



November 10, 2008

Ordinance Number 1661-2008, proponent testimony to Columbus City Council
Brandi Whetstone, Conservation Program Coordinator, Sierra Club Ohio Chapter

I appreciate this opportunity to discuss Ordinance Number 1661-2008, which considers funding to develop and implement an Environmental Management System for the Department of Public Utilities.

The Sierra Club, representing over one million members and supporters nationwide and 5,000 members in the Central Ohio Group, encourages the DPU's efforts to improve environmental compliance and reduce the department's environmental footprint. The U.S. EPA encourages organizations to design voluntary Environmental Management Systems to "improve compliance, prevent pollution and integrate other means of improving environmental performance" (<http://www.epa.gov/EMS/position/position.htm>).

We encourage the DPU to develop benchmarks in order to measure progress resulting from new practices and procedures. Annual progress reports should recognize achievements and next steps necessary for continued improvement. We also encourage transparency and open dialogue with the community about the progress and challenges identified throughout the process. Stakeholder input should also play a role.

In light of the DPU's most recent environmental audit, we are glad to see that the Department is taking responsibility and identifying areas of improvement. We encourage Columbus City Council to move forward with the DPU's funding request to develop an Environmental Management System and we look forward to environmental improvements that make Columbus a better place to live and work.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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