



Turning On Citizen Power

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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 with about 40,000 members. CAC is 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 three 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 rate payers more than \$4 billion in excess utility charges since 1974.

2000's

- Helped to secure \$50 million per year for the CHOICE Home Health Care Program in the state's new 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.

A Brief History of CAC (contd.)

2000's (continued)

- 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 aids 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.