

A Brief History of CAC

Background

Citizens Action Coalition is a 501(c)4 not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1974 by a group of organizations, churches, labor unions, and senior groups, to name a few, who saw the need for a grassroots organization dedicated to protecting consumers during the energy crisis. The organization's original name was the Citizens Energy Coalition. Since that time, CAC has expanded to a statewide organization dedicated to protecting ratepayers and advocating for affordable healthcare and a clean environment. CAC does this through canvassing, lobbying, community organizing and litigation.

Mission Statement

To initiate, facilitate and coordinate citizen action directed to improving the quality of life of all inhabitants of the State of Indiana through principled advocacy of public policies to preserve democracy, conserve natural resources, protect the environment, and provide affordable access to essential human services.

Major Victories

CAC has advocated for over four decades on behalf of Hoosiers on issues regarding energy policy, utility reform, health care, pollution prevention, and family farms. In order to achieve the objective to protect consumers in Indiana, CAC's activities include performing research, carrying out public education campaigns, organizing citizens, creating public awareness, lobbying legislators, intervening in utility cases before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission, and litigating when necessary.

CAC has saved ratepayers more than \$4 billion in excess utility charges since 1974.

2010's

- Helped to codify language in Indiana law that, for the first time ever, allows water utilities to set up low-income assistance programs in order to help insulate vulnerable Hoosiers from ever-increasing utility bills.
- Fought and helped to defeat Duke Energy's request for a \$1.87 billion rate increase.
- Fought and helped to defeat the Leucadia/Indiana Gasification attempt to build an expensive coal-to-gas plant in Spencer County. The project entailed a 30-year "no look back" contract that would have forced Indiana ratepayers to pay for this plant through our natural gas bills to the tune of \$7.8 billion over 30 years.
- Helped to defeat IPL's request to force ratepayers to pay \$12.3 million for the BlueIndy electric car share program through electric rates. The IURC stated, "There can be little argument that the request to recover the Installation Costs is anything other than a request to have IPL's customers pay a portion of the start-up costs for a private business enterprise."
- Reached a settlement with NIPSCO and other stakeholders to bring 16 megawatts of distributed renewable energy generation into NIPSCO's service territory.
- Participated in a net metering complaint against Vectren which forced Vectren to change its policy requiring an unnecessary piece of equipment for net metering installations, saving customers approximately \$500 per net metering installation.
- Worked with a broad coalition of organizations to protect the public's right to know how our food is produced by stopping proposed 'Ag-gag' laws.
- Helped to stop legislation known as "CWIP" (Construction Work in Progress) that would have allowed utilities to charge ratepayers for nuclear power plants being built that might not ever produce electricity.
- Assisted the communities of Scottsburg, Jasper, and Milltown in stopping the construction of dirty and unwanted biomass power plants.
- Reached a settlement with AEP, I&M's parent company, along with the U.S. EPA, eight states, and 13 citizens groups. The settlement results in the retirement of three coal-fired power plants, new wind and solar, and an investment of \$2.5 million towards the improvement of air quality in Indiana.
- Uncovered the cozy Duke and IURC regulator relationship regarding the Edwardsport Power Plant, which led to the firing of the IURC chairman, multiple felony counts against regulators and an ethics investigation.
- Helped to stop Vectren Electric from getting an unjustified \$32 million rate increase.
- Helped to create a statewide energy efficiency program called Energizing Indiana, which ran from 2012 - 2014. This program created tens of thousands of jobs and helped Hoosiers to save enough energy to power over 90,000 homes.

2010's (continued)

- Helped to stop NIPSCO Gas from changing their rate structure in a way that would have allowed them to charge ratepayers more on their bills even if they were using less natural gas. Also helped to negotiate a small rate reduction for NIPSCO natural gas customers.
- Helped to improve Indiana's net metering rule.

2000's

- Helped to cut AEP's requested 20% rate increase down to 6.5%, and to guarantee that AEP invest a minimum of \$2.35 million on an energy-efficiency program for AEP ratepayers.
- Helped to secure \$50 million per year for the CHOICE Home Health Care Program in the state's two-year budget, and also succeeded in securing language that prevents CHOICE dollars from being used for other programs and that keeps CHOICE dollars from being sent back to the Indiana's general treasury.
- Defeated several attempts by the utilities at backdoor deregulation of the utility industry in the form of a number of bills including trackers that would have allowed utilities to recoup their investments, reasonable or otherwise, as they were being incurred, coupled with language that would have limited, and in some instances completely removed, the discretion of the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) to approve or deny various investment proposals.
- Net metering allowances for residential customers using solar and wind systems negotiated with IPL and Cinergy, which led to the adoption of a net metering rule by the IURC.
- Legislation defeated twice to deregulate electric and gas utility profits.
- Settlement negotiated with Vectren and Citizens Gas for establishment of Universal Service programs for low-income customers, designed to keep them connected and reduce their costs through energy efficiency measures.
- CAC worked with Michiana Quality of Life (in New Carlisle, IN) to defeat the proposed Tondu coal gasification plant.
- Defeated SBC-backed legislation designed to let company set their own rates.
- Stopped SBC from increasing local phone rates.
- Working with local citizens, CAC's farm program stopped confined animal feeding operation development in a number of counties.

1990's

- NIPSCO forced to refund \$81 million for illegal rate increase for the uncompleted Bailey nuclear power plant.
- PSI forced to refund \$150 million to customers for illegal rate increase for the uncompleted Marble Hill nuclear power plant.

- AEP forced into settlement due to negligence at the DC Cook nuclear power plant which forced the plants closure until safety systems were once again made operational. The settlement resulted in a rate and fuel cost freeze and rebate to customers. Customers also avoided the \$500 million in costs to restore the safety systems at the power plant.
- Ameritech/SBC forced to refund \$44 million to customers.
- Ameritech/SBC forced to lower rates \$57 million.
- Ban on Local Measured Service extended by legislature.
- Clean Manufacturing Technology Institute bill passed legislature. The Institute aided manufacturers in the reduction or the use of toxic materials. The program has saved manufacturers over \$10 million and reduced toxic emissions by 7000 tons.
- Certified Organic food bill passes.
- CAC leads fight for better consumer protections in health insurance, resulting in a Patients Bill of Rights passed by the General Assembly.

1980's

- Forced the IURC to abide by the Open Door Law, allowing members of the public to view regulatory proceedings.
- Winter disconnect ban passes legislature.
- Forced PSI to abandon the Marble Hill nuclear power plant project by defeating their efforts to bill consumers \$2.7 billion in cost overruns.
- Twice killed legislation to implement Local Measured Service which would have allowed the telephone utilities (at the time, Ameritech) to charge by the minute on local phone calls
- Helped to pass legislation creating the CHOICE program (Community and Home Options to Institutional Care for the Elderly and Disabled).
- Legislation passed to provide financial counseling to farmers facing bankruptcy.

1970's

- "Consumer Bill of Rights," adopted by the IURC which gives customers appeals rights.
- Indiana/Michigan Electric Co. (AEP) forced to give ratepayers \$41 million dollar rebate.
- Won new rules that prohibited utilities from charging customers for advertising campaigns.