

# **NASUCA**

# **THE ORIGINAL STORY**

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**Monday, June 9, 2025**



## **Moderator: Maureen Willis**

Ohio's fifth (Current) Consumers'  
Counsel

Legal Intern for Bill Spratley in 1982

- The goal of NASUCA was to provide a forum to exchange ideas, improve consumer representation at the state and federal levels, and encourage greater consumer participation in the regulatory process.

This panel will tell the story.



# PANEL

## **BILL SPRATLEY**

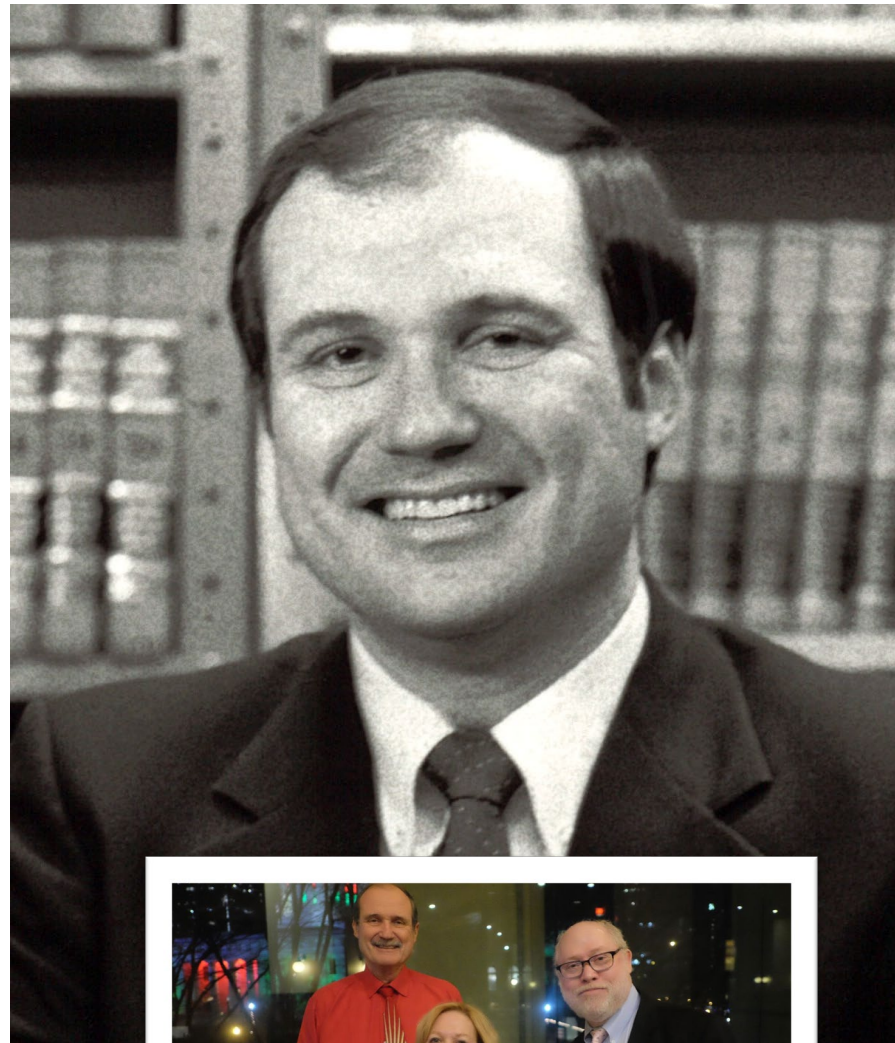
OHIO'S FIRST CONSUMER COUNSEL, NASUCA'S  
FIRST PRESIDENT 1979-1981

## **JANINE MIGDEN-OSTRANDER**

OHIO'S THIRD CONSUMER COUNSEL,  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO BILL SPRATLEY IN  
1979

## **BRUCE WESTON**

OHIO'S FOURTH CONSUMER COUNSEL, LEGAL  
INTERNSHIP FOR BILL SPRATLEY IN 1979





Is he ... a consumer advocate who relentlessly hammers at the big public utilities in hope of adding another notch to his own reputation?

Or is he just plain Bill, a hard-working, statepaid attorney who is a small-town Rotarian at heart?

15/The Columbus Dispatch/Monday, June 8, 1983

## IS HE WILD OR JUST PLAIN BILL?

It depends who you ask about Consumers' Counsel Spratley

By Lee Stratton  
Columbus, Ohio

**I**n he Wild Bill Spratley, a consumer advocate who relentlessly hammers at the big public utilities in hope of adding another notch to his own reputation?

Or is he Just Plain Bill, a hard-working, state-paid attorney who is a small-town Rotarian at heart?

Ohio Consumers' Counsel William Spratley is a little bit of both.

His foes, namely the utilities, say he's a publicly housed who distorts facts and takes unwarranted credit for cutting their requests for rate increases. They say his shortsighted stands as some issues cost consumers more in the long run.

Supporters say the consumers' counsel has built a credible record of protecting consumers from unreasonable and unfair practices by the utilities.

**BUT FRIENDS** and foes agree Spratley is a major force in the state's process of regulating public utilities.



"It's nice to sit down and try to settle things amicably. But the problem is that the playing field is not level for consumers."

Spratley said his frequent press conferences and surveys are necessary to combat the gas, electric and telephone companies.

"The fact is, utilities spend over \$100 million a year advertising and promoting themselves in this state and they go prime time," he said.

"They would love to see us be just a low low ranked away in the bureaucracy where no one could see us."

**PUCO CHAIRMAN** Thomas Chene doesn't want to see Spratley's office faded away, but he does see the consumers' counsel role as becoming less combative and more reflective.

In the past, he said, the office has played "an extremely important role of providing balance in an arena where it was hard for the public to have a voice."

"I frankly see the consumers' counsel role changing in the future," Chene said. "The goal of the consumer approach is to be

# BILL SPRATLEY

## OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL 1977-1993

# CONGRATULATIONS NASUCA

For 46 years of Consumer Protection!





# THE BEGINNING



Inspiration came in November 1977 at the Las Vegas NARUC meeting.



Consumer advocates attending decided that they needed their own organization



May 1979 -- the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA) was founded.

# FIRST CONSUMER ADVOCATES

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**Harold Abramson**  
**Bill Barvick**  
**Jack Shreve**  
**Bill Spratley**



**NASUCA** was officially started: May of 1979 with approximately 16 offices.

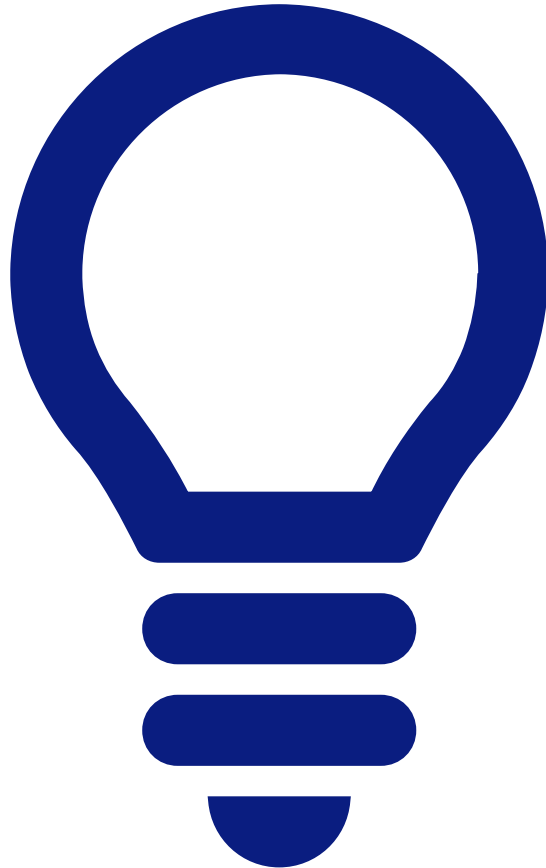


The first official meeting took place in November 1979 in **Atlanta, Ga.**



The founders established NASUCA for agencies that act as **independent ratepayer advocates.**

# What prompted Formation of Advocate offices?



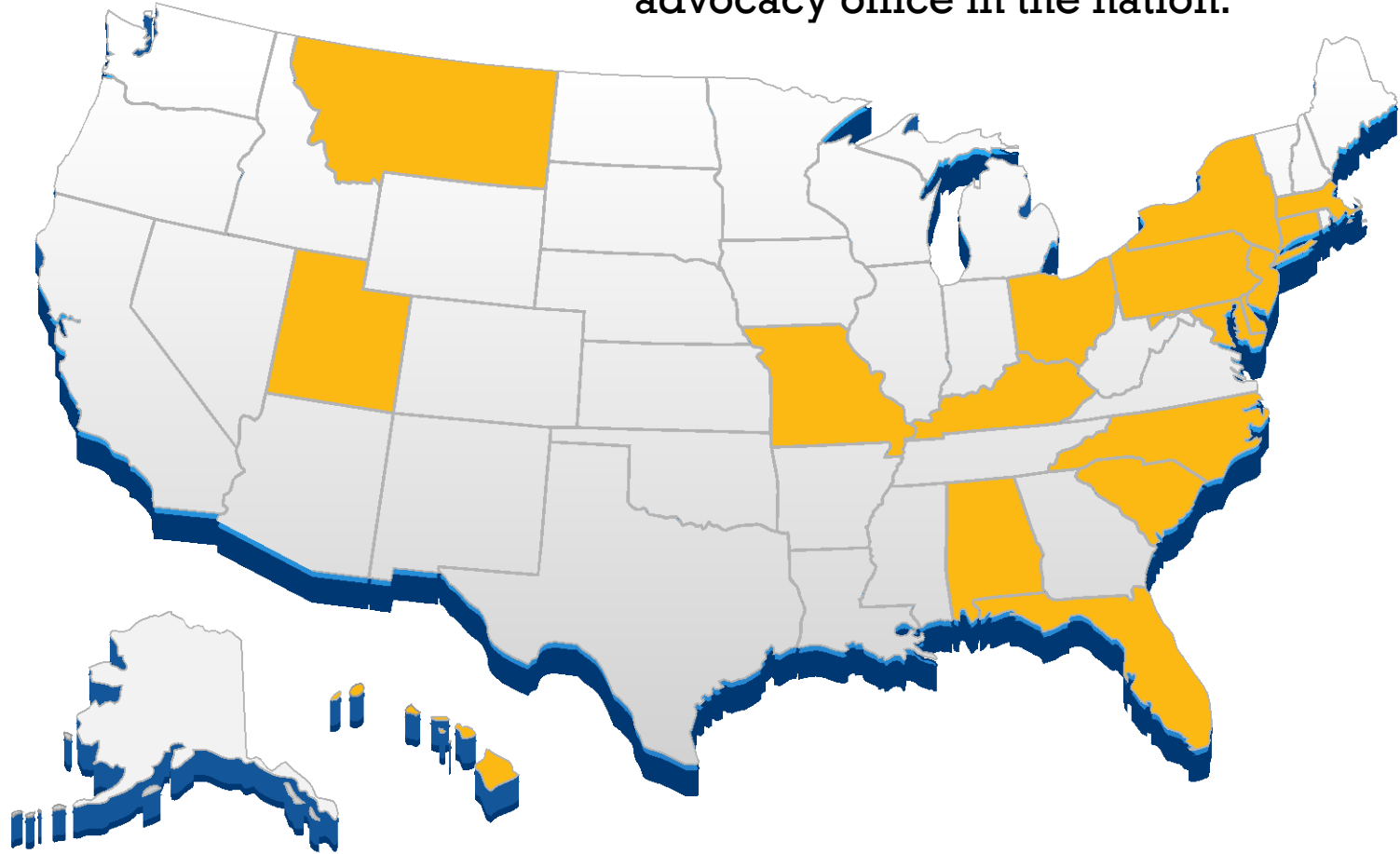
- **Rising Utility prices**
- **Energy crisis**
- **Need for Consumer Protections**



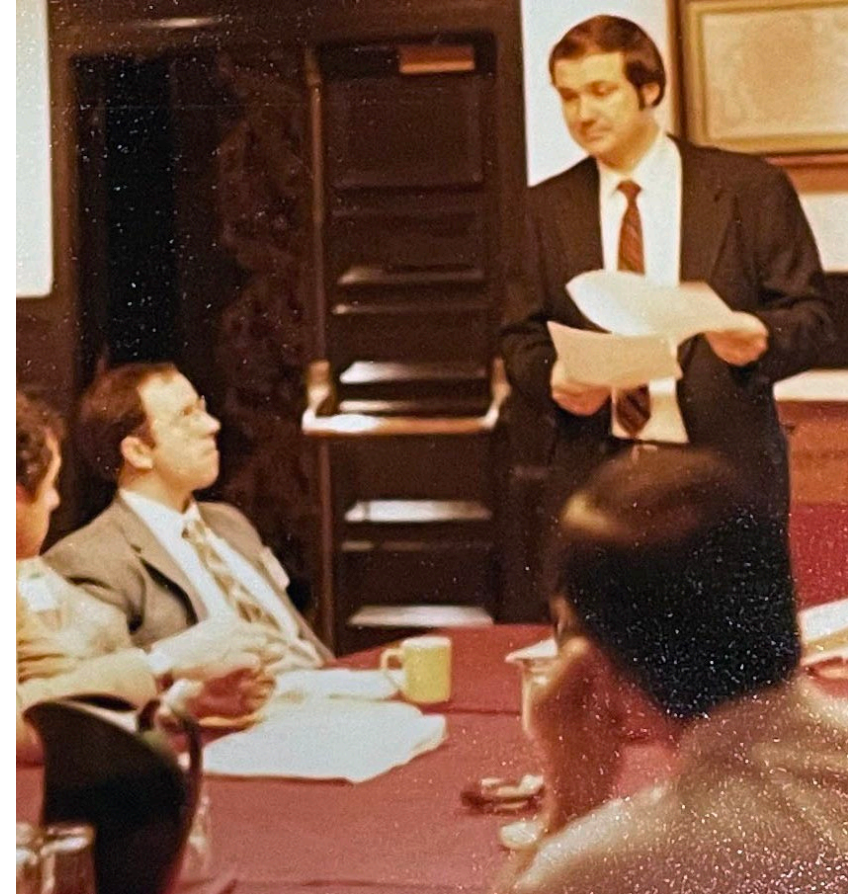
# FIRST NASUCA OFFICES

ALABAMA, CONNECTICUT,  
DELAWARE, FLORIDA, HAWAII,  
KENTUCKY, MARYLAND,\*  
MASSACHUSETTS, MISSOURI,  
MONTANA, NEW JERSEY, OHIO,  
NEW YORK, NORTH CAROLINA,  
PENNSYLVANIA, SOUTH CAROLINA,  
UTAH AND WASHINGTON D.C.

Maryland's Office of People's  
Counsel, established in 1924, is  
the oldest utility consumer  
advocacy office in the nation.







# EARLY NASUCA MEETINGS



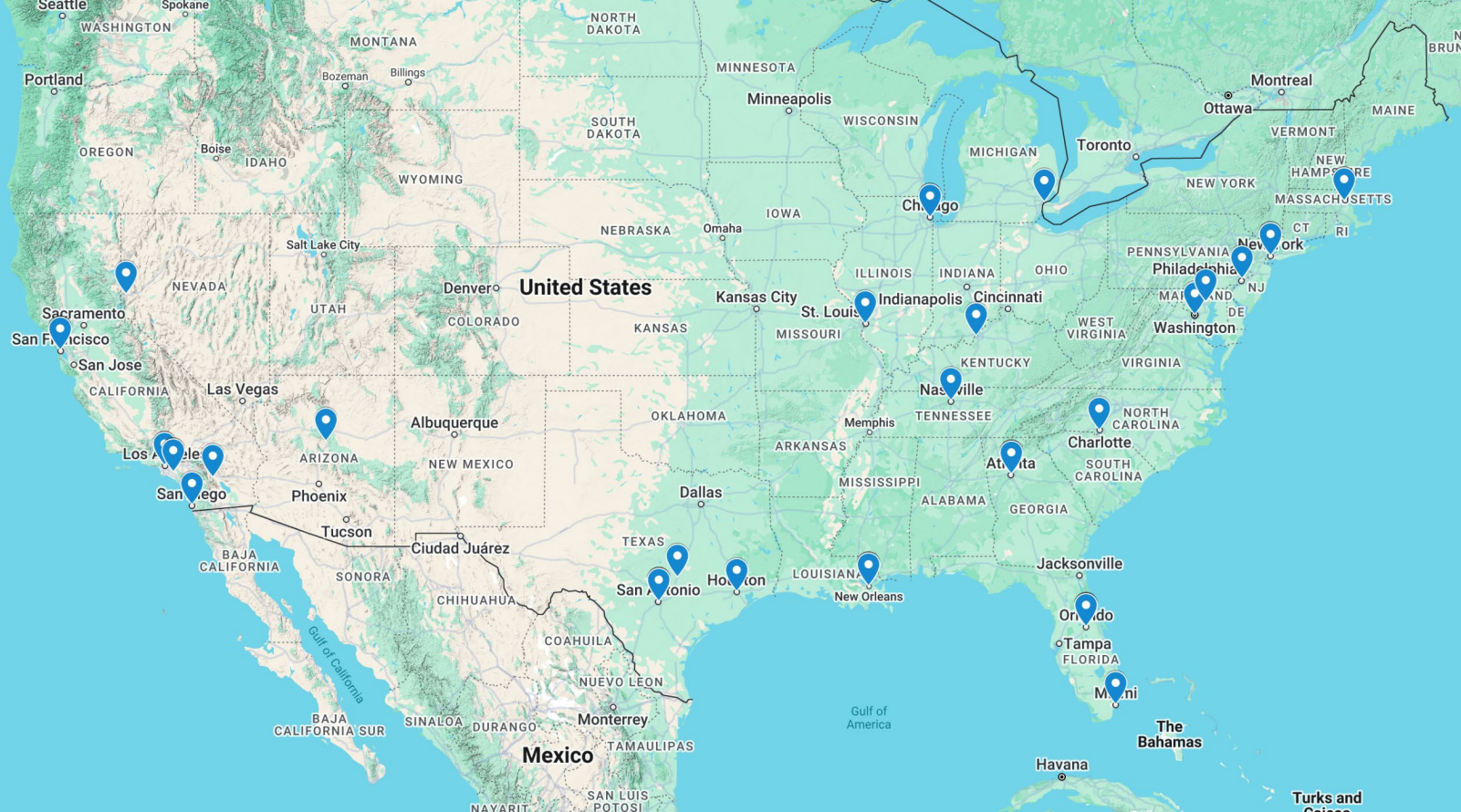
# YEARS OF NASUCA CONVENTIONS





## First Ten Years:

November 1979 – Atlanta, GA  
November 1980 – Houston, TX  
November 1981 – San Francisco, CA  
November 1983 – Detroit, MI  
November 1984 – Los Angeles, CA  
November 1985 – New York, NY  
November 1986 – Sedona, AZ  
November 1987 – Washington DC  
October 1988 – San Francisco, CA  
November 1989 – Boston, MA



# NASUCA CONVENTION LOCATIONS



# 01

**Constitutionality of  
prohibiting bill inserts on  
controversial matters**

– Adopted Dec. 5, 1979 in  
Atlanta, Ga.

# 02

**Automatic adjustment  
clauses**

– Adopted Nov. 14, 1979

# 03

**Funding and participation  
of specialized consumer  
groups**

– Adopted Nov. 10, 1980 in  
Houston, Texas

## **FIRST THREE KEY RESOLUTIONS**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UTILITY CONSUMER ADVOCATES

RESOLUTION

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF PROHIBITING BILL  
INSERTS ON CONTROVERSIAL MATTERS

WHEREAS, a number of utilities throughout the United States used inserts in customer bills as a mechanism for the dissemination of the utility's position on controversial matters of public policy; such dissemination of information is commonly referred to as political advertising.

WHEREAS, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., challenged the constitutionality of the order of the New York State Public Service Commission, dated February 25, 1977, that prohibited New York State utilities from using bill inserts for political advertising.

WHEREAS, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., legal challenge to the constitutionality of the New York State Public Service Commission order in a case entitled "Consolidated Edison Company of New York vs. Public Service Commission of the State of New York" is pending before the Supreme Court of the United States,, and the decision of the United States Supreme Court will effect the ability of the states to protect utility customers' right to privacy and the public interest.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT NASUCA finds that:

1. Utilities as regulated monopolies do not have the constitutional right to violate their customers' right to privacy by using bill inserts in customer bills to reach a captive audience to promote utilities' positions on controversial matters of public policy,

Approved by NASUCA

Atlanta, Georgia  
Place

December 5, 1979  
Date

Submitted by:

Harold I. Abramson  
New York State Consumer  
Protection Board

Reported out by Resolutions  
Committee

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UTILITY CONSUMER ADVOCATES

RESOLUTION

AUTOMATIC ADJUSTMENT CLAUSES

WHEREAS, automatic adjustment clauses account for hundreds of millions of dollars of utility rate increases annually, far more than rate increases authorized by regulatory commissions after notice and hearings;

WHEREAS, automatic adjustment clauses eliminate the opportunity for public scrutiny and input as well as effective regulatory scrutiny of utility operating practices and procurement procedures;

WHEREAS, automatic adjustment clauses by design are inflationary and encourage inefficient and uneconomic practices because the automatic adjustment clauses recover inefficient and uneconomic costs just as swiftly and completely as reasonable and prudently incurred costs, and thus excuse utilities' managements from responsibility for such inefficient and uneconomic actions and because the automatic adjustment clauses allow recovery of expenses in areas the utilities control such as the operating efficiency of these plants, fuel inventory management, general operating efficiency of their system and sometimes purchase power agreements;

WHEREAS, Title I, Section 115(e), of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 requires that automatic adjustment clauses be determined, after evidentiary hearings, not less than every four years by state regulatory authorities, and such clauses must be reviewed not less than every two years to insure the maximum economies in operations and purchases affecting the rates to which such clauses apply;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates finds that automatic adjustment clauses inherently encourage uneconomic practices: and in any form are of dubious wisdom necessity, workability, and in determining at least each four years w should be permitted to have or continue t adjustment mechanism, regulatory authority investigate the utilities' procurement pr

Submitted by:

Roderick Coy  
Department of Attorney General  
Michigan

Reported out by Resolutions Committee

Date: November 14, 1979

Favorably ☒ Not Favorably ☐

Harold Abramson - New York (CPB)  
Chairperson

Roderick Coy - Michigan

Brian Lederer - Washington, D.C.

Charles Rogers - Oklahoma





**JANINE  
MIGDEN-  
OSTRANDER**

**OHIO  
CONSUMERS'  
COUNSEL  
2004-2011**

# **JANINE MIGDEN-OSTRANDER**

## **OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL 2004-2011**



Importance of  
NASUCA



NASUCA at the  
federal courts



Telecommunications  
deregulation



Electricity, FERC and  
regulated  
competitive auctions



# OTHER KEY RESOLUTIONS

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**NEED FOR AN ENERGY  
AND UTILITY RESEARCH  
CENTER FOR NASUCA  
MEMBERS –**

ADOPTED NOV. 10, 1980 IN  
HOUSTON, TEXAS



**URGING LEGISLATORS AND  
REGULATORS TO PROHIBIT UTILITIES  
FROM PASSING ADVERTISING COSTS ON  
TO RATEPAYERS–**

ADOPTED NOV. 15, 1986 IN SEDONA, ARIZ.



**URGING STATE AND FEDERAL  
REGULATORS TO INITIATE  
UTILITY RATE REDUCTIONS–**

ADOPTED NOV. 15, 1986 IN  
SEDONA, ARIZ.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UTILITY CONSUMER ADVOCATES  
RESOLUTION

Funding and Participation of Specialized Consumer Groups

WHEREAS, the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA) is an association of state agencies that represents utility consumer interests in local, state and federal regulatory, legislative and judicial proceedings. The purpose of NASUCA is to improve communications among its members, to enhance their impact on public policy at the state and federal levels and to otherwise assist its members in the representation of utility consumer interests,

Approved by NASUCA:

Submitted by:

Houston, Texas

Place

November 10, 1980

Date

Harold I Abramson  
New York State  
Consumer Protection Board

Approved by NASUCA:

Submitted by:

NEAL RAUCH  
Energy & Utility Section  
N.Y.S. Department of Law  
2 World Trade Center  
New York, New York 10047  
(21) 488-7592

Reported out by Resolutions Committee

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF  
STATE UTILITY CONSUMER ADVOCATES  
RESOLUTION  
ON THE NEED FOR AN ENERGY AND UTILITY  
RESEARCH CENTER FOR NASUCA MEMBERS

Whereas, NASUCA members require expert research assistance in performing their public advocacy functions. Whereas such assistance could be provided effectively by a university affiliated research center.

Be it resolved that NASUCA investigate whether and, if so, how it should fund a center for performing research on energy and utility issues of interest to the NASUCA membership.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UTILITY CONSUMER ADVOCATES  
RESOLUTION

Funding and Participation of Specialized Consumer Groups

WHEREAS, the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA) is an association of state agencies that represents utility consumer interests in local, state and federal regulatory, legislative and judicial proceedings. The purpose of NASUCA is to improve communications among its members, to enhance their impact on public policy at the state and federal levels and to otherwise assist its members in the representation of utility consumer interests,

Approved by NASUCA:

Sedona, Arizona  
Place

November 15, 1986  
Date

Submitted by:  
Citizens' Utility Board, Inc.

16 N. Carroll Street  
Suite 300  
Madison, WI 53703  
(608) 251-3322

Reported out by Resolutions  
Committee Substitute

Date: November 10, 1986

Favorable X Not Favorable     

Deppish Kirkland  
COMMITTEE MEMBER

William A. Spratley  
COMMITTEE MEMBER

Daniel Clearfield  
COMMITTEE MEMBER

Approved by NASUCA:

Sedona, Arizona  
Place

November 15, 1986  
Date

Submitted by:  
Ohio Consumers' Counsel

William A. Spratley  
137 East State Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
(614) 466-8574

Submitted pursuant to the  
Provisions of Article VII,  
Section 5 of the NASUCA  
Constitution

Date: November 15, 1986

1986-12  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UTILITY CONSUMER ADVOCATES  
RESOLUTION

Urging state and federal regulators to initiate utility rate reductions in today's declining cost economic environment and thereby strengthen control of public utility monopolies in the public interest.

WHEREAS, state and federal regulators have the obligation to serve the public by reducing public utility rates in today's economic environment of falling cost of money,





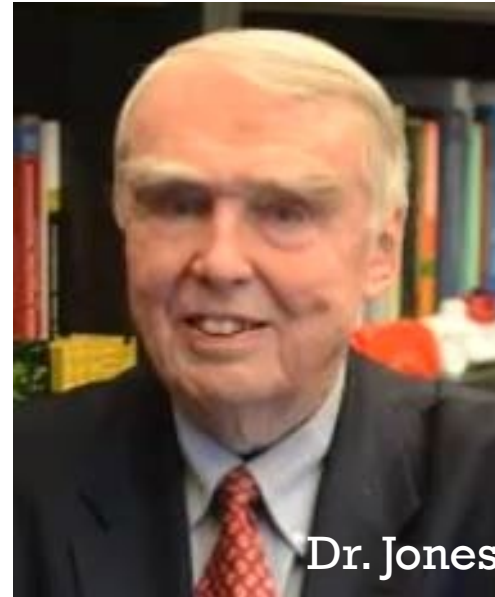
**BRUCE  
WESTON**

**OHIO  
CONSUMERS'  
COUNSEL  
2012-2023**

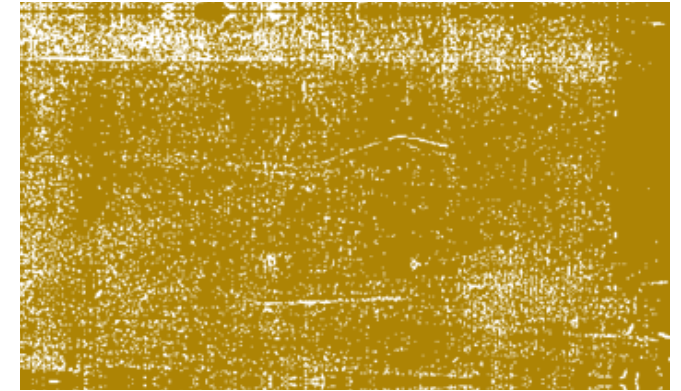
# EARLY NASUCA EDUCATORS/SUPPORTERS

- Harry Trebing conducted training for NARUC and invited consumer advocates to participate. Honored by NASUCA resolution in 1988.
- Dr. Douglas Jones of Ohio State University/NRRI
- Genevieve Morelli of NARUC
- NASUCA colleagues

Dr. Trebing  
1926-2019



Dr. Jones



G. Morelli



**PHOTO OF COLUMBUS, OHIO LOCATION  
(OCC'S FORMER OFFICE) OF 1979  
MEETING FOR VOTE TO CREATE NASUCA  
WITH: CHRIS AYERS (NC), BILL FINE (IN)  
AND BRUCE WESTON (OH) STANDING AT  
FRONT DOOR 40 YEARS LATER.**

**PHOTOGRAPHER DAVID SPRINGE**



# WHAT'S IN A NAME (NASUCA)?

- ✓ Researching names for the new association
- ✓ Building NASUCA's name recognition toward becoming an “essential voice” of consumers.



- E.g. NASUCA was designated one of the few consumer organizations to present argument, on behalf of the nation's telephone consumers, to U.S. District Judge Harold Greene in the 1987 review of the 1984 AT&T/Bell System antitrust break-up.



# NASUCA'S HONORARY RESOLUTIONS (1998 AND EARLIER)

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## SECTION IX - HONORARY

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- \* Commending William M. Barvick for dedicated service to the National Association of State Utility Consumers Advocates - Adopted November 17, 1981 in San Francisco, CA.
- \* Commending Harold Abramson for dedicated service to the National Association of State Utility Consumers Advocates - Adopted November 17, 1981 in San Francisco, CA.
- \* Commending William A. Spratley for dedicated service to the National Association of State Utility Consumers Advocates - Adopted November 17, 1981 in San Francisco, CA.
- \* Recognizing William W. Milks for dedicated service to the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates - Adopted November 1, 1988 in San Francisco, CA.
- \* Honoring Dr. Harry M. Trebing for excellence in teaching and inspired consumer advocacy - Adopted November 1, 1988 in San Francisco, CA.
- \* Honoring Thomas C. Gorak for years of service and leadership given the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates - Adopted November 1, 1988 in San Francisco, CA.
- \* Commending Donna Sorgi For Dedicated Service To the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates - Adopted May 20, 1991 in Seattle, WA. (1991-1)
- \* Recognizing Joseph Ingles for Dedicated Service to the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates - Adopted June 8, 1993 in St. Louis, Missouri. (1993-08)
- \* Commending William A. Spratley for Dedicated Service to the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates - Adopted June 8, 1993 in St. Louis, Missouri. (1993-09)
- \* Commending Robert K. Johnson for Dedicated Service to the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates - Adopted November 16, 1993 in New York, New York. (1993-18)
- \* Commending Walter Washington for Dedicated Service to the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates - Adopted June 7, 1995 in Breckenridge, Colorado. (1995-05)
- \* Commending Ronald J. Binz for Dedicated Service to the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates - Adopted November 15, 1995 in New Orleans, Louisiana. (1995-11)
- \* Commending Christopher Cook for Dedicated Service to the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates - Adopted November 15, 1995 in New Orleans, Louisiana. (1995-12)







**THANK YOU  
NASUCA!**

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**Monday, June 9, 2025**