

1 9/15/2022 - NYSEG/RG&E - 22-E-0317, 0319 22-G-0318, 0320

2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

4 CASE 22-E-0317 - Proceeding on motion of the
5 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules, and
6 regulations of the New York State Electric and Gas
7 Corporation for electric service.

8 CASE 22-G-0318 - Proceeding on motion of the
9 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules, and
10 regulations of New York State Electric and Gas
11 Corporation for gas service.

12 CASE 22-E-0319 - Proceeding on motion of the
13 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules, and
14 regulations of Rochester Gas and Electric
15 Corporation for electric service.

16 CASE 22-G-0320 - Proceeding on motion of the
17 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules, and
18 regulations of Rochester Gas and Electric
19 Corporation for gas service.

20 PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARING

21 DATE: September 15, 2022 at 1:04 p.m.

22 VENUE: WebEx

23 BEFORE: A.L.J. ERIKA BERGEN

24 A.L.J. LINDSEY OVERTON

25 Reported by Monique Hines

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2 (The hearing commenced at 1:04 p.m.)

3 THE REPORTER: On the record.

4 A.L.J. BERGEN: I call case 22-E-0317,
5 proceeding on motion of the Commission as to the
6 rates, charges, rules, and regulations of the New
7 York State Electric and Gas Corporation for electric
8 service; case 22-G-0318, proceeding on motion of the
9 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules, and
10 regulations of New York State Electric and Gas
11 Corporation for gas service; case 22-E-0319,
12 proceeding on motion of the Commission as to the
13 rates, charges, rules, and regulations of Rochester
14 Gas and Electric Corporation for electric service;
15 and case 22-G-0320, proceeding on motion of the
16 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules, and
17 regulations of Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation
18 for gas service.

19 Good afternoon and welcome. My name
20 is Erika Bergen and I'm an administrative law judge
21 with the New York State Department of Public Service.
22 With me today on the line is Administrative Law Judge
23 Lindsey Overton. And together, we're responsible for
24 presiding over the hearings in this case, and the
25 development of a complete record in these

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2 proceedings.

3 We're here today for a public
4 statement hearing that was noticed on August 19th,
5 2022. New York State Electric and Gas Corporation,
6 or NYSEG, and Rochester Gas & Electric Corporation,
7 or RG&E, filed amendments to their electric and gas
8 tariff schedules on May 26, 2022, proposing to
9 increase their annual electric and gas delivery
10 revenues effective May 1st, 2023.

11 NYSEG proposes to increase its annual
12 electric delivery revenues by approximately \$274
13 million, which is a 31% increase in base delivery
14 revenues or a 16.8% increase in total revenues.

15 NYSEG requests an increase in its
16 annual gas delivery revenues of approximately 43
17 million, which is a 20.7% increase in base delivery
18 revenues or a 9.8% increase in total revenues.

19 RG&E requests an annual increase in
20 electric -- electric's delivery revenues of
21 approximately \$93.8 million, which is a 19% increase
22 in delivery -- delivery revenues or an 11.3% increase
23 in total revenue.

24 RG&E also requests an annual increase
25 in gas delivery revenues of approximately \$37

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2 million, which is a 20.9% increase in base delivery
3 revenues or 9.7 increase in total revenues.

4 We're holding this hearing so that you
5 can provide your comments on these proposals for the
6 Public Service Commission's consideration. The
7 Commission will decide the terms and conditions of
8 service for NYSEG and RG&E.

9 The Commission consists of seven
10 members, the Chair Rory Christian, and Commissioners
11 Diane Burman, James Alesi, Tracey Edwards, John
12 Howard, David Valesky, and John Maggiore. We're
13 fortunate today to have Commissioner Maggiore with
14 us.

15 Commissioner, would you like to
16 address the participants?

17 COMMISSIONER MAGGIORE: Thank you very
18 much. I'm -- I realize that this is a very important
19 case that's going to affect a great number of people.
20 I am here to listen to you. You're not going to hear
21 from me again during this public statement hearing,
22 but I do think it's very important to take into
23 consideration of what -- what -- what comes out of
24 not just this public statement hearing, but there's a
25 series. So I'm all ears and I'm very much looking

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2 forward to hearing what people have to say.

3 And I'd like to thank everybody who is
4 participating for taking the time to do so. So thank
5 you very much.

6 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you,
7 Commissioner.

8 So the process we'll follow today is
9 the statements you make will become part of the
10 record. We have a court reporter, as I indicated,
11 who will prepare a transcript of the hearing, which
12 will be included in the official record of the
13 proceedings so that your comments can be considered
14 by all the members of the Commission.

15 When it is ready, the transcript will
16 also be publicly available for review on the
17 Department of Public Service's website in the DMM
18 system. This hearing is not an evidentiary hearing
19 with cross examination, and it is not a question-and-
20 answer session, but really a forum to hear comments
21 from you.

22 This is also not the only opportunity
23 for public comment. If you did not pre-register to
24 speak at today's hearing, but would like your views
25 to be included in the record, there are, as

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2 Commissioner Maggiore mentioned, other public
3 statement hearings scheduled, and there are other
4 ways to put your comments in the record.

5 You can submit comments through the
6 Department's website, by email, by regular mail, or
7 by telephone. All comments, no matter how submitted,
8 are given equal consideration. So no statement made
9 today will be given any more weight than if you
10 decide to put in your comments, later on, by email,
11 mail, or telephone.

12 Because we are holding this public
13 statement hearing virtually, we asked people to
14 register, to make a statement at today's hearing.
15 But it appears, at this point, we have a few more
16 people on the line than have registered, and since
17 it's still a manageable number, if we can get through
18 everybody in a timely manner that has registered,
19 then I will open up the floor for other people to
20 speak.

21 If you have registered to make a
22 statement or you're called upon to make a statement,
23 please summarize any lengthy written statements. You
24 can summarize them orally and then, submit the full
25 written statement by mail or email. That way we can

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2 give as many people an opportunity to speak as
3 possible today.

4 Before we begin with the public
5 comment section, I ask that if you're going to speak,
6 please use only one audio input and one audio output.
7 So use -- if you join by phone, use only your phone.
8 If you join by computer, use only your computer.
9 Otherwise, if you're logged in on both your devices,
10 we may experience problems with feedback that will
11 make it hard for the court reporter to make a
12 transcript.

13 We'll begin with people who have
14 registered electronically, and then, we will move to
15 the people who are registered by phone. If someone
16 is not available when I call them or if you're having
17 technical difficulties, stay on. We'll move on to
18 the next person, but at the end, we'll come back to
19 the people who were not available or who were having
20 trouble.

21 If you've registered electronically,
22 after we call your name, we will unmute your line and
23 let you know that you are unmuted. Please remember
24 that if you put your own line on mute on your end,
25 you will also have to unmute that line before you

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2 begin to speak, or we won't be able to hear you.

3 If you've joined by telephone, when we
4 call your name, we ask that you hit star 3. That's
5 star 3 if you've joined by telephone, so that we can
6 recognize you and unmute your line. It may take a
7 moment to go through the list to find you, so just
8 make sure that you wait until you hear a beep before
9 you begin to speak. Again, you should hear a beep
10 when your line's been unmuted.

11 And again, if you muted your own
12 telephone, remember you have to unmute on your end,
13 as well as ours, before you begin to speak. Again, I
14 remind everybody, please speak slowly and clearly so
15 the court reporter can accurately capture your
16 statement for the record.

17 If you're on, joining us today on
18 behalf of an organization, please also identify the
19 name of the organization you represent.

20 So with that, our first speaker today
21 is Melissa Carlson.

22 MS. CARLSON: Hello. My name is
23 Melissa Carlson. I am from Rochester. And thank you
24 for the opportunity to speak. I applaud the utility
25 RG&E, in Rochester where I live, for some of the work

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2 they're beginning to do. I have new poles in my
3 backyard. Not sure what that's for, but they're --
4 they're working on things.

5 But I don't want to see rate hikes
6 unless they are going to be doing things that protect
7 the climate. That is my primary driver. Two major
8 roads in my neighborhood have had new gas mains, and
9 I've seen marketing, saying how wonderful this is,
10 but this is not appropriate for protecting the
11 climate.

12 I also looked on the RG&E website.
13 And it says there is excellent customer service and
14 commitment to community and the environment. I find
15 none of these.

16 I answer phones for an energy supply
17 program in Rochester and other places in Monroe
18 County. I have talked to customers who have waited
19 hours on the phone. RG&E has sent them to me, when
20 they aren't part of my program, because I'm a local
21 scapegoat.

22 I, myself, installed a geothermal heat
23 pump, and RG&E did not send me any bills until I
24 called three times and talked to seven people, to
25 figure out they still had me as a gas customer.

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2 And because I had only two or three
3 therms of gas being used a month, they figured
4 something was wrong so they stopped billing me. And
5 I had to work to get that straightened out.

6 Where the website says that they have
7 commitment to the community, I want to see more
8 commitment to weatherization and rebates on heat
9 pumps and focus on district geothermal. It would
10 really help electrify many of the houses and improve
11 their energy burden for many of the poor housing
12 stock and for people in our community.

13 And for caring about the environment,
14 we should be focusing on electric. We should not be
15 installing new gas mains. I want more focus on the
16 environment on electrifying things and helping the
17 community move forward in those ways. Thank you very
18 much.

19 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Jody Francis.

21 MS. KAILAS: Jody Francis, if you have
22 called in for this public statement hearing, please
23 press star 3 on your phone so I can locate you.
24 You're not listed by name as an electronic user.
25 Thank you.

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2 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Jody Francis,
3 if you're on the line, we'll come back to you.

4 In the meantime, we're going to go to
5 Arlene Hayes.

6 MS. KAILAS: Arlene Hayes, if you have
7 called in for the public statement hearing, can you
8 press star 3 on your phone so I can locate you on the
9 line.

10 A.L.J. BERGEN: Again, we're looking
11 for Arlene Hayes. Okay. Arlene, if you're on the
12 line and having trouble, we'll come back to you.

13 Meanwhile, we'll move to Faith
14 Bennett. Faith Bennett, with a B.

15 MS. KAILAS: Faith Bennett, if you
16 have called in for the public statement hearing,
17 press star 3 on your phone so I can locate you and
18 unmute your line.

19 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Again, Faith
20 Bennett, if you're on the line and having trouble,
21 you can hold and we'll come back to you.

22 Meanwhile, we'll move to Vincent Meyr.
23 Vincent Meyr?

24 MS. KAILAS: Vincent Myer, if you have
25 called in to this public statement hearing, please

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2 press star 3 on your phone so I can locate you and
3 unmute your line. Thank you.

4 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Vincent Meyer,
5 if you're on, we'll try you again.

6 Meanwhile, we'll move to Beverly
7 Usher.

8 MS. USHER: Hello.

9 A.L.J. BERGEN: Hello. Is this
10 Beverly?

11 MS. USHER: Yes, it is.

12 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. Please
13 make your statement.

14 MS. USHER: I am sorry about the
15 inconvenience. All those names you have called
16 previously are in on my line, and they were -- since
17 it was logged in on my line, we're all sitting here,
18 together. So they will be available to make their
19 comments afterwards.

20 And we're all part of the Monroe
21 County Workers Benefit Council Organization. I'm
22 here today to speak on the behalf of more than 25,000
23 low-income workers and families throughout Monroe
24 County. The Workers Benefit Council expresses our
25 emphatic opposition to RG&E and NYSEG's shameless

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2 \$580 million rate hike request.

3 Furthermore, we demand the Public
4 Service Commission do its job and deny this
5 unaffordable and unsustainable rate increase. We are
6 the home health aides, nurses' aides, working in
7 nursing homes, children's childcare workers, food
8 service, and retail workers. They started calling us
9 essential workers during the pandemic, but we don't
10 get paid enough for the essentials like our energy.

11 And so adding another \$20 and \$22 to
12 my bill, and theirs, too, to our monthly bill is
13 absolutely out of the question. For over 12 years,
14 we called on the Public Service Commission to follow
15 its own legal mandate to, quote, protect the utility
16 customer from the potential abuse of monopoly power
17 and to protect the rights of New Yorkers while
18 ensuring access to reliable and low-cost utility
19 services.

20 But all during that time, the P.S.C.
21 had broken its mandate, choosing to guarantee a
22 certain rate of return on investments for the utility
23 monopoly shareholders. The guaranteed profit was 9%,
24 last we heard.

25 As a result of the state guaranteeing

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2 these exorbitant profits for energy monopolies,
3 compounding with stagnant wages and fixed incomes not
4 keeping up and not being able to keep up, New York
5 has seen 300,000 utility customers being shut off
6 each year, 60,000 of those right here in our region.

7 Shutoff by Avangrid subsidy area --
8 subsidiaries RG&E and NYSEG. And Avangrid's parent
9 company in Spain, Iberdrola, got a 4.4 billion in
10 profits this year, shareholders. And the C.E.O. got
11 paid 10 million, year after year.

12 During the pandemic, as an energy --
13 as an emergency measure, the state instituted a
14 moratorium on shutoffs, which the W.B.C. has already
15 been demanding for 12 years by petition, letters, and
16 testifying at public hearings. However, at the
17 beginning of 2022, the state lifted the moratorium,
18 so shutoffs began again.

19 This -- the Covid pandemic has -- has
20 made it worse with thousands losing their jobs and
21 hundreds of small businesses closing down. So it's
22 not time to allow shutoffs. It's time to stop the
23 shutoff forever.

24 During the pandemic, according to
25 RG&E's own 2020-2021 financial report, they

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2 successfully increased their net revenue by 32% and
3 increased their stockholders' wealth by over 27%. We
4 know how they did it. Now, 13% of all utility
5 customers owe more than \$2.1 billion and that's
6 double what was owed at the same time in 2021.

7 So the W.B.C. is here today again,
8 after more than a decade of hearings and petitions,
9 to continue demanding a permanent year-round
10 moratorium on all shutoffs for low- to moderate-
11 income taxpayers.

12 It's not just about financial debt.
13 Some of us are playing with our lives and our health.
14 Every winter in central and western New York, there
15 is a predictable death toll due to house fires and
16 carbon monoxide poisoning of people who have resorted
17 to unsafe heating methods after being shut off by
18 RG&E and NYSEG and other shareholder utility
19 companies.

20 Every summer, the numbers of
21 individuals in the U.S. ending up in emergency rooms
22 and even dying, heat-related death kill more -- kill
23 more people than hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and
24 earthquakes, combined. It's a silent killer. We are
25 dying. We the people, we are dying.

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2 There is no report on these deaths
3 from the heat waves. And that's why we're slipping
4 through the cracks. The same way we need heating in
5 the winter months, we need air conditioning in the
6 summer months, as well as -- because both are
7 essential to our health and the wellbeing, not to
8 mention for keeping insulin refrigerated and to keep
9 breathing equipment running. I use breathing
10 equipment.

11 This is why we need permanent year-
12 round moratorium on all shutoffs for low- to
13 moderate-income ratepayer.

14 On July 28th of this year, the W.B.C.
15 just submitted a petition to this P.S.C. office in
16 Albany by fax, containing over 13,000 signatures and
17 a dozen endorsement letters from local faith-based
18 groups and non-profits, who are attempting to address
19 the needs of the poor in our community.

20 The petition demands were to enact a
21 permanent year-round moratorium on utility shutoffs
22 for New a York residents whose incomes are below the
23 250% of the federal poverty level, to direct RG&E and
24 NYSEG to cancel arrears for their customers whose
25 incomes are below or are at the 250% of the poverty

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2 level guidelines, and to transition New York State's
3 energy grid, a 100%, to renewable energy by 2030,
4 while ensuring services, both affordable and
5 accessible, to even the lowest income resident.
6 Lowest income resident.

7 Dozens of people in their communities
8 have called the P.S.C. office to confirm that the
9 petitions had been received and processed.

10 Eventually, your staff in the Public Affairs office
11 told us that -- told us that they had received them
12 and forwarded them to Secretary Michelle Phillips.
13 Then, numbers of our people called her directly. And
14 she eventually indicated that they had been received.

15 We saw what happened next. The state
16 government ... debt, which is our second demand.
17 Excuse me. But what they really did is pay off
18 utility's debts with \$567 million that is coming out
19 of our taxes, except for the 6% utilities kicked in.
20 But somehow, they are allowed to actually bill us for
21 that 6% through additional surcharges to pay off our
22 debt.

23 The P.S.C. could make utilities
24 affordable and environmentally sustainable in the
25 interest of poor and working people throughout New

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2 York State if it was truly a priority to them. This
3 year, the Public Service Commission has another
4 chance to live up to its legal mandate and do what is
5 -- was created to do, serve the public.

6 Monroe County Workers Benefit Council
7 is here today to demand that the P.S.C. deny RG&E and
8 NYSEG's rate hike request outright and take the next
9 step and lower the rates, enact a permanent year-
10 round moratorium on utility shutoffs for New York's
11 residents whose incomes are at or below the 250% of
12 the federal poverty level, and to transition New York
13 State's energy grid to 100% renewable energy by 2030,
14 while ensuring service is both affordable and
15 accessible to even the lowest-income residents.

16 The Constitution says, it's we the
17 people. So again, we ask to be heard. Thank you.

18 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you for your
19 comment.

20 The next registered speaker is Cheryl
21 Frank. Cheryl Frank?

22 MS. KAILAS: Cheryl Frank, if you have
23 called in to the public statement hearing, please
24 press star 3 on your phone so I can locate you.
25 Thank you.

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2 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. We'll move on
3 to David Parrish. David Parrish?

4 MS. KAILAS: David Parrish, if you
5 have called in to the public statement hearing,
6 please press star 3 on your phone so I may locate
7 you. Thank you.

8 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Again, we'll
9 come back to Cheryl and David. If they're -- if
10 you're having problems, just stay on the line.

11 But we're moving on to Cynthia Cox.
12 Cynthia Cox?

13 MS. KAILAS: Cynthia, if you have
14 called in to the public statement hearing, please
15 press star 3 on your phone so I may locate you.
16 Thank you.

17 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. We'll move on
18 to Tony LaPietra (phonetic spelling), who is
19 registered by telephone. Tony LaPietra, please press
20 star 3 on your phone so we can identify you. Again,
21 Tony LaPietra, if you've joined us by telephone,
22 please press star 3 so we can identify your line.

23 Okay. We'll move on to -- did I hear
24 Mr. LaPietra? No?

25 Okay. We'll move on to Nicholas

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2 Ruben. Nicholas Ruben, if you joined by telephone,
3 please press star 3 so we can identify your line to
4 unmute. Nicholas Ruben, if you're on the line,
5 please press star 3 on your telephone.

6 Again, if you've joined us and you've
7 muted on your own line, whether online or on
8 telephone, you have to unmute yourself so that we can
9 hear you. Okay. No, Nicholas.

10 Do we have Kristen, going to make a
11 mess of this, Van Hooreweghe, V-A-N H-O-O-R-E-W-E-G-
12 H-E.

13 MS. HOOREWEGHE: Hi.

14 A.L.J. BERGEN: Hi. Thank you. I
15 apologize for wrecking your name. So please go ahead
16 and make your statement.

17 MS. HOOREWEGHE: Sure. In Rochester,
18 in 2021, 18 daily climate records were broken, 1
19 snowfall record, 5 extreme rain records, and 12
20 extreme heat records. Nationally, 2021 was the ...
21 on record, with 20 separate billion-dollar weather
22 and climate disasters in the U.S. This summer, we've
23 simultaneously experienced heat and drought in U.S.
24 west, wildfires in Europe, and massive flooding in
25 Pakistan.

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2 Climate impacts are here and now,
3 claiming untold human lives, costing billions of
4 dollars and disproportionately impacting our most
5 vulnerable community members. It's foolish to think
6 that continued investment of billions of dollars into
7 the local gas infrastructure, which is what is being
8 proposed in this case, will stem the tide of climate
9 disaster and meet the mandates put forth in New York
10 State's C.L.C.P.A.

11 Moreover, it is immoral to grant a
12 guaranteed return on equity of 10.2% to shareholders
13 to ... climate crisis while unduly burdening low- to
14 moderate-income customers with inordinate rate
15 increases that will serve to exacerbate existing
16 energy burdens.

17 Continued investment in gas
18 infrastructure, including ... solutions like ...
19 projects serve only to advance interests of
20 shareholders who stand to benefit from a guaranteed
21 return on equity with capital projects and do not
22 meet the public service law's requirement to provide
23 safe and adequate service at just and reasonable
24 rates.

25 Therefore, it is imperative that the

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2 companies reduce their gas sales in line with the
3 C.L.C.P.A. mandates, increase incentives for heat
4 pump technologies, particularly for low- to moderate-
5 income households, and invest in more impactful
6 energy efficiency programming.

7 To meet the state's goals of 100%
8 carbon-free electricity, the companies should ease
9 the process of connecting renewable energy to the
10 grid and coordinate suppliers to rely ...

11 The companies should invest more
12 heavily in utility-scale battery storage, ... greater
13 penetration of variable renewable energy, and help
14 address peak demand.

15 Finally, district geothermal projects
16 should be a top priority for ratepayer dollars as the
17 technology enables communities to take advantage of
18 aggregate ... economies of scale and load diversity,
19 as well as making highly efficient clean heating and
20 cooling accessible to all community members.

21 While I applaud the companies'
22 investment in electric heat make ready program and
23 efforts to include access to ... charging
24 infrastructure, we can do more to protect the climate
25 and ease local energy burdens. I implore the

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2 Commission and the companies to take this opportunity
3 to be leaders in transitioning our energy
4 infrastructure to a more sustainable future. Thank
5 you.

6 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you.

7 Next, we have Brady Fergusson. Brady
8 Fergusson?

9 MR. FERGUSSON: Good afternoon. My
10 last name is spelled F-E-R-G-U-S-S-O-N.

11 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. You may
12 begin.

13 MS. FRANCIS: Thank you. Just wanted
14 to make sure the extra S got in there. And good
15 afternoon, again.

16 Ten years ago, after my wife and I
17 moved into the first house that we owned, and with
18 the Rochester winter quickly approaching, we knew the
19 first project we had to get done was getting our
20 house insulated. Our house was built in 1880 and,
21 like many of the houses in our city, it was in need
22 of a weatherization upgrade. A retired widow, who
23 was on a fixed income, had lived here previously and
24 I shudder to think how much of that income she had to
25 spend on her utility bills every winter in her

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2 uninsulated home.

3 High energy burdens continue to be a
4 problem in our community. New York State has defined
5 a reasonable energy burden as 6% of one's household
6 expenses. But according to the American Council for
7 an Energy Efficient Economy, 37% of Rochester
8 residents and 44% of Black and Latino Rochester
9 residents pay between 10% and 25% of their income for
10 energy.

11 The proposed rate hikes will make this
12 worse and they will impose a disproportionate burden
13 on our most vulnerable community members. I ask the
14 utilities to reduce the proposed rate hikes in
15 consideration of the people who cannot afford to pay
16 these increased rates.

17 I also ask the utilities to provide
18 weatherization with options to pay back over time
19 through energy bills and to increase rebates for heat
20 pump technologies, particularly for low- and
21 moderate-income households.

22 I appreciate that the utilities -- or
23 I appreciate the utilities for electric heat make
24 ready funding to upgrade electric panels to enable
25 heat pump installations. Making heat pumps

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2 accessible to all members of our community is
3 especially important considering climate change.
4 Electric heat pumps are essential for reducing the
5 greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate
6 change.

7 The utilities should not be spending
8 ratepayer dollars on rebates for gas appliances and
9 marketing for gas products. We need to be
10 transitioning away from burning fossil fuels if we
11 want to successfully address climate change and meet
12 the goals of New York's Climate Leadership and
13 Community Protection Act.

14 In addition, heat pumps are better
15 than gas furnaces because they provide both heating
16 and cooling. Climate change is already causing big
17 swings between temperatures. And as these get more
18 extreme, more people here will need to be able to
19 both cool and heat their homes.

20 It was mentioned earlier that there
21 have been heat-related deaths. And I'm -- I'm sorry
22 to say that it's only a matter of time before we
23 experience the kind of heat waves that have hit
24 California and other parts of our country. We need
25 everyone in our community, especially the most

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2 vulnerable members, to have weatherized houses and
3 access to clean, cooling, and heating. And we need
4 our utilities to support this.

5 A.L.J. BERGEN: Does the conclude your
6 statement or have we lost you, Mr. Fergusson?

7 MR. FERGUSSON: No; that's three
8 minutes. I'm done.

9 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you very
10 much. Did you have something else you wanted to add?
11 I've let others go over the three minutes, so I feel
12 it's fair to let you finish.

13 MR. FERGUSSON: No; thank you. I'm
14 all set.

15 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you very
16 much for your comment.

17 The next person we have is Teresa
18 Hotte or Hotte, H-O-T-T-E. Teresa from the Public
19 Utility Law Project?

20 MS. HOTTE: Good afternoon,
21 Commissioner Maggiore and Administrative Law Judges
22 Bergen and Overton. My name is Theresa Hotte, H-O-T-
23 T-E, and I'm a staff attorney with the Public Utility
24 Law Project of New York, or PULP. My pronouns are
25 she and her.

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2 PULP is a 40-year-old non-profit with
3 the mission of educating, advocating, and litigating
4 on behalf of New York State's low-income utility
5 customers. PULP thanks the Department of Public
6 Service for the opportunity to testify in relation to
7 New York State Electric and Gas Corporations,
8 electric and gas rate cases 22-E-0317 and 22-G-0318
9 and Rochester Gas and Electric Corporations, electric
10 and gas rate cases 22-E-0319 and 22-G-0320.

11 PULP is an active party in all four
12 cases. And we will be filing expert testimony on
13 September 26th. PULP has several concerns that we
14 will address in today's hearing that will also be
15 expanded upon in our written testimony. When the
16 companies filed on May 26th, they proposed double
17 digit increases in revenues across the companies.

18 These proposed increases would further
19 put a strain on low-income ratepayers. On May 26th,
20 Governor Hochul released a press statement in
21 response to NYSEG and RG&E's 2022 rate case.
22 Governor Hochul stated it's outrageous and
23 unacceptable that the utility companies are proposing
24 the largest rate increase in recent history for more
25 than 1.2 million consumers in Upstate New York.

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2 Additionally, Governor Hochul urged
3 the Department of Public Service to scrutinize every
4 number and word of this proposal to protect New York
5 families from unjustified and unfair rate increases.

6 PULP thanks Governor Hochul for her
7 strong respond as customers of NYSEG and RG&E simply
8 cannot afford to pay more for their electricity and
9 natural gas.

10 PULP has pulled financial statistics
11 from the New York State Community Action
12 Association's 2022 Poverty Report, the United ways
13 ALICE Project, and the New York State Department of
14 Education's County statistics. The reality is that
15 people are struggling financially.

16 For example, in Broome County, 18.5%
17 of residents live in poverty. This includes 7.5% of
18 seniors, age 65 or more in the county, 45.9% of
19 female-headed households with children. 48% of
20 children in Broome County qualified for free or
21 reduced cost school lunch under federal guidelines.

22 Overall, if you add in families in the
23 category working poor, then approximately 45.3% of
24 residents of Broome County are unable to pay all
25 their bills and must choose which bills remain unpaid

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2 at the end of each month.

3 In the City of Binghamton, these
4 numbers are even more concerning. 32.7% of
5 Binghamton City residents live in poverty. This
6 includes 16.6% of seniors and 44.2% of children
7 living in the city. NYSEG's own collections activity
8 reports show that as of July 22, 106,328 residential
9 customers are behind on their utility bills by 16
10 days or more. This results in a total of \$58,698,477
11 in residential arrears.

12 RG&E's collections activity reports of
13 July 2022 show that 65,274 residential customers are
14 behind on their bills by 60 days or more. This
15 accounts for \$43,664,256 in residential arrears.

16 The Commission has set an important
17 target for affordability with a goal that no low-
18 income customer will spend more than 6% of their
19 income on energy. Even before any rate increases
20 that may result from the companies' filings, low-
21 income customers in the territories are already
22 spending much more than 6% of their income on energy
23 bills.

24 PULP is currently working on testimony
25 that will show that the average low-income NYSEG

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2 customer spends 9.7% of their income on energy. This
3 is 62% higher than the target set by the Commission.
4 Our testimony will also show that the average low-
5 income RG&E customer spends 9.1% of their income on
6 energy. This is 52% higher than the target for
7 affordability.

8 These energy burdens may be even more
9 exaggerated in dis -- disadvantaged communities
10 across the companies' territories. The effects of
11 the COVID-19 pandemic are still heavily felt across
12 the companies' territories. Every day ratepayers are
13 already struggling with bills that are unaffordable.

14 In these unprecedented times, PULP
15 asks the Commission to scrutinize NYSEG and RG&E's
16 rate request to make sure that the rates customers
17 are paying are just, reasonable, affordable, and
18 fair. Thank you.

19 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you for your
20 comment.

21 I'd like to briefly go back over the
22 people who we called, but were -- we were unable to
23 connect with. Do we have Cheryl Frank? Cheryl
24 Frank, if you've joined by telephone, please press
25 star 3 so we can identify you.

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2 Okay. David Parrish? Again, David
3 Parrish, if you've joined by phone, please press star
4 3 so we can identify you.

5 Seeing no hands raised on my list,
6 we'll move to Cynthia Cox. Cynthia, if you've joined
7 by phone, please press star 3 so we can identify you.

8 Okay. Tony LaPietra? Tony LaPietra,
9 if you've joined by phone, please press star 3 so we
10 can identify you.

11 Okay. Nicholas Ruben? Nicholas, if
12 you've joined by phone, please press star 3 so we can
13 identify your line.

14 Okay. Then, Beverly Usher had
15 indicated that there were several members of the
16 Monroe County Workers' Benefit Council who had
17 registered to speak. So we'll go back to that group.
18 Ms. Usher, can you please unmute your line? Or can
19 we unmute Ms. Usher's line?

20 MS. HAYES: My name is Arlene Hayes.
21 I live in Rochester, New York, and I'm -- I was a
22 food prep person. I'm here today with the Monroe
23 County Workers Benefit Council, or W.B.C. for short,
24 representing more than 25,000 low-paid working people
25 and families throughout Monroe County.

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2 As already mentioned, the W.B.C.
3 opposes any and all rate hikes on our utility bills,
4 as it would only cause more poverty and economic
5 inequality as well as pain and suffering in our
6 community.

7 It has come to our attention that a
8 major portion of Avangrid's rationale for this rate
9 hike is the fact that they are implementing their
10 green energy development plan, called, quote,
11 Reliable Energy New York, unquote.

12 While W.B.C. supports a sincere
13 transition New York's energy grid to 100% on
14 renewable energy, we take exception to the utilities'
15 claim that they must raise our bills in order to
16 achieve this end

17 This claim is especially egregious in
18 the light of the fact that RG&E succeeded in
19 increasing their revenues and profits during the
20 pandemic by 32% and 27%, respectively. And this,
21 while the numbers of ratepayers statewide were unable
22 to afford their utility bills doubled to 13% of all
23 household collectively owing over \$2.1 billion.

24 The claim that the only pathway to
25 green energy is higher bills for ratepayers is a lie

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2 that must be exposed. The concept of sustainable
3 development was designed and accepted globally at the
4 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development
5 Conference as, quote, development that meets the
6 needs of the present without compromising the ability
7 of the future generations to meet their own needs,
8 unquote.

9 In other words, sustainability
10 includes meeting of people's needs here and now in a
11 way that allows our children and grandchildren to do
12 the same. Therefore, sustainability must be
13 economically viable and socially inclusive and
14 equitable, as well as ecologically responsible.

15 Twelve years later, in 2013, all 193
16 member states of the United Nations unanimously
17 adopted the 2030 agenda for sustainable development
18 with its 17 sustainable development goals, or
19 S.D.G.s. Later that same year, the Monroe County
20 Workers Benefit Council officially endorsed the 2030
21 agenda because we felt it would masterfully balance
22 those three dimensions of sustainability, economic,
23 social, and ecological.

24 For example, sustainable development
25 goal number one is end poverty in all its forms

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2 everywhere. Goal seven is ensure access to
3 affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy
4 for all. And -- and goal 11 is make cities and human
5 settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and
6 sustainable.

7 Poor and oppressed people of the
8 world, including those of us right here in Rochester,
9 New York, understand what it means from our life
10 experiences. It means that we take urgent action to
11 fight climate change. We must do so in a way that
12 eliminates economic and social inequality.

13 If we do not, then the best outcomes
14 we can hope for will be an eco-friendly society for
15 the middle and upper classes and wealthy ... directly
16 on the exploitation and suffering of poor and working
17 people within and of the developing nations of the
18 global ...

19 This economic and social inequality
20 leads inevitably to conflict because, as we all know,
21 where there is no justice, there can be no peace.
22 And this, we say is unsustainable.

23 Using this criteria, there's nothing
24 sustainable about a multibillion-dollar energy
25 holding company like Iberdrola Avangrid, owner of

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2 RG&E and NYSEG, paying for their so-called green
3 energy initiative by raising customers' bills over
4 \$20 a month.

5 If it's not affordable to the utility
6 customers, then it may be green, but it's not
7 sustainable. There is nothing sustainable about
8 forcing us to let them put their, quote, smart meters
9 in our homes so they can fire all the workers whose
10 job it is to read meters.

11 There is nothing sustainable about
12 using those smart meters to change -- charge us more
13 money for using electricity at peak hours of the day,
14 such as when a working mom gets home from work at
15 5:00 p.m. and must cook dinner for her kids and do
16 laundry while they get started on their homework, or
17 any of the other myriad of activities the average
18 working family engages on a daily basis.

19 And if we chose to opt out of their
20 smart meter program, they will add an extra \$12 a
21 month to our bill, all in the name of going green.
22 While it may be green, but this -- this type of
23 profit-driven environmentalism has created more
24 poverty in our community. So we say it's not
25 sustainable.

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2 There is nothing sustainable about a
3 deregulated energy market that allows the largest
4 investment banks in the world to parasitically drive
5 up the price of a life necessities such as heat in
6 the winter, when the weather experts predict extreme
7 winter weather on the horizon, and they all start
8 buying gas futures, expecting to make a ... profit on
9 the price volatility caused by increased demand.

10 But this is precisely what is
11 happening now. And this is what increased climate
12 change will bring us if our government allows our
13 current political and economic state of affairs
14 continue. Whether this is unaffordable energy comes
15 from solar, wind, nuclear gas, coal, or any other
16 source matters little to hundreds of thousands of
17 households throughout New York State who are being
18 shut off in the cold of winter and the heat of summer
19 for their inability to pay.

20 The source of our energy does not
21 matter to us, but when -- does matter to us, but when
22 P.S.C. throws hundreds of thousands of our families
23 under the bus by allowing utility rate hikes in the
24 name of going green, we must fight for sustainable
25 development and not this profit driven

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2 environmentalism that victimizes and alienates the
3 majority for the benefit of the already wealthy and
4 powerful.

5 ... Monroe County Workers Benefit
6 Council demands P.S.C. and the New York State
7 Government set an emulative example for others to
8 follow and adhere to the letter and spirit of the
9 2030 agenda for sustainable development, and
10 transition our state's energy grid to a clean,
11 renewable, modern energy grid by 2030 for the sake of
12 our children and grandchildren and generations to
13 come.

14 We demand that the P.S.C. take away
15 ... approach to achieving this in an economically and
16 socially inclusive matter by ensuring that utility
17 rates remain affordable for even the lowest income
18 ratepayer. And to that, to achieve this, the P.S.C.
19 must take whatever action is necessary to ensure that
20 those who have been profiteering off our energy grid
21 and energy markets be required to foot the bill for
22 the transition to renewable energy.

23 They have the money to cover the
24 necessary cost. We do not. We have tightened our
25 belt year after year after year. It's time for them

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2 to share the burden. Thank you.

3 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you, Arlene.

4 Is there anybody else with you from
5 your group that would like to make a statement on the
6 record?

7 MS. HAYES: Yes, ma'am, there is. One
8 moment.

9 MR. MYER: Good afternoon. My name is
10 Vincent Myer. I live in Henrietta, and I work in
11 food service. I'm here today with Monroe County
12 Workers Benefit Council.

13 As has already been said, the W.B.C.
14 is completely against any rate hike whatsoever as the
15 bills have been growing increasingly unaffordable for
16 the growing -- for the growing majority of ratepayers
17 for many years now.

18 But of course, this has not stopped
19 RG&E, NYSEG, nor their parent companies, from making
20 record profits all alone -- all along, even during
21 the pandemic, while the numbers of households unable
22 to afford their utility bills doubled. We know that
23 this is due to the Public Service Commission's
24 prioritizing the companies' shareholder wealth over
25 the urgent survival needs of the low-income

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2 ratepayers who are victimized by every rate hike and
3 face shutoff every year.

4 Another example of the P.S.C.'s flawed
5 priorities can be seen in the recent so-called,
6 quote, unquote, debt forgiveness program.

7 Admittedly, \$567 million towards forgiving utility
8 debt sounds good at first. However, let us pause for
9 a moment and look at the whole context, shall we?

10 The P.S.C. guarantees the RG&E parent
11 company a 9% rate of return on investment and, other
12 than for around one year during the pandemic, places
13 no limitations on how many low-income customers they
14 can shut off who fall behind on their bills.

15 Then, each year, when it becomes clear
16 that the ratepayers are not going to be able to pay
17 back what they have been overcharged, instead of ...
18 on the companies, forcing them to lower their rate,
19 or at least lower their government-guaranteed
20 profits, they take our tax dollars every year and pay
21 off the utilities what they are demanding. That is
22 the Home Energy Assistance Program, HEAP.

23 And this year, when the -- with the
24 problem of unaffordable utility rates at an all-time
25 high due to the economic fallout from the pandemic,

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2 matched by the unprecedented price gouging on the
3 wholesale energy market by energy traders, what does
4 the state government do? Did they go to the
5 utilities and say, hey, average working people out
6 here have been tightening their belts for years, if
7 you want to continue to do business and make your
8 profits here in New York, you are going to have to
9 show some good faith and lower your rates and
10 profits? Absolutely not.

11 Instead, they went to the legislature
12 and got them to cough up \$250 million of the next
13 year's budget, throw in a hundred million of ERAP
14 money from the federal -- federal pandemic relief
15 aid, and then let the utilities add an additional
16 surcharge of \$181 million to our bills to generate
17 more money for the program.

18 The utilities themselves are only
19 kicking in \$36 million statewide. So that means each
20 of the 5 or so large utilities are only chipping in
21 around \$7 million or so. This is not even chunk
22 change for them. So what is this, quote, unquote,
23 debt forgiveness program? Really amounts to is
24 nothing more than a bailout for the utilities.

25 They couldn't force us to pay out our

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2 money that we did not have in our limited incomes.

3 So instead, they dipped into the public coffers and

4 paid off the utilities to make good on their

5 government-guaranteed profits.

6 Does the governor's office and the
7 P.S.C. have such a low opinion of us that we -- that
8 they think we are too dumb to see what they are
9 doing? You cannot fool us into believing that you
10 are suddenly accountable to the poor and working
11 people who make up the majority of the residents of
12 the State of New York with this sloppy attempt at
13 sleight of hand.

14 On the contrary, you have just allowed
15 a multinational energy holding company to strongarm
16 you over -- out of over half a billion dollars that
17 was desperately needed for all sorts of critical
18 projects from education to public health, to
19 combating climate change, to public works and jobs,
20 and so much more.

21 The W.B.C. is calling on the P.S.C. to
22 make good on its legal mandate, to, quote, protect
23 the utility consumers from the potential abuse of
24 monopoly power and to, quote, protect the rights of
25 New Yorkers while ensuring access to reliable and

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2 low-cost utility services.

3 The W.B.C. demands the P.S.C. begins -
4 - begin by complying with our three demands. Deny
5 RG&E and NYSEG's rate hike request outright, and take
6 the next step to lower the rates. Enact a permanent
7 year-round moratorium on utility shutoffs for New
8 York residents whose incomes are at or below 250% of
9 the federal poverty level. And to transition New
10 York State's energy grid to 100% renewable energy by
11 2030 while ensuring services, both affordable and
12 accessible to even the lowest-income residents.
13 Thank you for your time.

14 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you for your
15 comment.

16 Is Jody Francis or Faith Bennett with
17 you? Would they like to make a comment?

18 MS. HOTTE: Yes, Jody is next. Thank
19 you.

20 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you.

21 MR. FRANCIS: Good afternoon.

22 A.L.J. BERGEN: Good afternoon. Jody?

23 MR. FRANCIS: Yes.

24 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Please
25 continue.

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2 MR. FRANCIS: Yes. My name is Jody
3 Francis. I live in Rochester. I'm here with the
4 Monroe County Workers Benefit Council. And my
5 grievance with rate increase, it's -- it's a personal
6 one. I live with -- I'm a part of the Citywide
7 Tenant Union, and we advocate on behalf of tenants.

8 And even during the pandemic and there
9 were no shutoffs for my tenants. Now, that the --
10 now, that the shutoffs by the governor was taken
11 away, all of my tenants that I know they're behind
12 and they're behind on their bills and they're also
13 behind on their energy bills.

14 We're all low-income, moderate,
15 minority. We all have -- we're just -- we're really
16 just making it with our jobs that we have.
17 Personally, my experience with RG&E is not a good
18 one. They cut off my energy twice, without
19 explaining why. The second time, I had to rely on
20 the Workers Benefit Council. One of our
21 representatives by the name of Ben, he came to my
22 aid. If I didn't know Ben and the Workers Benefit
23 Council, I would have been in the cold one winter.
24 Ben came to my aid. He gave me information and we
25 found out that RG&E was in the wrong. And within two

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2 hours, I had my -- I had my energy back on.

3 What about the people that don't have
4 the wherewithal to reach out to the Worker Benefit
5 Council? A lot of them are without energy. And like
6 I said, to my understanding, it's a state -- this
7 energy that this rate increase is just going to make
8 more profits for a company that's not even a part of
9 our nation.

10 It's a -- it's a -- I mean, I just
11 want to understand what these proposals are about. I
12 just know that between tenants and the energy bills,
13 after these pandemic moratoriums, a lot of people are
14 going to be homeless this winter. And to me, it's
15 tough to choose between food and paying your energy
16 bill.

17 And right now, all my tenants are
18 going through that problem. Me, myself, I have a
19 seven-month-old newborn and, like I said, it's tough.
20 And this increase will definitely affect the way I
21 budget and manage my family. And I'm totally against
22 it, and I believe we should cancel this rate hike
23 entirely. Thank you.

24 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you, Jody. Is
25 Faith with you?

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2 MR. FRANCIS: She is not, but somebody
3 else in the group here raised their hand if there is
4 time for an unregistered person to speak. Faith
5 couldn't make it, but Linda is here if that's okay.

6 A.L.J. BERGEN: That's okay. Linda, I
7 just asked that you say and spell your last name for
8 the benefit of the court reporter.

9 MS. PRATT: Hi. My name is Linda, L-
10 I-N-D-A, Pratt, P-R-A-T-T, and I live in Penfield,
11 New York, which is a suburb of Rochester. And I'm
12 also here as part of the Monroe County Workers
13 Benefits Council. And I'm here with some math.

14 So looking at document dot EPS dot New
15 York dot gov, the C.E.O. salary for RG&E was nearly
16 \$1.8 million dollars last year. The average utility
17 rate in Monroe County per year is \$1,284, give or
18 take, depending of course on the weather.

19 A person living -- a single person
20 living at 250% below the poverty level makes an
21 income per year of \$32,000. If you do the math, you
22 will see that a person living at 250% below the
23 poverty level pays 800 times more in utility costs.
24 How are we doing this? Why is -- I cannot believe
25 that a C.E.O. does 800 times more work than a person

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2 living at 250% below the poverty level.

3 There -- and that is why I'm endorsing
4 the demands of the Monroe County Workers Benefit
5 Council to cancel this rate entirely, install a year-
6 round moratorium on shutoffs, and transitioning to
7 green justice 100% renewable energy for even the
8 lowest-income taxpayers. And that is priceless.

9 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you, Linda.
10 Does that conclude your comments?

11 MS. PRATT: Yes.

12 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you. Is
13 there anybody else in your group that would like to
14 make a comment today?

15 MS. PRATT: No, there is not. Thank
16 you.

17 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you.

18 We've gone through the list of
19 registered speakers. But I see we do have quite a
20 few people who have joined us, who may not have
21 registered. But in light of what you've heard today,
22 or if you simply changed your mind, is there anybody
23 on the call that would like to make a statement, even
24 if you didn't register? I'd ask if you are a call-in
25 user, if you've called in with your telephone, press

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2 star 3 on your phone. That way, we'll be able to see
3 that you've indicated an interest to speak. Again,
4 if you're calling in on your telephone, just push the
5 star button and then 3.

6 And if you've joined by WebEx, there
7 is a little hand in the bottom right corner next to
8 the megaphone. If you click that button, it's the
9 raise hand button. It will put an icon next to your
10 name on our screen and we can unmute your line.

11 So again, if you've called in, it's
12 star 3 to identify you'd like to make a statement, or
13 if you're joining us via WebEx, there is a raise hand
14 button next to the little megaphone icon on the
15 bottom right corner of your screen.

16 So we'll give everyone a minute to
17 figure that out. Thank you.

18 Sangeetha, do you see any hands
19 raised?

20 MS. KAILAS: I see one and the line
21 has been unmuted.

22 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you.

23 Caller, please identify yourself and
24 spell your last name.

25 MR. THOMAS: T-H-O-M-A-S.

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2 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thomas, is that your
3 first or your last name?

4 MR. THOMAS: Last name Thomas. First
5 name Ernest, E-R-N-E-S-T.

6 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you, Ernest.
7 Please begin.

8 MR. THOMAS: Thank you. Hello?

9 A.L.J. BERGEN: Hello. Please begin.

10 MR. THOMAS: Yes. I pastor a small
11 church out in Delaware County and meet a lot of
12 elderly people. And definitely oppose, no, no, no,
13 no, to any rate hikes. It's ridiculous. I mean,
14 there's a lot of poor folks throughout Delaware
15 County that I've spoke with. And a lot of them, they
16 don't know whether to pay their NYSEG bill or to pay
17 their rent or even be able to get food. A lot of
18 them are S.S.I. or, you know, S.S.D.I. or S.S.I., and
19 it's just too much.

20 And then, you know, the delivery
21 charge that they already have on the bill is
22 ridiculous. That's a little bit steep. That needs
23 to go. ... bill, that's a crazy charge. Like, you
24 know, if you have a bill from your phone company, you
25 don't have to pay delivery for the dial tone.

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2 But yeah, absolutely not to the rate
3 hike. People are suffering. Prices are high. It's
4 -- it's just really, really rough out there for
5 anybody to even try to make ends meet. And I have a
6 good friend that did go on the budget for NYSEG, and
7 they said that was a terrible, never going to go on
8 that budget. I asked him why. He said, well, they
9 add a tremendous cleanup bill that they want it all
10 at once, we don't have that kind. And I ask the
11 person, how much is a cleanup? And they told me, it
12 was over \$450. And that's crazy.

13 So they're like, well, the budget, you
14 know, you get a low monthly, they're paying 100 a
15 month. But at the end of that, it was astronomical,
16 the cleanup bill. It's very, very, very high.

17 And I know we can't get ... It
18 doesn't work that way nowadays, and we should be, you
19 know, paying our utilities and all that. But when
20 the companies are beginning to rip us off and charge
21 outlandish, you know, increases, no. It's time we
22 the people, like I've heard on here, stand up and say
23 no, enough is enough. You know, enough is enough.

24 Matter of fact, lower the rates a
25 little bit so that those that are in the poverty line

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2 can -- can, you know, afford it, those that are
3 S.S.I., S.S.D. I'm not asking you to give special
4 rates to them, but at least make it affordable, that
5 they're not living in fear of when are they coming to
6 shut it off, you know, winter, summer, whatever.

7 But it's basically all a no. No to
8 the increase. Hell no increase. Enough is enough.
9 But I thank you for allowing me on here today. Thank
10 you.

11 A.L.J. BERGEN: You're welcome. Thank
12 you for your comment. If you could please --.

13 MR. THOMAS: Have a good day.

14 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. And if you
15 could, please press star three on your phone again,
16 and that way your hand would be lowered so we can
17 identify if other people would like to make a
18 comment. But thank you; have a good day.

19 Again, if anybody's joined who didn't
20 register to speak, you can click the raise hand icon
21 in the bottom right corner of your screen if you
22 joined by WebEx, or star 3 on your telephone if
23 you've joined by telephone.

24 And Sangeetha, do you see any new
25 raised hands?

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2 MS. OVERTON: I don't see any new
3 raised hand, but is this the previous speaker?

4 A.L.J. BERGEN: The call-in user 14
5 was Ernest Thomas, yes.

6 MS. KAILAS: Okay. Thank you.

7 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you.

8 Okay. Seeing no other hands raised, I
9 want to thank everybody who showed up today to make a
10 statement on the record. Thank you very much for
11 taking the time to join us today. This concludes our
12 hearing this afternoon.

13 I would like to remind everybody on
14 the line that you may also submit your comments by
15 the other means we described earlier in the hearing
16 and in the August 19th notice of the public statement
17 hearing.

18 In addition to this afternoon's
19 hearing, we will be holding an additional public
20 statement hearing in these cases tonight at 5:00, and
21 on September 28th and October 18th, both at 1:00 and
22 5:00. The information to join us at those hearings
23 is available on the D.P.S. website. If you enter
24 into the search bar, any one of the four case numbers
25 in the D.M.M. search box, you will be able to find

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2 the notice that has all that information.

3 So again, Judge Overton and I would
4 like to thank everyone for their interest in the
5 proceedings today. We also thank Commissioner
6 Maggiore for joining us. I thank our Office of
7 Consumer Services for administering the session and
8 our court reporter for joining us.

9 The public statement hearing is now
10 concluded. We are off the record

11 (The hearing concluded at 2:13 p.m.)

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2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 I, MONIQUE HINES, do hereby certify that the foregoing was
4 reported by me, in the cause, at the time and place, as
5 stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1 hereof; that the
6 foregoing typewritten transcription consisting of pages 1
7 through 52, is a true record of all proceedings had at the
8 hearing.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
10 subscribed my name, this the 21st day of September, 2022.

11

12 MONIQUE HINES, Reporter

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