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NEWS RELEASE

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PUCO DECISION THREATENING CONSUMER SAFETY

Cleveland (Ohio) – Ohio residents need to know how a decision by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) is affecting the quality and safety of maintenance and repairs on residential gas service lines, says Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Contractors Association of Ohio (PHCC) Executive Director Rocco Fana. The decision gives responsibility of maintenance and repairs of service lines to Ohio's largest gas and utility companies.

“Our concern is whether the employees of Ohio's utilities meet the safety and quality standards met by many of Ohio's licensed plumbing contractors and heating technicians,” says Fana. “When completing gas service line repairs, consumer safety has to be the number one priority.”

Prior to the decision, gas service lines extending from the street to a residential or commercial property were privately owned. According to the PHCC, repairs were typically handled by the owner through licensed plumbing and heating contractors.

“Licensed plumbing contractors and members of the PHCC exceed safety standards set at the state and federal level,” says Fana. “Our members are licensed, bonded and insured in all municipalities in which they work and are certified drug and alcohol-free for the protection of homeowners and businesses which they serve.”

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Since the decision was made, a majority of Ohio's licensed plumbing and heating contractors have had the option of working as a sub-contractor for the utility companies to complete repairs and maintenance on gas service lines. According to the PHCC, very few plumbing and heating contractors who have signed-up to do this have received work.

“Plumbing and heating contractors throughout the state are available to complete quality work on gas service lines,” says Fana. “Until the PUCO reverses its decision and we are assured that qualified plumbing and heating contractors are doing the work, consumer safety may be at risk.”

The PHCC of Ohio is a trade association representing professional contractors, manufacturers and suppliers in plumbing heating and cooling. Its members are committed to the continuous improvement of the industry and society's quality of life through ongoing education, training and political action.

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