

Kabacinski Statement

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**Testimony for P P & L Restructuring Hearing
Presented by
Vincent W. Kabacinski, Executive Director
Volunteers In Service In Our Neighborhoods, Inc.**

Thank you for allowing me the time to present my testimony regarding the restructuring of Pennsylvania Power and Light Company. I am here today to express my concern about how the elderly and low income ratepayers will fare as we restructure our electric industry. Utilities, large commercial and industrial ratepayers should do fine because they have the means to ensure that their voices are heard and that their interests are protected.

As you consider P P & L's restructuring plan, it will be up to the Commission to ensure that low income programs and protections are in place to ensure that they benefit from restructuring as well. As the Commission tackles the many issues that are involved with restructuring, I would hope that you would take the time to consider the plight of the elderly and low income ratepayers as well.

Pennsylvania Power and Light has a long tradition of working with local community-based organizations in delivering a variety of low income fuel assistance, energy conservation, and payment assistance programs such as the winter relief assistance program known as WRAP which provides free weatherization services and energy conservation education to qualified low income customers. Another program Customer Assistance and Referral Evaluation service commonly know as CARE handles customers whose hardship circumstances prevent them from paying the full amount of their electric bills. This program provides affordable payment plans, protection against shut offs and referrals to a variety of other assistance programs. Another program, Operation Help targets low income customers at or below 175% of the federal poverty level who are confronted with hardships and have over due energy bills.

In addition there is the KEEP WARM plan and the on TRACK PAYMENT PROGRAM which offers reduced monthly payment based on family size, income, electric use, and previous payment history as well as referrals to other assistance programs such as weatherization and energy assistance. P P & L should be commended for this work and their commitment to continue offering these programs which benefit our elderly and low income ratepayers through community-based organizations in the restructured industry.

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The Family Service



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TO: Mr. Irwin A. Popowsky
Consumer Advocate
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

FROM: Michael W. Zimmerman
Director of Information & Referral Services,
Family Service Association of Wyoming Valley

RE: Pennsylvania Power & Light Company's Restructuring Plan

DATE: June 3, 1997

I provide testimony to you on behalf of the Family Service Association of Wyoming Valley and the people we serve.

Help Line, a 24 hours/day information, referral, advocacy, and emergency service program administered by Family Services has worked closely with other community agencies for the past twenty-five years to assure expedient and timely access to services for people in need. Through the years, we have assisted thousands of residents with heat and utility related issues.

It is from this formidable experience that I praise PP&L for its past efforts to assist the less fortunate and those victimized by low-income and poverty. The WRAP and KEEP WARM weatherization programs are vital efforts to assist a vulnerable population. We urge PP&L, however, to expand its weatherization efforts to more than its heating customers, maintain hardship funds, and to build its customer assistance program faster than is proposed. Such programs will become more important as deregulation proceeds, and will ensure that those people with the greatest need will not be abandoned as change in the industry occurs.

It is the mission of Help Line to connect those in need to programs that can alleviate the need. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that energy conservation programs, customer assistance programs, and hardship funds continue to be available to the vulnerable in our communities.



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Makowski Statement #1
R-00973954
6/3/97
Wilkes-Barre
wjH

June 3, 1997

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

RE: P.P.& L. Restructuring Filing

**TESTIMONY OF LUZERNE COUNTY COMMISSIONER CHAIRMAN,
THOMAS A. MAKOWSKI, ESQUIRE:**

To the Administrative Law Judge:

Dear Sir of Madame:

On behalf of the Luzerne County Commissioners, I appreciate the opportunity to address the Commission.

As the Electric Industry restructures, we are concerned that residential customers will not fare as well as commercial and industrial customers who have much more bargaining power. We must, therefore, make sure that there are safeguards in place to protect those who are most vulnerable. In this new era of electric competition, we must insure that consumer information continue to be available, and that it be regularly distributed to the general public.

In this regard, it is especially important that the Universal Service programs be continued, those being the Energy Conservation Programs (both WRAP and Keep Warm), the Customer Assistance Program and the program which provides hardship funds to help those who have the greatest need.

We are pleased that PP&L proposes to continue these programs, and we would request that some thought be given to even expanding them. There are a large number of senior citizens in our area, and these programs are very important to them.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas A. Makowski, Esquire,
Chairman

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