

LSC Greenbook

Analysis of the Enacted Budget

Office of Consumers' Counsel

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW..... 1
Agency Overview..... 1
Appropriation Overview 1
ANALYSIS OF ENACTED BUDGET 3
Operating Expenses (053601) 3

ATTACHMENT:

Budget Spreadsheet By Line Item

Office of Consumers' Counsel

- The Office of Consumers' Counsel is funded by annual assessment on utility companies; no GRF funding
- The budget represents no increase in appropriations compared to the previous biennium

OVERVIEW

Agency Overview

The Office of Consumers' Counsel (OCC), established in 1976, is the statutory advocate for residential utility customers. OCC has statutory responsibility to represent the interests of 4.5 million residential customers of Ohio's investor-owned electric, natural gas, telecommunications, and water companies. OCC represents residential customers before state and federal regulatory agencies and courts, including the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as well as the Supreme Court of Ohio.

Program Series	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Consumer Advocacy	77	78	80	80
TOTAL	77	78	80	80

The agency consists of attorneys, analysts, investigators, communications and education specialists, and administrative staff who represent and support the needs of residential utility consumers in the state of Ohio.

Appropriation Overview

The enacted appropriations are sufficient to allow OCC to continue current activities.

Fund Group	FY 2009*	FY 2010	% change, FY 2009-FY 2010	FY 2011	% change, FY 2010-FY 2011
General Services	\$8,224,024	\$8,498,000	3.3%	\$8,498,000	0.0%
TOTAL	\$8,224,024	\$8,498,000	3.3%	\$8,498,000	0.0%

*FY 2009 figures represent actual expenditures.

The FY 2010-FY 2011 appropriation amounts are approximately 9.4%, or \$1.5 million, more than OCC's expenditures in the previous biennial budget. OCC will continue all of its current operations in the coming biennium. However, the recent enactment of S.B. 221 of the 127th General Assembly profoundly impacted the Office's activities because it created a new state energy policy. OCC anticipates that the complexity and volume of utility cases will grow over the next two years. Because of this, the agency anticipates hiring experienced consultants with expert authority in complicated utility issues. Moreover, the agency plans to augment its outreach efforts to inform consumers of changes in the utility industry.

ANALYSIS OF ENACTED BUDGET

The following table shows the line item that is used to fund the activities of the Office of Consumers' Counsel, as well as the enacted funding levels.

Fund	ALI and Name	FY 2010	FY 2011
General Services Fund Group			
5F50	053601 Operating Expenses	\$8,498,000	\$8,498,000
Total Funding:		\$8,498,000	\$8,498,000

Operating Expenses (053601)

The enacted level of funding serves two purposes: to maintain existing service levels, and to add staff to address the new regulatory framework set forth in S.B. 221. The services provided by OCC are personnel intensive, which makes personnel costs the primary cost driver for the office.

OCC will use the current appropriation to help address the increased workload arising from S.B. 221 as well as the numerous rulemakings and rate filings by the utility companies with PUCO. OCC expects the increased workload to be ongoing rather than temporary. Furthermore, OCC will address the recent retirement of a key agency operations manager within the current funding levels. According to the Counsel, the recent policies initiated by the Office of Budget and Management and the Department of Administrative Services regarding agency operations necessitate increased manhours from OCC because they represent substantial changes in how state agencies are managed.

In the last biennium, OCC provided legal representation and initiated dialogue on hundreds of utility filings presented to PUCO, FERC, and FCC that would affect residential utility customers in Ohio. Over the same period, the Office visited with individuals, organizations, social service agencies, and community leaders in all of Ohio's 88 counties, reaching over 50,000 consumers.

OCC.docx / cm

FY 2010 - 2011 Final Appropriation Amounts

All Fund Groups

Line Item Detail by Agency			FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010 Appropriations	% Change FY09 - FY10	FY 2011 Appropriations	% Change FY10 - FY11
Report For: Main Operating Appropriations Bill			Version: Enacted					
OCC Office of Consumers' Counsel								
5F50	053601	Operating Expenses	\$ 7,318,221	\$ 8,224,024	\$ 8,498,000	3.33%	\$ 8,498,000	0.00%
General Services Fund Group Total			\$ 7,318,221	\$ 8,224,024	\$ 8,498,000	3.33%	\$ 8,498,000	0.00%
Office of Consumers' Counsel Total			\$ 7,318,221	\$ 8,224,024	\$ 8,498,000	3.33%	\$ 8,498,000	0.00%