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Contact: Steve Luttner, 440-897-3745
sluttner@lesiccamper.com

NOPEC HELPS IMPROVE ELECTRIC RATE PLAN FOR NORTHERN OHIO

SOLON – July 22, 2010 – The Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) today announced that it agreed to lend its support to a rate plan stipulation that will determine electric rates in northern Ohio for the next three years starting June 1, 2011.

NOPEC believes that the changes it negotiated in a supplemental rate stipulation with FirstEnergy will result in consumer savings of tens of millions of dollars to help moderate electric rates for NOPEC's customers in NOPEC's 129 member communities in nine counties in northeast Ohio. Assuming approval of the rate plan by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ("PUCO"), FirstEnergy's electric generation rates for the 3 year period starting June 1, 2011 will be determined following electricity auctions to be held later this year.

NOPEC worked with the Office of Ohio Consumers' Counsel, FirstEnergy and the Ohio Consumer and Environmental Advocates to finalize a supplement to FirstEnergy's electric security plan ("ESP"). NOPEC formally joined in the rate stipulation which supplements the stipulation previously filed at the PUCO regarding FirstEnergy's ESP.

Participating in this significant process allowed NOPEC to voice support for various pro-consumer changes in the rate plan that should result in savings of tens of millions of dollars to electric customers in northern Ohio. NOPEC believed that these additional provisions were necessary to improve the original FirstEnergy ESP rate plan stipulation that had been filed previously with the PUCO.

"We think these changes in the FirstEnergy ESP rate plan will help all customers in the FirstEnergy electric territory," said Joseph Migliorini, chairman of the NOPEC board of directors. "We think that, as we move forward from here, that there is still more work to do to help ensure that in the future our residents and businesses get the lowest electric rates possible."

Changes that were made in the rate energy plan's supplemental stipulation include an additional approximately \$40 million in electric transmission costs that FirstEnergy has agreed not to pass along to Ohio retail consumers. FirstEnergy also agreed to fund \$12 million – an increase from \$6 million – to help support payment assistance plans for low-income customers in its service territories during the 3 year rate plan.

Leigh Herington, executive director of NOPEC, said "As a member of the Ohio Consumer and Environmental Advocates (OCEA), NOPEC values the coalition and appreciates very much the insights gained by the collective advocacy of Ohio Consumers. NOPEC's decision to sign the stipulation reflects the numerous improvements that have now been made to the original settlement to provide more protection for Ohio consumers that was lacking in the original settlement. We think these changes will not only support governmental aggregation in the future but also will benefit all customers in the FirstEnergy electric territory. The fact that the Ohio Consumers' Counsel and other consumer advocates did not sign the settlement speaks to the fact that we as advocates have more work to do as we move forward under SB221 and PUCO regulation."

NOPEC is a non-profit governmental energy aggregation that represents approximately 450,000 residential and business electric customers in 129 communities in nine northeast Ohio counties. NOPEC is the largest public energy retail aggregation in the country and uses no taxpayer dollars. During its 10 years of existence, NOPEC has aggressively used bulk buying techniques to reduce energy costs by nearly \$100 million for northeast Ohio consumers – helping to make our region more affordable and more economically competitive. NOPEC is perhaps the best example today of successful regional cooperation in northeast Ohio.