

DUKE ENERGY AND UTILITY REGULATORS SCANDAL



The scandal that was taking place with utility regulators and Duke Energy has become a criminal act as of Monday. The grand jury for Marion County has indicted one of the ex-executive in Fort Wayne with three separate counts of felony and and misconduct. Governor Mitch Daniels fired David Lott Hardy, the former chairman of the Indiana Utility Regulator Commission, in early October of last year. While the Governor did fire Hardy, he believed that the charges were not as bad as they have been made out to be in front of the grand jury. He does not believe that Hardy's actions were actually criminal behaviors, according to the Journal Gazette. In fact, Daniels says, "I fired him for something a lot less minor than what's charged." He continued his sentence by saying, "If he did anything wrong beyond what I fired him for, he ought to pay for it." Hardy, who is 67 years of age, was the chairman since 2005, approximately five years before being fired by the Governor. When calls were made to Hardy as well as his attorney, the calls were not returned for questioning. The commission's general counsel, Scott Storms, was also forced to depart from his employment. At the time, Governor Daniels' said that they found out Storms had been speaking with Duke Energy about having a position and spot with the company while he was still in charge of the administrative hearings that had to do with Duke Energy. And, with that said, Hardy knew about the communication between Storms and Duke and failed to remove Storms from working on the matters that had to do with Duke. Instead, it was as if he ignored the entire situation at hands. The counts that Hardy is facing for this act are quite serious. All of the felony and misconduct counts can lead to three years in prison for each count. This means Hardy can end up spending at least nine years in prison. For the first count, Hardy has been accused of knowing what Storms was doing while communicating with Duke and allowing it to happen while also allowing Storms to continue working with proceedings that had to do with Duke Energy. The second count accuses Hardy of failing to disclose communication that took place in 2008 with one of Duke Energy's employees about a specific project. And for the third count, Hardy is then accused of failing to provide information about communication that took place in February of 2010 with employees from Duke Energy about the cost of a project for Edwardsport. Daniels says, "I think it would be highly improper for me not to meet with the leaders of important businesses and regulated utilities," and finishes his sentence with, "We have a zero-tolerance posture in our administration, always have, for anything improper. I think people know that."

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