

1 10/18/2022 - NYSEG - 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 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 the 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

21 PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARING

22 DATE: October 18, 2022 at 1:01 p.m.

23 VENUE: WebEx

24 BEFORE: A.L.J. ERIKA BERGEN

25 A.L.J. LINDSEY OVERTON

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2 (The hearing commenced at 1:01 p.m.)

3 A.L.J. BERGEN: Anthony, are you  
4 ready?

5 THE REPORTER: Yes. We are on the  
6 record.

7 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you. I  
8 call case 22-E-0317 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 electric service.

12 Case 22-G-0318 proceeding on motion of  
13 the Commission as to the rates, charges, rules and  
14 regulations of the New York State Electric and Gas  
15 Corporation for gas service.

16 Case 22-E-0319 proceeding on motion of  
17 the Commission as to the rates, charges, rules and  
18 regulations of Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation  
19 for electric service.

20 And Case 22-G-0320 proceeding on  
21 motion of the Commission as to the rates, charges,  
22 rules and regulations of Rochester Gas and Electric  
23 Corporation for gas service.

24 Good afternoon and welcome. My name  
25 is Erika Bergen. I'm an administrative law judge

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2 with the Department of Public Service.

3 With me today is Administrative Law  
4 Judge Lindsay Overton, and together we're responsible  
5 for presiding over the hearings in this case and the  
6 development of a complete record in these  
7 proceedings. We are here today for a public  
8 statement hearing that was noticed on August 19th,  
9 2022. New York State Electric and Gas Corporation,  
10 or NYSEG, and Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation,  
11 or RG&E, filed amendments to their electric and gas  
12 tariffs scheduled on May 26, 2022 proposing to  
13 increase their annual electric and gas delivery  
14 revenues effective May 1, 2023.

15 NYSEG proposes to increase its annual  
16 electric delivery revenues by approximately 274  
17 million dollars, which is a 31.2 increase in base  
18 delivery revenues or 16.8 percent increase in total  
19 revenues.

20 NYSEG requests an increase in its  
21 annual gas delivery revenues of approximately 43  
22 million dollars, which is a 20.7 increase in base  
23 delivery revenues or 9.8 percent increase in total  
24 revenues.

25 RG&E requests an annual increase in

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2 their electric delivery revenues of approximately  
3 93.8 million dollars, which is a 19 percent increase  
4 in delivery revenues or an 11.3 increase -- percent  
5 increase in total revenues.

6 RG&E also requests an annual increase  
7 in gas delivery revenues of approximately 37 million  
8 dollars, which is a 20.9 percent increase in base  
9 delivery revenues or a 9.7 percent increase in total  
10 revenues.

11 We are holding this hearing so that  
12 you can provide your comments on these proposals for  
13 the Public Service Commission's consideration.

14 The Commission will decide the terms  
15 and conditions of service for NYSEG and RG&E. The  
16 Commission consists of seven members, the chair Rory  
17 Christian, and Commissioners Diane Burman, James  
18 Alesi, Tracy Edwards, John Howard, David Valesky and  
19 John Maggiore.

20 We're fortunate today to have  
21 Commissioner Maggiore with us. Commissioner  
22 Maggiore, would you like to address the participants?

23 MR. MAGGIORE: Thank you very much. I  
24 would just like to thank everybody who has turned out  
25 to participate in this public statement hearing. As

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2 a Commissioner, I appreciate hearing from people who  
3 are affected by matters that come before us.

4 This is the only time you're going to  
5 hear from me because I'm here to listen to what folks  
6 have to say. So again, I'd like to thank you, and I  
7 look forward to hearing what people have to say, so  
8 thank you very much.

9 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you,  
10 Commissioner. So as I said before, the purpose of  
11 this hearing is to provide the public with an  
12 opportunity to tell the Commission their thoughts on  
13 NYSEG and RG&E's rate proposals. The statements you  
14 make today will become part of the case record.

15 As I indicated previously, we have a  
16 court reporter on the line who will prepare a  
17 transcript of this hearing, which will be included in  
18 the official record of the proceeding so that your  
19 comments can be considered by members of the  
20 Commission.

21 When it is ready, the transcript will  
22 be publicly available for review on the Department of  
23 Public Service's website. I remind everybody, this  
24 is not an evidentiary hearing with cross examination  
25 and it is not a question and answer session, but

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2 really just a forum to hear the public's comments.

3 This is also not the only opportunity  
4 for you to comment. If you did not register to speak  
5 at today's hearing or you don't want to speak at  
6 today's hearing, but you want your views included in  
7 the record there are other ways to comment as  
8 explained in the public notice for today's event.

9 You can submit your comments to the  
10 department's website by email or regular mail, or by  
11 telephone. All comments, no matter how they are  
12 submitted will be given equal consideration. Because  
13 we're holding this event virtually, we asked people  
14 to register to make a statement.

15 If you registered, please summarize  
16 any lengthy written statements and then submit your  
17 full written statement by mail or email just to make  
18 sure we have enough time for everyone to provide a  
19 statement.

20 So we will begin. I just want to  
21 remind everybody there are some people who are  
22 participating by telephone, there are some people who  
23 are participating via the Webex platform. No matter  
24 how you're participating, please have only one audio  
25 input and one audio output plugged in. Otherwise,

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2 we'll experience problems hearing you and some  
3 feedback will occur. If you've registered and you're  
4 participating by phone, when we call your name,  
5 please press Star Three on your keypad and that will  
6 share your name in our list so we can unmute you.

7 If you're participating via Webex,  
8 there's a small button on the right hand -- bottom  
9 right hand on your screen, you can click raise hand  
10 or we'll find you in the list, but it will make it  
11 easier if you click that.

12 If you registered via Webex and now  
13 you're participating by phone, again, click Star  
14 Three so we can identify you. When I call somebody's  
15 name, if we can't find you fairly, reasonably  
16 quickly, I'm going to move on. But I'll come back to  
17 you when we're done with the registered list.

18 So the first speaker is Warren Lucas.  
19 Warren Lucas, who has registered by phone, so Warren,  
20 if you're on the line please press Star Three on your  
21 keypad. All right. I don't see any hands raised,  
22 we'll come back to Warren.

23 The next speaker is Wendy Van Buren  
24 (phonetic spelling).

25 Wendy Van Buren. Wendy, if you've

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2 called in, please press Star Three on your keypad.

3 I think I see -- we have a hand raised  
4 for William -- well, can we unmute to see if that's  
5 perhaps Warren or Wendy is with that individual?

6 MALE VOICE: Sorry, no, they are not.

7 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay.

8 MALE VOICE: I just wasn't sure where  
9 do you need me to show the raised hand.

10 A.L.J. BERGEN: No, no, thank you very  
11 much.

12 Okay. We don't hear Wendy or Warren.  
13 Joanne (sic) Stanlin?

14 Okay. And now I see William Moehle,  
15 or Moehle, I'm sorry.

16 MR. MOEHLE: It's actually -- it's  
17 actually Moehle.

18 A.L.J. BERGEN: Moehle, thank you for  
19 that. That is an unusual one. Okay. You may begin.

20 MR. MOEHLE: Thank you very much. My  
21 name is Bill Moehle. I'm the supervisor of the Town  
22 of Brighton in Monroe County, and I've served in that  
23 position since January 1st, 2012. And I thank the  
24 P.S.C. for holding this public hearing.

25 Right now there's approximately 37,000



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2 residents, and Rochester Gas and Electric distributes  
3 gas and electricity throughout Brighton. The issues  
4 that the Town of Brighton and our residents have had  
5 with RG&E are not new, and we brought them to the  
6 attention of RG&E and the P.S.C. on multiple  
7 occasions.

8 I'm here today to call on the P.S.C.  
9 to deny RG&E's request for an electric rate increase  
10 and instead to engage in the act of regulation of  
11 RG&E's business to ensure that the patterns of  
12 service and system failures that have persisted for  
13 years are fixed once and for all.

14 In March 2016, I testified at a P.S.C.  
15 hearing held to consider a rate increase for RG&E.  
16 At that time, my testimony focused on persistent  
17 service outages in neighborhood street lighting  
18 districts in Brighton, as well as other issues caused  
19 by years of neglect of capital investment in the  
20 system.

21 In these lighting districts, the town  
22 serves as a conduit for funding the cost of providing  
23 electricity for ornamental neighborhood street  
24 lights, which are owned by RG&E. I testified the  
25 capital spending on the neighborhood street lighting

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2 system in Brighton had long been neglected by RG&E  
3 despite the fact that RG&E was charging town  
4 residents for capital improvements to the system as  
5 part of its rate structure.

6 At that time I asked the P.S.C. to  
7 deny a rate increase until RG&E could demonstrate  
8 that it was providing the service that its customers  
9 in the Brighton street lighting districts were paying  
10 for, specifically including capital expenditures to  
11 reduce outages and permit upgrades for more efficient  
12 and less expensive L.E.D. lighting.

13 In 2017, just one year later, I again  
14 submitted testimony to the P.S.C. at a hearing held  
15 to evaluate the performance of RG&E in the aftermath  
16 of wind storms that had knocked down RG&E poles  
17 causing a significant amount of the town to lose  
18 power.

19 I see my time is going, so I will  
20 submit more of this in writing. But today the  
21 serious neighborhood street lighting issues have  
22 gotten only worse. Certain neighborhoods in Brighton  
23 went without streetlights for as long as several  
24 months this past winter because RG&E failed to keep  
25 the parts needed to repair the system.

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2 This summer RG&E finally began the  
3 upgrade of one small part of the town street lighting  
4 system to allow the installation of L.E.D. fixtures,  
5 but the rest of the town will have to wait, in many  
6 cases, for years for that upgrade.

7 In 2017, I also address the failure to  
8 invest in infrastructure which has directly impacted  
9 economic development, specifically a substation along  
10 the Brighton/Henrietta corridor. Now as problematic  
11 as those ongoing issues have been, Brighton and the  
12 entire RG&E service area is now plagued with billing  
13 issues that have impacted hundreds of customers in  
14 Brighton alone.

15 We first noted billing problems when  
16 customers using the Source Power community solar  
17 program reported receiving large bills early in 2022.  
18 Although we've still not received a full explanation,  
19 it seems that RG&E and Source Power were not prepared  
20 to properly bill the large number of community solar  
21 customers in Brighton.

22 Many of these bills exceeded 1,000 and  
23 at least two exceeded 4,000 dollars. The Town of  
24 Brighton filed a formal complaint with the P.S.C.  
25 about these billing issues in February. Since that

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2 time, the billing problems have only gotten worse and  
3 many customers who were never part of the community  
4 solar program began to receive excessively large  
5 bills after going several months without receiving  
6 any bills at all.

7 Customers who tried to get answers and  
8 called the RG&E customer service line were put on  
9 hold, in some cases for over an hour. And in many  
10 cases were dissatisfied with the answers they  
11 received even when they finally did get through to  
12 customer service.

13 In Brighton, RG&E finally set up a  
14 dedicated customer service line at my request to  
15 handle the large number of customer service calls  
16 from Brighton residents. But even then, customers  
17 have reported leaving messages and not receiving a  
18 return call for four days or more.

19 The RG&E billing and customer service  
20 model is broken and customers here in Brighton and  
21 the Rochester area are being impacted day after day.  
22 Six years ago I asked the P.S.C. to deny RG&E's  
23 request for a rate increase. Perhaps the P.S.C.  
24 chose to give RG&E the benefit of the doubt at that  
25 time when it granted RG&E's request in spite of the

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2 voices of so many people who spoke out against the  
3 rate increase. Events since then show that RG&E has  
4 abused the benefit of the doubt in the neglect of  
5 infrastructure, supply and street lighting problems  
6 in Brighton have simply gotten worse.

7 And these new billing and customer  
8 service problems that left customers with no place to  
9 turn often in the face of threats of shutoffs or  
10 credit bureau reporting. Today, I asked the Public  
11 Service Commission to take note of RG&E's continued  
12 neglect of its infrastructure, the repeated customer  
13 service and billing failures, their ongoing failure  
14 to timely upgrade infrastructure to supply power, to  
15 submitting to permit economic development in Brighton  
16 and RG&E's ongoing delays in repairing and upgrading  
17 their street lighting system in Brighton, and to  
18 reject this unconscionable rate increase request in  
19 its entirety. I again, ask the P.S.C. to take strong  
20 measures to regulate RG&E's monopoly. The  
21 ratepayers, the residents of Brighton and the  
22 Rochester area deserve better.

23 And it is now time, as it was six  
24 years ago, but more so than ever today, to hold  
25 RG&E's feet to the fire to ensure that their work is

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2 done on an expeditious manner so that they can  
3 provide customer service, billing and electric supply  
4 to the Town of Brighton in the manner that their  
5 tariffs require them to do.

6 I thank you for your consideration,  
7 and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have,  
8 and I will submit my full statement electronically.

9 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you, Mr. --  
10 thank you, Mr. Moehle.

11 The next speaker is Christopher  
12 Kleine. Christopher Kleine, if you join by phone,  
13 please press Star Three on your keypad. I see we  
14 have a call-in user with a hand raised.

15 MR. KLEINE: Christopher Kleine  
16 speaking.

17 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. You may  
18 begin.

19 MR. KLEINE: Hi, I'm just a resident  
20 of the Town of Hamburg. I've been a resident in  
21 NYSEG's territory for 19 years. My comments are kind  
22 of similar to the supervisor in Brighton. It has to  
23 do with street lighting issues, customer service  
24 issues, lack of line technicians and customer service  
25 waits.

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2 Just rec -- probably five or six years  
3 now, I've had to file public service complaints in  
4 order to get something as simple as street lights  
5 fixed in the Town in Hamburg. The Town of Hamburg, I  
6 believe, has 60,000 residents with 10,000 in the  
7 village. Of that 10,000 and half of the 60,000 in  
8 the town are customers of NYSEG.

9 Just recently, I called in eight  
10 street lights that were out. I was on hold for over  
11 an hour. And just to get the lights fixed, I had to  
12 file a public service complaint. Took two weeks for  
13 them to respond to me.

14 And personally, I don't think that,  
15 you know, a town resident should have to file a  
16 public service complaint in order to get streetlights  
17 fixed. Also, in my taxes, I pay about 80 dollars a  
18 year just in my taxes for street lighting, which I  
19 believe goes to NYSEG for the maintenance of the  
20 streetlights. So it's just been an ongoing issue  
21 with street lighting problems.

22 My second complaint was the customer  
23 service recently was an hour. Also, most recently as  
24 last week that I called, it was a three-hour callback  
25 time. NYSEG provides the service to the customers,

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2 they don't produce anything. Their number one thing  
3 is servicing your customers, and I feel that, you  
4 know, that's way excessive.

5 I also own another property in the  
6 Town of Hamburg, which is serviced by National Grid.  
7 When I call them with an issue, phone calls answered  
8 within 10 minutes, streetlight issues, they pull up a  
9 map. I give them an address. They pull up the pole  
10 number. It's repaired in two or three days.

11 NYSEG chooses oftentimes to contract  
12 out the work through outside companies. About three,  
13 four years ago, I stopped at the line department at  
14 the Town of Hamburg, which was now reduced from about  
15 24 line technicians to between six and nine line  
16 technic -- technicians, not very many line  
17 technicians for servicing, you know, a population of  
18 60,000 people.

19 I asked them what the stack was on his  
20 desk, about two inches thick; those were for  
21 streetlights. So I mean, we shouldn't have to go  
22 through this. And one of the other things I just  
23 want to mention was, you know, the wait times for  
24 customer service, I mean, that happens all over, it's  
25 just excessive.



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2 And lastly, I just wanted to mention  
3 that it's even gotten as bad as my meter was read  
4 incorrectly a few months ago and that's a digital  
5 meter. You know, personally, I mean, if somebody  
6 can't read the digits on a meter, I mean, are they  
7 even working there or should they even be working  
8 there?

9 That's really about all I had to say.  
10 My main thing is mainly with the streetlights and  
11 just their lack of overall resources to repair them.  
12 I mean, I shouldn't have to file complaints to get  
13 streetlights fixed. But I appreciate your time.

14 THE REPORTER: Mr. Kleine -- Mr.  
15 Kleine, can I get the spelling of your last name,  
16 please?

17 MR. KLEINE: It's K-L-E-I-N-E.

18 THE REPORTER: N-E. Okay. Thank you.

19 MR. KLEINE: Okay. Appreciate it,  
20 thank you. All right. Bye now.

21 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. The next  
22 speaker is Steve Jacobstein or Jacobstein. If you  
23 joined, on the phone, Steve, please, press Star Three  
24 on your keypad. Steve Jacobstein.

25 Okay. We'll move on to John Kapusta.

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2 FEMALE VOICE: Your Honor, we have a  
3 raised hand.

4 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Is that Steve?  
5 Hello, do we have Steve Jacobstein?

6 I see Tina Jackson has their hand  
7 raised. Can we unmute, maybe Steve is with her?

8 MR. JACOBSTEIN: Yes, yes, Steve is  
9 here and there's a number of people here with the  
10 Monroe County Workers Benefit Council.

11 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Well -- well,  
12 we -- we have to go with people who have already  
13 registered, so whoever has already registered, I'll  
14 call your name and then if there -- you know, at the  
15 end, we'll go to people who have not registered. But  
16 I want to make sure we get to all the people who  
17 registered first. So if you have Steve --

18 MR. JACOBSTEIN: All right.

19 Good afternoon. My name is Steve  
20 Jacobstein. I live in Monroe County. I'm a retired  
21 attorney, and I work as a volunteer at Eastern  
22 Service Workers. In that capacity, I'm here today to  
23 speak on behalf of more than 25,000 low income  
24 workers and their families throughout Monroe County.

25 The Eastern Service Workers expresses

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2 their ... opposition to RG&E and NYSEG's 580 million  
3 dollar rate -- rate hike request. We demand that the  
4 Public Service Commission do its job and deny this  
5 unaffordable and also unsustainable ... with rate  
6 increase.

7 I have to (unintelligible) to the  
8 Eastern Service Workers. One, cancel this rate hike  
9 entirely. Two, install a year-round moratorium and  
10 shutoff. And three, transition to 100 percent  
11 renewable energy grid by 2030 while keeping rates  
12 affordable for even the lowest income taxpayers.

13 Eastern Service Workers represent home  
14 health aides, nursing aides working in nursing home,  
15 childcare workers, food service and retail workers.  
16 If they don't get -- they don't get paid enough for  
17 the essentials like home energy.

18 So adding another 25 dollar to their  
19 monthly bills is absolutely out of the question. For  
20 over 12 years E.S.W. has called on the Public Service  
21 Commission to follow its own public -- its own legal  
22 mandate to quote, Protect the utility consumers from  
23 potential abuse of monopoly power and to protect the  
24 rights of New Yorkers while ensuring access to  
25 releable -- reliable, low cost utility service.

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2 But all during this time, the P.S.C.  
3 has broken this mandate using to guarantee a certain  
4 rate of return on investment for the utility and  
5 monopoly shareholders that guarantee profit with 9  
6 percent as we heard. As a result of the state  
7 guaranteeing these exorbitant profits where energy  
8 monopolies compounding the stagnant wages in fixed  
9 income, not keeping up, New York has seen 300,000  
10 utility customers being shut off each year. 50,000 is  
11 right in their own region. Shutoffs by Avangrid  
12 Subsidiary and RG&E and NYSEG. But Avangrid's  
13 specific -- excuse me, parent company is paying --  
14 Iberdrola got 4.4 billion profits for shareholders to  
15 pay the C.E.O. 10 million dollars year after year.

16 During the pandemic as an emergency  
17 measure the state instituted a moratorium and shutoff  
18 which the E.S.W. has already been demanding for 12  
19 years by petitions, letters and testifying in public  
20 hearings. However, in the beginning of 2022 the  
21 state lift the moratorium, so shutoff begin again.

22 The COVID-19 pandemic made it worse  
23 with thousands losing their job and hundreds of small  
24 businesses closing down. So it's not part of the  
25 lock shop, it's time for stop shutoff forever. When

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2 the pandemic, according to RG&E's own 2020 and 2021  
3 financial reports, they successfully increase their  
4 ret -- net revenue by 32 percent and increase their  
5 shareholder wealth by over 27 percent.

6 We know how they did that. Now 13  
7 percent of all utility customers owe more than 2.1  
8 billion, double what was owed at the same time in  
9 2021. So that E.S.W. here again today, after more  
10 than a decade of the -- decade of these hearing the  
11 petition continue demanding a permanent year-round  
12 moratorium and all shutoff from low to moderate  
13 income ratepayers. Thank you very much.

14 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. The next  
15 speaker is John Kapusta. John Kapusta or Kapusta.

16 MR. KAPUSTA: All right. This is  
17 John, can you hear me? This is John Kapusta.

18 A.L.J. BERGEN: I can. Thanks. You  
19 may begin.

20 MR. KAPUSTA: Great. Hi, my name is  
21 John Kapusta. I'm a resident in the City of  
22 Rochester. And like all of the previous speakers,  
23 I'm also here to call on the Commission to deny  
24 RG&E's request for rate increase.

25 I think that everyone living in our

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2 county, our state, our country deserves to live in an  
3 equitable and sustainable world. A place where  
4 everyone, no matter who they are, can thrive. I have  
5 two small children, and when I think about the  
6 future, that's what I think about. I think about the  
7 world that they're going to grow up in, the burdens  
8 they're going to inherit, especially in light of the  
9 systematic inequality that we all live with. And the  
10 climate crisis, whose effects are already visiting us  
11 today and only promise to get worse in the future.

12 And so it's really -- it's on behalf  
13 of myself, but also on behalf of my small children  
14 and everyone that I'm here to ask for denial of what  
15 I think is really an outrageous request. I think it  
16 is completely unacceptable that RG&E would propose a  
17 rate increase that would so drastically increase the  
18 energy burden of people living in Rochester.

19 As you may know, a study conducted by  
20 the American Council for an energy efficient economy,  
21 which is a nonprofit research organization, found  
22 that 30 percent -- 37 percent of Rochester residents  
23 and 44 percent of black and Latino Rochester  
24 residents pay between 10 and 25 percent of their  
25 entire income on energy, and that's -- that's right

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2 now.

3 New York State defines a reasonable  
4 energy burden as 6 percent of one's household  
5 expenses. So again, we're talking about between  
6 approximately a third and a half of -- a third of  
7 Rochester residents and nearly half of black and  
8 Latino Rochester residents are already paying nearly  
9 twice that and even four times that for their energy.  
10 Four times what New York State defines as reasonable,  
11 and the proposed rate hikes are only going to make  
12 the situation worse.

13 On top of that, they're going to make  
14 the situation worse while also investing in gas  
15 infrastructure that is going to make our climate  
16 change crisis worse.

17 I want to applaud the utilities for  
18 the work they've done to invest in electric vehicle,  
19 charging stations and plans for more, the work  
20 they're doing to upgrade electric pedals and to  
21 enable heat pump installation and the geothermal  
22 project in Ithaca. That is the direction that RG&E  
23 should be devoting its resources.

24 It should not be spending ratepayer  
25 dollars on rebates for gas appliances and marketing

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2 for gas products and investment in other non-  
3 renewable energy sources. We all know the future of  
4 fossil fuels in our country. We can see with the  
5 passage of recent loss at the congressional level, at  
6 the federal level, that that is not the direction  
7 that we are heading in. That is not the direction  
8 that we want to head in. We want to invest in a  
9 renewable, a sustainable and equitable future for  
10 everyone. This proposed rate hike is an outrageous  
11 affront to that future that I think we all deserve.  
12 Thank you.

13 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. The next  
14 speaker is Carrie Warner -- Carrie Warner.

15 MS. CLARKE: Hi. Actually, this is  
16 Nicole Clarke for Carrie Warner, I'm in her office,  
17 and she's asked me to convey that given the  
18 inflationary pressures everyone is currently facing,  
19 this is not a time for a significant rate increase  
20 for energy use.

21 She says that it's important that the  
22 P.S.C. strip out of this enormous ask ... any  
23 extraneous expenses or investments that do not  
24 directly impact the delivery of energy to customers  
25 today. She asks, how can the P.S.C. justify a 9



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2 percent rate of return when nothing in the capital  
3 markets is yielding a 9 percent return? Why should  
4 the utility company be guaranteed a 9 percent rate of  
5 return? Thank you.

6 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. The next  
7 speaker is Alicia Landis.

8 MS. LANDIS: Good afternoon.

9 A.L.J. BERGEN: Alicia?

10 MS. LANDIS: Yup, this is Alicia  
11 Landis.

12 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thanks. Please  
13 begin.

14 MS. LANDIS: Good afternoon.  
15 Administrative Law Judges Bergen and Overton, my name  
16 is Alicia Landis, and I'm a staff attorney and the  
17 direct services supervisor with a Public Utility Law  
18 Project of New York, or PULP. PULP is a 40-year-old  
19 nonprofit with the mission of educating, advocating  
20 and litigating on behalf of New York State's low  
21 income utility customers.

22 PULP thanks the ... public service for  
23 the opportunity to testify in relation to both NYSEG  
24 and RG&E's electric and gas rate cases. PULP is an  
25 active party in all four cases, and we have filed

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2 expert testimony on September 26.

3 Although several concerns that has  
4 expanded upon our written testimony. When the  
5 companies filed on May 26, they proposed double digit  
6 increases in revenues across the companies. These  
7 proposed increases would put further strain on  
8 ratepayers, particularly low income customers.

9 Today, PULP has filed rebuttal  
10 testimony in these proceedings. We are concerned  
11 with D.P.S. staff testimony, which was filed last  
12 month, as it still increases rates for NYSEG and RG&E  
13 customers by double digits. Staffs proposed revenue  
14 requirements for NYSEG electric is a 27.6 percent  
15 increase. For NYSEG, gas of 4.8 percent increase,  
16 for RG and electric a 15.9 percent increase, and RG&E  
17 Gas in a 14.1 percent increase. PULP is concern that  
18 these increases are still far too high for NYSEG and  
19 RG&E's customers.

20 The reality is that people are  
21 struggling financially. NYSEG collections activity  
22 reports show that as -- as of August 2022, 108,694  
23 residential customers are behind on their bills by 60  
24 days or more. This equates to a total of 59 million  
25 253 thousand 973 dollars in residential arrears.

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2 RG&E's own collections activity report  
3 show that as of August 2022, 70,205 residential  
4 customers are behind on their bills by 60 days or  
5 more, for a total of 46 million 358 thousand and 109  
6 dollars in residential arrears. Neither NYSEG nor  
7 RG&E have updated these numbers for September of  
8 2022.

9 The Commission has set an important  
10 target for affordability with a goal that no low  
11 income customer will spend more than 6 percent of  
12 their income on energy. Even before any rate  
13 increases that may result from the company's filings,  
14 low income customers in the territories are already  
15 spending much more than 6 percent of their income on  
16 energy bills.

17 PULP's testimony shows that the  
18 average low income NYSEG customer spends 9.7 percent  
19 of their income on energy. This is 62 percent higher  
20 than the target set by the Commission. The testimony  
21 also shows that the average low income RG&E customer  
22 spends 9.1 percent of their income on energy. This  
23 is 52 percent higher than the target for  
24 affordability.

25 These energy work burdens may even be

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2 more exaggerated in disadvantaged communities across  
3 the company's territories, which is not discussed at  
4 all in the company's filing. Effects of the COVID-19  
5 pandemic are still heavily felt across the company's  
6 territories. Everyday ratepayers are already  
7 struggling with bills that are unaffordable.

8 In these unprecedented times, PULP ask  
9 the Commission to scrutinize NYSEG and RG&E's rate  
10 request to make sure that the rates customers are  
11 paying are just, reasonable and affordable and fair.  
12 Thank you.

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

14 The next speaker is Emma Lovett. Emma  
15 Lovett. Emma, if you've called in please press Star  
16 Three. Hello, is this Emma?

17 MS. LOVETT: Yes, it is.

18 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Please begin.

19 MS. LOVETT: Hello, and good  
20 afternoon. My name is Emma Lovett, and I live in  
21 Rochester, New York, and I work as a -- a landlord  
22 here in Rochester. I am a delegate to the Monroe  
23 County Workers Benefit Council, and in that capacity  
24 I'm here today to speak on behalf of more than 25,000  
25 low income workers and their families.

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2 The Workers Benefit Council expresses  
3 its emphatic opposition to RG&E and NYSEG's shameless  
4 580 million rate hike request. Furthermore, we  
5 demand the Public Service Commission do its job and  
6 deny this unaffordable and unobtainable (sic) rate  
7 increase.

8 We are the home health aides, the  
9 nurses aides, working in nursing homes, the childcare  
10 workers, the food service and retail workers. They  
11 started calling us essential workers during the  
12 pandemic. But we don't get paid enough for the  
13 essentials like home energy.

14 And so adding another 20 or 22 dollars  
15 to our monthly bill is absolutely out of the  
16 question. For over 12 years, we have called on the  
17 Public Service Commission to follow its own legal  
18 mandate to, and I quote, Protect the utility  
19 customers from the potential abuse of monopoly power,  
20 end quote, to protect the rights of New Yorkers while  
21 ensuring access to reliable and low cost -- low cost  
22 utility service.

23 But all during that time, the P.S.C.  
24 has broken this mandate choosing to guarantee a  
25 certain rate of return on investments for the utility

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2 monopoly shareholders. The guaranteed profit was 9  
3 percent last we heard. As a result of the state  
4 guaranteeing these ex -- ex -- exorbitant profits for  
5 energy monopolies, compounding with stringent wages  
6 and fixed incomes not keeping up.

7 As you know, with New York State, has  
8 seen 300,000 utility customers being shut off each  
9 year. 6,000 -- 60,000 of those right here in our  
10 region shut off by Iberdrola subsidiaries, RG&E and  
11 NYSEG, but Iberdrola's parent company in Spain,  
12 Iberdrola, got 4.4 billion in profits for its  
13 shareholders and paid its C.E.O. 10 million dollars  
14 year after year.

15 During the pandemic, as an emergency  
16 measure, the state instituted a moratorium on  
17 shutoffs, which our W.B.C. was already being demanded  
18 for 12 years by petition, letters, testimony at the -  
19 - at the public hearing. However, at the beginning  
20 of 2020, the state lifted the moratorium so shutoffs  
21 began again.

22 The COVID-19 pandemic made it worse  
23 with thousands losing their jobs and hundreds of  
24 small businesses closing down, so it's not time to  
25 allow shutoff -- shutoffs.

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2 It's time -- it's time to stop  
3 shutoffs forever for those in need. During the  
4 pandemic, according to RG&E own 2020 and 2021  
5 financial reports, they successfully increase their  
6 net revenue by 32 percent and increase their  
7 stockholders wealth by over 27 percent. We know how  
8 they did that.

9 Now, 13 of the utilities customers owe  
10 more than 1.2 billion, double what are owed -- what  
11 owed to the -- at the same time in 2021, double. So  
12 the W.B.C. is here today, again, after more than a  
13 decade of these hearings and petitions to continue  
14 demanding of permanent year-round moratorium on all  
15 shutoff for low to moderate -- to moderate income tax  
16 rate -- taxpayers.

17 This isn't just about financial debt.  
18 Some of us are paying with our lives and our health.  
19 Every winter in central and western New York, there  
20 is the predictable death toll due to those house  
21 fires, carbon monoxide poisoning for people who have  
22 resorted to unsafe -- unsafe heating methods after  
23 being shut off by RG&E, NYSEG, and other shareholders  
24 owned utilities.

25 Every summer, the number of

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2 individuals in the U.S. end up in emergency rooms,  
3 even dying heat-related deaths keep more people --  
4 kill more people than hurricanes, floods, tornadoes  
5 and earthquakes combined. It is a silent killer.  
6 There is no report on the deaths from the heat waves  
7 that the P.S.C. allows.

8 The same way we need heating in the  
9 winter months, we need air conditionings in the  
10 summer months as well, because both of -- both are  
11 essential to people's health and wellbeing. Not to  
12 mention for keeping insulin refrigerated and to keep  
13 breathing machines running, this is why we need a  
14 permanent, year-round moratorium on all shutoffs for  
15 low to moderate income rate ... On July the 28th of  
16 this year, the W.B.C. just submitted a petition to  
17 the P.S.C. office in Albany by fax containing over  
18 1,300 signatures and a dozen endorsement letters from  
19 local faith based groups and nonprofits who are  
20 attempting to address the needs of the poor in our  
21 community.

22 The -- the petition demands were, and  
23 that's a permanent year-round moratorium on utility  
24 shutoffs for New York residents whose incomes are at  
25 or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level.



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2 Number two, direct RG&E and NYSEG to  
3 cancel arrears for their customers whose incomes are  
4 at or below 250 percent of the poverty guideline.

5 Number three, transmit New York  
6 State's energy grid -- transitions New York State's  
7 energy grid to 100 percent renewable energy by 2030  
8 while ensuring service is both affordable and  
9 accessible to even the lowest income residents.

10 Dozens of people in our community have  
11 called the P.S.C.'s office to confirm that the  
12 petition has been received and processed. Eventually  
13 your staff in the Public Affairs Office told us that  
14 they had received them and forward them to the  
15 Secretary, Mitchell Phillips -- no, Michelle  
16 Phillips.

17 Then numbers of our people called her  
18 directly, and she eventually indicated that they had  
19 received them. We saw what happened next, the state  
20 government claimed debt forgiveness for those in  
21 debt, which is our second demand. But what they  
22 really did is pay off the utility debts with 567  
23 million dollars that has come out of our taxes,  
24 except -- except for the 6 percent the utilities  
25 kicked in.

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2 But somehow they are allowed to  
3 actually bill us for that 6 percent through  
4 additional surcharges to pay off our debt. The  
5 P.S.C. should make utilities affordable and  
6 environmental sustainability in interest of poor and  
7 working people throughout New York, if it is truly a  
8 priority for them. In fact, these are essential  
9 workers that they would be protecting.

10 This year, the Public Service  
11 Commission has another chance to live up to its legal  
12 mandate and do what it -- it -- it -- it was created  
13 to do, serve the public.

14 The -- the -- the Monroe County  
15 Workers Benefit is here today to demand that the  
16 P.S.C., number one, deny, deny, deny RG&E and NYSEG's  
17 rate hike request outright and take the next step and  
18 lower the rate.

19 Number two, enact a permanent year-  
20 round moratorium on utility shutoff for New York  
21 residents whose income is at or below 250 percent of  
22 the federal poverty level.

23 And number three, transition New York  
24 State's energy grid to 100 percent renewable energy  
25 by 2030. While ... service is both affordable and

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2 accessible to even the lowest income residents. Tell  
3 -- tell them all these people are here with you to  
4 speak. We have Beverly Ussher, Forrest Ward-Cherry,  
5 Zoey Natsas, Rachel Rowley, Jerry Renztel and Donna  
6 Brown and Alex Brown. Thank you very much.

7 THE REPORTER: Mrs. Lovett, can I get  
8 the spelling of your last name, please?

9 A.L.J. BERGEN: Sure. It's L-O-V-E-T-  
10 T.

11 THE REPORTER: T-T. Thank you.

12 A.L.J. BERGEN: The next speaker is  
13 Jeffrey Eisenhart. Jeffrey Eisenhart. Jeffrey, if  
14 you've called in please press Star Three on your  
15 phone. Jeffrey Eisenhart. Okay. We'll come back.

16 Next I have only a last name of  
17 Weiser.

18 MS. WEISER: Yes. Hi, it's Irene  
19 Wiser, I-R-E-N-E W-E-I-S-E-R, and I'm the coordinator  
20 of Fossil Free Tompkins here in Tompkins County and  
21 previously a council member in the Town of Caroline  
22 for 10 years. I am a party in this current rate  
23 case, and I actively participated and testified in  
24 the previous rate case as well.

25 I very much appreciate the

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2 Commissioners taking time to join our public hearing  
3 today, and similarly, I appreciate this opportunity  
4 to address the A.L.J.s. I have read through the  
5 staffs testimony on a variety of topics, and I have  
6 some deep concerns about the company's rate filings.

7 Both the staff -- or both the electric  
8 and gas infrastructure and operation panels  
9 identified significant gaps and in the information  
10 that was provided to them by the companies regarding  
11 their capital projects, O.N.M. and staffing needs.

12 And in that -- in many instances, the  
13 companies failed to provide clarifying information  
14 when requested by staff information requests. The  
15 electric infrastructure testimony goes on to note  
16 that these problems occurred in the last rate case  
17 too.

18 And further, that the 2018 management  
19 audit report instructed the companies to improve  
20 their filings, named particular software that they  
21 should use and in recommendation 10.1 they provided  
22 detailed information that the company should be  
23 providing.

24 Yet the company's failed to provide us  
25 with sufficient benchmarking this -- this year's

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2 electric panel ... I'm enormously appreciative of  
3 the staff's tenacity in trying to get the substantive  
4 answers out of the companies.

5 But beyond that, I am beside myself  
6 over the company's mismanagement and arrogance in  
7 asking for literally more than a billion dollars a  
8 year in revenue from ratepayers without providing  
9 anything close to appropriate justification.

10 Moreover, they are chronic offenders. This signals  
11 that the companies are either egregiously mismanaged  
12 or they just don't care.

13 It leaves me wondering, or it leaves  
14 me with the impression that the companies have no  
15 respect for ratepayers hard earned dollars and cannot  
16 be trusted to account for how it is used. The  
17 ratepayers deserve more. The -- the staff has  
18 provided their educated guess as to how the -- the  
19 staffs or how the company's proposal should be  
20 modified.

21 But really, these are just educated  
22 guesses because they have no concrete information to  
23 work with. My concerns with this were first  
24 articulated in the prior rate case when we rejected  
25 the joint proposal for the electric filing.

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2 We stated our concern that the rewards  
3 that the -- approval of the J.P. would reward the  
4 ongoing mismanagement and reticence of a  
5 dysfunctional corporation. By supporting the  
6 proposal, we are gravely concerned that staff has  
7 sent a signal that such antics can continue.

8 We further noted that as nonprofits,  
9 if any of us submitted an application without  
10 detailed project descriptions, budgets and  
11 justification, our funders would throw our proposal  
12 out the window. In contrast, D.P.S. staff have  
13 allowed this large corporate monopoly to get away  
14 with inadequate proposals and obstruction of the  
15 regulatory process and still be rewarded with  
16 hundreds of millions in ratepayer hard earned  
17 dollars.

18 In this way, D.P.S. staff, or perhaps  
19 unintentionally reinforcing the company's  
20 unprofessional behavior. If the companies cannot  
21 write a reasonably justified capital plan with clear  
22 cost centers, time lines, staffing requirement,  
23 engineering plans, consideration of alternatives, et  
24 cetera, they do not deserve our money.

25 So that was the statement in the last

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2 rate case. But I will say that the same holds true  
3 in this case. To allow this case to proceed sends a  
4 message to the companies that they can continue to  
5 submit proposals that are poorly justified, over  
6 price projects and still be rewarded with hundreds of  
7 millions more in new funding.

8 I recommend that the company's  
9 applications be declared incomplete. As such, I  
10 recommend that the company withdraw their filings  
11 until such time as they can file more complete  
12 information. Alternatively, if the companies do not  
13 withdraw their applications, the Commission should  
14 reject the company's applications.

15 Further, I recommend that the  
16 Commission undertake an evaluation of the company's  
17 management competencies. Last, that does not already  
18 exist, I recommend that the Commission establish  
19 clear guidelines for the type of data and information  
20 required in a rate case filing.

21 And with -- add to detailed specific  
22 penalties such as decreasing the R.O.E., at least one  
23 basis point below the R.O.E. that's determined by the  
24 general financing method, if those guidelines are not  
25 met.

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2 In the absence of Commission  
3 guidelines, I recommend that the companies follow the  
4 guidelines provided in the testimony by the electric  
5 and gas infrastructure panels before re-filing  
6 improvised proposals. So I -- I will be submitting a  
7 -- a longer version of this as testimony.

8 I urge the A.L.J.s, and if it's  
9 appropriate, the Commissioners, to not only read my  
10 testimony, but read the direct words of D.P.S. staff  
11 in their infrastructure and operation panel filings.  
12 Thank you so much for your time.

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

14 The next speaker is Tina Jackson.

15 MS. USHER: Hi. My name is Beverly  
16 Usher. I'm here for Tina Jackson. She can't make  
17 it, and I'm trying to get in because I have to get  
18 children off the school bus. How are you today?

19 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay.

20 MS. USHER: I am here and I am --

21 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Beverly, have  
22 you signed up?

23 MS. USHER: Yes, I have, but I've got  
24 to leave. So I need to get in here and say what I  
25 need to say because I got to go meet children off the



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2 school bus.

3 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay.

4 MS. USHER: I am here with the Monroe  
5 County Workers Benefit Council. And I may not be an  
6 essential worker, but I am an essential human being.  
7 And what I'm trying to let you know is that these  
8 rate hikes are just not -- not affordable, not even  
9 just to me, but anyone else on a fixed income.

10 I've worked hard all my life. I've  
11 been a construction worker. I've worked for the  
12 city. I have become a disabled person. And as a  
13 person on disability who cannot get their full share  
14 because I'm not of age, I cannot afford these RG&E  
15 rate hikes.

16 Do you know that it is hard enough to  
17 live off of 800 dollars a month? How am I going to  
18 afford RG&E? I can barely afford my phone bills, my  
19 food bills and every other bill like that, and you're  
20 raising these hikes up even faster than I can deal  
21 with them.

22 There's more people in this world in  
23 Rochester, New York, here who are having the hardest  
24 time just making ends meet with food prices going up,  
25 gas prices going up, rent prices going up. Now you

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2 want to pay RG&E, they don't even live in -- the  
3 greatest country in the world, which is supposed to  
4 be the United States.

5 And we're so strong, why are we given  
6 them all our money, why are we catering to them?  
7 You're supposed to help the people, the United  
8 States. We are a great country. You help us before  
9 you help them. How are you going to let us take the  
10 brunt and take the food out of my -- my  
11 grandchildren's mouth and give them rate hikes?  
12 You're not hiking up my disability check. I can't  
13 afford it.

14 I need you to say no to this. We need  
15 you to -- to side with the Workers Benefit Council  
16 and let them know you cancel that rate hike thing  
17 entirely and install a year-round moratorium on no  
18 shutoff so nobody has to do without their RG&E.

19 I have a breathing machine. Do you  
20 know I had to fight with RG&E to keep my RG&E on just  
21 so I can live? I had to get my doctors on it and  
22 everyone else. Do you know how humiliating that is  
23 to be begging everyone to help you keep your RG&E on  
24 so you can live? You won't know until you walked in  
25 my shoes.

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2 And another thing you need to know is,  
3 you need to transition to 100 percent renewable  
4 energy by 2030 to keep these rates affordable because  
5 low income people like me cannot afford to live, and  
6 we can't even afford to die. Thank you.

7 THE REPORTER: Ms. Beverly, can I get  
8 the spelling of your last --

9 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. The next  
10 speaker --

11 THE REPORTER: -- name, please?

12 A.L.J. BERGEN: -- is Jonathan Garcia.

13 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry, Your Honor.

14 A.L.J. BERGEN: Is Jonathan Garcia --

15 THE REPORTER: I didn't get the last  
16 name of Mrs. Beverly. She -- she was speaking very  
17 fast.

18 A.L.J. BERGEN: She said her last name  
19 was Usher.

20 THE REPORTER: Okay. Thank you.

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

22 Jonathan Garcia. Jonathan, if you  
23 joined by phone, please press Star Three on your  
24 keypad. We'll come back to Jonathan.

25 Brian Eden is the next speaker. Brian

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2 Eden, or somebody appearing on Brian's behalf from --  
3 from the campaign for renewable energy?

4 Brian, if you turn back on, press Star  
5 Three.

6 Okay. Forrest Ward. Forrest Ward, if  
7 you joined by phone, press Star Three.

8 MR. WARD-CHERRY: Can you hear me?

9 A.L.J. BERGEN: Yes. Who is speaking?

10 MR. WARD-CHERRY: This is Forrest  
11 Ward-Cherry.

12 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Please begin.

13 MR. WARD-CHERRY: My name is Forrest  
14 Ward-Cherry. I live in Monroe County, and I'm a  
15 service worker at Bunyan's Co-op (phonetic spelling).  
16 I'm here today with the Monroe County Workers Benefit  
17 Counsel, or W.B.C. for short, representing more than  
18 25,000 low paid working people and families  
19 throughout Monroe County.

20 The W.B.C. opposes any and all rate  
21 hikes of our utility bills as they would bring --  
22 only cause more problem and economic inequality as  
23 well as pain and suffering in our own community.  
24 Avangrid states that rationale for this rate hike is  
25 implementing the great energy development plan called

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2 Renewable Energy New York.

3 While the W.B.C. supports all sincere  
4 efforts to transition New York's energy grid to one -  
5 - to one base -- 100 percent base renewable energy,  
6 we take exception to the util -- utilities claim that  
7 we must raise our bills in order to do that.

8 The claim is actually disingenuous in  
9 light of the fact that RG&E may increase their  
10 revenues and profits during the pandemic by 32 and  
11 sev -- and 27 percent respectively. And this is why  
12 other numbers of ratepayers state -- statewide were -  
13 - were unable afford the utility bills that doubled  
14 by 13 percent. All households collectively owe over  
15 1.2 billion dollars.

16 The claim that only halfway the green  
17 energy is ... for rate players (sic) is a lot. The  
18 concept of sustainability development was defined and  
19 accepted globally at the 1987 World Commission of  
20 Environment and Development conference, quote,  
21 Development that meet -- that meets the needs of the  
22 present without compromising the ability of future  
23 generations to meet their all needs, end quote.

24 In other words, sustainability  
25 includes meeting people's needs here and now in the

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2 way that allows our children and grandchildren to do  
3 the same. Therefore, sustainability must be  
4 economically viable, socially inclusive, and  
5 equitable as well as ecologically responsible.

6 In 2015, all 193 members of state --  
7 states of the United Nations, unanimously --  
8 unanimously adapted to the 2030 agenda for  
9 sustainable development with its 17 sustainable  
10 development goals, or S.D.G., that includes the U.S.

11 Later that year, the Monroe County  
12 Workers Benefit -- Worker Benefit Council officially  
13 endorsed the 2030 agenda because it isn't consistent  
14 with our program going back forty years. Sustainable  
15 and development goal number one, impoverity (sic) of  
16 -- always forms everywhere.

17 Goal number seven, ensures access to  
18 affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy  
19 for all.

20 Goal 11, make cities and humans ...  
21 inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. While we  
22 take urgent and -- we take urgent action to fight  
23 climate change and must do so in a way that  
24 eliminates economic and social inequality.

25 There is nothing sustainable about a

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2 multi-billion dollar energy building company like  
3 Iberdrola and Avangrid, owner of RG&E and YSE&G  
4 paying for their so-called green energy initiative by  
5 raising customers' bills over 20 dollars per month is  
6 not affordable to utility customers and it may -- it  
7 may be claimed, but it's not sustainable.

8           There is nothing sustainable about  
9 fortunate enough to let them put their smart meters  
10 in our homes to charge us -- to charge us more money  
11 for using electricity at peak hours of the day, such  
12 as when working mothers get from work at five p.m.  
13 must cook for their kids and do laundry while they  
14 get started on their homework.

15           If we choose to opt out of the smart  
16 meter program, they will add additional 12 dollars a  
17 month to our bills, all in the name of going green.  
18 Well, it maybe green. This type of profit-driven  
19 environmentalism is creating more poverty in our  
20 community then we say and not sustainable.

21           This -- there is nothing sustainable  
22 about deregulated energy market that allows the  
23 largest investments banks in the world to give -- to  
24 drive up the price of a life necessity such as heat  
25 in the winter when weather ... could make extreme

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2 weather -- winter weather on the horizon, and they  
3 are -- all start buying gas futures, this way we can  
4 make a windfall profit.

5 When the P.S.C. throws hundreds of  
6 thousands of our families under the bus by allowing  
7 utility rate hikes in the name of going green, we  
8 must fight for sustainability development and not  
9 policies that harm the majority for the benefit of  
10 the already well-being and powerful.

11 We the Monroe County Workers Benefit  
12 demand the P.S.C. and the New York State government  
13 set an example for others to follow and adhere to the  
14 letter and spirit of the 2030 agenda of  
15 sustainability development and transition our state's  
16 energy grid to a clean renewable modern energy grid  
17 by 2030 for the sake of our children, grandchildren,  
18 for the generations to come.

19 We demand that P.S.C. achieve this  
20 while ensuring this, showing that utility rates  
21 remain affordable for even the lowest income payers.  
22 To cha -- to achieve that the P.S.C. must take  
23 whatever action is necessary to ensure that those who  
24 have been profiteering off our energy grid and energy  
25 markets be required to foot the bill for the



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2 transition to renewable energy.

3 They have the money to cover the  
4 necessary -- necessary cost, we do not. We have to -  
5 - we have tightened our bills year after year. It's  
6 time for them to share the burden. Thank you.

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

8 Let's go back to see if Jeffery  
9 Eisenhart has joined. Jeffery Eisenhart, if you're  
10 on by phone, please press Star Three. Jeffery  
11 Eisenhart.

12 Okay. How about Jonathan Garcia?  
13 Jonathan Garcia, if you joined by phone, press Star  
14 3, please.

15 Or Brian Eden. Brian Eden from the  
16 Campaign for Renewable Energy.

17 I haven't seen any hands for those  
18 people. Is there anybody on the line who did not  
19 registered -- did not register, but would  
20 nevertheless like to speak. If you joined by phone,  
21 please press Star Three to raise your hand.

22 And if you've joined via Webex, there  
23 is the raised hand on the bottom right-hand side of  
24 your screen. So the icon, if you click that on the  
25 Webex platform you can raise your hand, we can

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2 identify you.

3 Hello. Who do we have?

4 MS. NATSAS: My name is Zoey Natsas.  
5 I live in Monroe County.

6 A.L.J. BERGEN: Hi. I'm sorry, it's -  
7 - since you haven't registered, I'd like anybody who  
8 would make the statement now to state your name  
9 slowly and spell it for the court reporter, please.

10 MS. NATSAS: My name is Zoey Natsas.  
11 I live in Monroe County.

12 A.L.J. BERGEN: Sorry, can you spell  
13 your last name, please?

14 MS. NATSAS: N-A-T-S-A-S.

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

16 MS. NATSAS: Okay. I'm an advocate  
17 for the disabled population and for the working  
18 families of this area. I am here with the Monroe  
19 County Workers Benefit Council. We deserve to be  
20 able to live in our homes affordably. I protest this  
21 rate hike, demand that you work for us here, the  
22 P.S.C.

23 Fully and supported with the RG&E  
24 billing system and the times ahead -- and at times  
25 the vague customer service responses. I urge the

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2 P.S.C. to work with those in being our advocate in  
3 these matters. I also protest the smart meters to  
4 opt out with a fee, this is unacceptable. And this  
5 is why I endorse the demands of the Monroe County  
6 Workers Benefit Council.

7 Cancel these rate hikes entirely,  
8 install a year-round moratorium and shutoffs and  
9 transition to 100 percent renewable energy grid by  
10 2030 while keeping rates affordable for even the  
11 lowest income ratepayers.

12 A.L.J. BERGEN: Have you completed  
13 your statement?

14 MS. NATSAS: Yes.

15 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you. And  
16 if anybody else would like to speak who is not  
17 registered, please press Star Three on your phone or  
18 raised hand button on Webex.

19 MR. RENTZEL: Okay. Okay, my name is  
20 Jerry Rentzel, R-E-N-T-Z-E-L.

21 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you.  
22 Please begin.

23 MR. RENTZEL: Hello, I am speaking for  
24 the 25,000 members of the Eastern Service Workers  
25 Association, and you heard all the statistics, and I

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2 agree with all the previous speakers. And I'm going  
3 to keep this really short and sweet and -- all I'm  
4 going to say is protect the ratepayers and not the  
5 profiteers. Please do that for us. Thank you.

6 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. Is there  
7 anybody else with your organization that'd like to  
8 make a statement?

9 MS. BROWN: Yes.

10 A.L.J. BERGEN: I heard a yes, so can  
11 the next person, please state their name and spell  
12 their last name, please?

13 MR. RENTZEL: Tell them your name and  
14 spell your last name.

15 A.L.J. BERGEN: Hello?

16 MS. BROWN: Good afternoon.

17 A.L.J. BERGEN: Hi, who's speaking?

18 MS. BROWN: Don -- my name is Donna  
19 Brown, and I live in Rochester, New York.

20 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Please begin.

21 MS. BROWN: Pardon me?

22 A.L.J. BERGEN: You may begin.

23 MS. BROWN: Oh, okay. And I am here  
24 with the -- the Monroe County Workers Benefit Council  
25 as well. And I'm with them -- standing with them 100

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2 percent, and that is -- and that is why we're going  
3 to demand the Monroe County Workers Benefit Council  
4 to cancel this rate hike -- hike entirely, install a  
5 year round moratorium on shutoff and transition to a  
6 100 percent renewable energy grid by 2030 while  
7 keeping rates affordable for even the lowest income  
8 ratepayers. I truly believe that the rates are  
9 extremely high and some even are in -- are in very  
10 low income and cannot afford this high rate and --  
11 and the shutoff are very -- are very different.  
12 People are suffering and they need to understand and  
13 know that everybody can't afford these high rates in  
14 these times. .

15 And they should demand the shutoffs.  
16 I've been in the situation they don't even give you  
17 time enough to pay. When you're just a little late,  
18 they still shut you off and you'll be -- you'll be  
19 late because you have several other bills. When you  
20 have a very low income, you can't just take care of  
21 everything at one time.

22 You have to consider the -- the low  
23 incomes and consider people that can't afford these  
24 high rates and -- and people are suffering when they  
25 shut you off and do not care. Children are

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2 suffering. Elderlies are suffering. So these rate  
3 hike demands, and I stand 100 percent with Monroe  
4 County Workers Benefit -- Benefit Council. Thank  
5 you.

6 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you, Donna. Is  
7 there anybody else with you that'd like to make a  
8 statement?

9 MR. BROWN: Yes.

10 A.L.J. BERGEN: I heard a yes. Please  
11 state your name.

12 MR. BROWN: God bless you.

13 A.L.J. BERGEN: I'm sorry, can you  
14 repeat that?

15 MR. BROWN: God bless you. My name is  
16 Alex Brown, ... Alex Brown. A-L-E-X B-R-O-W-N.

17 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you.  
18 Please begin.

19 MR. BROWN: Hello? I've been in  
20 Rochester since 1958, and I've been cut off a few  
21 time, and -- but now I get ... It was bad before,  
22 but not ... bad. But I reach out from the -- I went  
23 from the City of Rochester -- 25 before the City of  
24 Rochester, New York, with ... and the state of New  
25 York. That was a -- I was fighting a ... for years.

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2 I know what it be like to come home and your heat  
3 off, you ain't got no -- you had to left it, but they  
4 have to left it, one of the people that going around  
5 here, so we really need you, but some of the things  
6 don't make sense, seem right to me.

7 I'm here -- I'm here ... agree with  
8 the -- the Monroe County Workers Association Benefit,  
9 and so I'm excited to hear that that -- let's check  
10 out, get down on the -- on the floor over there, over  
11 here, what you're -- what you're doing, you're going  
12 to do better. If you all do better, we can do  
13 better. We can live better. We live better, you'll  
14 do better, it's not even no problem. But if ...  
15 stuff like that incident. The machine don't work and  
16 all kind of stuff like that. They're not right. So  
17 we're -- we're the -- you guys do better, that's all.  
18 If y'all do better, we'll do better.

19 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you, Alex. Is  
20 there anybody else in your organization that'd like  
21 to make a statement?

22 UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: Sure.

23 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay.

24 MS. ROWLEY: Hello, my name is Rachel  
25 Rowley.

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2 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Can you please  
3 spell that for the court reporter, please?

4 MS. ROWLEY: R-O-W-L-E-Y.

5 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. Please  
6 begin.

7 MS. ROWLEY: I live in Rochester, New  
8 York. I live -- I -- I used to work as a town  
9 representative and now I later, as a teacher aide.  
10 I'm here with the Monroe County -- Monroe County  
11 Workers Benefit Council. Okay. I am talking --  
12 talking today about RG&E raising people bill. What  
13 is that all about it? Are you guys going to keep  
14 raising bill, the RG&E bill? Are you not going to  
15 fill ... involved in RG&E bill, okay. It is  
16 difficult to understand what you're doing with all  
17 the money they get from us. I don't know what they  
18 do with that money. I don't know. They -- they just  
19 -- I don't know, they're ...

20 My husband and I -- and I live on a  
21 fixed income. They -- then my son came to live with  
22 us with which did not make a ... since she's -- he's  
23 disabled to -- the rate increase make -- makes it  
24 hard for all to get all our items like clothes, food,  
25 clothing and medical care. It's ridiculous. We're



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2 no long -- we no longer drive and work -- my husband  
3 no longer drive ... and to help with appointments and  
4 getting groceries.

5 It is ridiculous, we don't have no --  
6 no body to take us nowhere. We don't have no money  
7 for gas. The gas is raising, ... is raising, what is  
8 all this? Try to think about it. ... all you guys  
9 are doing what the bad doing without. We're not  
10 going with that, raising people bill is not fair.  
11 It's not fair. It's enough. Enough is enough.  
12 Okay. We have no choice but to use RG&E because if  
13 not, we're going to say we don't want RG&E.

14 But please stop. And I'm going to say  
15 on that why ... the demands of Monroe County Workers  
16 Benefit Council, one, cancel this rate hike entirely.  
17 Two, install a year-round moratorium on shutoff. And  
18 three, transition a third of two -- 100 percent  
19 renewable energy grid to -- towards -- by 2030 while  
20 keeping rates affordable for even the lowest rate --  
21 income ratepayers. Please, lower your bills now.

22 A.L.J. BERGEN: Thank you. Is there  
23 anyone else who'd like to make a statement with your  
24 organization? Is there anybody else who would like  
25 to make a statement with your organization? Hello?

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2 Can somebody from the Workers Benefit Council please  
3 confirm whether there's anyone who'd like to make a  
4 statement? Can we unmute them please, Sangeetha?

5 MALE VOICE: Yes, everybody has said  
6 what they have to say, thank you.

7 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you very  
8 much.

9 Okay. At -- at this point, again,  
10 I'll ask if there is anyone on the line, even if you  
11 didn't register, if you'd like to make a statement  
12 we'll allow that. If you just press Star Three on  
13 your keypad, or if you join by Webex, there's a  
14 raised hand button in the lower right-hand corner of  
15 your screen, you can click that to identify that  
16 you'd like to make a statement.

17 Press Star Three for those joining by  
18 phone, the raise hand button for those of you joining  
19 via Webex. I don't see any hands -- hands raised.

20 We'll give one last try for Jeffery  
21 Eisenhart who has registered. We've called a few  
22 times. Jeffery, if you've joined --

23 MALE VOICE: Jeff is sick. he  
24 couldn't make it today. He is sick today.

25 A.L.J. BERGEN: Okay. Thank you for

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2 letting me know.

3 And Jonathan Garcia or Brian Eden from  
4 the Campaign for Renewable Energy or representative  
5 for Brian Eden? Okay. Final call, Star Three on  
6 your phone or the raise hand button via Webex.

7 Okay. Seeing no hands raised, I  
8 conclude the hearing this afternoon. I'd like to  
9 remind everyone listening that you may also submit  
10 comments by the other means described earlier and  
11 also as described in the August 19th notice. In  
12 addition to this afternoon's hearing, we will be  
13 holding an additional public statement hearing this  
14 evening starting at five p.m.

15 Judge Overton and I thank everyone for  
16 your interest and participation today. We also thank  
17 Commissioner Maggiore for joining us. Our Consumer  
18 Services Office for administering -- administering  
19 the session, and thank you to our court reporter.  
20 The public statement hearing is now concluded and we  
21 are off the record.

22 (The hearing concluded at 2:24 p.m.)

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2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 I, ANTHONY MCCLAIN, do hereby certify that the foregoing  
4 was reported by me, in the cause, at the time and place,  
5 as stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1 hereof; that  
6 the foregoing typewritten transcription consisting of  
7 pages 1 through 59, is a true record of all proceedings  
8 had at the hearing.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto  
10 subscribed my name, this the 25th day of October, 2022.

11

12 ANTHONY MCCLAIN, Reporter

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