

NAIOP

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
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NAIOP OF OHIO

NAIOP Weekly Legislative Report
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Supported Bills

- HB10** **REMEDIATION OF CONTAMINATED SITE (SEARS B)** To authorize refundable tax credits for the completion of a voluntary action to remediate a contaminated site and for the return of such sites to productive use, and to exempt persons through 2017 who have issued covenants not to sue under the Voluntary Action Program from certain fees and penalties for one year after the issuance of such a covenant.
Current Status: 3/2/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 2/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
2/16/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
2/9/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
2/2/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
1/26/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
1/11/2011 - Introduced
- HB17** **TAX CREDIT FOR HIRING UNEMPLOYED (BAKER N)** To authorize a \$2,400 income tax withholding credit for an employer that hires and employs a previously unemployed individual.
Current Status: 9/27/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
All Bill Status: 1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
1/11/2011 - Introduced
- HB18** **TAX CREDIT - EXPANDING BUSINESSES (BAKER N)** To authorize a nonrefundable tax credit for a business that increases payroll and expands into a vacant facility.
Current Status: 9/27/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Sixth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 2/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)
2/16/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
2/9/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
2/2/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
1/26/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
1/11/2011 - Introduced

Oppose

- HB50** **TYPE-II ANNEXATION (SNITCHLER T)** To require that a political subdivision owner be included in determining the number of owners needed to sign a petition for an expedited type-II annexation.

Current Status: 6/21/2011 - House Local Government, (Fifth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 6/14/2011 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Local Government, (Fifth Hearing)
5/24/2011 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Local Government, (Fourth Hearing)
3/1/2011 - House Local Government, (Second Hearing)
2/22/2011 - House Local Government, (Second Hearing)
2/15/2011 - House Local Government, (First Hearing)
2/1/2011 - Referred to Committee House Local Government
1/26/2011 - Introduced

Monitoring

- HB134 CAPITAL GAINS INVESTMENTS (SCHURING K)** To reduce the income tax rate on capital gains reinvested in Ohio-based investments.
Current Status: 6/1/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 5/11/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
3/30/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
3/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
3/16/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
3/2/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
3/1/2011 - Introduced
- HB198 PROPERTY TAX COMPLAINTS (COLEY II W)** To permit property tax complaints to be initiated only by the property owner.
Current Status: 5/12/2011 - House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development, (Second Hearing)
All Bill Status: 5/4/2011 - House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development, (First Hearing)
4/12/2011 - Referred to Committee House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development
4/12/2011 - Introduced
- SB89 LABOR REQUIREMENTS (JORDAN K)** To prohibit state agencies from requiring or prohibiting certain labor requirements as a condition of performing public works and prohibit the appropriations of state funds for public works when political subdivisions require or prohibit certain labor.
Current Status: 3/8/2011 - Referred to Committee Senate Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review
All Bill Status: 2/23/2011 - Introduced
- SB115 PROPERTY SALE GAINS (KEARNEY E)** To exempt from income taxation any gains from the sale of Ohio property used in a trade or business and held for at least two years.
Current Status: 3/24/2011 - Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development, (First Hearing)
All Bill Status: 3/15/2011 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development
3/9/2011 - Introduced

Bills Introduced Since 10/3/2011

- HB338** **COMPREHENSIVE SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION** (SLESNICK S) To establish statutory standards for comprehensive sexual health education and HIV/AIDS prevention education in public schools and to designate section 3313.6011 of the Revised Code as the "Act for Our Children's Future."
- HB339** **BIRTHPLACE OF SUPERMAN LICENSE PLATES** (PATMON B) To create the "Birthplace of Superman" license plates."
- HB340** **SOCIAL SECURITY NO. ON FISHING LICENSES** (PATMON B, DOVILLA M) To specify that an applicant for a fishing license cannot be required to provide more than the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number.
- HB341** **FRATERNAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES** (HENNE M) To make changes to the law regulating fraternal benefit societies.
- HB342** **AGREEMENTS TO PRIVATIZE STATE PROPERTY** (PILLICH C, DRIEHAUS D) To limit agreements to privatize state property, facilities, services, or functions.
- SB234** **FORECLOSURE SALES** (COLEY W) To authorize county sheriffs to advertise foreclosure sales via a web site.
- SCR17** **AMERICAN JOBS ACT** (CAFARO C) To urge Congress to pass the "American Jobs Act of 2011."

Week in Review

Friday, October 7, 2011

ABORTION

The Ohio Department of Health released its annual report on abortions in Ohio, showing a continuing decline that dates back to 2000. A total of 28,123 induced abortions were performed in 2010 compared to 28,721 in 2009.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Mike DeWine said that the state has reached an agreement with Grand River Enterprises Six Nations LTD, in which Grand River deposited \$984,185 into a state escrow account; paid penalties and post-judgment interest of \$1,052,000 to the state General Revenue Fund; and paid \$82,000 in attorney fees and costs of to his office -- the result of a lawsuit that maintained the company had failed to establish and fund an escrow account, as required by law, for the sale of its cigarette products in Ohio during 2002 through 2004.

BALLOT ISSUES

The Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association urged a "no" vote on Issue 1, the constitutional amendment to raise the mandatory retirement age for judges to 75.

The Ohio Democratic Party Executive Committee endorsed a "No" vote on Issues 1 (judicial age limit), 2 (SB5 referendum), and 3 (Ohio Healthcare Freedom Amendment).

The Health Policy Institute of Ohio dedicated a page on its website to providing Ohioans with a non-partisan source for resources and information about State Issue 3 -- the proposal to create a state constitutional amendment aimed at preserving individual health care freedom. It can be found online at <http://ef75047ae00916ecede6951020f3d6ac961776f.gripelements.com/resources/other-resources/ohio-issue-3-resources.php>.

BUDGET

Ohio continues to exceed revenue estimates through the first quarter of FY12 by \$35 million or 0.8 percent, but for the most recent month, September, revenues came in 1 percent or \$16.3 million below estimates, according to the latest preliminary figures from the Office of Budget and Management (OBM).

DEATH PENALTY

Concerns over prison violence moved state corrections Director Gary Mohr to announce that Ohio's Death Row, currently split between the Ohio State Penitentiary in Youngstown and Mansfield Correctional Institution, will be consolidated at the Chillicothe Correctional Facility in southern Ohio. He said the consolidation will add hundreds of maximum security prison cells at Mansfield and Youngstown, with the additional space used to separate the state's most violent and difficult-to-manage inmates from the general prison population -- in a corresponding effort to reduce the violence within the prison system.

DISASTERS

The U.S. Small Business Administration announced that federal economic injury disaster loans are available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations of all sizes located in all Ohio counties except Williams as a result of the excessive rain, flooding, high winds, excessive heat and tornadoes that occurred from Feb. 2 through July 31, 2011.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

High-growth companies based in northeast Ohio are contributing significantly to the region, according to a new report from Cleveland State University (CSU). In 2010, 90 young tech-based companies generated nearly \$155 million in economic benefits regionally and helped create and retain 546 direct jobs with an average salary of \$62,850, CSU said. Total employment impact was more than 1,100 jobs for the 21-county region.

ECONOMY

Ohio's minimum wage will increase 30 cents on Jan. 1, 2012 to \$7.70 per hour for non-tipped employees. It will also go up to \$3.85 per hour for tipped employees. The current rates are \$7.40 and \$3.70 per hour.

EDUCATION

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) launched its upgraded Education Management Information System (EMIS) on Monday. The redesigned EMIS was originally scheduled to go online in June 2009 and then in December 2010.

The Ohio Department of Education said Monday that it has notified Ashe Cultural Center that it is no longer permitted to sponsor community schools. The move was made after a unanimous decision by the State Board of Education at the September board meeting and is the first time the state board has revoked a sponsor's authority.

U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan said in a conference call with media that the American Jobs Act would fund nearly 400,000 education jobs through averted layoffs and new hires. Over 14,000 of those would come in Ohio, Duncan said.

eTech Ohio Commission gave the go-ahead Thursday on three separate contracts for the state broadcast study even as members pulled back requests for proposals (RFP) totaling \$800,000 for blended learning and mobile technology, recommending further review by its Executive Committee.

ELECTIONS

Secretary of State Jon Husted Tuesday announced the release of more than \$100,000 in grants to county boards of elections to improve access for voters with disabilities through permanent improvements to polling locations. The funds were made available by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Help America Vote Act.

ELECTIONS 2011

Early voting began Tuesday, Oct. 4 rather than starting Oct. 18 for vote-by-mail and Oct. 22 for in-person voting -- the dates in the "on-hold" election reform law HB194 (Mecklenborg-Blessing). Voters have until Nov. 5 to ask for a ballot by mail or until Nov. 7 to ask for one at the county board of elections.

Ohio voters will elect 109 judges to municipal courts across the state in the Nov. 8 General Election, with 39 of those races contested. A total of 14 municipal court judges -- who were appointed since the 2009 General Election -- will be on the ballot for the first time.

ELECTIONS 2012

With HB319 (Huffman) that sets Ohio's new 16 congressional districts in place, Secretary of State Jon Husted announced the most populous counties for each of the districts where candidates must file their petitions. Congressional candidates are required to collect signatures from registered voters within their districts in order to qualify for the ballot, and must file those signatures with the board of elections of the most populous county within the district.

The Ohio Supreme Court announced that it has realigned its judicial campaign rules to reflect a return to the March 2012 primary, meaning candidates can begin reporting campaign donations "immediately" and begin soliciting and receiving campaign funds on or after Nov. 7, 2011 -- 120 days before the primary election.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

As it continues to await word of a \$2 billion loan guarantee from the U.S. Department of Energy, the USEC Inc. board of directors voted this week to continue the company's investment in the American Centrifuge Plant (ACP) in Piketon for the month of October, but at a reduced spending rate. However, the company directed its suppliers to suspend certain work and notified workers of possible future layoffs if it does not get a commitment from DOE on the Piketon project by Nov. 1.

ENERGY

AEP Ohio, a unit of American Electric Power, is offering a \$10-\$15 discount on select models of Energy Star Light Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs through a pilot program available at nearly 60 retail outlets in Ohio. The discount is available on purchases made Sept. 1 through Dec. 31, 2011, or until funds are depleted.

ENVIRONMENT

Small business owners across the country and in Ohio support strong national standards to increase energy innovation, according to a new opinion poll released by Small Business Majority. The poll, conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, found an overwhelming majority of small business owners in Ohio support U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) regulation of greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, refineries and other major emitters, countering anti-regulatory hype.

FEDERAL

Former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray's nomination to lead the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) cleared the Senate Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs Committee by a vote of 12-10 on Thursday, but he still faces a deep partisan battle in the full chamber. Democrats praised Cordray's qualifications, but Republicans continued to make it clear that they won't vote for any director until the Obama administration agrees to make changes to the structure of the bureau.

GAMING

The Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio told the Ohio Casino Control Commission Wednesday it believes the Ohio Bureau of Investigation and Identification (BCII) would be best suited to provide gaming agents for the casinos instead of the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Both agencies had given presentations during the last meeting on the benefits they could provide. The FOP said it sees gaming agents as enforcing gaming rules, regulations and laws of the state, while some of the small crimes such as fights, purse snatchings, etc., would be handled by casino security and local law enforcement.

In addition, the Ohio Casino Control Commission selected John Barron, the chief legal counsel for the Senate Republican Caucus, as deputy executive director and general counsel beginning Monday, Oct. 10. Commission Chair Jo Ann Davidson noted that he was legal counsel for the casino implementation legislation.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) set a deadline of Oct. 14 for applications to fill the Senate seat vacated by former Sen. Tim Grendell (R-Chesterland) when he accepted a judgeship in Geauga County. He had said earlier, however, that the new member won't be seated until the Senate returns after the November election.

The Ohio Statehouse is observing Arts and Humanities Month throughout October with a number of special programs and events.

The Statehouse is the second in the nation to add electric vehicle charging stations. They can be found on the green level. Total cost was \$35,770 and was entirely paid for through donations.

Sen. Shirley Smith (D-Cleveland) is to appear before the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections on Nov. 7 to testify about her residency after a report by WKYC in Cleveland said it appears she lives at a South Euclid home outside her district.

Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) said Tuesday that he will be asking a small group of senators to examine HB125 (Wachtmann), the so-called "Heartbeat Bill," to vet the legal issues surrounding the legislation that bans abortion after a fetal heartbeat can be detected. One of the questions he wants them to look at is why the Legislature should pass the heartbeat bill instead of an outright ban on abortion.

At Wednesday's hearing of the House Public Utilities Committee, Chairman Peter Stautberg (R-Cincinnati) made it clear that everything is on the table as far as discussing policy matters, as representatives for Ohio's manufacturing groups gave committee members an idea of what is working and what is clearly not working since 127-SB221 (Schuler), Ohio's latest energy reform legislation, was passed. The only issue they all agreed on is that the advanced and renewable energy benchmarks are a barrier to attracting manufacturing business to Ohio.

Kumar Rachuri, chief information officer for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) led off the testimony Wednesday before the House Study Committee on Technology in State Government, outlining for committee members the nine different computer systems that support the work of the department in the areas of supervising the state's public assistance including food assistance, workforce development, unemployment compensation, child and adult protective services, adoption, child care and child support, and Medicaid programs.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

People either infected with HIV-AIDS or who work to treat it and stop its spread found themselves on opposite sides of a debate at Monday's Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) meeting over changes to the state's Ryan White program that would set criteria for which patients would get priority

access to state-funded drugs and treatment programs if the department has to restart its waiting list. The committee allowed the rules to stand but noted the General Assembly may want to review Ohio's law to see if it is in keeping with current science.

The Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) announced that the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

(CMS) approved changes to Ohio's Assisted Living Medicaid Waiver, immediately giving more seniors the ability to choose assisted living facilities as a long-term care setting. Additionally, the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) awarded Ohio a three-year, \$3 million grant to enhance and integrate care systems.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reports it has made several improvements to a website that allows Ohioans to apply for food, cash and medical assistance online. Now applicants and recipients of those services can use the site -- <http://ODJFSBenefits.ohio.gov> -- to check the status of their applications, review current and past case information, complete reapplication forms, and complete interim reports.

Representatives of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network and Jewish Family Services of Columbus, local activists, advocates, survivors and lawmakers joined Wednesday in the Statehouse Atrium to observe Domestic Violence Awareness Month and to kickoff the "Purple Light Nights" campaign. The event served to remember those who have died, celebrate those who have survived, and connect those who are committed to reducing and ending domestic violence.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Board of Regents Chancellor Jim Petro designated Bowling Green State University as the Center of Excellence in Developing Effective Businesses and Organizations. The center concentrates on the human side of organizational performance. Nationally ranked programs in industrial-organizational psychology, supply-chain management, and organizational development form the core of the center, the Board of Regents explained.

The Kent State University Museum opened the exhibition "On the Home Front: Civil War Fashions and Domestic Life," which focuses on the daily life and experiences of the American civilian population during the Civil War and the years immediately following. It is part of the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War.

Sports network ESPN pushed back Monday against Ohio State University's request that the Ohio Supreme Court send both of them to mediation to settle a public records dispute related to recent athletics scandals at the university. ESPN labeled OSU's mediation request as a "stalling tactic" and said it could not address the heart of the conflict -- whether the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act shields some of the records from release. The Court quickly denied OSU's request.

A University of Toledo bio-engineering professor, Jian-yu Lu, was named president-elect of the Ultrasonics, Ferroelectrics and Frequency Control Society of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

Rhodes State College in Lima will host the 44th Annual Conference of the Ohio Association of Two Year Colleges (OATYC) on Friday, Oct. 21. The theme for this year's conference is "Active Learning: Having Fun in the Classroom." It features approximately 58 presenters from 17 Ohio colleges and universities, including 11 community and technical colleges as well as six university branch campuses.

Ohio State University ranks 57th overall in THE World University Rankings for 2011-2012, led by 11 other state university systems. Of the institutions rated by Times Higher Education (THE) in London, the state of Ohio had three other institutions in the top 400: Case Western Reserve University, University of Cincinnati and Kent State University.

HOUSING

More than 2,900 homeowners, many of whose financial difficulties leave them ineligible for other foreclosure assistance programs, have received assistance through the "Restoring Stability" initiative, the Ohio House Finance Agency (OHFA) reported in marking the one-year anniversary of the initiative's launch. Ohio eventually received a total of \$570.4 million from the federal "Hardest Hit Fund," meaning it can help approximately 53,000 homeowners -- a number it is now on target to hit before the end of 2017, the federal deadline for spending the funds, by helping 500 to 600 homeowners per month.

JUDICIAL

The ACLU of Ohio reported Monday that the U.S. Supreme Court has declined to review a court decision against Richland County Common Pleas Court Judge James DeWeese, thus allowing the ruling by a three-judge panel for the Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals which agreed unanimously that the display was unconstitutional to stand.

A central Ohio cab driver convicted in the 2000 murder of an elderly customer gets another shot at freedom after the Ohio Supreme Court ordered the 5th District Court of Appeals to hear his request for a new trial. The district court had found the Ohio Constitution bars appellate and trial court review in capital cases after a final judgment by the Supreme Court, but the high court said that restriction applies only to the original death sentence, not to post-conviction relief.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

State Auditor Dave Yost made use of a new authority given to him in the state budget to place the city of Akron under "fiscal caution," the first time the designation has been used since HB153 (Amstutz) took effect. Specifically, the budget bill authorized the state auditor develop guidelines for "identifying fiscal practices and budgetary conditions of municipal corporations, counties and townships that, if uncorrected, could result in a future declaration of fiscal watch or fiscal emergency" or that entity is "under a fiscal caution."

NATURAL RESOURCES

According to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife, the annual fall stockings of rainbow trout in waterways across Ohio will be significantly reduced this year due to renovation of the Castalia State Fish Hatchery, with the total number of fish available for fall stockings being 4,000 instead of the usual 25,000.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) announced funding for three Toledo-area Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GRLI) projects totaling nearly \$2.4 million. The projects will help to restore Lake Erie and are expected to increase use of a conservation corps model to hire unemployed workers to improve habitat and clean up the shoreline.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) held a media teleconference Tuesday to highlight a report documenting new and massive ecosystem breakdowns in the Great Lakes caused by interactions between excessive fertilizer run-off from farms and invasive zebra and quagga mussels.

Fall wild turkey hunting opens in 48 Ohio counties on Saturday, Oct. 8, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Wildlife. The season continues through Sunday, Nov. 27.

PEOPLE

Karen Muench and Rick Barrera have been named deputy directors in the Division of Watercraft, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Muench most recently was the division's law enforcement assistant administrator and training coordinator while Barrera has served as registration and titling section manager.

Department of Development Director Christine Schmenk announced the appointment of Diane Lease, previously assistant Franklin County prosecutor, chief legal counsel for the agency.

The Rev. Al Sharpton will be the guest speaker at the first annual Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) State Dinner set for Saturday, Oct. 8 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Columbus.

The Ohio Association of Health Plans (OAHP) announced that Miranda Creviston Motter has been appointed the organization's new president and CEO. She succeeds Kelly McGivern. Motter most recently was an associate at Bricker & Ecker LLP and is a member and legislative affairs chair for the Ohio Association of Civil Trial Attorneys.

Gov. John Kasich appointed former State Rep., Lt. Gov. and Gov. Nancy Putman Hollister of Marietta (Washington Co.) as a member of the Ohio Historical Society (OHS) Board of Trustees for a term beginning Oct. 4, 2011 and ending June 26, 2014.

POLITICS

The Ohio Republican Party will change its delegate rules for the 2012 Republican National Convention, allowing multiple candidates to win delegates instead of a winner-take-all system used in previous presidential years -- a move Ohio Republican Party Chairman Kevin DeWine said may bring more Republican primary candidates to Ohio because they have a greater chance of winning delegates at the convention.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Deer-vehicle crashes on Ohio roads were down nearly 8 percent in 2010, state agencies and the Ohio Insurance Institute (OII) reported as the October-January deer mating season began. The Department of Public Safety said 2010 saw 23,201 deer-vehicle crashes, a 7.7 percent drop from 2009 figures of 25,146. Both years' crashes resulted in four deaths, while 920 people were injured in 2010, compared to 1,004 in 2009.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

The Apportionment Board voted Friday to amend the General Assembly maps it had approved earlier, adopting a change sought by Rep. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland), president of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, to preserve the 21st Senate District's status as Cleveland's majority-minority Senate seat. The move makes the 21st Senate District include House Districts 9, 10 and 11, while Senate District 25 will include districts House Districts 8, 12 and 60.

The map approved Friday puts Williams' 11th District House seat in the 21st Senate District, where Sen. Shirley Smith (D-Cleveland) will be term-limited in 2014. The map that had been approved earlier had put her in the 25th Senate District, whose incumbent, Sen. Nina Turner (D-Cleveland), can run again in 2014. Williams acknowledged considering a Senate run but said preserving the 21st as Cleveland's majority-black district, as it's been since the 1960s, was her only goal. That goal was also shared by former Sen. Jeff Johnson, chairman of the Cleveland NAACP legal redress committee.

TRANSPORTATION

A new survey released on Monday by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that nearly nine out of 10 drivers nationally believe there should be a law against reading, typing or sending a text message or email while driving, while more than a third admitted that they have done so while they drove.

Ohio drivers will save \$1.058 billion a year at the pump in 2030 as a result of new fuel economy and vehicle emission standards, according to a new analysis released on Wednesday by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and members of the Go60MPG.org coalition. Ohio was ranked 12th among the states for total net saving in 2030, saving \$234 per household. Texas, California and Florida were the top three in net savings.

UTILITIES

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) said Monday that American Electric Power Ohio (AEP) customers are only getting "a partial return of unjustified costs" they have paid the utility as a result of the ruling by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO). OCC had advocated for returns and rate reductions of more than \$787 million but under the PUCO ruling, only \$78 million will be returned to customers. This decision followed an Ohio Supreme Court finding that required the commission to re-examine aspects of the "provider of last resort" (POLR) charge and environmental carrying costs outlined in a previous AEP filed electric security plan (ESP).

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) will have four local public hearings to provide AEP-Ohio customers an opportunity to comment on the utility's proposal to increase electric distribution rates. The hearings are scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. as follows: Marietta on Monday, Oct. 17; Canton on Tuesday, Oct. 18; Lima on Monday, Oct. 24; and Columbus on Wednesday, Oct. 26.