

NC FILE



25-0623-  
EL-CSS

David R. Hannum  
President, New Era Broadband  
119 E. Memorial Dr.  
Pomeroy, OH 45769  
[dhannum@mynewera.net](mailto:dhannum@mynewera.net)  
(740) 992-0620

May 27, 2025  
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
180 E. Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

RECEIVED-COCKETING DIV  
2025 JUN -2 PM 4:34  
PUCO

**RE: Request for PUCO Engagement on Interference Between AEP Ohio AMI Deployment and Rural Broadband Services in Meigs County**

This is to certify that the images appearing are an accurate and complete reproduction of a case file document delivered in the regular course of business  
Technician CMT Date Processed JUN 2 2025

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of New Era Broadband, LLC, a locally owned Fixed Wireless Internet Service Provider serving over 800 customers in Meigs County, Ohio. Since 2007, we have worked tirelessly to connect some of the most difficult-to-reach households in Meigs and surrounding counties—those beyond the reach of fiber or cable—using a combination of licensed and unlicensed spectrum technologies.

Today, I wish to bring to your attention a growing conflict between broadband access and electric infrastructure modernization—one that stands to disconnect 167 households in one of Ohio's most underserved counties.

AEP Ohio is actively deploying an Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system across Meigs County that uses frequency-hopping radios in the 902–928 MHz band. This is the same unlicensed spectrum we use under FCC Part 15 to deliver fixed wireless internet to many of our most rural, non-line-of-sight customers.

Because of the design of AEP's AMI system—which sweeps the full band at high duty cycles and does not support coexistence, this deployment has already begun to interfere with our broadband services. If fully built out, it will render our 900 MHz links inoperable, effectively severing internet service to 167 homes. These are the very residents the State of Ohio is trying to connect through digital equity efforts.

We have engaged AEP Ohio directly, and while they acknowledge the interference, they maintain that under FCC Part 15, both systems are legally permitted. They have agreed to pause further AMI deployment in the impacted areas for 18 months, which provides a valuable window to seek long-term solutions.

Meigs County is an Appalachian Regional Commission–designated “Distressed” county. Residents depend on our broadband service for telehealth, school, work, public safety, and quality of life. Without your support, they

risk being stranded by a well-intentioned—but incompatible—electric utility deployment.

We are not asking PUCO to block AEP's AMI project. Instead, we respectfully request:

- That PUCO engage with AEP Ohio and Meigs County leaders to explore coexistence strategies or migration funding options.
- That PUCO consider how regulated utility deployments in shared spectrum bands impact unregulated but essential services like broadband.
- That PUCO help facilitate a collaborative solution, such as AEP supporting county-based infrastructure upgrades that would allow continued internet access for affected residents.

We believe there is a path forward where both grid modernization and rural broadband can coexist, but it will require proactive leadership from regulators, counties, and utilities alike.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We are available to provide technical data, maps, and community impact analysis upon request.

Sincerely,  
David R. Hannum

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David R. Hannum", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

President, New Era Broadband  
[dhannum@mynewera.net](mailto:dhannum@mynewera.net)  
(740) 992-0620