



City of Lakewood Municipal Government

Media Contact:

Kevin Wayner, Public Information Officer

(216) 529-6602

kevin.wayner@lakewoodoh.gov

August 7, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUCO Issues Second Probable Noncompliance Notice to FirstEnergy after Complaint by City of Lakewood, Proposes Over \$3 Million in Penalties and Other Corrective Actions for Continuing Violations

State oversight body sides with City of Lakewood after finding that recent outages once again caused by FirstEnergy aging equipment & facilities and that company was using garden sprinklers to cool Lakewood substation

LAKEWOOD, OH – The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) sustained The City of Lakewood's complaint against FirstEnergy for the company's major, multi-year failure to provide safe and reliable power to residents and businesses due to its aging and failing infrastructure and equipment. Following Lakewood Mayor Meghan F. George's complaint to PUCO on July 6th, the agency completed an investigation which revealed that widespread and prolonged power outages in Lakewood over the summer were once again the fault of FirstEnergy and not due to storms or high winds.

"I appreciate the thorough investigation by PUCO, and I applaud their decision that proposes millions of dollars in penalties against FirstEnergy for its ongoing failure to provide safe reliable power to the people of Lakewood," said Mayor George. "We knew things were bad, but I was shocked and outraged when I read that FirstEnergy was attempting to cool its failing equipment with garden sprinklers. I am glad that the City's demand for significant financial penalties against FirstEnergy was supported by PUCO – it has become clear that the only way this company will ever fix things is if we can hit their pocketbooks. The City of Lakewood will continue to work through PUCO to hold FirstEnergy accountable and force it to fix Lakewood's power grid."

In its investigation, PUCO identified eight major FirstEnergy equipment failures in Lakewood over a period of two weeks, including line failures, breaker failures, underground cable failures, and overall aging infrastructure. The investigation found over 18,000 customer power outages for prolonged periods. Of particular concern was that FirstEnergy's own staff told PUCO investigators that the Lauderdale substation was "routinely" cooled on hot days with "garden or lawn-watering style" sprinklers and FirstEnergy staff consider this to be "industry standard practice."

As part of its notice of probable noncompliance, PUCO issued a list of proposed corrective actions to FirstEnergy, including proposing that the company forfeit \$3,049,750 and take immediate action to analyze and inspect its equipment and implement an equipment replacement plan by the end of 2026.

All of this follows a similar process last year wherein the City of Lakewood previously filed a complaint with PUCO against FirstEnergy for similar outages. Last year's notice of noncompliance ordered FirstEnergy to take corrective actions to address matters but did not include the type of multi-million-dollar forfeitures noted in this most recent notice from PUCO.

Mayor George thanked Lakewood City Council and especially the people of Lakewood for raising their voices in the effort. "The all-hands-on-deck approach on this situation is getting results, and I want to thank City Council for their joint advocacy and especially the people of Lakewood who took the time to make complaints to PUCO so the agency understood the scale and impact of this problem," she said. "These are life-and-death matters that also cost our residents and businesses thousands of dollars when our power fails at the times we need it the most."

PUCO's letter of probable noncompliance to FirstEnergy is included with this release for reference.

For more information about the City of Lakewood, please visit lakewoodoh.gov.

* * *

Situated on the shores of Lake Erie, the City of Lakewood, Ohio is a historic streetcar suburb located five minutes from downtown Cleveland. One of the densest communities in the U.S., Lakewood offers a charming, walkable setting filled with beautiful century homes, hundreds of unique small businesses, well-respected schools, and high-quality public parks and amenities.