

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE GERALD F. KELLY, presiding

Application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company for Authority, Among Other Things, to Increase Rates and Charges for Electric and Gas Service Effective on January 1, 2020. (U39M)

PUBLIC  
PARTICIPATION  
HEARING

Application  
18-12-009

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FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

AUGUST 14, 2019 - 1:00 P.M.

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ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE KELLY: We'll go on the record. This is the time and place set for the Public Participation Hearing for the General Rate Case application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company, or PG&E, for Application 18-12-009. My name is Gerald F. Kelly, and I am not the administrative law judge assigned to this proceeding; however, I volunteered to cover this proceeding for Judge Lirag and Judge Lau because I like to come out and hear from the public and interact with the public. So I'm covering this proceeding for them this afternoon and this evening.

The commissioner assigned to this matter is Commissioner Randolph; unfortunately, she could not make it to this hearing today. However, copies of the transcript will be provided to her office, and I will also draft a short summary of what occurred at this meeting and what will occur in the meeting in the evening meeting, and present that to both Judge Lirag and Judge Lau and Commissioner Randolph.

Before we start, let me just give

1     you a brief overview of what the Public  
2     Utilities Commission does. We are a state  
3     agency that regulates privately-owned  
4     utilities like PG&E that provide essential  
5     services such as electricity and natural gas  
6     to customers. There are five commissioners  
7     at the PUC. These five commissioners will be  
8     the people who vote and decide whether to  
9     approve PG&E's request or some other dollar  
10    amount in the application. The assigned role  
11    of the judges in this case for Judge Lirag  
12    and Judge Lau is to review PG&E's  
13    application, review the evidence as  
14    presented, and then they will then write a  
15    proposed decision for the Commission to  
16    consider. The Commission will vote to adopt  
17    their decision or an alternate put forth by  
18    the commissioner.

19               Now I'll just briefly give you an  
20    overview of what is in PG&E's application.  
21    In the application, PG&E requests authority  
22    to increase its revenues by 1.058 billion in  
23    the year 2020, 454 million in 2021 and 486  
24    million in 2022. Every three years, PG&E  
25    files a rate case application, or GRC, like  
26    this one to request funding for its gas and  
27    electric operations. The impact of this GRC  
28    application, if fully granted, would increase

1 the average residential customer's monthly  
2 bill by seven to eight percent, or  
3 approximately \$10.57. According to PG&E, the  
4 major reasons for the requested increase are  
5 to fund PG&E's wildfire safety mitigations  
6 and liability insurance. If you want to know  
7 more information about the application,  
8 there's a fact sheet at the Public Advisor's  
9 table outside of -- outside the doors.

10 Currently, there are many active  
11 parties in this proceeding, including several  
12 consumer groups, community-based  
13 organizations, cities and county governments,  
14 unions and large user groups. Many of these  
15 groups oppose what PG&E is requesting. Their  
16 participation in this proceeding can impact  
17 the amount of money that the Commission  
18 ultimately authorizes PG&E to collect.

19 The purpose of this Public  
20 Participation Hearing is to hear from you,  
21 the public, about how this application will  
22 impact you, your family and your community as  
23 a PG&E customer. Your comments will help the  
24 Commission gather information to determine  
25 whether PG&E's proposed increases are  
26 reasonable. Judge Lirag and Judge Lau have  
27 already received various comments that were  
28 submitted prior to the Public Participation

1 Hearings via the Public Advisor's Office.

2 Also outside is a table staffed by  
3 PG&E representatives. They have customer  
4 service representatives there where you can  
5 talk to them if you have specific questions  
6 about your bill or specific questions about  
7 the application.

8 I'm just going to cover some basic  
9 ground rules. When you speak, you'll be  
10 addressing me, so if you could take the  
11 podium there and face me and state and spell  
12 your name for the record. Also, if you could  
13 just remember to speak slowly and clearly, as  
14 the court reporters have the difficult job of  
15 transcribing everything that is said here  
16 today. And I know that's hard to remember,  
17 and I'm usually one of the biggest offenders.  
18 When I start talking, I talk really fast.  
19 But, if you could just remember to speak  
20 slowly, the court reporters will greatly  
21 appreciate that. Also, I just ask that only  
22 one person speak at a time, because they  
23 don't have the ability to transcribe two  
24 people speaking at the same time, and it  
25 makes it extremely difficult; so, please,  
26 just only one person at a time.

27 At the conclusion of these hearings,  
28 the court reporters will prepare a

1 transcript, and as I mentioned earlier, these  
2 transcripts will be shared with Judge Lirag  
3 and Judge Lau, and will also be shared with  
4 the commissioners.

5 Additionally, there -- PG&E has  
6 requested to make a presentation, so at this  
7 point, I will go ahead and allow PG&E to make  
8 a brief presentation. Then after that, we'll  
9 start with the public comments. Thank you.

10 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BROOKS

11 Welcome, and thank you, everyone,  
12 for attending today's Public Participation  
13 Hearing on PG&E's 2020 GRC proposal. My name  
14 is Anna Brooks, A-n-n-a B-r-o-o-k-s, and I've  
15 been an employee at PG&E for ten years. As a  
16 team leader for this part of our service  
17 territory, I'm responsible for the local  
18 government relations team.

19 This is one of 17 hearings being  
20 hosted by the CPUC throughout our 70,000  
21 square-mile service area. At each location,  
22 representatives from PG&E will be available  
23 to assist customers with their questions. We  
24 have representatives here today who can help  
25 track down information you need related to  
26 this specific proceeding.

27 Your feedback in this process is  
28 crucial, because the application outlines a

1 series of critical safety investments to help  
2 address the state's growing wildfire threat  
3 and to further protect the 16 million people  
4 that we serve. In Fresno, your dollars help  
5 us perform this work. That's what makes  
6 these hearings so significant. It's also  
7 important to know that this process is one of  
8 many forums that the CPUC provides for  
9 customer input on the GRC and other  
10 regulatory requirements. Thank you to the  
11 Commission and ALJ Kelly for this opportunity  
12 to learn from our customers.

13 In closing, I would like to  
14 introduce Roland Trevino, vice president of  
15 our gas, engineering and design team, who,  
16 with your permission, would like to say a few  
17 words.

18 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER TREVINO

19 Good afternoon, everyone. Thank  
20 you for the -- for being here today. Thank  
21 you very much, ALJ Kelly, for giving us this  
22 opportunity to contribute to and learn from  
23 the Public Participation Hearings on our 2020  
24 General Rate Case proposal.

25 My name is Roland Trevino. That's  
26 R-o-l-a-n-d. Trevino's T-r-e-v-i-n-o. And  
27 I'm the vice president of gas, engineering  
28 and design. My primary responsibilities



1 include the design and management of gas  
2 transmission and distribution projects.  
3 These projects directly support PG&E's most  
4 important responsibility, which is the safety  
5 of our customers and the communities we  
6 serve. One of the most important ways that  
7 we achieve that is through our GRC proposal  
8 which outlines our plans to upgrade  
9 technology and infrastructure to enhance our  
10 ability to provide safe and reliable gas and  
11 electric service.

12 Our -- our proposal will help  
13 bolster wildfire prevention, risk monitoring  
14 and emergency response. It will also add new  
15 and enhanced safety measures, increase the  
16 vegetation management, and harden our  
17 electric system to increase resiliency and  
18 help further reduce wildfire risk, among  
19 other projects, to safely reliable --  
20 reliably, excuse me, serve our customers.

21 Under the proposal, we are  
22 requesting about a 1.1 billion-dollar  
23 increase over the currently adopted revenues.  
24 More than half of the proposed increase will  
25 be directly related to wild -- wildfire  
26 prevention, risk reduction and additional  
27 safety enhancements. If approved by the  
28 CPUC, it would increase a typical residential

1 customer's bill by 6.4 percent, or \$10 and  
2 57 dollar -- 57 cents per month, which  
3 includes \$8.73 per month for electricity and  
4 \$1.84 per month for natural gas service.

5 While it is important to share with  
6 you where your money is going, it is also  
7 important to share with you where this money  
8 will not be spent. While the GRC proposal  
9 will help fund a series of important safety  
10 investments, it does not request funding for  
11 PG&E Corporation or utility officer  
12 compensation. That means it does not go  
13 toward my pay or any of my colleagues. The  
14 proposal also does not request funding for  
15 potential wildfire claims involved in the  
16 Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceeding.

17 The GRC proposal is a significant  
18 request, and it comes at a difficult time.  
19 As always, our commitment is to keep  
20 customers' costs as low as possible while  
21 meeting our responsibilities to safely serve  
22 our customers, even as our changing climate  
23 presents significant new challenges and  
24 risks. This funding proposal is subject to  
25 the CPU's -- CPUC's thorough, open and  
26 transparent review and approval process. We  
27 encourage our customers to provide feedback  
28 and participate in this important public

1 process that will help shape customer rates  
2 and California's energy future. Thank you  
3 for your time today. ]

4 ALJ KELLY: Thank you, sir. I forgot  
5 to say if you give a speech and you have a  
6 written document prepared, if you could let  
7 the court reporters get a copy of that. It  
8 makes it easier for them. That also applies  
9 to all previous speakers. Thank you.

10 Do we have anybody from the Public  
11 Advocates Office that would like to make a  
12 presentation?

13 And for TURN -- TURN is a party to  
14 the matter.

15 STATEMENT OF MS. SLIDER PIERRE

16 Good afternoon. My name is Constance  
17 Slider Pierre. I am the organizing director  
18 for TURN, The Utility Reform Network. I'd  
19 like to first take a moment to thank ALJ  
20 Kelly for this opportunity to speak and say a  
21 few words to welcome members of the public.

22 ALJ KELLY: Could you spell your name  
23 for the court reporter's, please.

24 MS. SLIDER PIERRE: My full name?

25 ALJ KELLY: Yeah.

26 MS. SLIDER PIERRE: Constance,  
27 C-O-N-S-T-A-N-C-E, Slider, S-L-I-D-E-R,  
28 Pierre, P-I-E-R-R-E.

1 ALJ KELLY: Thank you.

2 MS. SLIDER PIERRE: To members of the  
3 public, thank you for taking the time to come  
4 to today's public participation hearing. I  
5 hope you all will take advantage of the  
6 opportunity to share your experiences and  
7 your concerns. We know that safety is very  
8 important, and we are all concerned about it.  
9 However, we also want to make sure that every  
10 dollar earmarked for safety improvements is  
11 spent on that and nothing else.

12 Public participation hearings  
13 represent the California Public Utilities  
14 Commission at its very best. In the hearing  
15 rooms, the judge gets to hear from the  
16 utility attorneys and consumer attorneys  
17 locked in battle arguing over numbers and  
18 technical issues. Today, however, the judges  
19 want to hear from you, consumers, about how  
20 the proposed changes and rate increases  
21 affect you, your family and your community  
22 because your voice makes a difference. Today  
23 you have the chance to share your opinion  
24 before decisions are made. Because by the  
25 time you hear about a new policy on the TV or  
26 in the newspaper, it's too late to engage in  
27 a public discourse that affects change and  
28 has the greatest impact.

1 PG&E's latest proposal will increase  
2 residential customer bills annually from 2020  
3 to 2022. If approved, this proposal would  
4 raise your monthly bill \$20 by 2022, grow  
5 PG&E's revenue 23 percent by 2022 from 2019,  
6 create a 2 billion dollar annual increase for  
7 PG&E by 2022 resulting in a 4.6 billion  
8 dollar total increase for PG&E above 2019  
9 over the next three years.

10 Additionally, this proposal comes on  
11 top of other ratepayer increases currently  
12 being proposed by PG&E that would authorize a  
13 60 percent profit margin increase to  
14 shareholders while forcing ratepayers to pay  
15 billions for additional tree trimming in  
16 costs associated with wildfires caused by  
17 PG&E's negligence.

18 During your testimony today, I  
19 encourage you to use your time to reflect on  
20 your experience as a PG&E customer, tell the  
21 Commission how current energy costs affect  
22 you, what trade-offs you have been forced to  
23 make, what measures you have taken to reduce  
24 costs and conserve energy and what additional  
25 trade-offs you will be forced to make if you  
26 are required to pay an additional \$20 per  
27 month for energy.

28 Finally, if you haven't already

1 signed up to speak, please consider doing so.  
2 I hope our statement has provided some  
3 context and inspiration to you so that you  
4 can lift up your voice today and be heard.

5 Thank you.

6 ALJ KELLY: Thank you.

7 Mayor Brand.

8 STATEMENT OF MR. BRAND

9 Good afternoon. Lee Brand. Mayor of  
10 Fresno.

11 I appreciate the opportunity to  
12 speak today on behalf of the City of Fresno  
13 and to address important issues like rate  
14 proposals and safety procedures.

15 I was especially pleased that Senior  
16 Vice President Roland Trevino is here to  
17 listen to public comment. We have a great  
18 history with PG&E. They have been good  
19 partners. They're totally invested in our  
20 community.

21 The City of Fresno has embarked on  
22 several successful energy efficiency programs  
23 with PG&E. We have converted three of our  
24 four city garages with LED lighting and are  
25 well on our way to converting all 38,000  
26 streetlights in the City of Fresno. These  
27 new LED bulbs will provide better visibility  
28 at night for our residents, and better

1 visibility means increased safety for  
2 pedestrians and drivers on our streets. The  
3 LED streetlight program called Light Up  
4 Fresno is only made possible with a zero  
5 interest rate loan from PG&E.

6 We also have several upcoming  
7 projects that can also benefit from this loan  
8 program. And our hope is that the City of  
9 Fresno will receive more support. It's  
10 important to us that we maintain a strong,  
11 supportive relationship. With that in mind,  
12 I would like to address some of our concerns.

13 In reviewing the current rate  
14 proposal submitted by PG&E for their next  
15 rate cycle, it is no surprise that it focuses  
16 on safety and wildfire prevention. This is  
17 understandable. And the City of Fresno  
18 empathizes with PG&E's need to focus on these  
19 areas. However, as one of PG&E's largest  
20 customers, I respectfully ask for continued  
21 support for our disadvantaged communities in  
22 the City of Fresno.

23 As you know, many in our community  
24 continue to struggle with paying their PG&E  
25 bills. Fresno is dealing with the highest  
26 concentration of poverty in the state and the  
27 second highest rate of extreme poverty in the  
28 United States. And any level of increase can

1 be hard for many of our residents to handle.

2 We also ask that PG&E work with the  
3 City of Fresno to do everything we can do to  
4 help our neediest residents, which are many,  
5 in the City of Fresno.

6 Let me also address the power safety  
7 shut-offs. Fresno is struggling to prepare  
8 like many other communities. This new plan  
9 threatens to stretch our thin resources to  
10 the breaking point as we try to plan for your  
11 worse case scenarios that develop.

12 We ask that you be mindful of  
13 exactly what the impacts would be on cities  
14 like Fresno if you turn off the power for  
15 consecutive days. We are also struggling to  
16 know exactly what we should be planning for  
17 and appreciate your assistance in going  
18 forward. Our public safety, public works and  
19 public utility directors are ready to work  
20 with you so you can achieve your safety  
21 goals.

22 I want to thank the CPUC for giving  
23 us the opportunity to be heard and to PG&E  
24 for listening to our comments and our  
25 feedback. We appreciate the strong  
26 partnerships with both organizations.

27 Thank you.

28 ALJ KELLY: Thank you, Mayor.



1                   John Larrea. If you can just please  
2 state and spell your name, sir.

3                   STATEMENT OF MR. LARREA

4                   John Larrea with California League of  
5 Food Producers. I represent the large  
6 industrial users in PG&E territory such as  
7 the tomato processors, food processors and  
8 others.

9                   Is that okay? Do you want me to  
10 spell my name also? I gave them a card.  
11 J-O-H-N L-A-R-R-E-A. I appreciate TURN's  
12 presentation. They talk about how it's going  
13 to go from \$10 to \$20 by 2022 for  
14 residential. However, I think that's going  
15 to be low because they are only looking at  
16 what the costs for residential are going to  
17 be on their bills. This GRC -- this general  
18 rate case covers everyone including us and  
19 all the businesses that the residential get  
20 their services from and get their goods from.  
21 We're going to have to take that cost as  
22 well. That cost generally we try to pass  
23 through so that the residential are actually  
24 going to be paying even more for this  
25 increase than is going to be seen in just  
26 their bills.

27                   The other issue is that residential  
28 are not going to see the percentage increase

1 that the industrials get. So you are going  
2 to see significant cost increases for  
3 industrial rates as well as any kind of  
4 commercial or business rates that are going  
5 on out there as well. Just -- if you look at  
6 the past gas transmission and storage rate  
7 case that just passed through, we saw 90  
8 percent increase in our gas transportation  
9 rates. Some of our members ended up looking  
10 at between 200,000 to almost a million  
11 dollars a month in increases just for the  
12 transportation of the energy, just for  
13 getting the gas to them. This has nothing to  
14 do with the cost of the gas or anything else.

15 The other issue is that we're seeing  
16 these -- and this has been going on. So  
17 we're seeing these costs and rates compiling  
18 on over and over again. We never see a  
19 decrease. We only see increase. This has  
20 been not just last time, but this is  
21 continuing forward. So we've seen since the  
22 last GRC, I want to say, or the last GT&S,  
23 the gas transmission and storage rate case,  
24 it went from 500 million dollars for a  
25 three-year period to a billion dollars. It's  
26 going to a billion dollars every year now. I  
27 want to ask anybody has anybody seen an  
28 increase in the services that you receive

1 from PG&E? They talk about safety, but is  
2 anybody saying, "Wow, my services are even  
3 better"? I doubt that is going to be the  
4 case.

5 Because I can tell you that most of  
6 my members say the same thing. The services  
7 have decreased, not increased. But they stay  
8 at the same level despite the fact we're  
9 paying much, much more. So I would urge the  
10 Commission and the ALJs who are looking at  
11 this to look at the past rate case especially  
12 for the industrials and try to determine  
13 exactly what those cost transfers are going  
14 to for the residential as well. Because  
15 we're looking at essentially rate shock. And  
16 at some point, businesses have to figure out  
17 whether or not they are going to remain  
18 competitive or they are just going to leave.  
19 Because you cannot continue to pile these  
20 rate increases on every single year and not  
21 understand that we also have to compete with  
22 other companies and other manufacturers  
23 outside the State of California.

24 One of the issues that we have is  
25 that I have a company that has both a  
26 facility here in California, here in the  
27 Valley and one that is also operating up in  
28 Oregon. And the difference between the rates

1 in electricity alone for two similar plants  
2 it's 279 percent more expensive here in  
3 California than it is to operate up there.  
4 And you have to ask the question, Well, why  
5 haven't they moved?

6 Now, the mayor spoke about  
7 disadvantage and trying to make sure that we  
8 continue to support them. Industrials also  
9 provide that support. We have a  
10 public-purpose charge that goes along with  
11 every other rate that we do too, and that  
12 supports this. However, we also employ these  
13 people. Everybody -- I mean, we are in some  
14 of the lowest income areas in the Valley  
15 itself. And we offer them the jobs and  
16 steady jobs every year, every harvest. Yet  
17 if we keep -- those costs go up, we have to  
18 find ways to cut. And I have asked my  
19 members over and over again, "What do you  
20 do" -- for instance -- and let me just get to  
21 this is that during the gas transmission and  
22 storage rate case, when that went into  
23 effect, it went into effect in the middle of  
24 our season. So in the middle of August, they  
25 doubled our rates for gas transportation, and  
26 we were -- we had already tried to fix that.  
27 So what do they do? The first thing that  
28 goes is employees. You have to cut employees

1 because that's the quickest way that you can  
2 save some money to continue to produce at the  
3 level you're doing it. So, again, I would  
4 just ask that the ALJs look at these past  
5 cases, understand how much we receive, not  
6 just under the GRC but all of the rates that  
7 have been increasing over the years and  
8 understand that they are putting pressure on  
9 us. All that pressure is being doubled on  
10 the residentials that you're working so hard  
11 to protect.

12 Thank you.

13 ALJ KELLY: Thank you, sir.

14 Mary Curry. ]

15 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER CURRY

16 Good afternoon. My name is Mary  
17 Curry, C-u-r-r-y, and I'm a Fresno resident  
18 for 60-plus years. I'm here today because  
19 I'm concerned about rate increases. My  
20 husband and I are both retired, and I'm  
21 speaking on behalf of my community, as well  
22 as myself.

23 West Fresno is one of the highest  
24 poverty areas in the State of California, and  
25 for a increase, even if it's just \$5 or \$10,  
26 for some of our residents it's going to be  
27 very difficult, because they're struggling  
28 now just to get by on what they're already

1     paying.   So I'm concerned about that.

2             I'd like to mention the fact that  
3     you talk about safety and fire damage.   I  
4     realize that PG&E's had some major fires, and  
5     they weren't necessarily around the valley.  
6     I also understand that PG&E has to find a way  
7     to try to get out of those difficult  
8     situations.   But, the ratepayers didn't cause  
9     these situations, and I think the ratepayers  
10    should not be penalized for the things they  
11    didn't have nothing to do with.   If I -- I  
12    just hope you will take that into  
13    consideration.

14            Also, it's my dream some day that  
15    there will be some competition, that PG&E  
16    won't be the only service.   They'll be like  
17    Ma Bell that was broken up, and people have a  
18    chance to have choices.   We have no choices  
19    right now, and we're at the mercies of the  
20    PUC.

21            And I hope that you will consider  
22    the hardship that this is going to bring  
23    on -- on many people.   In my house, we have  
24    done double windows, weather stripping, new  
25    light bulbs, turning off the air and  
26    suffering a good part of the day.   I don't  
27    know what else we can do personally to make  
28    the rates go down.   But, each time the rates

1 go up, the service is not any different. So  
2 my concern is not just for my family, but for  
3 families and the community that I've lived  
4 in, my husband has worked in, for 60-plus  
5 years. And it's disturbing, because we have  
6 no choices. We haven't any choice but to use  
7 PG&E. Thank you.

8 ALJ KELLY: Thank you, Ms. Curry.  
9 Pastor Lewis?

10 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER LEWIS

11 Good afternoon. Thank you for  
12 hearing us this afternoon. I'm not really  
13 prepared for this, and I just found out about  
14 it, but let me -- let me cover just three  
15 points.

16 ALJ KELLY: Sir, I'm sorry. Just  
17 for --

18 SPEAKER LEWIS: Oh, I'm sorry. My name  
19 is Pastor B.T. Lewis of the Rising Star  
20 Missionary Baptist Church. We're here in  
21 Fresno, California. Last name, L-e-w-i-s.  
22 Is that sufficient?

23 ALJ KELLY: Yeah.

24 SPEAKER LEWIS: Okay. So the first  
25 thing -- you know, I remember working in  
26 corporate America before I became a full-time  
27 pastor, and many times, the -- the -- if the  
28 new projections for increasing revenue

1     were -- were -- were never based on a need.  
2     It was always based on a desire to increase  
3     revenue and increase profits. And so, I'm  
4     afraid that PG&E, even though it's a public  
5     utility, falls into that category.

6             And another thing that I -- I  
7     would -- would -- that I'm not sure about is  
8     that whether or not PG&E is -- all of the new  
9     services that they say they want to offer,  
10    like the gentleman that spoke before, I -- I  
11    don't see a difference in how PG&E is  
12    providing service to me personally or to our  
13    church, and so I wonder if PG&E would not be  
14    better served to do due diligence in-house,  
15    to -- to be audited, and to bring a -- an  
16    external auditor in-house, in the house, to  
17    audit how they're spending the funds that  
18    they currently earn from ratepayers.

19            I represent not only myself, but I  
20    represent our church, and I'll tell you how  
21    in a minute, but also can speak without  
22    equivocation for about 50 churches in our  
23    area, 20 churches outside of our area. Those  
24    churches, they give me permission to make  
25    statements of this nature on their behalf,  
26    because our ministries are so similar.

27            And one of things that I was just  
28    telling Ms. Curry that I've noticed is that



1 last week I was complaining -- sometime  
2 pastors complain. Last week, I was  
3 complaining about the fact that there was --  
4 there seems to be a -- a -- a noticeable  
5 increase in the number of people coming by  
6 the church that need help with their --  
7 paying their PG&E bills and paying other  
8 bills, water bills and all. But, PG&E is  
9 certainly the one -- one that is at the top  
10 of the list, and -- and that is a noticeable  
11 difference in our community, given the  
12 economy that we live in. And so -- and one  
13 friend said to me that the church -- the  
14 reason that it's so noticeable for us is that  
15 the church is on the ground floor where  
16 people live, and so when -- when PG&E and  
17 agencies like PG&E do rate increases, a lot  
18 of times that -- that just trickles down to  
19 nonprofits and churches that are on the  
20 ground with families that are already  
21 struggling to pay their bills every month.

22 And so, I would ask that this  
23 Commission would consider denying PG&E this  
24 rate increase. I -- even though they may not  
25 see the direct impact, people like me, we see  
26 the impact every -- every day. Every week,  
27 we have people waiting to see if we can  
28 allocate some benevolent funds and help them

1 keep the lights on. Thank you very much.

2 ALJ KELLY: Thank you, pastor.

3 Marie Ramirez.

4 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER RAMIREZ

5 Hi. My name is Marie Ramirez,  
6 M-a-r-i-e R-a-m-i-r-e-z. My concern is -- is  
7 this pay rate that we're going to -- or  
8 you're trying to increase, like the pastor  
9 said, you know, people are struggling out  
10 there, and I'm one of them. Thank goodness,  
11 I haven't -- so far, I have a job; but, those  
12 jobs don't last long. We just live day by  
13 day.

14 Recently, as a matter of fact, two  
15 days ago, I have a resident home that I had  
16 been talking to law enforcement, code  
17 enforcement, concerning -- and the property  
18 owners, JD Home Rentals, concerning a  
19 property across the street from where I live  
20 at to where these people were actually  
21 stealing your electricity. I couldn't prove  
22 it. I called PG&E and reported it. So I  
23 don't know how long that took. That -- that  
24 was recent, because I didn't know it was  
25 being stolen until recently. And that -- now  
26 that nobody did anything about that  
27 situation, the house is burned down. So now,  
28 you know, that becomes a factor.

1                   So if you guys are increasing  
2     our -- us people that are paying our bills  
3     each month for other people's negligence, you  
4     know, I don't think that that's fair, either,  
5     you know, for us to have to be increased.  
6     There's programs to where -- you know,  
7     sometimes I can't even pay my -- for food, so  
8     I go to these programs. There's a lot of  
9     programs right here in Fresno for the  
10    homeless. They just don't pick the choice,  
11    because they'd rather be doing their drugs or  
12    whatever they do out there or lighting fires  
13    on people's properties because it's not  
14    theirs because they don't care, because they  
15    don't have nothing to lose, they're already  
16    homeless. But, it's just frustrating because  
17    I have to live in that -- the neighborhood  
18    where these things are going on.

19                  And so I would appreciate it if you  
20    guys don't increase this PG&E. I had no  
21    knowledge of this meeting, because I came up  
22    here to actually talk about the situation  
23    about that house burning, because it really  
24    concerns me that I live in a neighborhood  
25    that, if you guys are increasing these PG&E,  
26    then people are either -- they're making a  
27    choice either to eat or have lights. So I  
28    just thank you for listening.

1           ALJ KELLY: Thank you, Ms. Ramirez.  
2                           Margarita Rocha.

3                           STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ROCHA

4                           Good afternoon. My name is  
5 Margarita Rocha, R-o-c-h-a. I am executive  
6 director of Central La Familia Advocacy  
7 Services, a community-based organization in  
8 Fresno. Our services are provided throughout  
9 the County of Fresno. So I will be speaking  
10 about the impact that this rate would have  
11 with the residents that we work with  
12 throughout Fresno County.

13                          We serve over 10,000 families  
14 annually, and I can tell you that firsthand  
15 experience working with the families, I know  
16 that these rates are smaller than may sound  
17 to other people. For the families that we  
18 work with, it's huge. If we're talking about  
19 ten to \$20 over a two-year period or  
20 three-year period, and then we're talking  
21 about what we just heard the gentleman talk  
22 about, their increases will then be passed on  
23 to the consumer. It is an impossible -- it's  
24 impossible for it to work. We already see  
25 families who can't afford the rates they  
26 currently have and pay the rent and buy food  
27 and take care of their families, as we all  
28 should. The families that I'm talking about

1 don't even have an opportunity to have well  
2 structured homes where we could have some  
3 savings in double-paned windows and all those  
4 other things that some of us are able to do.  
5 Our families can't do that. Some families  
6 end up living in a car, because those are the  
7 families that we work with. We have to help  
8 them find shelter so they can get some  
9 permanent housing. So they cannot afford it.  
10 Daily, we have these families come in, and  
11 daily we also have to find -- find food for  
12 them.

13 On top of all this discussion about  
14 increasing, now we have the issue of public  
15 charge. So those same families that  
16 potentially would apply for some benefits  
17 that will give some life-sustaining resources  
18 are not going to do that. So now we've added  
19 another thing to it. Work here is seasonal,  
20 so our folks know that they work during  
21 season, and then apply for some support  
22 services. That's not going to happen.

23 So this rate increase, proposed  
24 rate increase, is not good for this  
25 community. We just can't afford it, and we  
26 can't find places -- other solutions. So I  
27 beg you not to do this. It is just going to  
28 increase a trickle-down effect where we're

1     probably going to see more homeless people  
2     than we're going to have shelter for. And it  
3     is not the community's burden to try to bail  
4     somebody out. I am -- I implore you to  
5     please take a very serious look at what's  
6     going to happen in this community and this  
7     valley. Thank you.

8             ALJ KELLY: Thank you, Ms. Rocha.  
9             Lori Apodaca.

10            STATEMENT OF SPEAKER APODACA

11            My name is Lori Apodaca, L-o-r-i  
12     A-p-o-d-a-c-a. Good afternoon. Thank you  
13     for allowing me the time to come here and  
14     speak. I am director of regulatory affairs  
15     at California Citrus Mutual. We are a trade  
16     association that has over 2,500 grower  
17     members. We represent 75 percent of  
18     California's 320,000-acre 3.3 billion-dollar  
19     industry. As you know, most of our growers  
20     are centered here in the Central Valley, and  
21     they're primarily located here in Fresno  
22     County.

23            As -- I'd like to echo a lot of  
24     the -- the comments that have been expressed  
25     here today. This is something that growers  
26     and business people face every day at -- in  
27     California. We often hear of smaller growers  
28     who sell their farms, their family farms that

1 they've had for generations, because they  
2 cannot afford the cost of doing business.  
3 Likewise, as much as our growers would like  
4 to pass on the costs to the customer, that is  
5 not always an issue. That results in  
6 customers usually buying less of the product  
7 because of their fixed budgets, or in some  
8 cases, it's just not an option, because the  
9 seller won't allow them to. So then, in  
10 turn, the business owner looks to cut costs  
11 elsewhere, and most of the time that ends up  
12 being labor. So there is a trickle-down  
13 effect on the economy. And a lot of our  
14 family farms have workers that have been  
15 working for them for years. They do not like  
16 to see their workers suffer, as well.

17 I would urge you to reconsider the  
18 increase of the rates, and thank you very  
19 much for your time.

20 ALJ KELLY: Thank you, Ms. Apodaca.

21 Anybody else that would like to  
22 speak that hasn't signed up?

23 (No response.)

24 ALJ KELLY: You guys are lucky. If  
25 Judge Lirag was here, he would actually pick  
26 people out of the audience and make them --  
27 make them speak, or ask them to speak. I'm  
28 not going to be that mean, so I won't do that

1 to you guys.

2 I do, before I give a closing, just  
3 wanted to plug a proceeding that I'm working  
4 on based on some comments that were made by  
5 the mayor. We are, at the Commission,  
6 working on a -- a matter dealing with  
7 disconnections to limit the amount of  
8 disconnections to people who are in  
9 disadvantaged communities, and we've been out  
10 in certain areas. I know last winter, I  
11 think we were in Fresno. We were in San  
12 Bernardino a few months ago. So although  
13 it's not an end-all solution, we are  
14 attempting to look at the disconnections,  
15 especially in communities that are impacted  
16 largely for being low-income, and that  
17 proceeding is R.18-07-005. I suspect that  
18 we'll have a decision for our Phase 1 coming  
19 out in early next year. And that's relating  
20 to the large utilities, so that would be  
21 related to -- to PG&E and SoCal Edison and  
22 SDG&E. So if you're interested in getting  
23 more information on that proceeding, please  
24 either check with the Public Advisor's Office  
25 or if you just go to the PUC website and  
26 search for R.18-07-005, you can get more  
27 information on that proceeding. ]

28 I also just wanted to make sure that



1 everybody knows about the CARE and --  
2 program. But if you don't know about that,  
3 please check into that. It provides a little  
4 bit of assistance. I know it's not a lot.  
5 And a lot of people are just barely over the  
6 qualification for that. So I know that's not  
7 perfect, but that's a start.

8 I also want everybody to know we have a  
9 complaint process at the Commission. So if  
10 you have a situation where you have  
11 difficulty with your bill or can't -- have a  
12 problem getting an answer resolved or you're  
13 feeling overcharged, you can reach out to the  
14 Public Advocates Office -- excuse me -- the  
15 Public Advisors Office, not the Advocates  
16 Office -- reach out to the Public Advisor to  
17 get information about how to file a  
18 complaint.

19 So I just want to make sure there's  
20 nobody else that wants to make a statement?

21 You want to make a statement, sir?  
22 Okay.

23 MR. WATKINS: Thank you.

24 ALJ KELLY: Sir, just state and spell  
25 your name for the record, please.

26

27 STATEMENT OF MR. WATKINS

28 MR. WATKINS: Howard K. Watkins,

1 H-O-W-A-R-D, middle initial K, last name  
2 Watkins, W-A-T-K-I-N-S. I'm a resident in  
3 the City of Fresno. Thank you first for  
4 having a hearing in Fresno. We don't get  
5 them very often from various out-of-area  
6 groups or entities.

7 My concern is that the rate  
8 increase, it seems to me, is due  
9 substantially, if not primarily, to the  
10 negligence of PG&E not maintaining the safety  
11 around their distribution system. I also see  
12 a need that -- I'm not interested in PG&E  
13 collapsing because of the need for money to  
14 keep going.

15 Now, my suggestion is figuring out  
16 approximately how much money PG&E needs to  
17 cover their negligence and that they -- the  
18 structure be they get the money now but in a  
19 year or two they start reducing the rates by  
20 5 percent refunding back, in effect, to the  
21 ratepayers, that this is a temporary  
22 interest-free loan as opposed to a guarantee  
23 that the stockholders will continue to make  
24 money off of their stock.

25 Now, how feasible that is, what the  
26 economics are on that, I don't know, but  
27 conceptually they shouldn't just get a free  
28 ride.

1                   And that's my comment.

2           ALJ KELLY: Thank you, sir.

3           MR. WATKINS: Thank you.

4           ALJ KELLY: Is there anybody else that  
5 wants to make a comment?

6                   (No response.)

7           ALJ KELLY: Okay. I want to thank  
8 everybody for coming out here. I know you  
9 all have lives and things to do. So I  
10 appreciate the fact that you come out here to  
11 express your opinion, and I also wanted to  
12 ensure everybody the ALJ does a lot of water  
13 general rate cases. The judges, ALJs do look  
14 at and consider all the comments that come  
15 in. So don't think that we don't look at the  
16 comments. We do look at the comments. We do  
17 evaluate the comments.

18                   On behalf of the judges that are  
19 assigned to this matter, Judge Lirag and  
20 Judge Lau, I would like to thank you for  
21 coming out here. Like I said, I like to  
22 volunteer every now and then and listen to  
23 the public, so I volunteered to cover this  
24 proceeding for them. I'd also like to, on  
25 behalf of the Commissioners and the assigned  
26 Commissioner, thank you for coming out here  
27 today. We have another proceeding tonight.  
28 It's 6:00 p.m. back here in this room. This

1 will be the last of the public participation  
2 hearings. Currently hearings in this matter  
3 are set to take place September 23 to October  
4 18th in San Francisco, and the schedule shows  
5 that a decision will come out tentatively the  
6 first quarter of 2020.

7 And again, if you have any -- if you  
8 need any additional information, you can  
9 check with the Public Advisor's Office out  
10 there, or you can also contact  
11 public.advisors@cpuc.ca.gov. Thank you very  
12 much.

13 And we are adjourned.

14 (Whereupon, at the hour of 1:49  
15 p.m., this matter having been continued  
16 to 6:00 p.m., August 14, 2019 at  
Fresno, California, the Commission then  
adjourned.)

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1                    EVENING SESSION - 6:00 P.M.

2  
3                    \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

4                    ALJ KELLY: Good evening, Everyone.  
5                    The Commission will come to order. This is  
6                    the time and place for the public  
7                    participation hearing in the general rate  
8                    case application of Pacific Gas and Electric  
9                    Company, or PG&E, for Application 18-12-009.

10                   My name is Gerald F. Kelly, and I am  
11                   not the administrative law judge assigned to  
12                   this proceeding. However, I volunteered to  
13                   conduct this proceeding for Judge Lirag and  
14                   Judge Lau because I like coming out and  
15                   interacting with the public and hearing what  
16                   the public has to say in these public  
17                   participation hearings.

18                   The Commissioner that is assigned to  
19                   this proceeding is Commissioner Randolph.  
20                   She was not able to make it for tonight.  
21                   However, there is a transcript that is being  
22                   taken today of everything that's being said,  
23                   and she will be given copies of the  
24                   transcript, as will both Judges Lirag and  
25                   Judge Lau. And additionally, after each of  
26                   these public participation hearings, I  
27                   prepare a brief summary of what the major  
28                   comments were and what the public has stated,

1 and I forward those to Judge Lirag and Judge  
2 Lau.

3 I just want to give you a basic  
4 brief introduction as to what the Public  
5 Utilities Commission does. The CPUC is a  
6 state agency that regulates privately owned  
7 utilities like PG&E that provide essential  
8 services to the public such as electricity  
9 and natural gas. There are five  
10 Commissioners at the CPUC. These five  
11 Commissioners will be the people who vote and  
12 decide whether to approve PG&E's request or  
13 some other dollar amount in the application.

14 The role of the assigned judges in  
15 this matter is to review PG&E's application,  
16 look at the evidence presented in the record  
17 and write a proposed decision for the  
18 Commission to consider. The Commissioners  
19 will vote to either adopt the proposed  
20 decision or an alternate decision put forth  
21 by the Commissioner.

22 Now I will briefly explain to you  
23 what PG&E is requesting in its application.  
24 In this application, PG&E requests authority  
25 to increase its revenues by 1.058 billion  
26 dollars in 2020, 454 million in 2021 and 486  
27 million in 2022. Every three years PG&E  
28 files a general rate case, or GRC, like this

1 one to request funding to cover its gas and  
2 electric operations.

3 The impact of this GRC application,  
4 if fully granted, would increase an average  
5 residential customer's monthly bill by 7 to 8  
6 percent or \$10.57. According to PG&E, the  
7 major reasons for the requested increases are  
8 to fund PG&E's wildfire safety mitigation and  
9 liability insurance.

10 If you want more information about  
11 the application, there is a fact sheet  
12 outside at the Public Advisor's table.  
13 Currently there are many active parties in  
14 this proceeding including several consumer  
15 groups, community-based organizations, cities  
16 and counties, unions and large user groups.  
17 Many of these groups oppose what PG&E is  
18 requesting in their application. The  
19 participation of these groups in this  
20 proceeding can impact the amount of money  
21 that the Commission ultimately authorizes  
22 PG&E to collect.

23 The purpose of these public  
24 participation hearings is to get comments  
25 from the public on PG&E's application. We  
26 want to hear from you, the public, how the  
27 application will impact you, your family,  
28 your community as a PG&E customer. Your

1 comments will be evaluated, and they will  
2 help the Commission gather the information to  
3 determine whether PG&E's proposed increases  
4 are reasonable.

5 Judge Lirag and Judge Lau have  
6 received the various comments written into  
7 the Public Advisor's Office from the public,  
8 and they have looked at those comments.  
9 Additionally, they will also be reviewing  
10 each transcript from every PPH that's  
11 conducted and will look at the comments that  
12 were made.

13 Outside the room, as I mentioned,  
14 there is a table for the Public Advisor's  
15 Office. If you have questions regarding the  
16 Commission or how you can follow a specific  
17 proceeding, please do not hesitate to speak  
18 to them after this meeting. Additionally,  
19 PG&E has brought several customer service  
20 representatives with them, and they are also  
21 on a table outside. And if you have any  
22 questions about your bill or specific  
23 questions about the application, you can also  
24 speak to them.

25 I'm just going to lay forth a few  
26 ground rules before we start the comments. I  
27 just would ask that everybody who signed up  
28 to speak that you come -- when you come up to



1 the podium, that you direct your comments to  
2 me and that you state and spell your name  
3 before you start speaking. I also ask that  
4 you -- only one person at a time speak as the  
5 court reporters have the difficult job of  
6 taking down everything which is said here  
7 today and also if you could remember to try  
8 to speak slowly and clearly so they can do  
9 their jobs and take the information down.  
10 And I know that sometimes when you start  
11 speaking you just automatically start  
12 speaking fast, and I'm probably one of the  
13 biggest offenders of that. So just try to  
14 remember to speak slowly and clearly, and  
15 that will make their jobs easier this  
16 evening.

17 Right now I'm going to go ahead and  
18 allow PG&E to make a short presentation about  
19 their application.

20 STATEMENT OF MS. BROOKS

21 Welcome. And thank you, Everyone, for  
22 attending today's public participation on  
23 PG&E's 2020 general rate case proposal. My  
24 name is Anna Brooks. I have these comments  
25 written for you that I will hand to you  
26 after. A-N-N-A B-R-O-O-K-S.

27 And I've been an employee with PG&E  
28 for 10 years. As a team leader from this

1 part of our service territory, I'm  
2 responsible for the local government  
3 relations team. This is the last one of the  
4 17 hearings being hosted by the CPUC  
5 throughout our 70,000 square-mile service  
6 area. At each location, representatives from  
7 PG&E will be available to assist customers  
8 with their questions. We have  
9 representatives here today who can track down  
10 information you need related to this specific  
11 proceeding.

12 Your feedback in this process is  
13 crucial because the application outlines a  
14 series of critical safety investments to help  
15 address the state's growing wildfire threat  
16 and further protect the 16 million people we  
17 serve. In Fresno, your dollars help us  
18 perform this work. That's what makes these  
19 hearings so significant. It's important to  
20 note that this process is one of many forms  
21 the CPUC provides for customer input on the  
22 GRC and other regulatory filings.

23 Thank you to the Commission and ALJ  
24 Kelly for the opportunity to learn from our  
25 customers. In closing, I would like to  
26 introduce Roland Trevino, our vice president  
27 of gas engineering and design, who, with your  
28 permission, would like to say a few words.

1 Thank you.

2 STATEMENT OF MR. TREVINO

3 Good evening, Everyone. Thank you for  
4 being here today. Thank you very much, ALJ  
5 Kelly, for giving us the opportunity to  
6 contribute and to learn from the public  
7 participation hearings on our 2020 general  
8 rate case proposal.

9 My name is Roland Trevino. That's  
10 Roland, R-O-L-A-N-D T-R-E-V-I-N-O, and I'm  
11 the vice president of gas engineering and  
12 design. My primary responsibilities include  
13 the design and management of gas transmission  
14 and distribution projects. These projects  
15 directly support PG&E's most important  
16 responsibility, which is the safety of our  
17 customers and the communities we serve. One  
18 of the most important ways we achieve this is  
19 through our GRC proposal, which outlines our  
20 plans to upgrade technology and  
21 infrastructure to enhance our ability to  
22 provide safe and reliable gas and electric  
23 service.

24 Our proposal will help bolster  
25 wildfire prevention, risk monitoring and  
26 emergency response. It will also add new and  
27 enhanced safety measures, increase vegetation  
28 management and harden our electric system to

1 increase resiliency and help further reduce  
2 the wildfire risks, among other projects, to  
3 safely and reliably serve our customers.

4 Under the proposal, we are  
5 requesting about 1.1 billion dollar increase  
6 over currently adopted revenues. More than  
7 half of the proposed increase would be  
8 directly related to wildfire prevention, risk  
9 reduction and additional safety enhancements.

10 If approved by the CPUC, it would  
11 increase a typical residential customer's  
12 bill by 6.4 percent or \$10.57 per month,  
13 which includes \$8.73 per month for  
14 electricity and \$1.84 per month for natural  
15 gas service. While it is important to share  
16 with you where your money is going, it is  
17 also important to share where this money  
18 would not be spent. While the GRC proposal  
19 would help fund a series of important safety  
20 investments, it does not request funding for  
21 PG&E corporation or utility officer  
22 compensation. That means it does not go  
23 toward my pay or any of my colleagues. The  
24 proposal also does not request funding for  
25 potential wildfire claims involved in the  
26 Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceeding.

27 The GRC proposal is a significant  
28 request and comes at a difficult time. As

1 always, our commitment is to keep customers'  
2 costs as low as possible while meeting our  
3 responsibilities to safely serve our  
4 customers even as our changing climate  
5 presents significant new challenges and  
6 risks.

7 This funding proposal is subject to  
8 the CPUC's thorough open and transparent  
9 review and approval process. We encourage  
10 our customers to provide feedback and  
11 participate in this important public process  
12 that will help us shape customer rates in  
13 California's energy future.

14 Thank you for your time today.

15 ALJ KELLY: Thank you, sir.

16 Robert Rodriguez. And Mr.  
17 Rodriguez, if you could just state and spell  
18 your name, that would be great.

19 STATEMENT OF MR. RODRIGUEZ

20 Good evening. My name is Robert  
21 Rodriguez. Robert, R-O-B-E-R-T. I usually  
22 go with M, middle initial. Rodriguez,  
23 R-O-D-R-I-G-U-E-Z.

24 I'm here as a resident of Region 7,  
25 and I see that the rate hikes would possibly  
26 increase my rates by about \$130 plus a year.  
27 And every time I turn around, I'm having my  
28 water rates -- they are raised or my utility

1 rates are raised, and yet I'm a retiree on a  
2 fixed income. But I don't see anybody else's  
3 salaries going up. But always companies are  
4 asking for more each time we turn around.

5 And as a resident of Region 7 that  
6 is in Southeast Fresno -- it's one of the  
7 lower income communities -- I have -- that  
8 was a -- from the county -- I have PG&E poles  
9 in my backyard that are in dire need of  
10 repair, and some of them are termite  
11 infested. And I have asked PG&E to come and  
12 repair them, and they always do the minimum.  
13 My posts in the corner of my house is about  
14 ready to fall. I see it swaying when the  
15 wind blows when there's heavy winds coming.  
16 And I already notified PG&E about this, and  
17 nothing has ever been done.

18 Just like the thing that happened in  
19 Paradise. They knew for a fact that those  
20 poles were in dire need. They had been told  
21 in advance that those lines were in need, but  
22 they neglected it because of greed. And  
23 greed was the driving force in Paradise when  
24 this tragedy happened. And it's really  
25 because they wanted to save that money to  
26 give bonuses to the CEOs, and that's a  
27 documented fact. They got bonuses as a  
28 result of not repairing those lines that they

1 knew in advance that they were in dire need  
2 and could possibly cause a fire. ]

3 And -- and, in good conscious, I  
4 cannot basically bail out a private company,  
5 as a -- as a public citizen, and -- and pay  
6 that additional rate. For citizens of  
7 Southeast Fresno, that's about \$130, and that  
8 would probably mean some parents could  
9 possibly buy their children a couple of pair  
10 of shoes, tennis shoes, or their children to  
11 go to school to be dressed appropriately or  
12 they could possibly invest a little bit of  
13 money for their children's future education.  
14 But, in good conscious, I cannot bail out  
15 people that were driven by greed and  
16 committed criminal acts in the travesty that  
17 happened in Paradise. And -- and -- and  
18 my -- and my belief is that they were  
19 directly responsible for the deaths and the  
20 tragedy that happened in Paradise, because  
21 they knew in advance that those poles were  
22 falling, especially the one that ignited the  
23 fires that started, and they were already put  
24 on notice that this was going to happen, but  
25 they let it happen. And yet, for us to be  
26 bailing them out at this point, I -- in all  
27 good conscious, I cannot justify in any way  
28 helping them out. Again, it's another

1 example of too big to fail, a monopoly too  
2 big to fail. And I'm getting tired of always  
3 bailing out large companies that they make  
4 the mistakes, but the citizens have to bail  
5 them out.

6 And so I'm here to strongly oppose  
7 the rate hike, because I know that nothing is  
8 going to change. They're still going to get  
9 their bonuses, they're still going to get  
10 their raises, but at the taxpayer's expense.  
11 And I think the low crowd here is an example,  
12 that they feel that nothing is going to  
13 change. That's why we have possibly low  
14 attendance here today, because people are  
15 tired, and they say, "Nothing changes, and  
16 they're still going to do what they want to  
17 do."

18 And so here, as -- as a resident  
19 of -- of region seven, I've got a pole that's  
20 ready to fall over in the back, and I -- and  
21 I've told them over and over that needs  
22 repair. It's got termites at the bottom.  
23 And they always come out and only do the very  
24 minimum, again to skimp, to save, to get the  
25 bonuses and get the raises. And I cannot  
26 justify, you know, giving them anything  
27 because of their greed and ignorance. So I  
28 thank you.



1           ALJ KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez.

2           We have another party that's here,  
3   TURN, that wants to make a brief statement,  
4   and so if you'd like to come forward and give  
5   your statement, that would be great.

6           STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MONTES

7           Thank you. Good afternoon. My  
8   name is Ana Montes. That's Ana, A-n-a,  
9   Montes, M-o-n-t-e-s. And I'm a consumer  
10  advocate at TURN. And at TURN, I also work  
11  with consumers on a daily basis handling  
12  complaints as they come into the office.

13          I'd like to, first of all, thank  
14  you, Administrative Judge Kelly, for being  
15  here today and for your opening statement  
16  that you made early today. I thought it was  
17  really excellent. So thank you for that.

18          I also want to take this  
19  opportunity to say a few words of welcome to  
20  the people that were able to come out today.  
21  One of the things that I did find out from  
22  people in asking them why the turnout has  
23  been low at these hearings, and not just this  
24  hearing, but other hearings, is the location.  
25  People have requested that locations be held  
26  in areas that are -- that -- where people  
27  live, and for some people, especially now,  
28  they are not going to come to state or

1 federal buildings. It's -- it's very  
2 threatening for them to come out to some of  
3 these places. So first of all, thank you for  
4 taking the time today to come out to today's  
5 Public Participation Hearing. And I hope  
6 that those who are able to speak out today  
7 will speak out, because it is very important  
8 to hear your voices and to have the  
9 opportunity for you to share your experiences  
10 and concerns.

11 We also know that safety is very  
12 important, and we are all concerned about it.  
13 Every one of us in this room are very  
14 concerned about safety. However, we also  
15 want to make sure that every dollar that is  
16 earmarked for safety improvements is spent on  
17 safety improvements. TURN's opposed to this  
18 rate hike.

19 I also want to say that public  
20 hearings represent the California Public  
21 Utilities Commission at its very best. In  
22 the hearing room, the judge gets to hear from  
23 utility attorneys and consumer attorneys  
24 locked in battle over numbers and technical  
25 issues. Today, however, the judges want to  
26 hear from you consumers about proposed rate  
27 changes and rate increases and how they  
28 affect you, your family and your community.

1 You are the experts. Those of you who are  
2 paying the bills are feeling the pain or the  
3 ease, if there is any ease. Your voice does  
4 make the difference, and today you have a  
5 chance to share your opinion before decisions  
6 are made. By the time you hear about a new  
7 policy on the TV or the newspaper, it's too  
8 late to engage in the public discourse. I  
9 can't tell you how many calls I get from  
10 people asking why certain decisions have  
11 occurred because they felt that they had no  
12 opportunity to participate because they  
13 didn't know how to participate.

14 PG&E's latest proposal will  
15 increase residential consumer bills annually  
16 from 2020 to 2022. If approved, this  
17 proposal would raise your monthly bill by \$20  
18 by 2022, grow PG&E revenue 23 percent by 2022  
19 from 2019, create a two billion-dollar annual  
20 increase for PG&E by 2022, resulting in a  
21 4.6 billion total increase for PG&E above  
22 2019 over the next three years.

23 Additionally, this proposal does come on top  
24 of other ratepayer increases currently being  
25 proposed by PG&E that would authorize a  
26 60 percent profit margin increase to  
27 shareholders, while forcing ratepayers to pay  
28 billions for additional tree trimming and

1 costs associated with wildfires caused by  
2 PG&E's negligence.

3 During your testimony today, I  
4 encourage you to use your time to reflect on  
5 your experiences as a PG&E customer. Tell  
6 the -- the Commission how current energy  
7 costs affect you, what tradeoffs you've been  
8 forced to make, what measures you've taken to  
9 reduce costs and conserve energy and what  
10 additional tradeoffs you may be forced to  
11 take if you're required to pay an additional  
12 \$20 a month.

13 Finally, if you've not already  
14 signed up to speak, please consider doing so.  
15 I hope our statement has provided some  
16 context and inspiration so that you can lift  
17 up your voice and be heard today and tell  
18 your story. Thank you.

19 ALJ KELLY: Thank you.

20 Lisa Walzem.

21 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER WALZEM

22 Can I just submit my comments via  
23 writing?

24 ALJ KELLY: Sure, yeah. That's fine.

25 SPEAKER WALZEM: Okay. I'm going to do  
26 that, instead.

27 ALJ KELLY: Okay. Do you want to do  
28 that -- how would you like to do that? Do

1 you want to do it just through the Public  
2 Advisor's Office or give a copy to the court  
3 reporter?

4 SPEAKER WALZEM: Through the advisor's  
5 office.

6 ALJ KELLY: Okay. All right. So make  
7 sure you talk to them about how to do that.  
8 You can do that. That's fine.

9 SPEAKER WALZEM: Okay. Great. Thanks.

10 ALJ KELLY: Eric Payne. Hey, I know  
11 you. You were at my other proceeding.  
12 Right?

13 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PAYNE

14 Yeah, Judge Kelly. Thank you for  
15 coming to Fresno. I'm going to have to adopt  
16 you as a Fresnoian. Welcome. Yes, I am a  
17 party to another proceeding on  
18 disconnections.

19 My name is Eric Payne. I am the  
20 executive director of the Central Valley  
21 Urban Institute. We work on behalf of  
22 low-income disadvantaged communities of color  
23 to ensure that there is equitable, just and  
24 fair inclusion of those who have been  
25 marginalized in the decision-making process.

26 And so, much of my thoughts, like  
27 they were a couple years back when PG&E  
28 requested a rate increase for its residents,

1 while we are deeply appreciative of PG&E's  
2 commitment to education by investing in our  
3 Beating the Odds scholarship program, we are  
4 still alarmed at their ask for ratepayers,  
5 specifically those -- when you look at the  
6 disparate impact that many families here in  
7 the Central Valley experience around poverty,  
8 38 percent of the children that live in  
9 Fresno County live in poverty; but, when you  
10 desegregate those numbers, and you look at  
11 the African American dysphoria, more than  
12 60 percent of children live in poverty. And  
13 when you look at the unemployment rates here  
14 in Fresno County, specifically those amongst  
15 African American families, unemployment --  
16 the unemployment rate is three times higher  
17 than that of -- of -- of Caucasians here in  
18 the Central Valley. The median household  
19 income -- and we are talking about post  
20 recession. Right? We are having a tough  
21 tough time bouncing back from the recession.  
22 Right? Unlike many other communities in the  
23 State of California, like Los Angeles and  
24 San Francisco, the median household for  
25 African American families is \$27,000 a year.  
26 And then when you also look at Latino  
27 families, it's 30 -- \$39,000 a year, compared  
28 to Caucasian families whose median household

1 income is \$69,000 a year. And so,  
2 oftentimes, many families here in the Central  
3 Valley are faced with, you know -- and even  
4 looking at some of our data around food  
5 insecurity, 39 percent of our families are  
6 food insecure. So often times, when you look  
7 at even something as minimal as \$10 being  
8 added to your bill, families are choosing  
9 between feeding their children in their  
10 household and keeping the lights on at night.

11 And so, it's our position that we  
12 are just really deeply concerned about the  
13 rate increase and the heights that they're  
14 asking for, and we would ask that -- that the  
15 Commission take further thought into ways  
16 that -- even when we look at the  
17 disconnection rates of those households,  
18 which -- which you are very well versed on,  
19 it's just -- it's alarming for the -- the  
20 disconnection on rates across the board for  
21 our households. And we really want to look  
22 at ways to support these families to ensure  
23 that there's not this trickle-down effect  
24 from a disconnection ensuing that a family  
25 that lives in public housing and could not  
26 make their payment, and understanding that  
27 there are safety nets in place for those  
28 families, but even getting lost in that

1 transition, you -- you end up having a social  
2 worker come out to your house or DSS does an  
3 inspection, and they see that the lights are  
4 out, and then that, in turn, creates a  
5 separation or a burden to the family from  
6 those children to that family. Then you have  
7 to go through the courts, and additional fees  
8 are incurred. And so, there -- there are  
9 just all these other concerns that transition  
10 from the -- the costs of a rate increase or a  
11 disconnection that a family in poverty could  
12 experience.

13 And I think that, you know, we --  
14 we really need to have a little deeper dive  
15 and further conversation around how we  
16 mitigate those issues, and I just don't  
17 believe that the solution right now is to  
18 increase those rates for families.

19 ALJ KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Payne.

20 SPEAKER PAYNE: All right. Thank you.

21 ALJ KELLY: You guys are all doing what  
22 I did in law school. I sat in the very last  
23 row thinking that I wouldn't get called on;  
24 but, the professor would actually randomly  
25 call. I've always wanted to actually just do  
26 that, but I'm not that -- that mean, so I'm  
27 not going to randomly pick out people to  
28 speak.



1 But, is there anybody else that  
2 would like to speak that did not sign up?

3 (No response.)

4 ALJ KELLY: You guys are a shy bunch.  
5 You're making my job really easy.

6 Well, if you want to submit comments  
7 to -- in writing, you can do so. You can  
8 send an email to the Public Advisor's Office.  
9 That address -- as soon as I find it, I will  
10 give that to you. That is  
11 public.advisors@cpuc.ca.gov. If you would  
12 just reference this proceeding number,  
13 A.18-12-009, you can go ahead and make  
14 comments in writing, and Judge Lirag and  
15 Judge Lau will get those comments. I -- I  
16 assure you, as somebody who's done a couple  
17 of water cases, we do look at the comments  
18 that come into the Public Advisor's Office.  
19 The commissioner's office also looks at  
20 the -- the -- the comments. ]

21 So if nobody else wants to speak, I  
22 would like to, on behalf of myself, thank you  
23 for coming out. I realize you guys have  
24 lives and you took time out of your personal  
25 time to come here. I appreciate that.

26 Judge Lirag and Judge Lau also thank  
27 you for coming out, and the Commissioners  
28 themselves also thank you. This matter is

1 set, if it goes to hearings -- hearings are  
2 set to be in San Francisco from September  
3 23rd through approximately October 18. And a  
4 decision is expected sometime during the  
5 first quarter of 2020, and I would guess it  
6 would probably be later in the quarter. So  
7 it probably would not be January or February.  
8 It probably would be more likely about March  
9 or April.

10 Thank you very much, and we are  
11 adjourned. 6:31 p.m.

12 (Whereupon, at the hour of 6:31  
13 p.m., the Commission then adjourned.) ]

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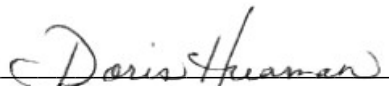
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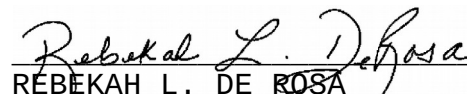
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