspected for state compliance. The number of train-motor vehicle crashes in Ohio in 2023 was 77.



PUCO KEEPS OHIO HIGHWAYS SAFE

The PUCO serves as the lead agency for the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program and in this capacity, partners with the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) to ensure that commercial motor vehicles are safely traveling throughout Ohio. PUCO and OSHP inspectors conducted more than **76,747** driver/vehicle inspections during FY 24.

Each inspection follows a thorough process to ensure that the driver and vehicle meet necessary state and federal regulations. Vehicles, drivers and companies that fail to meet these regulations may be declared out-of-service and cannot continue operating until they comply. FY 24 inspections resulted in **11,883** vehicles and **4,923** drivers being placed out-of-service due to severe violations.

Additionally, the PUCO conducted **611** motor carrier and shipper compliance reviews to ensure proper state and federal safety and hazardous materials regulations were followed. The PUCO staff processed **6,674** Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity and conducted **2,341** new entrant safety audits. **4,420** motor carriers were trained during public appearances from the PUCO.

PUCO CONSUMER CALL CENTER

The PUCO can help resolve problems that arise between customers and utility companies under PUCO jurisdiction.

Need help with a utility service? Contact the PUCO Call Center:

PUCO Call Center
(800) 686-PUCO (7826)
7-1-1 (TDD/TTY)
www.PUCO.ohio.gov/contact-us

Ways the PUCO works for you:

- Helps solve utility and supplier disputes
- Provides payment plan information
- Explains utility rules and regulations
- Provides information about PUCO public hearings and how to participate
- Provides tips on energy conservation
- Explains energy choice and the Apples to Apples comparison tool
- Provides speakers for civic, consumer, religious and community organizations

ENERGY CHOICE OHIO

Just as you shop for other products and services, you may also be able to shop for an energy supplier.

With choice, energy customers from large manufacturers to residential homeowners are able to shop for energy options from a diverse group of competitive suppliers certified by the PUCO.

As more suppliers are offering their services in your area, you have the opportunity

to choose the company that supplies the generation of your electricity and supplies your natural gas.

The PUCO's Apples to Apples tool helps customers compare prices, contract terms and other plan differences between suppliers.

Compare offers at
www.EnergyChoice.Ohio.gov



Energy Choice Ohio
powered by choice.



180 E. Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

www.PUCO.ohio.gov

Jenifer French, Chair
Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

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