

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3                               STATE OF NEW YORK

4                                       PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

5       CASE 24-E-0322; 24-G-0323 - In the Matter of Niagara  
6       Mohawk Corporation d/b/a National Grid for Electric  
7       Service and Niagara Mohawk Corporation d/b/a National  
8       Grid for Gas Service

9                               PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARING

10                   DATE:                SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

11                   LOCATION:           Town of Clay Town Hall

12                                       4401 Route 31

13                                       Clay, New York 13041

14                   BEFORE:           ALJ ERIKA BERGEN

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18                   Reported by Thomas Baker

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1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3                           (The hearing commenced at 6:04 p.m.)

4                   A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. We're on  
5 the record. I call case 24-E-0322. Proceeding on  
6 motion of the Commission as to the rates, charges,  
7 rules, and regulations of Niagara Mohawk Power  
8 Corporation, doing business as National Grid for  
9 electric service, and 24-G-0323 proceeding on motion  
10 of the Commission as to the rates, charges, rules,  
11 and regulations of Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation,  
12 doing business as National Grid for gas service.

13                           Good evening and welcome. We are here  
14 today for a public statement hearing that was noticed  
15 on August 26th, 2024. This public statement hearing  
16 concerns the proposed changes in the electric and gas  
17 delivery rates and practices of National Grid.  
18 National Grid filed amendments to its electric and  
19 gas tariff schedules on May 28th, 2024, proposing to  
20 increase its annual electric and gas delivery  
21 revenues effective April 1st, 2025.

22                           More specifically, National Grid seeks  
23 to increase its electric delivery revenues by  
24 approximately \$525 million, a 20 percent increase in  
25 base delivery revenues, or an 11 percent increase in

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           total revenues. And its gas delivery revenues by  
4           approximately \$148 million, which is a 28 percent  
5           increase in base delivery revenues, or a 15 percent  
6           increase in total revenues.

7                   These increases would result in a  
8           total monthly bill increase for the average  
9           residential customer of approximately \$18.92 for  
10          electric and \$18.34 for gas.

11                   The rate request filing states that  
12          the company is focused on three priorities;  
13          continuing to deliver safe, reliable, energy service  
14          to its more than two million customers. Enabling  
15          customers to affordably meet their energy needs while  
16          improving customer service. And supporting the goals  
17          of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection  
18          Act.

19                   My name is Erika Bergen. I'm an  
20          administrative law judge for the Department of Public  
21          Service. I'm here tonight on behalf of Judges  
22          Anthony Belsito and Michael Clarke, who are presiding  
23          over this rate case. At the conclusion of the rate  
24          case process, Judges Belsito and Clarke will be  
25          making recommendations to the Commission, which will

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           be the ultimate decision-maker in this case.

4                   The Commission, in making its  
5           decision, must consider the utility's proposal and  
6           may adopt or reject it in whole or in part, or modify  
7           it. The Public Service Commission will decide what  
8           the company's terms and conditions of service will  
9           be.

10                   The Commission has seven members,  
11           currently, the chairperson, Rory Christian, and six  
12           Commissioners, James Alesi, David Valesky, John  
13           Maggiore, Uchenna Bright, Denise Sheehan, and Radina  
14           Valova.

15                   The purpose of today's hearing is to  
16           provide you, the public, with an opportunity to tell  
17           the Commission your thoughts on the company's filing.  
18           Statements you make today will be part of the case  
19           record. The court reporter with us today will  
20           prepare a transcript of this hearing, and it will be  
21           included in the official record of the proceeding, so  
22           that your comments can be considered by all members  
23           of the Commission. The transcript will be available  
24           for public review on the Department of Public  
25           Services' website.

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3                   Today's event is not a question and  
4           answer session, but a forum to hear comments from  
5           you. However, if you do have questions, National  
6           Grid representatives are here, including a consumer  
7           advocate, Marybeth is in the back, and they can help  
8           you with any of your questions you have about your  
9           specific utility service.

10                   If you do not wish to speak tonight at  
11           this event, but you would still like your views  
12           included into the record, there are other ways to  
13           make a comment. These are listed in the public  
14           notice for this event. We have copies of that notice  
15           at the table in the hallway. You can do so by  
16           submitting comments on the Department's website, by  
17           regular mail, and there's a telephone number you can  
18           leave a message. No matter how you submit your  
19           comments, whether today or in any of those other  
20           methods, all of the comments are given equal weight  
21           and equal consideration by the members of the  
22           Commission.

23                   For those of you that would like to  
24           make a statement here today, we've asked you to fill  
25           out a card. I have 14 cards today, so I just ask

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 that you be mindful when you make your comments of  
4 all people's time. We'd like to give everybody an  
5 opportunity to make a statement. I'd request that  
6 you try your best to limit your statements to a  
7 three-minute statement. If you have lengthy comments  
8 that you'd like to be included into the record, I ask  
9 that you summarize those lengthy comments and submit  
10 your comments in full, in writing, in one of the  
11 other forums that I've mentioned. Again, that  
12 information is on the notice which we have copies of.  
13 It's also available on the Department's website for  
14 you to find.

15 When you're speaking, please come to  
16 the podium, there is a microphone there. Earlier at  
17 another hearing, we were told that the acoustics were  
18 a little bad for people hearing the people speaking  
19 in the back. So please use the microphone to make  
20 your statement so we can all hear you and our court  
21 reporter can capture your comments.

22 And finally, I'd just like to remind  
23 everybody to be respectful of everyone's views. Some  
24 people may have differing viewpoints on different  
25 issues, but this event is being held so we can hear

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 from everybody who would like to make a comment. I  
4 don't want you to interrupt anybody when they're  
5 speaking. And please make sure you silence your cell  
6 phones.

7 And with that, our first speaker is  
8 Fanny Villarreal.

9 MS. VILLARREAL: Good evening. I am  
10 Fanny Villarreal, and I'm at the YWCA  
11 (indiscernible). Our mission is to eliminate racism,  
12 empower women and girls, and promote peace, justice,  
13 and freedom, for all. We provide support,  
14 transitional, and permanent housing for survivors of  
15 domestic violence through our homeless residence  
16 program. We foster the development of girls ages 5  
17 to 18 through the implementation of our research  
18 curriculum, empowerment, and (indiscernible) as well  
19 as (indiscernible) in public schools. And we provide  
20 opportunities through sports. The YWCA offers  
21 basketball programming and youth soccer teams to the  
22 young residents in the City of Syracuse and Onondaga  
23 County. Our center is located on the north side,  
24 where we serve a diverse demographic of youth and the  
25 refugee community.

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3                   Since the National Grid generous  
4           support, we were able to provide free summer camps to  
5           the girls of YWCA and provide resume building and  
6           mock job interviews with their employees for our  
7           Women to Work program. National Grid employees are  
8           fixtures in our community and we are thankful for it.  
9           One of the most impressive aspects of National Grid's  
10          community involvement is how they actively fund not  
11          only the girls at the YWCA program, but numerous  
12          organizations that share similar mission-driven goals  
13          to unite communities. For instance, Your Latino  
14          Voice, the only Latino radio in Central New York that  
15          serve the Hispanic Latino communities in the area,  
16          work together with National Grid to empower next  
17          generation and inspire growth in Syracuse.

18                   National Grid employees live in the  
19          communities where they work. They are not just a  
20          utility company, but also our neighbors. They know  
21          our people and they care about the community. The  
22          impact of National Grid's investment and extend far  
23          beyond gas and electrical services, helping to shape  
24          a more inclusive and thriving presence. Thanks to  
25          their support, YWCA and many other local business and



1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 not-for-profits can continue driving positive change  
4 for domestic violence survivors, the youth leadership  
5 and development programs, and the girls in YWCA.

6 National Grid's generosity is a  
7 shining example of corporate responsibility, and  
8 their commitment to community engagement allows us  
9 all to create a better Central New York. It is  
10 critical that they have the resources that they need  
11 to continue supporting the communities they serve.  
12 Thank you.

13 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you, thank you  
14 for your comment.

15 The court reporter is asking that when  
16 you use the microphone, you just hold it a little bit  
17 farther away so that we can capture the statement  
18 accurately. But he said we got your comment fine.  
19 Thank you.

20 MS. VILLARREAL: I was told I was too  
21 loud. Sorry.

22 A.L.J. BERGEN: We just -- for the  
23 recording, so we don't have a lot of echo, just hold  
24 a little bit farther away.

25 Andrew Lunetta.

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3                   MR. LUNETTA: Good evening. My name  
4           is Andrew Lunetta. I'm the Executive Director of the  
5           A Tiny Home for Good. We're an organization in the  
6           City of Syracuse. We build, manage, and provide  
7           housing for men, women, and families facing  
8           homelessness. Given the kind of mission of our work,  
9           we work really closely with National Grid. In my ten  
10          years directing A Tiny Home for Good, I've had  
11          nothing but really positive interactions with  
12          National Grid staff. The service provided has been  
13          reliable and positive. But I think I would expect  
14          that as a consumer, right? I would expect my  
15          organization, our tenants, to get that. I would  
16          expect my wife and I to get that as well.

17                   What I think goes above and beyond,  
18          though, is the stuff that Fanny just discussed and  
19          clearly how National Grid has supported our work. I  
20          really say is a partner in our work. Last year, they  
21          provided the resources to build four super-efficient  
22          solar-powered homes on the south side, things that  
23          Syracuse has really has not seen before. And it  
24          would not have happened without Grid's help.

25                   I also want to point to what is now

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 just peaked over 1,000 hours of volunteer time that

4 National Grid employees have given to our work. And

5 it's clear to me that they don't have to do that.

6 Like, we need our utilities. We don't need that

7 company to go above and beyond to do what they do.

8 So I'm just super appreciative of National Grid. And

9 thanks for the opportunity to share.

10 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you for your

11 time.

12 The next speaker is Robert O'Connor.

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Good evening. My name

14 is Robert O'Connor. I'm a volunteer advocate with

15 AARP New York. I am a ratepayer living here in

16 Onondaga County, which is part of the National Grid

17 service territory. Approximately 70,000 other AARP

18 members living in Onondaga County would be impacted

19 by these proposed changes. Also, we know that non-

20 AARP members would be impacted as well.

21 Thank you for the opportunity to speak

22 here tonight concerning National Grid's proposed

23 utility rate increases. I'll note that National

24 Grid's rate proposal for its Upstate New York service

25 territory is five times greater than inflation. AARP

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           New York opposes the National Grid rate request and  
4           urges the PSC to reject this increase. The company's  
5           rate increase requests of \$525 million for electric  
6           and \$148 million for gas delivery service are  
7           unacceptable and should be drastically reduced by the  
8           PSC.

9                   If approved by the Public Service  
10           Commission, these proposals would result, we believe,  
11           in monthly delivery bill increases for the average  
12           residential customer of approximately \$18.92 as was,  
13           I believe you mentioned before, which is an increase  
14           of 23 percent for electricity service and \$18.34 for  
15           gas service, which is approximately 29 percent on an  
16           increase. These rates are excessive and  
17           unacceptable.

18                   AARP strongly recommends the PSC take  
19           in consideration that many National Grid customers  
20           simply cannot afford these bills now. National  
21           Grid's bills haven't been affordable for low and  
22           moderate income -- some moderate income customers,  
23           and this increase will make it worse.

24                   Right now, according to your website,  
25           there are 236,000 households who are 60 days or more

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           late on their bill to National Grid, with over 46,351  
4           households receiving a final termination notice in  
5           July, which is the latest data available.

6                   These proposed increases would  
7           undoubtedly add to the financial burden of hundreds  
8           of thousands of older New Yorkers living on a fixed  
9           income, who are already struggling to pay their  
10          monthly utility bills and other living expenses.

11                   AARP believes there are certain  
12          actions by the PSC that should be taken in this rate  
13          case. Our suggestions are as follows:

14                   Number one, the customer charges  
15          should not be increased. They are already too high.  
16          High customer charges make controlling one's energy  
17          bill more difficult.

18                   Two, the overall return on investment  
19          requested is ten and a half percent. That far  
20          exceeds what utilities around our nation are getting  
21          and should be reduced.

22                   Three, specifically require the  
23          utility to apply for and maximize all federal dollars  
24          available, thus alleviating some cost to existing  
25          ratepayers.

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3                   To conclude my remarks, according to  
4           National Grid and their filing with the PSC, a large  
5           portion of the requested increase is necessary to  
6           prepare the groundwork for the transition away from  
7           fossil fuels and towards greater use of electricity.  
8           This is consistent with the stated justification  
9           we've seen from many other recent utility rate  
10          increase requests. The results of these requests in  
11          the past few years have largely been settlements that  
12          included staggering, unaffordable utility rate  
13          increases for many rate payers (sic). The  
14          negotiated outcome of these cases are not working for  
15          ratepayers, and the State's approach has to change.

16                   While this is an issue that goes  
17          beyond the rate case, it is certainly a driver in  
18          this case. As New York moves toward a clean energy  
19          future, it's imperative that we stop rubber-stamping  
20          the placement of the -- of these enormous costs of  
21          New York's transition to a clean energy future  
22          squarely on the backs of utility ratepayers, and  
23          develop a more equitable strategy to pay for this  
24          transition.

25                   AARP New York believes that the

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           governor, the Public Service Commission, and the  
4           legislature should work together more than ever to  
5           make sure the energy costs become affordable for New  
6           Yorkers. Thank you.

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

8                   The next speaker is Arthur Coughlin.

9                   MR. COUGHLIN: Ladies and gentlemen,  
10           good evening. Hello. My name is Arthur Coughlin.  
11           I'm a property owner in the Town of Clay. I just  
12           have a few comments directed towards the Public  
13           Service Commission, National Grid, any town, county,  
14           or state officials present or anyone that's going to  
15           read the transcript of this meeting, and to my fellow  
16           concerned citizens.

17                   I want to address a few concerns that  
18           I have with the proposed rate increases on the  
19           natural gas and electricity delivery charges  
20           requested by National Grid. I recently sat down and  
21           closely looked at my last ten months' bills from  
22           National Grid, and I noticed a few items that  
23           heightened my awareness on the proposed rate  
24           increases. I took the last ten bills and wrote the  
25           monthly cost out for the delivery charges, and the

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           usage charges for each of the utilities.

4                   First, I was amazed that the delivery  
5           charges for each of the utilities far exceeded the  
6           usage charge. I then averaged those ten months'  
7           bills to determine my monthly average, and then  
8           multiplied it by 12 to represent a year's cost of the  
9           delivery -- the delivery and the usage charge for  
10          both the gas and electric. The delivery charges were  
11          nearly 50 percent more than the usage charges. And  
12          with this proposed rate increase, these difference  
13          would be well over 60 percent.

14                   The rate requested by National Grid  
15          for the delivery increased on electricity is 15  
16          percent, and for natural gas is 20 percent. Both of  
17          these numbers far exceed the rate of inflation, as  
18          reported by the United States government for the year  
19          2023, which was 3.67 percent. And the year to date,  
20          2024 at 2.5 percent for combined rate of 6.17.

21                   The proposed increases on my bill  
22          would roughly be \$10 a month, or \$120 a year on the  
23          electric delivery charges, and these are low  
24          estimates. And I took that number and multiplied it  
25          by the 1,700,000 electric customers here in Upstate



1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           New York. And I took the estimated increase on -- on  
4           the natural gas side of \$11 a month and multiplied  
5           that to the annual cost of \$132, and multiply that by  
6           the 600,000 gas customers in the State, and came up  
7           with a whopping number of \$79,200,000 for the gas and  
8           204,000, excuse me, \$204 million for the electric  
9           delivery charges. But I see that those numbers are  
10          low based upon the information that was provided as  
11          we walked in the door. The combined increase for the  
12          gas and electric delivery charges will be \$673  
13          million.

14                   I question the National Grid, how much  
15          money did you earn for profit in the year 2023? This  
16          requested rate increase is nothing more than  
17          corporate greed. And as a side note, I noticed some  
18          discrepancies in my bills as I went over to my show  
19          that four of the bills have overlapping dates that I  
20          was charged for twice on the bills. So I was double  
21          charged on the bills. Thank you for your time.

22                   A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you for your  
23          comments.

24                   MR. COUGHLIN: Thank you.

25                   A.L.J. BERGEN: And if you have a

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3           particular question about your bill, we do have a  
4           customer service representative.

5                   Our next speaker is Shawn Maher.

6                   MR. MAHER: Yes, good evening. My  
7           name is Shawn Maher and I'm the plant manager of  
8           Morse Manufacturing. We're a manufacturer of  
9           industrial drum handling equipment serving both the  
10          U.S. and global markets. We're a family owned  
11          enterprise. And last year, we celebrated our 100th  
12          year anniversary of doing business in Central New  
13          York. National Grid is a critical partner in the  
14          Central New York business community, with access to  
15          reliable and affordable energy is essential for a  
16          robust, dynamic, and vibrant economy. The National  
17          Grid's deep understanding and commitment to the  
18          community that they serve enables them to provide a  
19          tailored support to businesses that need to thrive.

20                   New York business landscape, National  
21          Grid actively supports the business owners through  
22          initiatives such as economic development grants,  
23          energy efficiency awards, and workforce development  
24          programs. Morse Manufacturing has benefited from the  
25          National Grid economic development and energy

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           efficiency grants, which we deployed to keep us  
4           competitive in a global market. We understand that  
5           there's a continued support for these programs and  
6           others that are included in this National Grid rate  
7           proposal, which we believe is an appropriate and  
8           effective use of customer funds. Morse supports the  
9           continuation of National Grid's current economic  
10          development and energy efficiency programs under its  
11          proposed rate plan. Thank you.

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

13                   Our next speaker is Bill Cappelletti.

14                   MR. CAPPELLETTI: Good evening. My  
15          name is Bill Cappelletti, and I represent the Hueber-  
16          Breuer Construction Company. We are a sixth  
17          generation construction and commercial development  
18          company based here in Syracuse. We view National  
19          Grid as a vital partner to our Central New York  
20          business community. Having access to reliable and  
21          affordable energy is a critical component needed to  
22          help position our area and local economy for growth.  
23          National Grid understands our communities, which then  
24          allows them to provide support to help our businesses  
25          succeed.

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3                           In New York State, National Grid  
4           actively assist business owners through initiatives  
5           such as economic development grants and workforce  
6           development programs. Hueber-Breuer has benefited  
7           from National Grid development programs in our own  
8           projects like the Sullivan and Doyle apartment  
9           complexes in Utica. Additionally, we have worked as  
10          the general contractor for many third-party owners  
11          and developers throughout Central New York, who have  
12          also benefited from other economic development  
13          programs offered by National Grid. We are aware of  
14          the financial support for these programs is included  
15          in this National -- in National Grid's latest rate  
16          proposal, and it is our view that it is an  
17          appropriate and effective use of customer funds.  
18          Hueber-Bruer supports the continuation of National  
19          Grid's current economic development and energy  
20          efficiency programs under its proposed rate filing.  
21          Thank you.

22                           A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you for your  
23          comment.

24                           The next speaker is Lauren Kochian.

25                           MS. KOCHIAN: Close. Kochian.

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2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3                   A.L.J. BERGEN: Kochian. I'm not very  
4 good with those. That's okay.

5                   MS. KOCHIAN: My name is Lauren  
6 Kochian. I am the president of the Museum of Science  
7 and Technology in downtown Syracuse. I am here in  
8 support of National Grid, one of our largest  
9 supporters -- corporate supporters of our museum.  
10 They sponsor some of our most important programs.  
11 Our science learning partnership with the Syracuse  
12 City School District that supports 6,000 students, a  
13 program that's free to students, that we would not be  
14 able to provide without their support.

15                   National Grid has an energy exhibit in  
16 our museum, which is critical to curriculum for  
17 grades K through 8 in New York State, teaching kids  
18 about energy and sustainability.

19                   We also have a lot of volunteer work  
20 from National Grid employees. They employ thousands  
21 of people right here in Central New York who are our  
22 neighbors and our friends, who do things like  
23 volunteer at the MOST for our mentorship programs.  
24 We have a girls in STEM program. We have an after  
25 school program, and we can't do any of these things,

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2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 truly, without supporters like National Grid. There  
4 are a lot of big corporations here in Central New  
5 York. And National Grid's commitment to our  
6 community is unparalleled in my experience and not  
7 just my experience at the MOST, but my experience in  
8 my role at Arc of Onondaga, where their volunteer  
9 work to support Arc and we have gardens and things  
10 for people with autism and sensory processing  
11 challenges. And it was National Grid volunteers --  
12 volunteers, who made sure that that happened with  
13 National Grid supporting those projects. So it is my  
14 honor to be here today in support of not only  
15 National Grid, but all the people that work at the  
16 company. Thank you.

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

18 The next speaker is Nancy Eaton.

19 MS. EATON: Good evening. My name is  
20 Nancy Eaton, and I'm the president of the United Way  
21 of Central New York. We are a local organization  
22 that has been addressing the health, education, and  
23 financial needs of people in this community for over  
24 100 years. National Grid is by far one of our most  
25 important partners. National Grid provides financial

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2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 support every year that enables us to fund programs  
4 that touch the lives of thousands of people in this  
5 community every single day.

6 In addition, National Grid employees  
7 are offered the opportunity through their workplace  
8 to donate to charities in their community through  
9 United Way using payroll deduction, and hundreds and  
10 hundreds and hundreds of National Grid employees  
11 choose to do that every day. They live here, they  
12 are neighbors, they care about us. The other thing  
13 that National Grid does that's extremely important is  
14 they partner with us all year long in terms of  
15 getting information to people throughout this  
16 community and throughout New York State that is vital  
17 to helping people access services.

18 So 211 is a 24-hour-a-day phone line  
19 where people can call to get anything besides police,  
20 fire, and ambulance services. So it is an amazing  
21 connection for people to access any sort of  
22 information they need. 211 is a service that not  
23 enough people know about, and we were honored to  
24 partner with National Grid in 2022 to run a statewide  
25 radio messaging campaign that was underwritten by

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3           National Grid, making it possible for thousands and  
4           thousands of people across the State to become aware  
5           of the service. And the calls to 211 rose  
6           dramatically.

7                   In addition, National Grid partners  
8           with us so that they train their call center  
9           operators to know about 211 and how to help people  
10          connect to 211 and get information. And at the same  
11          time, National Grid has trained the 211 call center  
12          operators so they're aware of the many programs  
13          National Grid offers to support lower income New  
14          Yorkers and can, again, do that connecting of people  
15          to the services that National Grid offers.

16                   When we're thinking about corporate  
17          citizens and corporate support, I honestly cannot  
18          think of an organization that is -- epitomizes  
19          connecting to the community, the needs of the  
20          community, serving as many of my friends have said,  
21          in -- on boards, volunteering, and that's certainly  
22          true for us. National Grid is an incredible  
23          organization.

24                   And I'll say on a personal level, my  
25          husband and I have been astounded by the



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3 extraordinary service whenever we've needed services,

4 National Grid has been there incredibly quickly, and

5 we think they do an extraordinary job. Thank you.

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

7 The next speaker is Richard --

8 Richard, I cannot make out your last

9 name. Is it Augustin?

10 I'll just take the opportunity, I've

11 heard a little bit of chitter chatter around in the

12 audience. That makes it a little bit distracting for

13 people who are trying to pay attention. So we can

14 keep that to a minimum, I'd appreciate that.

15 But Richard, what is your last name?

16 MR. AUSTIN: My name is Richard

17 Austin.

18 A.L.J. BERGEN: Austin. Okay. Thank

19 you. You may begin.

20 MR. AUSTIN: I just want to say form

21 what I've heard so far, if a corporation wants to do

22 charity, that's wonderful if they have the profits to

23 do it. But to have rate increases and ask their

24 customers to pay for their charity, I don't feel is

25 right. And I'm sure that people that are getting the

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2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 money and keep saying how great they are, are doing  
4 it so they can continue to keep getting their monies,  
5 and their help, and their support. I would love to  
6 have people come up here and talk about how great I  
7 am in giving back if I could just get everybody else  
8 to pay for it. Thank you.

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

10 The next speaker is Andrew Fish.

11 MR. FISH: Good evening. I'm Andrew  
12 Fish. I am here representing both CenterState CEO,  
13 that's the regional economic development organization  
14 for Central New York, as well as I am a ratepayer  
15 with two accounts. And so I will personally  
16 experience this as well as I'm going to talk to both  
17 of those things. And frankly, it's never fun for  
18 prices to go up. And that's something that is a  
19 reality that we're all experiencing on a number of  
20 fronts and it can be frustrating. But when I look at  
21 something like that, I also have to think about the  
22 alternative. And the reality is that costs are going  
23 up for all of us individuals and businesses alike.

24 And so as the work that I do in  
25 economic development, I have the good fortune of

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2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 seeing firsthand the impact of what National Grid  
4 does when it has the means to invest in critical  
5 infrastructure, and economic development, and  
6 community-based programs. As a region, we have  
7 incredible opportunities in front of us for the first  
8 time in a very long time. And there will be  
9 tremendous amount of growth, but the ability to  
10 capitalize on that is not guaranteed. It really is  
11 necessary for us to make critical investments in that  
12 delivery network, which is costly to maintain.

13 I will tell you that when we work with  
14 companies that are looking to locate here and employ  
15 people, one of the very first questions they ask is,  
16 can we get the power that we need at a site that  
17 works for us? And the only way that we're able to  
18 answer that question with a yes, is when National  
19 Grid is able to invest in that network and maintain  
20 that network with safe and reliable energy to those  
21 businesses.

22 As for the community-based and  
23 economic development programs, I will tell you that  
24 National Grid doesn't just support the growth of the  
25 community through the delivery of that energy, they

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2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 engage directly on the projects. They have kept  
4 alive the -- the spirit of Niagara Mohawk and the  
5 economic development programming that they have. As  
6 an organization, we work across multiple utility  
7 providers, and there is no partner like National Grid  
8 in New York State when it comes to that kind of work  
9 and directly trying to impact the community as a  
10 whole.

11 In addition to that, I also know they  
12 recognize the challenges that people face in terms of  
13 the cost associated and sometimes not having the  
14 means. I will also stand here and say that the fact  
15 that I have two accounts also, I recognize that that  
16 means that I have an opportunity to privilege that  
17 most people don't. And so I don't take that for  
18 granted. But they have public assistance programs  
19 where they work with individuals that struggle and  
20 make sure that they have economic assistance for  
21 them.

22 I mentioned in the opening that as a  
23 customer and also a partner of National Grid and  
24 Economic Development, and because of both of those  
25 reasons, I am here supporting the rate case for them.

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

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

4                   The next speaker is Michael Ivey.

5                   MR. IVEY: Good evening. My name is  
6 Mike Ivey. I'm the director of engineering and  
7 technology for Current. Current, headquartered in  
8 Morristown, New Jersey is an end to end medium and  
9 heavy duty vehicle fleet electrification company.  
10 Where we provide electrical vehicle leasing, charging  
11 infrastructure, and ongoing maintenance. Thanks to  
12 the support of the National Grid, we've been able to  
13 deploy charging infrastructure and electric vehicles  
14 at a major package distribution center in Syracuse.

15                  A.L.J. BERGEN: Mr. Ivey?

16                  MR. IVEY: Yes?

17                  A.L.J. BERGEN: Can I ask you to slow  
18 down just a tiny bit so we can capture your --

19                  MR. IVEY: Absolutely.

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

21                  MR. IVEY: These vehicles have been  
22 running a hundred plus mile routes daily, providing  
23 diesel-free home deliveries to towns in the greater  
24 Syracuse area, such as Skaneateles, Ithica, and  
25 Cortland. More vehicles are being deployed in the

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           coming months, not only at this location, but  
4           throughout National Grid's territory in Central and  
5           Upstate New York.

6                   At this location, in particular,  
7           Current has benefited from the commercial EV make-  
8           ready program, allowing Current to offset costs of  
9           bringing additional power to the site. These savings  
10          are directly passed to customers, assisting with the  
11          total cost of ownership closer to parity with  
12          traditional ICE vehicles.

13                   With costs currently being a barrier  
14          to fleet electrification, these programs have made an  
15          immediate positive impact to the transition. We look  
16          forward to continuing -- continuing to take advantage  
17          of these provided programs and newer programs to  
18          improve the economics for our customers.

19                   Current has sites and operation, and  
20          in development nationwide. And I personally have  
21          experience with nearly two dozen different utilities.  
22          The progressiveness, care, and professionalism that  
23          the National Grid EV team shows toward  
24          electrification is a model for utilities around the  
25          country.

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 Current is a proud partner with  
4 National Grid, and we plan to strengthen our  
5 relationship in the future. By adopting the Advanced  
6 Clean Trucks rule, New York State is requiring all  
7 sales or leases of medium heavy duty trucks to be  
8 emission free or EV by 2045. We understand that the  
9 financial support for electrification is included in  
10 this rate case, and we believe it is a prudent use of  
11 the funding and meeting this goal. Thank you.

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

13 The next speaker is James D'Agostino.

14 MR. D'AGOSTINO: Hello. My name is  
15 Jim D'Agostino, and I'm the CEO and center director  
16 for TDO. TDO is a nonprofit consulting and training  
17 organization based in Liverpool. Excuse me. Our  
18 mission is to grow the local economy by helping  
19 Central New York manufacturers and technology  
20 companies drive operational excellence and cultural  
21 transformation to reach their full potential. TDO is  
22 part of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership  
23 system, and we're happy to call National Grid one of  
24 our critical regional economic development partners.

25 As a part of their rate case filing,

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 National Grid is proposing to continue its economic  
4 development grant programs at their current levels of  
5 funding. These programs continue to have a major  
6 impact on the attraction, expansion, and retention of  
7 businesses in Upstate New York. In many ways, these  
8 programs serve as lifelines for our local  
9 manufacturers.

10 Since the grant programs were  
11 introduced in 2003, National Grid has invested over  
12 \$160 million in the regional economy, helping to  
13 create or retain over 70,000 jobs, and leveraging  
14 nearly \$12 million in new capital investment across  
15 the companies Upstate New York service territory.

16 National Grid's Manufacturing  
17 Productivity program has alone funded over 700  
18 projects, providing \$13.1 million in support for New  
19 York State manufacturers. National Grid's continuing  
20 investment in energy infrastructure is also  
21 critically important to economic development in  
22 upstate New York. The company's investment in its  
23 electricity and gas networks is essential in order to  
24 meet the capacity, reliability, resilience, safety,  
25 and security needs of existing and prospective



1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           businesses in New York State. As a result of these  
4           tremendous regional impacts, TDO stands in support of  
5           National Grid's rate case filing. Thank you.

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

7                   The next speaker is Louis Klapper.

8           Louis Klapper, Klopper?

9                   MR. KLAPPER: Can I go after --

10                   A.L.J. BERGEN: You want me to --

11                   MR. KLAPPER: Can I ask for another  
12           minute?

13                   A.L.J. BERGEN: Yeah, sure. No  
14           problem. Okay. We'll move on to Dan Cannon. Don  
15           Cannon. Dan Cannon?

16                   MR. CAROL: Dan Carol (phonetic).

17                   A.L.J. BERGEN: Carol?

18                   MR. CAROL: Unless it's some other --

19                   A.L.J. BERGEN: Le Moyne?

20                   MR. CAROL: We good?

21                   A.L.J. BERGEN: Dan Carol?

22                   MR. CAROL: Okay.

23                   A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay.

24                   MR. CAROL: Thank you. Yeah, I didn't  
25           know really if we could ask questions, but what about

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 the wind turbines and what about the solar panels and  
4 stuff like that? Isn't that supposed to reduce our  
5 expenses? I mean, our rates. I thought this was all  
6 part of the cause. You know, and then -- and then  
7 most electricity comes from coal, doesn't it? So  
8 we're not -- I mean, I don't have answers to this,  
9 and I'd like answers. I think we probably would all  
10 like that, though. And what about fracking? So I  
11 mean, those are just some questions. I didn't hear  
12 anybody ask them, so I'll just leave it with that.

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

14 Mr. Carol (sic), are you ready or  
15 would you like me to skip another?

16 MR. KLAPPER: One more please. Sorry.

17 A.L.J. BERGEN: I'm sorry?

18 MR. KLAPPER: One more please.

19 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay.

20 MR. KLAPPER: My apologies.

21 A.L.J. BERGEN: Pat Pavir.

22 MR. PAVIR: Good evening. I'm a

23 homeowner and I don't have a prepared statement, but  
24 I have six accounts, and I've been smoldering under  
25 these delivery charges for quite a while. I -- the

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 presentation that Art gave here was very succinct, I  
4 think, in citing the problem for the homeowner. It's  
5 wonderful to hear all of the programs that National  
6 Grid promotes for charity and for start-up of  
7 businesses. But that can't happen on the backs of  
8 the homeowner. I think this new request for an  
9 increase is significantly greater than we should have  
10 to bear. I refer back to Art's report because he  
11 really covered the increase percentage wise, the  
12 inflation and the relevance to all of that. I think  
13 it's a very good report, and you should look at it  
14 carefully. Thank you.

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

16 Mr. Carol (sic)?

17 MR. KLAPPER: I had originally not  
18 written anything down, and I saw that everyone had.  
19 So --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible)  
21 use that.

22 MR. KLAPPER: Use this one?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: A little lower.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There you go.

25 MR. KLAPPER: Okay. So I'm a

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3 certified energy manager. I've worked in my career  
4 with National Grid. The workers are absolutely  
5 wonderful people. The company is a wonderful partner  
6 to many community organizations. They offer many  
7 incentives to cooperate and residential partners.  
8 They do a great job of communication. They get  
9 restoration done quick. I've never lost power in my  
10 home for more than about four hours. They're always  
11 there when I need them.

12                         But we as citizens have to be able to  
13 separate the proposed rate hike and this specific  
14 policy from the good that they do in the community  
15 and from the good deeds with the organization. You  
16 can be a huge fan of the organization but oppose some  
17 of their policies. And I do oppose the rate hike. I  
18 know as an energy manager exactly what to do to save  
19 energy in my home. And I've availed myself of many  
20 of programs. I've gotten incentives for my heating  
21 to be more efficient, when we bought the home. I've  
22 gotten incentives for my water heater. I've gotten  
23 incentives for my thermostat, which is a smart  
24 thermostat. I have LED lights that are off unless  
25 we're in the room. I have sensors, all of those

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3 things.

4                   But not even the smartest minds can  
5 change the weather. The fact is that winters are  
6 getting colder, summers are getting hotter, and bills  
7 go up. It's just a fact. So even though I'm doing  
8 everything right to save as much as I possibly can  
9 and avail myself of all the programs that the company  
10 offers, you can't change the weather. The rate hike  
11 is going to bring in unnecessary hardship to  
12 thousands of vulnerable New Yorkers especially those  
13 in need, the elderly, the impoverished, and many of  
14 us who are just struggling to get by. Bills have  
15 increased year by year. And in this day and age,  
16 with many people needing to work from home, as  
17 many -- much of the workforce shifted to that route.  
18 We rely on utilities as a necessity, much like we do  
19 with water. We need to heat our homes, especially  
20 here in Central New York, and we need to be able to  
21 afford to do it.

22                   The proposed rate hike vastly outpaces  
23 inflation, as has been mentioned before, and as such,  
24 it's an unnecessary -- it's just an unnecessarily  
25 high number. If National Grid was struggling, or

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 hemorrhaging profits, or showing deficits, you know,  
4 we would need to come and help because they're such  
5 an essential utility. I mean, they are a utility.  
6 They're essential to every home. But they're not,  
7 they have -- they have shown profit. And so I would  
8 be amenable to an inflation that would match -- or an  
9 increase that match inflation. An increase that  
10 maybe even be, like, one and a half of inflation.  
11 But it's such a large increase when you compare to  
12 the inflation. You know, I get a cost of living  
13 raise every year that matches inflation. But if my  
14 bills outpace that, where am I going to be? It's  
15 just not a sustainable increase for the average  
16 consumer. So I'm opposed to the rate hike. Thank  
17 you.

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

19 The next speaker is Alicia Corp.

20 MS. CORP: Good evening,

21 Administrative Law Judge Bergen and my fellow  
22 Syracuse area residents. My name is Alicia Corp. I  
23 use she/her pronouns and I'm the supervisor of direct  
24 services and counsel, for the Public Utility Law  
25 Project, or PULP for short. PULP is a 40-year-old

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           nonprofit with the mission of educating, advocating,  
4           and litigating on behalf of New York State's low  
5           income utility customers. PULP thanks the Department  
6           of Public Service for the opportunity to testify in  
7           relation to National Grid's rate cases. PULP is an  
8           active party in both cases, and we will be submitting  
9           testimony on September 26th. But tonight, our  
10          message is one of reflection. It's important for the  
11          Commission to be aware of how Upstate National Grid  
12          customers are doing right now, and the struggles to  
13          afford their current bills. PULP has many concerns  
14          with low and moderate income customers being able to  
15          afford their bills.

16                   In May 2024, the company requested an  
17          increase in annual delivery revenues that could  
18          result in an almost \$40 increase a month for  
19          residential customers with both electric and gas  
20          service. According to the company's collections  
21          activities report as of August 2024, 228,110  
22          customers are behind by 60 days or more on their  
23          bill, with a total dollar amount of \$312,242,821.

24                   Additionally, PULP pulled financial  
25          statistics from the New York State Community Action

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           Association's 2024 Poverty Report, United Way's ALICE  
4           Project, and the New York State Department of  
5           Education County Statistics. In Onondaga County,  
6           13.9 percent of households live in poverty, with 9.7  
7           percent of people over 65. And 44.7 percent of  
8           female head of households living in poverty. 3  
9           percent of students have identified as homeless and  
10          54 percent of students are considered economically  
11          disadvantaged.

12                   In Oswego County, 17 percent of  
13          households live in poverty, with 7.7 percent of  
14          people over 65 and 74 percent of female head of  
15          households living in poverty. 5 percent of students  
16          have identified as homeless and 57 percent of  
17          students are considered economically disadvantaged.

18                   I grew up just across the Oswego  
19          County border in Phoenix, New York, in a single  
20          parent household where it was a constant struggle to  
21          afford food, rent, and the utility bill. Our service  
22          was terminated numerous times while as a child, and  
23          therefore, I know from personal experience how  
24          terrifying it is to come home from school and the  
25          lights not turning on.



1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3                   These statistics are important and are  
4           the reality of life for many families in this area.  
5           Every day, ratepayers are already struggling with  
6           bills that are unaffordable. PULP asks the  
7           Commission to scrutinize National Grid's rate  
8           requests to make sure that the rates customers are  
9           paying are just, and reasonable, affordable, and  
10          fair.

11                   Thank you to the public who came out  
12          today to share their stories. And thank you for  
13          giving PULP the opportunity to speak today.

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

15                   The last speaker I have is Matt Jones.

16                   MR. JONES: I won't keep you all.

17          Good evening. My name is Matt Jones, and I'm here on  
18          behalf of Assemblywoman Pamela Hunter, who represents  
19          the 128th Assembly District. She's asked me to enter  
20          the following statement into the record.

21                   "New Yorkers have become accustomed to  
22          increases in costs everywhere they look with. While  
23          this rate case has not yet been approved, my  
24          constituents have already experienced record high  
25          utility bills during times of peak energy demand. I

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 understand that the economic environment has changed  
4 and inflation is impacting pricing at all levels, but  
5 we cannot continue to levy these costs on the backs  
6 of vulnerable" taxpayers -- excuse me, "ratepayers.  
7 Although I recognize that we have programs to assist  
8 low income families, and I see that National Grid has  
9 taken measures to reduce costs for ratepayers, such  
10 as by waiving credit card fees, we cannot continue to  
11 approve large rate hikes when we have already had  
12 hikes approved in the recent past.

13 "The average expected bill increase is  
14 approximately \$18 per month and is a significant  
15 increase for many of my constituents, and it is not  
16 an increase that many of them are prepared to afford.  
17 I invite National Grid and the Public Service  
18 Commission to work with the legislature to find ways  
19 to keep utilities affordable for our ratepayers. In  
20 our pursuit of sustainable energy, we must continue  
21 to be mindful of reliability and affordability. I  
22 urge the PSC to disapprove of this rate hike proposal  
23 and find other ways to fund utility infrastructure or  
24 reduce costs. When the legislative session resumes,  
25 I will work with my colleagues to make energy in New

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           York more affordable, and I welcome utility and PSC  
4           collaboration."

5                   Again, this is a statement from  
6           Assemblymember Pamela Hunter, who represents the  
7           128th Assembly District. Thank you.

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

9                   Those are the only speaker cards that  
10          I have. If during the speakers, anyone has decided  
11          that they would like to make a comment on the record,  
12          you're more than welcome to do so.

13                   Sir, would you like to make a  
14          statement? I just ask that after you're done making  
15          your statement, if you could fill out a card so we  
16          can capture the proper spelling of your name for our  
17          court reporter, for the transcript.

18                   MR. LINNENBAH: Thank you for letting  
19          me speak. My name is James Linnenbah.

20                   A.L.J. BERGEN: I'm sorry. James --

21                   MR. LINNENBAH: Can I try this again?  
22          Hi, my name is James Linnenbah. Thank you for  
23          allowing me to speak. I'd just like to talk about  
24          two things.

25                   What is National Grid? As near as I

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2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           can tell, it's a British multinational company  
4           located in London, England.

5                   And who owns National Grid? In other  
6           words, where is our -- where are the profits going?  
7           Major shareholder is huge hedge fund called  
8           BlackRock. They own nine percent of it, nine percent  
9           of National Grid. Other major shareholders are J.P.  
10          Morgan and Sovereign Wealth Fund of Norway and  
11          Investment Authority of Abu Dhabi. How do we let  
12          this happen is the question before the Public Service  
13          Commission, as we've already heard, about tens of  
14          thousands of households struggling to pay their rates  
15          and the question before them is, you know, do these  
16          people need more money? Thank you. That's it.

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

19                   Does anyone else wish to appear?

20                   I'll remind everyone this is not the  
21          only opportunity for comment. We have the copy of  
22          the notice again that tells you how to submit your  
23          comments in writing, by phone, by email. If you made  
24          a comment today and you leave and you think, I should  
25          have said something more, there's no limit on

1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323  
3           comments. You can continue to submit comments as you  
4           have them, so I encourage you to continue to think  
5           about the case and provide the comments that you have  
6           them.

7                   I think we'll take a five-minute break  
8           until 7 o'clock to give you a final opportunity to  
9           decide if you'd like to make a comments.

10                   So we can go off the record.

11                   (Off the record)

12                   (On the record)

13                   A.L.J. BERGEN: We're back on the  
14           record. It is 7:02. We took a little break. Many  
15           people have cleared the room, but there are still  
16           people in the audience. And I'll open it up one more  
17           time if anybody has changed their mind or they have  
18           something to add to the record tonight, I --

19                   Sir, please come to the podium. State  
20           your name, please for our court reporter.

21                   MR. MITCHELL: My name is Russ  
22           Mitchell. I'm a 49-year resident of the Town of  
23           Clay, and as Richard put it, I'm disappointed in this  
24           public hearing. Basically, because there's nobody  
25           here from National Grid to tell us why they need this

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 rate increase and that kind of a 15 to 20 percent.

4 That's just absolutely absurd right now. All I heard  
5 at the beginning of this was how great National Grid  
6 is. We know how great National Grid is. They've  
7 done a lot of things for the community. We know  
8 that, they didn't have to enforce that. None of that  
9 has gone away for any of these people that talked  
10 originally. They're still going to get money and  
11 they're going to be able to do the programs they did.  
12 But do we need to have an increase that's going to  
13 cost our residents? \$400 a year? Come on, that  
14 doesn't even make sense.

15 I've done everything with my home.  
16 I've sealed it. I've done all kinds of stuff the  
17 National Grid puts on -- on the internet they've  
18 asked you do to do, and I've done that. Now they're  
19 going to come in here and tell us that they need to  
20 increase our rates by this kind of money? That's --  
21 if they need that kind of delivery cost, there's a  
22 reason for it. I haven't heard and nobody asked  
23 that.

24 We have some people, residents here,  
25 who talked to us about the fact that, where they were

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 at and -- and what we needed, and they weren't in  
4 support of this rate increase. But nobody, nobody's  
5 here from National Grid to ask any kind of questions  
6 or tell us exactly why they need this kind of an  
7 increase. I don't see it. I don't see why they need  
8 to do that. I -- maybe they need some kind of rate  
9 increase, but I don't think they need 15 to 20  
10 percent. At best, half of that. At worst, nothing.

11 But they're not running out of money.  
12 And we -- we got some things going on in our town  
13 right here, right now with my primary and everything  
14 that's gone on. And that's going to cost.

15 (Indiscernible)? Sure, because they're going to get  
16 money from the federal government, the State,  
17 everybody else. Who's the guy -- who's all this  
18 going to fall back on? Everything that goes on in  
19 our -- in this town, is going to fall back on the  
20 taxpayer, the ratepayers, because there isn't any  
21 other place to go.

22 School taxes are going to go up and  
23 we're going to get hit with it. Raising your  
24 children is going to go up, and we're going to get  
25 hit with it. And you know what's going to happen?

1 9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 We're going to lose people. Who wants to stay here?

4 Not just Clay, but who -- who wants to stay here with

5 the kind of stuff that's going on? They will lose

6 us.

7 We sit in our town and we try to

8 figure out what kind of housing that we want to build

9 here, to help people to -- to ask them to stay. And

10 then on top of that, we're going to tax the devil out

11 of them. It just does not make sense. And I implore

12 that the Commission to seriously take a look at this.

13 I'm not saying give them zero, but I think they

14 really need to take a look at the rate increase and

15 find out exactly why they need that. Why do they

16 need those millions of dollars? Thank you.

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

18 Anyone else?

19 Okay. We're off the record. Thank

20 everybody for coming out tonight.

21 (The hearing concluded at 7:10 p.m.)

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1           9/18/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation D/B/A  
2                   National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3                           STATE OF NEW YORK

4           I, THOMAS BAKER, do hereby certify that the foregoing  
5           was reported by me, in the cause, at the time and  
6           place, as stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1  
7           hereof; that the foregoing typewritten transcription  
8           consisting of pages 1 through 49, is a true record of  
9           all proceedings had at the hearing.

10                           IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto  
11           subscribed my name, this the 21st day of September,  
12           2024.

13  
14           

15           THOMAS BAKER, Reporter

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