



Consumers' Counsel Weston To Retire – Gongwer News Service

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Ohio Consumers' Counsel Bruce Weston intends to retire in the coming months, although he has yet to pick a departure date.

Mr. Weston announced his pending resignation to the OCC Governing Board, signaling the approaching end of a 12-year stint heading the state's consumer utility watchdog.

He indicated he will work with the board to set a departure date several months in the future, allowing the search for a successor to play out.

"I cannot emphasize enough my admiration and gratitude that the board has defended the agency's most key attribute that was established by its legislative founders – the agency's independence," Mr. Weston said in prepared remarks.

The agency's nine-member board, appointed by the attorney general, will hire Mr. Weston's successor.

The state's fourth consumers' counsel, Mr. Weston first joined the office in 1978 when he was hired as a legal intern by the state's first consumers' counsel, William Spratley.

While serving as deputy counsel, he was appointed interim consumers' counsel in 2011 by the board. His appointment was made permanent in 2012. (See Gongwer Ohio Report, March 20, 2012)

His ascension followed the departure of former Consumers' Counsel Janine Migden-Ostrander, who left after the legislature slashed agency funding by 33.6% – or about \$3 million.

The agency's funding never rebounded, leaving Mr. Weston and his board to navigate a new normal with fewer resources. His latest budget request for the upcoming spending cycle called for a \$700,000 per year increase in spending authority and included a raft of policy changes such as providing the counsel more say over Public Utilities Commission of Ohio appointments. (See Gongwer Ohio Report, December 28, 2022)

In recent years, Mr. Weston led the agency day-to-day as it traversed the ongoing FirstEnergy scandal, including securing and pouring over hundreds of thousands of pages of subpoenaed documents.

As for what is next, Mr. Weston said he has already fielded questions about his retirement plans.

"I look forward to the usual things – like life away from utility influence and crony-capitalism," he said.

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