

1 10/17/2023 - Central Hudson - 23-E-0418/23-G-0419

2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

4 CASE 23-E-0418 - Proceeding on motion of the
5 Commission as to the Rates, Charges, Rules and
6 Regulations of Central Hudson Gas and Electric
7 Corporation for electric service.

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9 CASE 23-G-0419 - Proceeding on motion of the
10 Commission as to the Rates, Charges, Rules and
11 Regulations of Central Hudson Gas and Electric
12 Corporation for gas service.

13
14 PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARING

15 DATE: October 17, 2023 at 6:02 p.m.

16 LOCATION: SUNY ORANGE NEWBURGH CAMPUS
17 KAPLAN HALL, GREAT ROOM #101
18 Grand Street
19 Newburgh, New York 12550

20 BEFORE: ALJ ASHLEY MORENO
21 ALJ JAMES COSTELLO
22

23
24
25 Reported by Danielle Christian

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2 (The hearing commenced at 6:02 p.m.)

3 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. I call cases
4 23-E-0418 and 23-G-0419 proceedings on motions of the
5 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules and
6 regulations of Central Hudson Gas & Electric
7 Corporation for electric and gas service.

8 Good evening, everyone and welcome.
9 We are here today for a public statement hearing that
10 was noticed on September 26th, 2023. This public
11 statement hearing concerns the proposed changes in
12 the electric and gas delivery rates and practices of
13 Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation, who I will
14 refer to as Central Hudson.

15 Central Hudson filed amendments to its
16 electric and gas tariff schedules on July 31st, 2023,
17 proposing to increase its annual electric and gas
18 delivery revenues effective July 1st, 2024. Central
19 Hudson is proposing to increase its electric delivery
20 revenues by approximately \$139.5 million, which is a
21 31.9 percent increase in base delivery revenues or a
22 16.4 percent increase in total revenues.

23 And its natural gas delivery revenues,
24 it's proposing to increase by approximately \$41.5
25 million, which is a 29.2 percent increase in base

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2 delivery revenues or a 19 percent increase in total
3 revenues. The actual bill impacts of the proposed
4 changes on any particular customer class will vary
5 based on revenue allocation and rate design.

6 My name is Ashley Moreno. I am an
7 Administrative Law Judge with the Department of
8 Public Service. With me today is James Costello.
9 He's also an Administrative Law Judge with the
10 Department of Public Service.

11 And together we are responsible for
12 presiding over these hearings and the case at large
13 in the development of a complete record in the case.
14 So we may also make recommendations later to the
15 Commission, the New York State Public Service
16 Commission, who is the ultimate decision maker in
17 this case.

18 So under state -- New York State Law,
19 public service -- the Public Service Commission or
20 the Commission, as I'll refer to them, is the final
21 decision maker and may consider utility's proposal
22 and may adopt it, they may reject it, either in whole
23 or in part, or they may modify it.

24 The Public Service Commission will
25 decide ultimately what the terms and conditions of

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2 service will be. The Public Service Commission has
3 seven members. The Chairperson Rory Christian, and
4 six Commissioners, who are, Diane Burman, James
5 Alesi, Tracey Edwards, John Howard, David Valesky,
6 and John Maggiore.

7 And now, I'll go through the process
8 that we're going to be following this evening. The
9 purpose of today's hearing, as I mentioned before, is
10 to hear from you. This is an opportunity to tell the
11 Commission what your thoughts are about Central
12 Hudson's proposal.

13 As I mentioned before we went on the
14 record, the statements that you're going to make
15 today will become part of the case record. We do
16 have a court reporter here with us today who is going
17 to make a transcript of today's event that will be
18 included in the case record and considered by the
19 Commission when they're ultimately making their
20 decision in this case.

21 It will also be available for anyone
22 who's interested in viewing it when it's ready on the
23 Department of Public Service website. And again,
24 this is not an evidentiary hearing or a question and
25 answer session, but really an opportunity for us to

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2 hear from you and your thoughts about what Central
3 Hudson's proposal is.

4 If you, for any reason, do not feel
5 comfortable tonight making a comment or are not ready
6 to, but you would still like your views considered,
7 there are a number of other ways that you can make a
8 comment that will be considered by the Commission.

9 There's a couple of other ways that
10 are on the notice from today's event, you can do it
11 by regular mail, email, or by phone. And regardless
12 of how you make your comment, they all will be given
13 equal weight and considered by the Commission. And
14 there's no time frame or limitation on when you can
15 make that comment.

16 As long as the case is going on, we're
17 happy to hear from you. So the process that we're
18 going to follow tonight, if you would like to make a
19 statement, I would ask that you go out to the table
20 on your way in with our outreach staff and just write
21 your name down. We will then be using that list to
22 call people to come forward one by one.

23 For those of you who are just joining
24 us, I mentioned before we went on the record that
25 unfortunately tonight, we do not have a functioning

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2 sound system. My apologies. If we could ask that,
3 when you make your statement, you could come down and
4 if you would like to either sit or stand to make your
5 statement, we would appreciate it. That way we can
6 capture it for the court reporter and have a clear
7 transcript.

8 So please just try to speak slowly and
9 clearly so that we can get an accurate record. To
10 the extent that you have a lengthy statement, if you
11 would like to summarize that and submit your full
12 written statement, we're happy to take that.

13 And then, finally before we -- we
14 begin, I just ask that everyone be respectful of all
15 of the speakers that we have. We understand
16 sometimes there's differing viewpoints. Sometimes
17 everybody's all in agreement, but please, this is
18 everyone's opportunity to be heard. So we want to
19 make sure that everyone feels comfortable and feels
20 heard tonight.

21 So in the same vein, if you have a
22 cell phone with you, could you please silence it so
23 we're not interrupting anyone? That would be
24 appreciated. Okay. With that, I will call our first
25 speaker, who is Senator Rob Rolison.

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2 SENATOR ROLISON: Good evening. My
3 name is Rob Rolison, and I represent the 39th
4 District in our State Senate. I'd like to begin
5 thanking the Public Service Commission for holding at
6 least two public statement hearings in our district.
7 And as you know, this allows citizens and community
8 stakeholders in Newburgh and elsewhere to voice their
9 legitimate concerns about this proposed rate
10 increase.

11 Public input such as the comments
12 offered this evening will be critical in determining
13 the reasonableness of the proposed hike. And I want
14 to thank Judge Costello and Judge Moreno for
15 listening to the statement that we submitted earlier
16 in the virtual hearing on September 20th.

17 As all of us know, our Hudson Valley
18 region faces a affordability crisis, costs associated
19 with the housing, childcare, groceries and energy
20 have all increased. And according to a recent Siena
21 Research Institute poll, more than 80 percent of New
22 York voters consider the rising cost of living to be
23 a major problem.

24 Our constituents shouldn't have to
25 choose between a doctor's visit, feeding a family of

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2 four, or between lighting and heating their home, and
3 filling up the gas tank to get to work. Yet that is
4 precisely what an increase of this magnitude would
5 mean for the average Newburgh resident.

6 After carefully listening to our
7 constituents here in the 39th District, I believe
8 Central Hudson's proposed rate increases of 16
9 percent on the average residential electric bill and
10 19 percent on the average natural gas bill is not
11 acceptable.

12 Let me be clear or repeat that, it is
13 unacceptable. This rate high -- hike would be too
14 much, too fast for Newburgh, for Poughkeepsie, for
15 Beacon, for all of us. Therefore, I respectfully
16 request that the Commission reject the proposed
17 increased amount.

18 In my view, stakeholders working with
19 local partners can craft a better solution which
20 meets the needs of our region's and State's growing
21 energy demands, while protecting ratepayers who are
22 already squeezed by inflation and higher costs nearly
23 everywhere else.

24 To that end, I have spoken with
25 Central Hudson's leadership on several occasions to

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2 express my concerns and your concerns, and to try to
3 work collaboratively for a better outcome. I've also
4 visited NYISO, which is the Albany area non-profit
5 which controls the entire grid in the State to learn
6 more about what's keeping the lights on, so to speak.

7 Both have relayed their concerns that
8 the structural pressures being placed on energy
9 supply, thanks to the rushed Climate Leadership and
10 Community Protection Act would lead to higher cost
11 for homeowners and renters living there.

12 I've met with small -- I've met with
13 small businesses selling different types of natural
14 gas powered fireplaces and other heating devices, and
15 they're worried about their product line and the jobs
16 that they've created because of Albany's rush on this
17 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. You
18 cannot manage what you can't measure.

19 And I do not believe those in chain --
20 in charge, excuse me, of New York's energy policy
21 have really reckoned with the dramatic immediate
22 costs -- immediate costs associated with the long-
23 term promises. It's time to pause and reassess
24 consequences responsibly, before we leave the people
25 of Newburgh and the rest of the Hudson Valley behind.

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2 One suggestion I would offer today is
3 to ease the burden of rising energy costs on families
4 and individuals, is to expand the P.S.C.'s Energy
5 Affordability Program or E.A.P. financial relief to
6 more New Yorkers.

7 As some of you know, the E.A.P. is
8 currently paid to the federal poverty level
9 thresholds and does provide a monthly discount on
10 utility bills. My district office has completed or
11 engaged in over 100 cases of utility billing
12 assistance since I got in the State senate in
13 January.

14 The majority of this case work
15 involves middle income and working class New Yorkers
16 unable to pay their electricity and heating bills. I
17 can assure you, from having spoken personally to many
18 of these folks, these stories will break your heart.

19 Therefore, I'm calling on the P.S.C.
20 to streamline the enrollment process, make these
21 discounts available to more of our residents here in
22 Newburgh and elsewhere who are struggling with the
23 month to month payments, Albany can and should do
24 better.

25 In closing, let me say it's not too

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2 late to hit pause. It's not too late on this massive
3 rate increase. I believe there's still time to take
4 into account the important first person testimony
5 being delivered here this evening. Lead by
6 listening, don't double down on a mistake. The
7 decision is yours to the P.S.C. Thank you.

8 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
9 speaker is Tamsin Hollo.

10 MS. HOLLO: I'm not going to do the
11 performance audience thing.

12 A.L.J. MORENO: Sure.

13 MS. HOLLO: I'm Tamsin Hollo. I'm a
14 resident of the City of Newburgh. Frankly, I'm
15 shocked that Central Hudson is proposing this radical
16 rate hike. It's -- it's simply not reasonable.

17 As a Central Hudson customer, I,
18 personally, am overwhelmed by my current debt to this
19 utility. With winter coming, our energy usage is a
20 real concern to me. My moth -- 90-year-old mother
21 and I are going to be making some pretty stark
22 decisions this winter regarding our energy bills.

23 I'm also extremely concerned about the
24 massive investment in methane gas infrastructure in
25 direct conflict with the stated aims of the

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2 C.L.C.P.A. \$41.5 million does not sound like this
3 utility is ramping down gas infrastructure, quite the
4 opposite.

5 I've also had multiple inserts in my
6 bill advertising nash -- natural gas despite Central
7 Hudson's promises not to do that. Central Hudson, in
8 fact, has not met a lot of past promises to us. We
9 still don't have Spanish translation on our bills,
10 despite this community being over 50 percent Spanish-
11 speaking.

12 Central Hudson also has -- happens to
13 have our city's contract for street lighting and
14 there couldn't be a better example of how little
15 Central Hudson respects the residents of this city.
16 We're expected to report that our lights are out
17 constantly. I've reported over a dozen, they may or
18 may not get seen too. Currently, half the lights on
19 my block are non-functioning despite having been
20 repeatedly reported.

21 Finally, I suspect that Central Hudson
22 has proposed this giant rate hike so that when a
23 compromise is made, we'll feel like we've been
24 allowed some concessions. But I urge you to reject
25 this rate hike plan wholesale and send Central Hudson

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2 back to the drawing board to provide clean energy at
3 a reasonable price to its customers. Thank you very
4 much for your time.

5 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you so much.
6 Before we move on to our -- our next speaker, I just
7 wanted to also acknowledge we do have a few
8 interpreters with us this evening who will be
9 providing Spanish translation or interpretation. And
10 perhaps if you'd like to pass over here so that --

11 MS. KISSAM: Yeah, that would be
12 better.

13 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. Our next
14 speaker is Sandra Kissam.

15 MS. KISSAM: I'm right here.

16 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. Perfect. Thank
17 you.

18 MS. KISSAM: (unintelligible)

19 A.L.J. MORENO: I understand.

20 MS. KISSAM: I guess you have to
21 figure out why.

22 A.L.J. MORENO: It is. It's chilly in
23 here.

24 MS. KISSAM: Okay. That's number two.
25 I might make it up to the --.

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2 A.L.J. MORENO: Take your time.

3 MS. KISSAM: Can you hear me?

4 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yes.

5 MS. KISSAM: The acoustics are
6 beautiful. Very good. Okay. Well, my opening
7 remark is very straightforward. I think that it is -
8 - I think that we are at a point where the Public
9 Service Commission should not even be entertaining
10 any discussion of any rate hike until the current
11 confusion has been resolved.

12 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Hear, hear.

13 MS. KISSAM: Well, hear, hear yourself
14 then.

15 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yeah. No way.

16 MS. KISSAM: Having said that, I also
17 have a problem with who is making this application
18 because I am well aware that the company is not owned
19 by Central Hudson. The company is owned by a
20 Canadian company called Fortis.

21 And approximately six or seven years
22 ago, myself and a couple of other people traveled up
23 to Kingston for hearings opposing Fortis taking over
24 Central Hudson. This is very important because a lot
25 of unfriendly to consumer changes took place after

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2 Fortis gained control of Central Hudson.

3 So if you look at your bill, you'll
4 see it is a Fortis owned company. Fortis does not
5 have a good record. They were in Belize, which is
6 in, of course, South America. They were in Belize
7 and for -- and -- and -- and put in a dam proposal.
8 By that, I mean, on a -- on a -- on river.

9 And after they were in place, they
10 raised bills by probably 30 or 40 percent. So they
11 do not have a good record. And I do believe,
12 although I'm not sure, that the country of Belize got
13 rid of them as far as generating electricity for
14 their needs. So this is not a good record.

15 The other problem is that there have
16 been all of these efforts made to reduce costs, but
17 they're not mentioning this, this evening. One of
18 them, of course, was when digital meters were
19 installed, I have my own home in the town of
20 Newburgh, and I believe that that took place about 10
21 or 15 years ago.

22 And the point of putting in those --
23 meters was to save themselves on personnel because
24 then it would be easier to read the meters and you
25 wouldn't need as many employees. What they saved

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2 with that -- with that effort, we will never know.

3 They also -- after they took over --
4 after Fortis took over Central Hudson, they
5 immediately changed or almost shortly thereafter,
6 changed from monthly billing from -- excuse me, from
7 bi-monthly billing to monthly billing.

8 And of course, it was very clear that
9 that was done so that your monthly bill would not
10 look as large as your bi-monthly bill had looked.
11 And they started raising the rates. And they raised
12 them. And they raised them. And on and on it went.

13 And meanwhile, they actually reduced
14 their labor force to the point where, when there were
15 -- when there were emergencies, weather emergencies
16 such as hurricanes, they didn't have enough people to
17 do the fix.

18 And so they had people coming in from
19 other parts of the country in order to beef up their
20 own labor force because they have apparently tried to
21 save themselves dollars by reducing, especially,
22 maintenance workers.

23 So where is it stated how much money
24 they have saved themselves over the years, over these
25 past 10 or 15 years? Nowhere that I can see.

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2 Although, in all fairness, I haven't FOIL'd documents
3 from the company, and in fact, I -- I don't imagine
4 that if I did, I would get them in time to be able to
5 make additional statements to this in this hearing.
6 So I just want to say that.

7 Now -- then, there are other problems
8 that are more specific to our bills. And one of the
9 major ones that I would like to bring up this evening
10 is estimated billing. I think that estimated billing
11 is a very serious problem.

12 And when I have discussed this with
13 company representatives in the past, they go, oh no,
14 we can't get rid of estimated billing. Well, I
15 understand that at this point there are legislative
16 efforts to eliminate estimated billing. Am I
17 correct?

18 A.L.J. MORENO: I am not aware.

19 MR. KENNEDY: Well, you got
20 legislators here, ask some of them.

21 MS. KISSAM: I see one -- there are
22 legislative efforts.

23 MR. KENNEDY: Where is the bill?
24 What's -- what?

25 MS. KISSAM: Okay. So --

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2 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay.

3 MS. KISSAM: -- why should we grant
4 them an increase of any kind while there is still
5 serious issues that have not even been resolved as to
6 how billing should be -- in fact, should be
7 determined? And so this is all terribly premature to
8 say the least.

9 Now, I do not believe that, aside from
10 justifying their request as a way of increasing their
11 dividends to -- to their stockholders, I do not
12 believe that there is a reason to legitimately ask
13 for an increase.

14 And in fact, I would venture to say
15 that if the records were carefully examined, it would
16 be determined that there should be a decrease in the
17 rate.

18 MR. KENNEDY: That's about right.

19 MS. KISSAM: Thank you. I love your
20 energy. You've got to be younger than me.

21 MR. KENNEDY: Listen, I have to yell
22 at kids all day long, so this is --

23 MS. KISSAM: That's what I mean.

24 MR. KENNEDY: -- this is how I get
25 through to them.

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2 MS. KISSAM: And so those are the
3 statements I want to make this evening. And you say
4 there is no -- there is no deadline on adding
5 additional comments?

6 A.L.J. MORENO: That is correct.

7 A.L.J. COSTELLO: As long as the cases
8 are pending, you can add comments.

9 MS. KISSAM: All right. And thank you
10 very much.

11 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you.

12 FROM THE AUDIENCE: I can't even
13 understand why you're considering it. Are you sure?

14 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. All right.

15 MS. KISSAM: With some hope, I'll get
16 back to my seat.

17 A.L.J. MORENO: Our next speaker is
18 Michelle Basch.

19 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Is it Basch?

20 A.L.J. COSTELLO : I think it's Basch.

21 MS. BASCH: B-A-S-C-H.

22 A.L.J. MORENO: Yes. I apologize.

23 MS. BASCH: It's for her.

24 A.L.J. MORENO: Yes.

25 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Yes.

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2 A.L.J. MORENO: Yes.

3 MS. BASCH: It's not for you guys.

4 All right. I want to thank you for your time and
5 allowing us to voice our concerns. I own a business
6 in the City of Newburgh, and I live in the City of
7 Newburgh. My home monthly rate has gone from pre-
8 COVID to 200 monthly cost has gone from 230 a month,
9 12 months a year to \$490.

10 Now, not only that, my son used to
11 live with us. He doesn't anymore, it's just my
12 husband and I. And we have a new refrigerator, we
13 have a stove we hardly use because we have a
14 restaurant, that's where we eat.

15 We haven't turned the heat on yet, we
16 use wood, which is going to be outlawed. So I don't
17 understand where this is coming from. That's the
18 home. As far as my restaurant is concerned, we had
19 bills around 1450 to 2000 at a high. Now, my average
20 is 3500 a month.

21 Now, there's also something else. The
22 cost of the electric and gas has not gone up
23 tremendously. What's gone up is something that we
24 have no choice in, and that is delivery. The
25 delivery charge has gone through the roof.

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2 MR. KIMBILL: That's right.

3 MS. BASCH: And we have no choice
4 because it's a monopoly.

5 MR. KIMBILL: With this state, people
6 could get -- get away from that.

7 MS. BASCH: So we are looking at a no
8 choice situation. I can choose between my rates. I
9 am with a solar company. I can go with other
10 companies. I can change. I have done it. But as
11 far as delivery, it's Central Hudson, period.

12 Even if I was fully solar, unless I
13 had ginormous Tesla batteries in the house, I'd have
14 to go through Central Hudson and I would be paying
15 the cost of delivery. Now, there's also something
16 else, talking about monopolies.

17 I sell burgers, real simple American
18 fare. If I were to go up 30 percent on my
19 hamburgers, you could come in and say, ah, it's so
20 good, I don't mind. But you could also say, what,
21 are you crazy? And go to the next place and have a
22 burger. We do not have that choice. And that's a
23 problem.

24 As far as other areas, I have heard,
25 and I don't know if this is true, that our delivery

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2 rate in the City of Newburgh is higher than anywhere
3 else in the area. I am not sure that is true because
4 I do not own property or I do not rent in another
5 place, but I've heard that from many, many people.

6 Something must be done because our
7 service, when there is an emergency, is slow. You
8 ought to pay your bill. Okay. I just paid \$5000,
9 and I haven't started heating and I'm not air
10 conditioning right now at my restaurant.

11 \$5000 is a lot. My burgers are going
12 to have to go up. I hope you still come. It's a
13 real issue for all of us, whether you are a family
14 just getting by or you have a business. How can I
15 pay people? How can I keep my prices at a rate where
16 I'm going to have my customers? How are we going to
17 do this and where is a choice? Thank you.

18 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
19 speaker is Jim Kimbill.

20 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Can we please have
21 our legislature speak. I know --

22 FROM THE AUDIENCE: That can wait.

23 FROM THE AUDIENCE: -- Senator Skoufis
24 needed to speak up.

25 FROM THE AUDIENCE: It's fine.

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2 FROM THE AUDIENCE: (unintelligible)
3 FROM THE AUDIENCE: It's fine.
4 FROM THE AUDIENCE: This is for
5 everybody.
6 FROM THE AUDIENCE: I know. I
7 understand that. But --
8 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Moving on.
9 FROM THE AUDIENCE: -- they can give
10 us information.
11 FROM THE AUDIENCE: There's a list.
12 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Never mind.
13 FROM THE AUDIENCE: In order --.
14 A.L.J. MORENO: It's okay. Thank you.
15 Mr. Kimbill?
16 MR. KIMBILL: Okay. My name is Jim
17 Kimbill. I'd like to start off by asking, is there
18 anyone here, representatives from the P.S.C. tonight?
19 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Two of us are from
20 the P.S.C.
21 MR. KIMBILL: I thought you were both
22 Judges.
23 A.L.J. MORENO: Yes.
24 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Right. There --
25 you're asking, if the Commissioner -- is -- is there

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2 a Commissioner here?

3 A.L.J. MORENO: There's not a
4 Commissioner here.

5 MR. KIMBILL: There's -- there's --
6 you listed a number of names that are part of the
7 P.S.C. Are any of them here?

8 A.L.J. COSTELLO: The Commissioners --

9 A.L.J. MORENO: They're not here.

10 A.L.J. COSTELLO: -- there was someone
11 this afternoon, not someone here this evening.

12 MR. KIMBILL: Okay. So nobody. Okay.
13 How about from Central Hudson? No? Some people are
14 here and there's no representatives of the company
15 where we send the money in. Imagine that. Okay.
16 Well, I'm obviously against the -- the rate -- the
17 increases.

18 And, you know, I've got a few things
19 to say. And I'm looking at this paper here that was
20 handed out, and for the reasons for these increases -
21 -

22 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Can you turn
23 around so we can hear you?

24 MR. KIMBILL: I get nervous when I
25 face people though. All right, I'll look down. So

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2 I'd like to talk about -- one of the things I'd like
3 to talk about is the reasons that were given to us on
4 this paper that was handed out to us.

5 Let's look at some of these. I'm
6 toward the bottom of the first page. Ensure safe,
7 reliable, resilient electric and gas systems.
8 Shouldn't we already have that now? No. We're going
9 to pay for it again? It seems like we already have
10 that. Then, why are we paying for that again?

11 Let's look at the next one, provide
12 energy efficient incentives and services to pro --
13 promote New York's Climate Leadership. Well, let's
14 see. Governor -- President Biden passed a very huge
15 bill to support a lot of these -- a lot of these
16 costs. Even New York State, we -- they passed bills
17 to -- to support this. And now we're going to be
18 asked again to pay for it to our -- to Central
19 Hudson? That's three times we're going to be paying
20 for this.

21 Let's look at the next one, let's see.
22 To effectively respond to major storms and extreme
23 weather events. Well, you know, someone talked about
24 this earlier. A lot of people were, they cut back on
25 -- on staffing and they bring in help from other

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2 places. I think that's pretty reasonable. But they
3 don't say what they're going to do here for that --
4 for that particular topic.

5 And let's see. Here we go, invest in
6 grid modernization and restore power more quickly.
7 This is one of the first ones that I've read, invest
8 in grid modernization. To me, that's something
9 that's important for that money should be spent on.

10 I question though, whether it should
11 come from a rate increase. You know, we pay our
12 bills every month and they -- they make a profit on
13 that. Shouldn't they be saving a portion of that to
14 do these modernizations?

15 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yes.

16 MR. KIMBILL: To me -- to me, we
17 should only be billed extra for something unplanned
18 that can't be avoided. And then, you know, ask us
19 for a -- a rate increase to support that. This isn't
20 the first time that we've been asked to support
21 changes for just to make -- to make things better.

22 In the past, this has happened over
23 and over again. 5 percent for this, 10 percent for
24 that. Now, 19 percent, you know. And this project,
25 to do this modernization, that has a price tag to it.

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2 It has to, you know, it's going to cost, say, I'm
3 just throwing the numbers out there, \$10 million to
4 do this modernization, okay.

5 Well, the P.S.C. should be looking at,
6 well, \$10 million, it's going to be a 5 percent
7 increase for our customers for three years, for
8 instance, just throwing numbers out there. But at
9 the end of that, that should go away. This shouldn't
10 continue on.

11 I mean, we all have our bills, right?
12 We look at the first page of our bills. When I look
13 at mine, the first pie chart on there, the cost of
14 energy in electricity and gas, it goes up and down
15 for various reasons, including competition.

16 But what doesn't change, was said
17 earlier, the delivery -- delivery. And I look at my
18 bill, my natural gas bill, my delivery charge is, and
19 just eyeballing this, the delivery charge is about
20 four times more than I paid for the natural gas.
21 Something's wrong there. It should not be like that.

22 I mean, when's the last time we've all
23 seen someone making changes to the lines, whether it
24 be electric or our -- our gas, in our neighborhoods?
25 I've been living where I am for over 15 years, never.

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2 Never.

3 Those -- those -- those
4 infrastructures last decades, right? So why is my
5 delivery charge so high? Same thing for electric.
6 I'm looking at my electric right now. My electric,
7 just eyeballing again, is at least twice as more for
8 delivery than I paid for my electric, you know.

9 And if you look back over time, I
10 mean, I -- I didn't keep a record of this, but I know
11 I've seen this before and where we've -- we've been
12 asked to pay -- pay for things. But the price never
13 goes down. And it's pretty obvious, when we look at
14 our bills, the price never goes down for delivery.

15 Does the P.S.C. really have our back?
16 I don't think so, based upon what I see on my bill.
17 So I think that should be changed. I think we --
18 like someone else said, it should be a lot less than
19 what it is now. I think even less than the actual
20 cost of the actual energy.

21 Let's see. Maintain affordability is
22 the next reason for they want to have the rate
23 increase. How is our -- our rate increase of 20
24 percent, 19 percent, how is that going to make things
25 more affordable? That's listed here. It's on the

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2 page. More -- more maintain affordability. That's
3 not going to make it more affordability for me, you
4 know.

5 Mitigate customer bill impacts. Wow.
6 So they want to charge us for their mistakes. They
7 obviously didn't test the software, they didn't test
8 the deployment of it, they had no good rollout of
9 this. This should be on them, not us. This should
10 come out of their profits and not put the bill back
11 on us. We've already paid for this.

12 Let's see. Upgrade technologies to
13 improve customer experience. Deliver my -- deliver
14 my electric and gas, you know, that's all I ask for.
15 Deliver it. What kind of experience are -- are they
16 going to provide us, you know. So that's my point
17 right there.

18 Support workforce low growth. Well,
19 that's raises. A.K.A. raises, right? So I'm not
20 opposed to raises, but 20 percent raise, 19, whatever
21 the numbers were, that's -- that's outrageous. I
22 don't get 20 percent raise rate increases, anybody
23 here? I don't.

24 And with all due respect, Senator, is
25 he here? The one that spoke, I disagree with how to

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2 -- how to make this more affordable. It's not --
3 it's not to -- to give more money to the poor, the
4 working class or -- or whatever. It's the -- the
5 cost. The overall cost.

6 I mean, pay -- taking money from
7 taxpayers to pay for this, that's not going to make
8 the cost -- overall cost of this any better for
9 anybody. It's lowering costs to a reasonable amount
10 and not having these discrepancies of 3 and 4 percent
11 times more than we're paying for our natural gas and
12 electric. That's all I'm saying. Thank you.

13 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Yes, sir.

14 MR. PALMER: Can I step in at this
15 time?

16 A.L.J. MORENO: We do have a list of
17 people who are waiting.

18 MR. PALMER: I just -- I just want to
19 say two lines. Two lines. Just two lines I have,
20 wait.

21 A.L.J. MORENO: And your name, sir?

22 MR. PALMER: William Palmer. Okay.

23 THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry, I
24 can't hear you.

25 A.L.J. MORENO: Could we ask you to

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2 just move over here, please?

3 MR. PALMER: Net worth of Central
4 Hudson --

5 THE COURT REPORTER: Can you say your
6 name again? I didn't hear your name.

7 MR. PALMER: William Palmer.

8 THE COURT REPORTER: Thank you.

9 MR. PALMER: Okay. Just -- I was --.

10 THE COURT REPORTER: No -- no -- no,
11 please don't do that.

12 A.L.J. COSTELLO: That is not --
13 there's not -- there's not -- this is just so they
14 can pick it up for the transcript.

15 MR. PALMER: So I always look at -- I
16 was in a car accident a few years ago with State --
17 and I have State Farm. It was the only car accident
18 I was ever in. And I -- I became partially liable.
19 The first time -- and I'm like 69 years old, the
20 first time I ever had to pay --

21 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Can you speak up.

22 MR. PALMER: Yes.

23 A.L.J. MORENO: That doesn't work.

24 MR. PALMER: Okay. So --

25 A.L.J. MORENO: There you go.

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2 MR. PALMER: -- I was in a car
3 accident, two years ago, and I was concerned about my
4 insurance company. And the -- the only accident I
5 was ever in and only 50 percent liable, but they had
6 to pay out some money. And I looked up State Farm's
7 net worth, it was 141 billion.

8 And I said, you know something, I've
9 been paying my insurance all my life, you're picking
10 that up. Okay. I just looked up -- this is the last
11 thing I'll say. I looked up the net worth of Central
12 Hudson, 1.7 billion and Fortis -- Fortis is 13.6
13 billion. Okay. No -- no rate increases.

14 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Okay. Our
15 next speaker is -- and I apologize, I'm having
16 trouble with some of the handwriting, Hildegard
17 Franco.

18 MS. FRANCO: Franco.

19 A.L.J. MORENO: Franco. Apologies.

20 MS. FRANCO: I agree with every
21 speaker so far for whatever they said. I am -- I
22 don't understand how that increase can be warranted.
23 The service is lousy. Let's be honest. I received a
24 \$15,000 electric bill about two weeks ago, okay. I
25 was gone for a month, but I received a -- a -- a bill

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2 for \$15,000, okay. When I called, they --.

3 FROM THE AUDIENCE: How long did it
4 take you to get through to anyone?

5 MS. FRANCO: Well, they call you back,
6 but sometimes they don't call you at all, you know.
7 You -- you talk to one representative. You call
8 back, you get another representative and you get a
9 completely different story. I was on a budget.

10 Well, my -- my bill was zero zero.
11 The next bill I got was doubled because I didn't pay
12 the budget that month, but I was told not to pay the
13 budget that -- that previous months. So they charged
14 me double, okay. I like to know why we are paying
15 the high delivery charges.

16 Why am I doing their job? And on the
17 estimated bill, I have to call that in and give them
18 the numbers? Why -- why am I -- what am I paying
19 for, that is their job. My electric -- I live in
20 Balmville -- Balmville Road.

21 My electric -- my electric meter is a
22 little bit down the slope. I'm going to be 80 years
23 old, am I going to slide down in the winter time and
24 read that so I can give them the -- the -- the -- the
25 numbers -- the correct numbers? This is ridiculous,

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2 what you're doing. One -- one month, my bill is \$89.
3 The following month it's \$650 or \$680. I mean,
4 before they get increases, they have to bring their
5 household in order.

6 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yes, bravo.

7 MS. FRANCO: Okay. Once they have
8 their household in order, then they can ask us or the
9 Public Commission for a rate increase. But until
10 then, that is not warranted. You never know when you
11 get a bill. They had asked me, said they'd take it
12 out of my account and I'm very glad I said no,
13 because once they are taking it from out of my
14 account, I will never get the money back, what they
15 owe me.

16 I still don't know, I was on the
17 budget, and my -- my credit was \$1200. But because I
18 write it down every months, your credit was only
19 \$600, go figure. This -- this Central Hudson is so,
20 and I'm going to use that word, screwed up. If any
21 other company --

22 FROM THE AUDIENCE: You can use the f-
23 word.

24 MS. FRANCO: -- well, if any other
25 company would work like this, if they had to close,

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2 they would close. Why are we getting delivery?

3 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Please, let --

4 A.L.J. MORENO: Sir, can you --

5 A.L.J. COSTELLO: -- please let her
6 read the comment.

7 A.L.J. MORENO: -- please let her have
8 her turn.

9 MS. FRANCO: How -- why are we getting
10 delivery from Canada? I think we have enough
11 resources here so that -- so that we can -- so that
12 we have the deliveries here. We don't have to go to
13 Canada, so they -- they get high -- go higher and
14 higher with the increases. That's ridiculous. Who
15 can afford those payments?

16 Last winter, I hardly had my heat on.
17 I turned every light off there was. At night, I -- I
18 had two blankets on my bed because I was afraid of
19 the electric bill. My husband was -- passed away and
20 he was a military veteran, 100 percent disabled. He
21 was put on the emergency list.

22 When the power went out, we got a
23 call, they cannot come, others have priorities. My
24 husband couldn't breathe, I had to take him to a --
25 to the hotel. I mean, this is something that it is

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2 not warranted that they get an increase. They should
3 give us a decrease instead of an increase.

4 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you.

5 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you.

6 A.L.J. MORENO: Our next speaker is
7 Assembly member Jonathan Jacobson.

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER JACOBSON: First, I
9 wish to thank the Public Service Commission for its
10 excellent report on the Central Hudson fiasco, their
11 billing fiascos over -- that we've all suffered over
12 the past two years. The report is so thorough that
13 I've posted it on the home page of my official
14 website. So there's a link on there, everybody can
15 read it. It's a great report.

16 Second, I want to thank you for having
17 these in-person hearings. As you can tell, it's a
18 hell of a lot better than looking at a bunch of one
19 inch boxes on Zoom. And I think it's so important
20 that -- that you continue to have in-person hearings
21 and you responded to my letter.

22 As I've stated publicly before, I'm
23 strongly opposed to the proposed 16 percent rate
24 increase for electricity and the 19 percent rate
25 increase for gas. Over the past two years, Central

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2 Hudson customers have suffered with non-billing, late
3 billing, grossly inacc --accurate billing and
4 terrible service. Most of which you have cited in
5 your own report.

6 And the terrible service is that,
7 whenever there is a windstorm, we have outages. Now,
8 they've gotten better. They now announce, when --
9 when something should normally take a day or two,
10 they announce that it's going to take four days. And
11 when it takes three, they declare victory. So
12 they've got a -- the -- the service is hurting us
13 all.

14 The average monthly Central Hudson
15 bill for electricity is \$118. That's what it's --
16 all the reports are. The proposed so-called dollar a
17 day increase would mean more than a 25 percent
18 increase. That's nearly eight times the rate of
19 inflation. Eight times.

20 Social Security payments are only
21 going up 3.2 percent, and that's based on the rate of
22 inflation. So they're way out of line. And that
23 does not include the increase for natural gas. Given
24 the over reliance on estimated billing and the
25 inaccurate billing in general, how can the Public

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2 Service Commission rely on Central Hudson's own
3 numbers which they base this increase on?

4 Customers have learned from their own
5 experience not to trust their Central Hudson bills.
6 You should not trust Central Hudson on their numbers
7 either. I just want to say that, to answer Sandra's
8 comment before, there are two bills in the
9 legislature that I've sponsored.

10 The -- the one on the estimated
11 billing, which has gotten through the Senate and
12 passed in the Corporation's Authorities Committee.
13 It hasn't passed the House yet, but it will. The
14 other would prohibit back billing for bills that are
15 later than two months. That has passed both houses
16 and are waiting the signature of the governor.

17 So I want to thank you for having this
18 in-person hearing. As you can see, it's well worth
19 it. People showed up. There was questioning whether
20 anybody would show up. Well, you have a lot more
21 people showing up in person than you did in -- on
22 Zoom. So thank you again for this opportunity.

23 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you.

24 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you.

25 A.L.J. MORENO: Our next speaker is Ed

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2 Kennedy.

3 MR. KENNEDY: Okay. Thanks a lot for
4 doing this, and long overdue. Long, long overdue.
5 This started about two years ago, and I got this
6 letter here from Anthony Campagnoli -- Campagnoli,
7 telling me that they're going to redo my bills and
8 then everything's going to be better.

9 And since that point -- and then I got
10 another letter here saying that, pay direct payment
11 part, you know, where my money used to come out and
12 it was taken out every month and taken out
13 beautifully. Then we're going to set up this new
14 thing and that wasn't working anymore.

15 In that time, I -- I, you know, this
16 started my anger with them. Is they -- Central
17 Hudson ended up taking two grand out of my credit
18 card for something that was not even mine, telling me
19 that it was my fault that this happened.

20 Because I put my credit card in to
21 give them their money, and I've never owned -- I've
22 went through maybe 50 different phone calls to that
23 place. I don't know how many other things. But I,
24 you know, like we asked earlier, is there anybody
25 from Central Hudson here?

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2 FROM THE AUDIENCE: No.

3 MR. KENNEDY: You are? Do you watch
4 your website and see what Chris Capone comes on your
5 website, right? First thing he says. We've taken
6 care of all of our billing. No freaking way. Lie.
7 Number one. As soon as you see that thing, your
8 billing problems have not been taken care of.

9 But he's got this beautiful thing.
10 Then he's got the freaking cojones to say, the guy
11 that screwed up the billing problem is still working
12 for the company, and still getting compensated, and
13 still work, oh, he's working to help us switch this
14 thing over.

15 What? This guy should be long gone.
16 When somebody screws up like that, you've got to say
17 goodbye. And we've got politicians in this room. I
18 -- people have been saying this already tonight.
19 When somebody screws up that bad, they shouldn't be
20 continued to allow things to happen.

21 Now we're saying, rate increase.
22 First of all, they already did a rate increase.
23 Check your bills out from last year to this year.
24 Your service bill went up. In one year, they put it
25 up and they didn't ask for anything. They just did

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2 it.

3 They didn't give a crap, they just
4 took it, because they can. Like everybody says,
5 they're a monopoly, they can do whatever they want.
6 Yeah, we're lucky enough we can go out and get
7 another electric company or whatever to -- and you
8 call, you know what? You try to call your electric
9 company, if you don't have Central Hudson's.

10 Hello? Yeah, maybe two minutes and
11 I'll get a real person. Call Central Hudson, 45
12 minutes. I'm still hello, we'll get somebody to call
13 you back, maybe. Maybe. I don't know how many times
14 I've called and said I'm going to get that call back.
15 It's never come.

16 I freaking got to the front gate of
17 Central Hudson, down at the end of Academy Street,
18 been barred from getting in there, used to be able to
19 go in and talk to a person, but no more. And can't
20 get in there and talk to anybody.

21 Oh, Mr. K., we'll have somebody get
22 back to you. I've been waiting for my freaking paper
23 bills for over six months before they finally sent
24 them to me. So I can look them over and see that
25 nice rate increase that you guys put on there for me.

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2 And there's just so many other things.

3 Listen, where the hell is this money going to that
4 you say that you need? How can you be giving more
5 money to a group? All right. How much money, how
6 many executives you've got working for you that --
7 how many? What -- what are you paying Chris, four
8 bill -- four million a year?

9 Or well, his little packages and
10 whatever, and the other guy, oh, well we got to get
11 rid of him, so we're going to give him a couple
12 million too? It's ridiculous. When you screw up,
13 every business screws up. They have to cut back.
14 They don't go asking for more money.

15 Okay. We got this nice little
16 vacation place up on Sturgeon Pond. Okay. Maybe
17 we'll sell that off or give it to the State to make a
18 park there or something. We got all sorts of other
19 things that we can give up.

20 Orange and Rockland is charging half
21 the rate, half the freaking rate that you are for the
22 delivery charge. That's freaking ridiculous. I
23 can't believe that you're asking for more. I call
24 Orange and Rockland, I wish that I lived in New
25 Windsor instead of Newburgh because they could take

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2 over my -- I said, can I move to you guys instead.

3 You know, that's ridiculous. No, you
4 can't. They said they couldn't do it. And then, you
5 know, we had the big hurricane last year down in
6 Florida. That's where my brother lives down there,
7 Fort Myers. Okay? Saying, oh, we're doing this so
8 that we can help pay for all the -- how many
9 hurricanes does Florida get hit with all the time?

10 I call my brother up. Hey, what are
11 your delivery charges? How much are you paying for
12 your energy? Nowhere freaking near what Central
13 Hudson is charging. And Central Hudson's, I can't
14 believe that they're asking for more money.

15 Every person in Central Hudson who
16 came and asked for more should be taking a pay cut.
17 When you screw up, you take a pay cut. And this is a
18 huge screw up like everybody said earlier tonight.
19 This is ridiculous. And you politicians, you should
20 be taking their license away and giving it to Orange
21 and Rockland or giving it to somebody else. No more
22 Central Hudson. No more Central Hudson.

23 You give them a rate increase, you are
24 doing a disservice to everybody in this room and this
25 entire community. We've had enough from them. No

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2 more.

3 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
4 speaker is Senator James Skoufis.

5 SENATOR SKOUFIS: Good evening, and
6 thank you Administrative Judges for -- for being here
7 in person. I appreciate you all. I no longer
8 represent Newburgh post-redistricting. However, I
9 represent a large set of communities that are served
10 by Central Hudson here in Orange County.

11 And I've been in the State legislature
12 now for about 11 years. And whether it's O&R or
13 Central Hudson, a couple of their very smaller
14 utilities I, in the areas that I've represented, I've
15 seen more than my fair share of rate hike
16 applications and ultimately approvals.

17 And I know how this game works. And
18 what these utilities do is internally, they figure
19 out what they actually want from the Public Service
20 Commission. They set some number internally, we want
21 to end up at X. And then they go and submit an
22 application that is double or triple or quadruple at
23 Y.

24 Knowing that elected officials,
25 knowing that the public, knowing that others are

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2 going to oppose the much higher Y, and then the
3 Public Service Commission is going to knock down the
4 Y right to the X, which is what they wanted all
5 along.

6 That's the game that happens every
7 single time. Now, I am generally a fan of context.
8 And the context is important here, vis-à-vis the
9 Central Hudson rate hike application. It is beyond
10 insulting, given their behavior of the past number of
11 years to be submitting any kind of rate hike
12 application.

13 FROM THE AUDIENCE: That's for sure.

14 SENATOR SKOUFIS: It is a slap in the
15 face. It is beyond insulting. Whether it's the
16 overcharges, whether it's the delayed bills, whether
17 it's -- as was mentioned before, the wildly
18 inaccurate estimate building. Whether it's the
19 disastrous, borderline non-existent customer service
20 that ultimately re-directed -- that ultimately re-
21 directed hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and
22 hundreds of people to call my office.

23 If not, thousands of people to call my
24 office pleading for help because of the non-existent
25 customer service. I chair the Senate Investigations

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2 Committee, we launched a probe following the major
3 winter price surge that occurred between 2020-'21 in
4 the following year.

5 And we found, amongst many other
6 findings, we looked at a whole host of different
7 utilities from around the entire State. And Central
8 Hudson had the largest, not one of the largest, the
9 largest jump in their price surge from winter to
10 winter of any of the utilities that we looked at in
11 New York State.

12 Whether it's the Public Service
13 Commission's own scathing investigation and report.
14 Whether it's the pending ongoing class action
15 lawsuit. All of these issues, all of this bad
16 behavior. And Central Hudson wakes up one day and
17 says, you know what? We think we're going to ask our
18 ratepayers for more money. It is beyond insulting.

19 And so what I am pleading with you
20 all, and pleading ultimately with the Public Service
21 Commission. And quite frankly, respectfully
22 demanding is that this game not be played this time.
23 And that -- and that there be not some smaller rate
24 hike, not some even what you all might characterize
25 in a, you know, a normal set of circumstances, a

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2 modest rate hike, not some knockdown rate hike
3 because a knockdown rate hike, no one's going to be
4 celebrating.

5 No elected official, no one in the
6 public. Oh, thank you, Public Service Commission for
7 only limiting it to X. They deserve not one red cent
8 of a rate hike. It should be zero, and that's what
9 we're all asking for you. Thank you.

10 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
11 speaker, I apologize if I got this wrong. Kippy
12 Boyle.

13 MS. BOYLE: Hi, good evening.

14 A.L.J. MORENO: Good evening.

15 MS. BOYLE: Thank you for having this
16 opportunity -- oh, okay. Can you hear me if I sit
17 down?

18 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay.

19 MS. BOYLE: Oh, okay. Okay. There
20 have been so many totally relevant comments made here
21 tonight that I really only just wanted to add my
22 voice to make sure that it's another live person
23 that's going to go on the record.

24 In my opinion, Central Hudson is on
25 probation. I think it's wonderful that our

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2 legislature may be getting the rules changed, so that
3 there won't be this estimated billing. But it hasn't
4 happened yet. And until there's a rollout, a
5 successful rollout of that, whenever that's going to
6 be, that we have proof that management can even
7 handle such a thing, no raise should be considered at
8 all. They are on probation.

9 And I just wanted to remind myself and
10 the rest of you, those estimated bills, that month
11 when you're paying the estimated bill, that is them
12 borrowing our money at zero percent interest. And
13 that's what they've been doing for years as long as
14 that program was there. So that's unconscionable.

15 And if I were an investigative
16 reporter, I was so mad about this. If I were an
17 investigative reporter, I would want to know how that
18 contract ever got approved by management. I would
19 like to know what the relationship is between that
20 software contract company and all of the board
21 members and stockholders of Central Hudson because
22 why would you choose somebody that has so little
23 experience that they could screw somebody, something
24 like that up so poorly? It's very, very suspect to
25 me.

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2 So to the shareholders of Central
3 Hudson, bite the bullet, take the hit, and don't make
4 us -- don't make us be the ones to have to bear that.
5 And the other thing is, I just want to add, as a
6 resident of the City of Newburgh, our city manager is
7 proposing for next year a 6 percent increase in water
8 and sewer.

9 So you know, that's bad enough for us
10 -- us citizens, but the city itself uses a lot of
11 Central Hudson's, I mean our street lights, all the -
12 - all the city buildings. So all of those increases
13 are going to come back to us, the city taxpayers. So
14 that's it. Thank you.

15 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
16 speaker is Kim Ashcroft.

17 MS. ASHCROFT: Good evening.

18 A.L.J. MORENO: Good evening.

19 MS. ASHCROFT: I want to thank
20 everybody for coming, and I do agree with the
21 audience. I did a small sampling comparing Central
22 Hudson to NYSEG, the second largest utility company
23 in New York. And our delivery rates are actually
24 twice as much.

25 So to say you're going to raise our

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2 rates, there's no justification. Instead, they
3 should be decreasing our rates to equal everybody
4 else. Only -- the only --

5 A.L.J. MORENO: All right. Please let
6 our speaker speak.

7 MS. ASHCROFT: Okay. The only company
8 that has higher delivery rates is Manhattan. Even
9 Long Island has lower rates. So to say that the
10 Hudson Valley and Central Hudson needs our money, I'd
11 like to know why, because they are showing record
12 profits, their annual report is online and any
13 consumer can see how much money they're making and
14 what their salaries are like.

15 They have huge amounts of money
16 invested in real estate. Take a loan if you need
17 money. As consumers, we need money we mortgage our
18 homes, we take loans. You need money, don't take it
19 from your customers. Get a mortgage like every other
20 person and every other business does.

21 Don't turn it to your clients and say
22 we have to pay for it. That's my speech.

23 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Okay. Our
24 next speaker is Matthew Slagle.

25 MR. SLAGLE: I'll be quick. I think

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2 everybody said what I wanted to say. We've shared
3 all the same experiences.

4 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Say it again.

5 MR. SLAGLE: Well -- yeah, I don't
6 want to take anybody's time. Same thing, the bill up
7 and down, you know, my folks live right over the
8 border in Hopewell. Their bill is a fraction of
9 mine. I don't believe any of it is a mistake. It's
10 all been carefully delivered, organized crime, you
11 know.

12 FROM THE AUDIENCE: That's right.
13 That's what they're doing.

14 MR. SLAGLE: Extreme conditions,
15 demand extreme responses. That -- that's it. That's
16 all I want to say.

17 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
18 speaker is Rochelle Parker. Rochelle Parker? Okay.
19 Wanda Brown.

20 MS. BROWN: Hello?

21 A.L.J. MORENO: Hi, there.

22 MS. BROWN: Central Hudson should not
23 be raising, you know, prices for us, period. I'm
24 still trying to figure out what happened on the
25 software. I spoke to them when they were here at the

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2 library.

3 A.L.J. MORENO: Uh-huh.

4 MS. BROWN: They gave me a runaround.
5 The lady was supposed to send me some emails. I
6 never got.

7 FROM THE AUDIENCE: That's about
8 right.

9 MS. BROWN: She said, I'll call you
10 and we'll talk about other things.

11 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Never got the
12 call.

13 MS. BROWN: I never got the call. And
14 I started out on the budget before the pandemic at
15 200 and something. Then they went to 300 and
16 something. Now it's almost \$500. And no
17 explanation. You know, they never contacted to say
18 we're doing this because, or this went up because.

19 And then they tried to explain it at
20 the meeting. But you had a software glitch. How am
21 I supposed to believe you? I supposed to trust you
22 now? I don't. I don't. You know, I understand they
23 lost a lot of money when the pandemic happened and
24 the shareholders, okay?

25 But don't take from the little people.

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2 We still trying to survive. I have a bill over
3 \$3,000. I'm trying to figure out how to pay it. I'm
4 trying to figure out how to pay the rent raise that
5 I'm just about to get in January.

6 Am I going to pay rent or am I going
7 to pay Central Hudson? You know, am I going to live
8 in my home and no lights, and no gas, and no heat?
9 What -- what -- what are we going to do? They have
10 no answers. They have no answers at all. And I
11 think it's a shame. Shame on them.

12 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
13 speaker is Alexis Danzig.

14 MS. DANZIG: Good evening, everybody.
15 I'm your neighbor to the north. I'm from Saugerties.

16 A.L.J. MORENO: I'm sorry, could you
17 just move a little closer, so we get you for the
18 court reporter.

19 MS. DANZIG: Sure.

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

21 MS. DANZIG: Thank you. I'm from the
22 village of Saugerties, population under 4,000. We
23 have many of the same issues that you have. I want
24 to raise a new issue, with all due respect, to the
25 folks from P.S.C. who have heard me before because

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2 I'm a completionist. I'm going to all the public
3 hearings.

4 It's been very illuminating to hear
5 from people in different areas. The reason why I'm
6 here is because after I got a \$1500 bill for one
7 month, sandwiched in between a \$160 bill and a \$116
8 bill, I decided that I should find out what the heck
9 was going on.

10 After months of going around and
11 around with Central Hudson, I finally learned that
12 there was such a thing as the Public Service
13 Commission. I -- I can't believe I've been alive
14 this long and I didn't know about it, but I finally
15 made an introduction.

16 And I formally submitted a complaint.
17 The complaint was to ask for a review of my entire
18 account. Because if I'm getting a \$1500 bill one
19 month, and then I got a \$19 bill in August, can I
20 trust any of it?

21 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Nope.

22 MS. DANZIG: I don't think so.
23 Rhetorical question number 3,000. So I entered the
24 complaint system in June. And by the time I got a
25 pink slip in the mail from Central Hudson, it had

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2 already been two months and I hadn't heard anything
3 back from P.S.C.

4 I had been told by P.S.C. that Central
5 Hudson was not allowed to reach out to me during the
6 time that I had a case open with P.S.C. I opened the
7 pink slip, nothing in the statement said termination,
8 but it did say, you better pay your bill. This is
9 harassment.

10 If P.S.C. is to be trusted, and I'm
11 not supposed to hear from Central Hudson, why are
12 they sending me a bill telling me to pay up when my
13 case has not been reviewed? I finally, this month,
14 it's been four months, I finally got a determination.

15 There is no information in my bill,
16 sorry, in the determination, there's no information
17 that says what my rate was based on. What -- what
18 does it say in the letter from P.S.C.? It says, we
19 checked with Central Hudson, and Central Hudson says,
20 they're billing you okay.

21 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yeah, that's --
22 that's about right.

23 MS. DANZIG: This is a problem.
24 P.S.C. has a bad reputation on the street. I belong
25 to an organization on Facebook that when I joined, it

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2 had 800 members. It's the Hudson Valley Citizens
3 against Central Hudson. It now has over a thousand
4 members.

5 Most of these members want to kvetch
6 and they want to testify, but they don't necessarily
7 want to do anything. I want to do something, which
8 is why I'm going to all of these meetings and why I
9 have a petition here. This is not just for P.S.C.
10 This is for all of our elected officials to make sure
11 that they have constituent services to help us.

12 I got bounced out of the complaint
13 system at P.S.C. And the worker who I talked to said
14 that I should start paying my bill. But I don't have
15 a reason for that \$1500 bill. By bouncing me out of
16 the system, I'm in danger of having my electricity
17 cut off.

18 I just had a young friend with an
19 infant move into my house. So we've got a senior and
20 an infant in the same house where we could have our
21 electricity cut off. That is not right.

22 So now I'm re-opening my case. Part
23 of my complaint, as part of the process, I learned
24 that not only could I get an audit of my account, but
25 that if I didn't like the rationale for billing me

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2 the \$1500, that I could go to a hearing. An informal
3 hearing, a hearing, whatever they want to call it.

4 But there's no information in the
5 P.S.C. letter to me that apprises me of my rights to
6 go to a hearing. So what is going on? The letter
7 from P.S.C. sends me right back to Central Hudson to
8 pay my bill. Now, if I didn't have the patience for
9 this, and if I didn't have the time, I wouldn't be
10 here complaining, but I am here.

11 This is for activists. This is for
12 people who want to go to the next level. My number
13 is on here. You can call me. You can ask me any
14 questions. I've been doing community organizing for
15 30 years, and boy, do I want to do it against Central
16 Hudson.

17 If you are interested, if public
18 hearings are your jam, but you're also interested in
19 other ways of taking action, please sign up. I'd be
20 happy to let you know what's going on. The next
21 public hearing is in Poughkeepsie tomorrow. I'll be
22 there. The one after that is going to be in
23 Kingston. I'll be there.

24 MS. DANZIG: And I would love to keep
25 people in the loop. If we have to go and protest

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2 outside peacefully, under the First Amendment. If we
3 have to go and protest, wherever we need to go
4 protest, we can do that. Because protesting is not
5 just yelling. It's also an education campaign.

6 It's also drawing people in. It's
7 showing other people who don't have the time and
8 energy to do this, that there are people who are
9 going to stand up for them too. And I'm sure, in the
10 end, that P.S.C. wants to improve its reputation with
11 the public, and I'm sure that they will do the right
12 thing. So sign up and help me.

13 A.L.J. MORENO: Our next speaker is
14 Justice McCray.

15 MR. MCCRAY: Hi, my name is Justice
16 McCray, and I'm a City Council person representing
17 the City of Beacon, New York, across the river. My
18 constituents, my neighbors, we're all constrained.
19 I'm consistently told of stories of inconsistent and
20 egregious charges that have continued and haven't
21 been resolved since 2021.

22 What we're experiencing right now is
23 the damaging effects of privatization of a monopoly
24 of a public good. When our residents don't have a
25 choice in whose profit to subsidize, we're pulled

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2 away from what matters to us. And when it's a result
3 of impossible rate hikes, my constituents get
4 displaced.

5 Our businesses leave, and everything
6 that makes our cities wonderful goes away. I'm here
7 to represent the thousands of people in my city that
8 can't be here. I'm here to echo every comment that
9 I've heard tonight. And I don't need to say
10 everything over and over again, and I want to keep it
11 as brief as possible because I know there's so many
12 people that are here that want to continue to speak.

13 But I shouldn't be here in a position
14 of public power and feel helpless for my
15 constituents. I won't sit silently while my city and
16 my neighbors are hurting. The mere suggestion that
17 Central Hudson rate hike -- the Central Hudson rate
18 hike is appalling. Don't entertain a negotiation.
19 The only rate change that should be considered is a
20 rate decrease. Thank you.

21 A.L.J. MORENO: Our next speaker is
22 Thomas Wright.

23 MR. WRIGHT: Good evening. Thank you
24 for holding this public hearing and for your time.
25 My name is Thomas Wright and I am a resident of

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2 Beacon, New York, where I am a member of Beacon
3 Climate Action Now.

4 I'm here to voice my opposition to the
5 increases in delivery charges proposed by Central
6 Hudson. We have all heard many testimonies about
7 Central Hudson's inability to provide reliable
8 billing to its customers. I own and operate a
9 business here in Newburgh, and have experienced this
10 insanity firsthand with four to five statements
11 arriving monthly for a single account, all showing
12 different figures.

13 And this happening month after month
14 after month. A publicly regulated monopoly must not
15 be rewarded for this sort of shoddy performance. I
16 am even more concerned about the fact that the
17 proposed rate increases are not aligned with the
18 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

19 It shouldn't surprise anyone in this
20 room that humanity faces a climate emergency. The
21 C.L.C.P.A. in its scoping plan lays out a roadmap to
22 address this emergency. It is inconceivable to me
23 that the Public Service Commission could consider a
24 rate increase without specific agreements from
25 Central Hudson on how they will bring themselves --

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2 themselves into alignment with the C.L.C.P.A.

3 Any expansion of the fossil gas
4 network inherently undermines the goals of the
5 C.L.C.P.A., which mandates rapid decarbonization of
6 buildings and the electric grid. Finally, the use of
7 ratepayer money to promote fossil gas needs to stop.

8 Apparently, as a condition of the
9 previous rate increase, Central Hudson agreed to stop
10 promoting fossil gas. This certainly has not
11 happened. I regularly receive emails promoting gas
12 as the economical choice. The more cost-effective
13 choice, emails that conveniently leave out a
14 comparison to efficient, cold climate air-sourced
15 heat pumps or ground-sourced heat pumps.

16 Emails that conveniently omit the fact
17 that, on average, residents of New York State will
18 see a savings of \$900 per year by switching to
19 efficient all-electric equipment that runs on
20 renewable energy. These practices are deceptive and
21 need to stop. They absolutely should not be rewarded
22 with a revenue increase. Thank you.

23 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
24 speaker is Anthony Grice.

25 MR. GRICE: There you go. That's me.

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2 So my name is Anthony Grice, Councilman at large for
3 the City of Newburgh, homeowner for 20 years,
4 business owner for 6 years, co-business owner. And I
5 actually had another board meeting tonight, but a
6 good friend of mine told me that I should show up,
7 because when I think about it, what Central Hudson
8 does impacts more people than that board meeting.

9 So I apologize if I don't have numbers
10 and facts and other things like that, what I usually
11 like to do. So I'm just going to give you some
12 qualitative things. You know, Central Hudson and the
13 City of Newburgh, for the City of Newburgh, our
14 average medium income is about 47,000. So what that
15 means is a lot of people are rent burdened when
16 they're renting their -- their apartment.

17 The other thing about it is we have
18 the largest historic district here in the City of
19 Newburgh. And so what that means is that for
20 property owners, they have to invest a lot of money
21 into making sure that their house is warm in the
22 winter and cool in the summer. So that takes a
23 tremendous amount of money.

24 They usually have to pass that cost.
25 If they're able to do that, they have to pass that

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2 cost on to the renters. For the homeowners, that
3 means that their bill fluctuates throughout the year.
4 So it actually makes it hard for someone to say, oh,
5 my bill should be this or my bill should be that
6 because with the bills fluctuating.

7 So those things should be taken in
8 mind. The other thing is, Central Hudson comes into
9 our city to upgrade their gas lines and they do a
10 horrible job at paving. And then what happens is,
11 city government gets blamed for it because when
12 people see it, they don't know, oh, this is Central
13 Hudson or this is Precision Pipeline or whoever the
14 contractor is.

15 They just see it as city government.
16 And so they come in and they'll dig up streets that
17 we already paved. So we had to make a resolution
18 that no, you can't dig up streets within a certain
19 amount of years, so that they won't do that.

20 But even now, they're working on
21 Broadway, which was a surprise to us. We didn't know
22 that they were going to go in and work on Broadway
23 until they showed up to work on Broadway. And then
24 when they do the paving, it -- it looks like
25 patchwork quilt. It's -- it's -- it's not good.

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2 It's bumpy and it's everything else.

3 We, the city government get blamed for
4 that. Mayor Harvey, who is here tonight, we tried to
5 get our street lights, tried to claim our street
6 lights, so that we could make them better and more
7 efficient. And they sent us a bunch of numbers or a
8 bunch of other things of why it wouldn't work.

9 And so that died. When it comes to
10 the -- when it comes -- I -- I was pushing for
11 legislation, the community choice aggregation
12 legislation that -- that passed and we should be
13 moving on that. But they still have the lines that
14 if we do get our electric cheaper somewhere, if we do
15 get our gas cheaper somewhere, they still own the
16 lines.

17 I wish that my company, that everyone
18 had to come through my company to get that product.
19 Then, you know, of course, but that's not the case
20 here. There was something else that I was going to
21 mention, but it probably was already mentioned by
22 other people.

23 The bottom line is, I am 100 percent
24 against this rate hike, and I agree with everyone
25 else that we should be looking to reduce their rates.

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2 I know what it was now, the estimated billing, the
3 estimated billing was a fiasco.

4 We had, I don't want to speak for
5 Mayor Harvey, but his bill went up three times as
6 much, all of a sudden. It -- it was between paying
7 this bill and paying his mortgage. Like, just think
8 about that. It's, you know, it's between people
9 paying their bill, or paying for food, or paying for
10 rent, or paying for these other medical needs.

11 Because -- so they, I agree, a few
12 people said it. They really need to fix their
13 billing. They should give us all discounts.

14 FROM THE AUDIENCE: That's a -- there
15 you go. There you go. All right.

16 MR. GRICE: They should give a call,
17 but they definitely should not be getting a -- a rate
18 hike. It should be at zero. Thank you.

19 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
20 speaker is Torrance Harvey.

21 MAYOR HARVEY: So for the record, I'm
22 Torrance Harvey, Mayor of the City of Newburgh, New
23 York. I'm speaking as the mayor on behalf of my
24 constituents, not only in the City of Newburgh, but
25 also in the region. It's ridiculously unfair and

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2 horrible that Central Hudson would even consider a
3 hike in the rates as the utility monopoly to increase
4 these rates for consumers in the City of Newburgh and
5 in the region.

6 Especially during inflammatory --
7 inflationary times, such a rate hike can place a
8 greater burden as many people have said, a greater
9 burden on the already struggling households, the
10 businesses, exasperating the financial challenges
11 that we all face in the United States of America and
12 also in the Mid-Hudson Valley.

13 It's important for the utility company
14 to consider the economic climate that we're currently
15 in, prioritize the well-being of their consumers when
16 making these pricing decisions. The Public Service
17 Commission should not allow this rate hike to happen.

18 And I received as, to correct my
19 colleague on the City Council, Councilman Grice. I
20 received a \$782,000 bill in COVID for my -- my home
21 which is a ranch house, three bedroom house, okay?
22 On a third of an acre in the City of Newburgh.
23 \$782,000 for a month, monthly bill, almost put me in
24 cardiac arrest. And that's the God's honest truth.
25 I almost had a heart attack.

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2 And to be honest with you, Congressman
3 Pat Ryan took this to the house floor, \$782,000 bill
4 in one month, okay? And -- and he took this to the
5 house bill and that is why the C.E.O. had to change
6 in this company.

7 And he called for this, that current
8 C.E.O.'s resignation and that's what happened. Okay?
9 A \$782,000 monthly bill, okay? Cause -- almost
10 causing me into cardiac arrest. I got several calls
11 from lawyers and had a great opportunity to litigate
12 this issue because of the pain and suffering I and
13 this community has had to have.

14 Okay? There needs to be a class
15 action lawsuit, to be honest. It's very -- it's very
16 bad for the S.M.A. Billing. How dare a company, a
17 billion-dollar company, okay, not have the human
18 power, not manpower, but human power to actually send
19 their agents out, hire their agents, send them out to
20 read the meters for all the customers that you --
21 that Central Hudson services.

22 How dare they do estimate billing.
23 When we found that out, that in itself is a crime. I
24 recommend that there be an act of the State
25 legislature, the Governor of New York and the Federal

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2 Legislature to break up these monopolies.

3 FROM THE AUDIENCE: There we go.

4 MR. HARVEY: That's what I -- that's
5 what I recommend. And because I'm a history teacher,
6 in 1896, the Sherman Antitrust Act was passed by
7 federal law, okay, to bust up these monopolies in the
8 United States of America. And then was followed up
9 by 1915, it was known as the Clayton Antitrust Act of
10 1915 to bust up American monopolies.

11 And now we have these utility
12 monopolies that are legalized and we are being taken
13 advantage of here in the United States of America,
14 here in the City of Newburgh and in the Mid-Hudson
15 Valley. That is a crime. And they're not even --
16 they're -- their company's coming out of Canada, not
17 even the United States of America.

18 So as the Mayor of the City of
19 Newburgh, I'm saying to the people of this great
20 nation, we need to put pressure on our State and
21 federal legislatures, so that we can continue to
22 break up these monopolies, even if they are utility
23 monopolies.

24 We are American consumers, and we
25 should have a choice on who, and what, and how to

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2 shop for our utility companies. But see, here's what
3 the problem is. Central Hudson created these gas
4 lines in the 1800s. And because they own these gas
5 lines, we don't have a choice as American citizens,
6 and we don't have a choice as American consumers.

7 We should be able to choose what --
8 what utility companies we want to purchase gas and
9 electric from. So they broke up the electric
10 monopolies, but we need to break up the utility
11 monopolies. And that's -- and that's a fact.

12 So one last statement I'm going to
13 make. My colleague talked about the gas line
14 replacement program. When I got elected as a city
15 councilman at large in 2015, sworn in in 2016,
16 Central Hudson came before the City Council and they
17 asked for a 10-year program, a 10-year program.

18 That's 2016 to 2026 to do the gas line
19 replacement program in the City of Newburgh with the
20 four-square miles, 28-, 29,000 residents that are on
21 record because we know there's more, but everyone
22 doesn't participate in the census report.

23 But according to the census, 2020, 28-
24 to 29,000 residents, they said they were coming in
25 here to do gas line replacement programs for 10

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2 years. Then they snuck into our council meeting, got
3 back on our agenda two years ago, and asked for an
4 extension on the 10-year gas line replacements.

5 And my question, as the mayor, at that
6 time said, I said, who's going to pay? Who's on the
7 hook for these new gas lines? And they said in a
8 very honest way, the consumers will pay for these
9 increases. And that's what -- that's what this is
10 about.

11 They're modernizing their gas lines,
12 these old gas lines, and we're paying for it. And
13 they said it before the City Council, and that's on
14 the record. You can check the video. The last thing
15 is, when we talk about the gas line replacement
16 program, all right?

17 As Councilman Grice just mentioned, we
18 have worked diligently with our Department of Works
19 and our Commissioner of Public Works and our City
20 Manager to coordinate the efforts. So when we mill
21 and pave roads in the City of Newburgh, we'll make
22 sure that the gas line replacement has already
23 happened.

24 Because we have a four-year master
25 plan on paving, and every time we coordinate those

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2 efforts, like on Montgomery Street, like in the East
3 Historic Inn, we pave that a year ago. They have
4 already gone back in, not even two years later, back
5 into Montgomery Street and other areas in the East
6 Historic Inn and even in the Heights.

7 When we pave, they go back a year
8 later and start digging up our roads and digging
9 these trenches and they don't mill and pave again.
10 All right? And it becomes a botched work and again,
11 the elected officials on the City Council and the
12 city government takes the blame when they -- when
13 they hire Precision Pipeline, and they do this botch
14 work, this botch work, and re -- and -- and patching
15 up.

16 No, we want Central Hudson, if they go
17 in the ground to mill and pave our road, especially
18 if we've milled and paved within a five-year time,
19 when they're going back in that -- in that ground.
20 And they need to mill and pave our roads when they do
21 that replacement.

22 So in closing, this -- the -- the --
23 the residents that are receiving gas services from
24 Central Hudson should get a rebate check and they
25 should decrease the rate instead of an increase.

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2 That's all I have to say.

3 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Okay. Our
4 next speaker is Mark Sanchez Potter.

5 MR. SANCHEZ POTTER: Hello everyone.
6 My name is Mark Sanchez Potter. I'm a City of
7 Newburgh resident. I'm a public school teacher in
8 the City of Newburgh. I love my community, but
9 Central Hudson can go to hell. And I say that
10 because they're a monopoly and they are -- they are a
11 criminal organization that the State government
12 should break up.

13 All right? They do not deserve any of
14 your money, any of your money. You are hardworking
15 Americans. You do not need to be paying this
16 criminal organization. All right? So that's pretty
17 much all I wanted to say.

18 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
19 speaker is Eric Eckley. Hi, there.

20 MR. ECKLEY: Hi there. Thank you very
21 much for coming. Thanks for having this meeting.
22 You know, a lot of other people spoke before me, I
23 think very eloquently. They've really stated
24 everything that needs to be stated. But I did write
25 down a brief statement, which I'd like to quickly

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2 read.

3 A.L.J. MORENO: Absolutely.

4 MR. ECKLEY: So my name is Eric
5 Eckley. I live in East Fishkill, New York. I'm a
6 member of the Mid-Hudson chapter of the D.S.A. I'm
7 actually running for Dutchess County Legislature,
8 which that has nothing to do with it, but I just
9 wanted to say that because that's kind of why I'm
10 doing it.

11 But in any case, if Central Hudson
12 needs funds, it shouldn't be requesting it from their
13 ratepayers. The C.E.O. makes millions and the
14 company is constantly touting consistent annual
15 record profits. Central Hudson is owned by Canadian
16 mega utility company, Fortis, which owns five utility
17 companies.

18 The C.E.O. makes over 5 million.
19 Their former C.A. -- C.E.O. is paid over 10 million a
20 year. Fortis made 1.3 billion in profits in 2022.
21 So that's 1.3 billion in profits. That's after
22 everybody gets paid. And why do they need more?

23 How much profit do they want? Like, I
24 mean, how much money do they want? They want it all.
25 Do we know, when is enough enough? Fortis has seen

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2 growth in corporate profits every year. Somebody
3 else mentioned that. You can look at their website
4 and it's great that they make profits for their --
5 their shareholders, but they're already extremely
6 profitable. They don't need more.

7 So we don't know what -- what their,
8 you know, what -- what they're really going to do
9 with the money. But what we do know is their
10 customers can't pay their bills. Central -- Central
11 Hudson's own documents show that customers are in
12 arrears and have been -- have grown by a 1,000
13 percent since the beginning of the pandemic in
14 February, 2020.

15 Customers are \$96 million in debt just
16 on utilities. Central Hud -- Hudson has a history of
17 incompetent and negligent billing. The Public Con --
18 Public Service Commission found that over 8,000
19 customers were overcharged and that more than 30,000
20 customers had multiple months of payments withdrawn
21 from their account.

22 So that's money wrongly taken from
23 their accounts. They trusted Central Hudson, and
24 that was clearly a mistake. Central Hudson can
25 afford to continue its service without increasing

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2 rates. That's a fact. Energy is not a luxury, it's
3 a basic need, and it should not be used to give
4 corporate utilities ever increasing guaranteed
5 profits.

6 While seniors and families on fixed
7 incomes freeze in the winter, can't pay their bills,
8 and go further into debt, which can even cause them
9 to lose their homes. A rate hike will cause an even
10 greater economic catastrophe than we already have in
11 the Hudson Valley for small businesses, seniors, and
12 working families.

13 Inflation does not affect mega
14 corporations like Fortis the same way it affects
15 everybody who's living paycheck to paycheck. While
16 the working class continues to fall behind, Fortis
17 made 1.3 billion in profits despite inflation.

18 Where's all that money gone? Lastly,
19 Central Hudson needs the approval of the Public
20 Service Commission to make these rate increases
21 permanent, and we should say no, no to Central Hudson
22 rate hike today. Thank you.

23 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
24 speaker is Bob Follan.

25 Hi there.

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2 MR. FOLLAN: Hi, everybody. I'm Bob
3 Follan. I have -- my wife and I have recently moved
4 to the Town of Newburgh. I've been a resident of
5 Newburgh for a very long time. I -- I am astounded
6 tonight and very happy that the mayor showed up and
7 the senator showed up. That was -- it was just
8 unbelievable to me to see you guys here, supporting
9 us in this matter for Central Hudson.

10 I am, however, very disappointed in
11 the -- in the P.S.C. that in the last eight years
12 that I've moved into this house that I bought in the
13 Town of Newburgh, my electric has more than doubled.
14 And it's -- it's extremely upsetting to see we -- we
15 -- we bought in August, so come September you get
16 nailed.

17 And every September I get the tax bill
18 and then I get nailed by Central Hudson. And it's
19 just extremely unbelievable. My wife and I -- I'm a
20 C.S.E.A. employee. And we're about ready to come to
21 retirement. And I'm going to tell you what, I'm
22 getting out of New York. I -- I want out.

23 And -- and -- and Central Hudson has a
24 lot -- has a lot to do with that. And there's
25 millions of people leaving New York State because of

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2 that. And I don't know why the P.S.C. hasn't had my
3 back over the last eight years. Where have you been?
4 Why have they been allowed to raise my rates this
5 much? And now they're asking.

6 And you guys you -- you cannot accept
7 that from Central -- from Central Hudson to raise the
8 rates on us. They've raised the rates. I -- I, you
9 know, it's -- it's a 100 percent they got already. I
10 don't know what else to say. I -- I thank everybody
11 for coming out. And given -- given their piece and
12 they -- everybody said pretty much what I wanted to
13 say. And that's all I have. Thank you.

14 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
15 speaker is Mari Shakur.

16 MR. SHAKUR: Omari.

17 A.L.J. MORENO: Oh, I'm sorry, Omari,
18 pardon me.

19 MR. SHAKUR: So just to follow up.
20 Basically, you've heard everything that's happened.
21 What you all witnessing is a robbery without a gun.
22 That's what you all witnessing, a robbery without a
23 gun. When I got my first bill I said more than what
24 you said. And you might know me we would -- so one
25 of the reasons why this is happening and you touched

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2 on a good point, there's no competition.

3 Because I want to make a -- as a city
4 councilman in this city, I want to make a resolution
5 where we call for an investigation about these prices
6 where -- into an investigation, our residents don't
7 have to pay nothing to Central Hudson. And when they
8 come back with the investigation, whatever they find
9 out that they probably owe us.

10 But -- but in the meantime, like I
11 said, what we're witnessing is a robbery without a
12 gun. And so one of the reasons why it's happening in
13 the City of Newburgh, you brought up a point. Why
14 it's happening in the City of Newburgh? So I asked
15 somebody that works for Central Hudson. Why is
16 Newburgh, he said because you have a lot of
17 minorities that collect HEAP.

18 You have a lot of elderly people that
19 collect their HEAP or get subsidies for this. And
20 these subsidies are paying more than what you would
21 pay as a, you know, when you're paying your own bill.
22 And so they're maximizing the bill to get these
23 subsidies also like in the City of Newburgh, so
24 that's one reason.

25 Why? Because they're getting these

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2 subsidies and the subsidies will pay double the
3 amount of what your bill is because that's whatever
4 your bill is. So that's -- that's probably one
5 reason why it's happening. But we have to make sure
6 that we bring some competition into this because as
7 long as there's no competition, they don't only show
8 in town.

9 We've got to do what they, so we're
10 basically hostages to Central Hudson right now. But
11 as -- as one of your representatives and as the City
12 Council, we will continue to see work on this with
13 our county -- with our State representative and with
14 our congressman and see what we can do to shut these
15 people down.

16 Because before I was a city
17 councilman, I was a community activist. And that's
18 what we -- that's what we focus on, shutting down
19 something that we didn't want to participate in. And
20 so how can we do that? But that's another point but
21 make sure that you sign that petition and maybe we
22 need to get a petition going on in this county to
23 whatever we need to do.

24 Whatever we need to do to shut them
25 down because they're shutting us down. And they

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2 don't care about our community, come on, we just came
3 out of pandemic. We just came out of pandemic. And
4 right now -- right now they're pushing people out of
5 their homes, they're pushing people out of the State.
6 You see the man say, he's leaving New York State. So
7 contact your elected officials and make sure they're
8 doing their job. And --

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

10 MR. SHAKUR: -- that's it. Thanks.

11 A.L.J. MORENO: Our next speaker --

12 MR. SHAKUR: Shut them down.

13 A.L.J. MORENO: -- is Veekas Ashoka.

14 MR. SHAKUR: Shut them down.

15 A.L.J. MORENO: Veekas Ashoka? Okay.

16 I don't. Oh, sorry about that.

17 MR. ASHOKA: Hi, everyone, I'm Veekas
18 Ashoka. I live in Beacon, New York. I'm part of a
19 group called Beacon Climate Action Now. And this is
20 -- this fellow here, he's three months' old
21 yesterday. So --

22 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Someday he's going
23 to be the (unintelligible).

24 MR. ASHOKA: Yeah, (unintelligible).

25 Yeah, you heard from a member of Beacon -- Thomas,

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2 earlier. Beacon has applied to be an official
3 intervener in this process. And the reason why we
4 feel really invested in this is last fall through
5 this spring, we ran a campaign in Beacon called --
6 that we called gas-free buildings.

7 And we -- we passed a law in Beacon,
8 so that all new buildings in Beacon will be electric
9 instead of gas. And I'll explain a little bit about
10 that at -- at the end. But in that process, we
11 knocked on thousands of doors in Beacon. And I -- I
12 specifically knocked on doors in every neighborhood
13 in Beacon.

14 And I will tell you, there is only one
15 opinion about Central Hudson in the City of Beacon.
16 That is fuck Central Hudson.

17 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Careful around the
18 young one.

19 MR. ASHOKA: No one likes Central --
20 he's too young to care about that word. But like no
21 one -- no one likes them. So you all know why. You
22 all said why. We also, I -- I personally talked to
23 people who had their electricity shut off while all
24 this billing issues was going on during the
25 moratorium. Like -- it -- there is so much rage, and

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2 anger, and hurt, and pain.

3 And this -- and all during this time,
4 Central Hudson is lying and cheating and stealing
5 from us. And I want to like kind of dive in a little
6 bit into something Thomas brought up. They're
7 sending mail to all of our households, you all
8 probably got it, saying that like all the benefits of
9 gas in your home.

10 The -- the reason why they're doing
11 that, like think about it, why would Central Hudson
12 pay all this money to send you mail that you should
13 use gas over electric. Even though all the research
14 in recent years is showing that electric homes save
15 \$900 per year compared to gas. And all the recent
16 research -- research shows that kids like mine will
17 have lower rates of asthma if they have an electric
18 house versus a gas house.

19 Why would Central Hudson want you to
20 have a gas house?

21 FROM THE AUDIENCE: To make money from
22 their pipeline.

23 MR. ASHOKA: It's because they make
24 their damn money on these pipelines. And so they're
25 -- so they're cheating, they're lying, they're

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2 stealing. And so they deserve nothing from us, but
3 our scorn. And that's why I gracefully request that
4 you all deny the rate increase. And I love this idea
5 of reducing the rates. That's fantastic.

6 I want to say one last thing to the --
7 to the audience generally. If you want to fuck
8 Central Hudson, call your legislators and ask them to
9 support the New York Heat Act. That's a bill, I
10 think it almost pass this past year. I would say the
11 thing that is the best part about it, is it caps your
12 utility bills, so that no single one of us here will
13 pay more than 6 percent of our bills to Central
14 Hudson in a month.

15 So no matter what they do, that's a
16 mess. And that's pretty cool. So all right, that's
17 it.

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

19 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Anybody else?

20 A.L.J. MORENO: Our next speaker is
21 Marina Kollkini -- Kollkininas. Marina Kollkinias.
22 No? Vanda Kuna.

23 MS. KUNA: I've experienced other
24 things with Central Hudson that aren't right, like
25 when you're renting an apartment and you get on

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2 budget billing, they budget bill you from the person
3 before, from the year before. And you have to pay
4 their electric or whatever, we're electric, so we had
5 to pay their electric for a full year until we had
6 our own electric guideline to go by. And so anyway -
7 - and they also don't read their meters. I had a
8 meter go wrong and I called them four times that
9 there was something wrong with my bill.

10 And then they said to me that I should
11 go out and read my own meter. Then, I called again
12 and I got somebody else and they did come out and
13 read the meter, there is something wrong with the
14 meter. And I told the man that I owed them back
15 three years on utility bills, that they can go back
16 three years.

17 Even though I called them in advance
18 and told them that they were -- something was wrong.
19 And it wasn't my first phone call. And then, when
20 you call them up, they don't answer your calls. And
21 the other thing is, I'm -- I'm on subsidy. And
22 before I got on subsidy and things, they used to send
23 me a bill at the end of the month on your budget
24 billing, how much you get back if you overpaid or
25 this or the other.

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2 They don't do that if you're on budget
3 billing. They don't give you a -- what you have
4 spent or whatever. And they tell you it's because
5 you're on the system and they rip the system off. So
6 that's about all I have to say.

7 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you very much.

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

9 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. Our speaker is
10 Christy Cushman.

11 FROM THE AUDIENCE: (unintelligible).

12 A.L.J. MORENO: She's left? Okay.
13 Thank you. We'll go to Citlali Garcia?

14 MS. GARCIA: Oh, can I say hi, good
15 evening but it's night. Good night, everyone. My
16 name is Citlali Garcia. And I'm a City of Newburgh
17 resident. I've been living here since I was 11 years
18 old. I am 25 now. And I was so excited to be here
19 because it's one thing, Central Hudson has, it's the
20 -- the City.

21 It's -- if someone really sat down,
22 they really sat down, they wrote up and they thought
23 it would be a good idea to request an -- rate in --
24 increase. I mean, at least this time they had the,
25 you know, decency of asking. Someone said that they

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2 lost money during the pandemic half. That's when
3 they made the most money.

4 They were screwing us over, so bad
5 that I don't think we'll ever recover from that,
6 honestly. I -- I would bring this up. I am a single
7 mother. I have a four-year-old who's in school now.
8 And I work 60 hours a week. I am gone most of the
9 day because I am out of the house at least 14 hours a
10 day.

11 And so does the rest of my family that
12 lives with me. And we still get high bills. When I
13 lived last year, more than a year ago, in this little
14 apartment over on Farrington, I remember during the
15 winter, we got a bill for more than \$700 for a two-
16 bedroom apartment while we were out at least 14 hours
17 a day.

18 How? I -- I mean, I do got to give
19 them credit because they are great salesmen. You
20 know, you're going to get all this benefits. You're
21 going to get great service. Meaning that we're not
22 getting it already. They're charging premium for
23 bare minimum. And they still want more money. Why?
24 Why is this even being considered? When we're
25 already paying top dollars for a necessity.

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2 I don't want to pay their bills. I
3 pay them because I have a -- a child at home who
4 needs heat, water, food. Nobody wants to pay for
5 that, but we don't have an option. We don't have a
6 choice. We don't have a -- the freedom to decide who
7 we're going to shut from. And honestly, I love
8 coming to these hearings because I always learn
9 something.

10 For example, that the Public Service
11 Commission, it's supposed to be for us, but they're
12 not. Why is there people working in places that are
13 supposed to help the public? Why are there people
14 working there who are not for the public? Are they
15 getting a cut? Because that's the only way I see
16 that they're turning back, the elderly, the needy.

17 We all know the Newburgh, it's a low-
18 income city. We know that. We got rent hikes, we
19 are barely getting by paying rent. We can't afford
20 rent. And now we're supposed to pay more for a
21 necessity and that's just the electric, so we're not
22 supposed to eat. We can't go out. We can't --
23 either we have a roof, or we have electric, or we
24 have food.

25 And then, there's the gas, you know,

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2 it's also increased. Crazy. So where are we getting
3 to? Where isn't -- when is enough enough? When are
4 they going to have enough? Or they -- I guess, they
5 saw how much the owner -- building owners got, you
6 know, when they increased the rate of the rent.

7 And they were like, oh, we can still
8 take a little more and get away with it. It is
9 ridiculous. I know that many of them asked nicely
10 and said gracefully, you know, please deny that. I'm
11 not asking gracefully. That is the bare minimum that
12 can be done. Because like I said, this shouldn't
13 even be considered. We should be getting a decrease.

14 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Exactly.

15 MS. KUNA: I called. I got the same
16 situation to have my meter read. And they said, oh,
17 go read it yourself, you know, because obviously I'm
18 very qualified to do that. And so you know, is the
19 rest of the population. And it's -- how can I say
20 this. Don't pass it. I'm against it. And I think
21 the rest of the city is.

22 And I am here. My motivation to be
23 here is not only my daughter. It's because I know
24 that the rest of the population, at least my Spanish
25 speaking population, don't get informed enough. They

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2 can't be represented if they're not being informed of
3 what's going on.

4 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yeah, yeah.

5 MS. KUNA: And I told them, we are
6 paying the price for decisions that are being made
7 while we're not present. And we can't be present if
8 we're not being represented. And I am tired of it.
9 Because we're giving them money. Our money is the
10 same as everyone else's.

11 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Right.

12 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yeah.

13 MS. KUNA: So that needs to be -- that
14 needs to stop. There needs to be actual customer
15 service.

16 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Thank you.

17 MS. KUNA: And thank you too, cut the
18 shit, please. Thank you.

19 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yes.

20 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
21 speaker is Barry LaPierre.

22 MR. LAPIERRE: Good evening. Thank
23 you for hosting this meeting.

24 A.L.J. MORENO: Good evening.

25 MR. LAPIERRE: I won't take a lot of

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2 your time. Just a couple of points. Pretty much
3 what everybody said but everybody here is on the same
4 wave length. I wonder what it would be like if you
5 had a meeting like this in the Town of Newburgh, the
6 Town of New Windsor. In every town it would hold a
7 facility like this. The reaction would be exactly
8 the same. So don't think this is a microcosm of
9 angry people. It's not. It's huge.

10 FROM THE AUDIENCE: On the Town of
11 Newburgh.

12 MR. LAPIERRE: Okay.

13 FROM THE AUDIENCE: We feel the same
14 way.

15 MR. LAPIERRE: So my first experience
16 with the Public Service Commission -- forgive me, if
17 I get animated, I'm not a great speaker. It was
18 probably 10 years ago where in my younger life I
19 thought I was going to be able to afford an airplane.
20 And there was a meter on the building and there's 10
21 of them.

22 It was \$30 a month. The door went up
23 once. It's for reading it. Then, it went up to 50
24 bucks and they won this group of meters. It's 500
25 bucks for two seconds of work. All right. This is

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2 the way -- this is the way it happens. Okay. Now,
3 there's five of these in a row. The Public Service
4 Commission said to me, well, Mr. LaPierre, I see
5 you're upset because your bill has just about doubled
6 as part of your hanger rent.

7 I don't want you to be upset because
8 it's going up 20 percent in six months. We approved
9 it. Okay. So that puts me in -- in a very awkward
10 position about that. Everybody's getting tired of
11 feeling like a mouse in a box. Right. We're like
12 mice in a box. We run from one corner to the other
13 corner, right?

14 We turn off our lights, we turn down
15 our heat, we go to LED bulbs, we swap out our
16 appliances, every five years we get the most
17 efficient furnaces and we can. We -- we -- there's
18 no other place for these people to go. There's no
19 other place for them to go. What else can they do?

20 They're freezing as it is. It's --
21 it's a shame that somebody has to come here with a
22 baby to air this out. And like I say any town you go
23 to, you're going to hear the same thing. Okay. So
24 this isn't a microcosm of angry people. It's an --
25 an entire community and State that's angry.

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2 So let's go back in time really quick.

3 Again, I don't want to take your time. Back in the
4 good old days, 2018 to 2020, okay. Your cost per
5 kilowatt hour or my cost per kilowatt hour at that
6 time and an increase went from 19.3 to 19.5. Okay.
7 Small increase over 16 months 2 percent. Okay.

8 Then, from January of 2020 to November
9 of '21, it went from 19.5 percent to 24.1. Okay.
10 That's a 26 percent increase naturally. I -- I've
11 been spared all the bills that you people have been
12 getting beat up with, thank God it's -- it's been
13 fairly accurate, okay. I haven't been overbilled,
14 it's okay.

15 But let's not talk about that, let's
16 just talk about the actual cost. Okay. So from
17 November '21 to November '22, it went from 24.1 to
18 30.7. So in another year, it went up another 28
19 percent. So that's a 60 percent increase from
20 January '20 to November '22. All right. That's --
21 those are real figures.

22 Then, they threw you a bone because
23 they were having problems. They were having
24 problems, we weren't having problems. We're still
25 trying to save. So this September, my re -- most

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2 recent bill went to 0.27 -- 0.27.5 cents. So they
3 gave you back 10 percent for now. Because they're
4 asking for \$142 million.

5 So they're going to do you a favor.
6 They're going to throw the dog a bone. Now another
7 thing, it takes math to figure this out. Okay. I'm
8 not a mathematician, but let's face it. Is there
9 anywhere on your bill where it says what your usage
10 is per kilowatt hour? Or does it say you use this
11 much kilowatt hour and you spent 500 bucks.

12 All right. So you kind of have to
13 figure it out what your percentage is on each time.
14 So you have to basically take what you pay, divide it
15 by the amount of kilowatt hours you use to compute
16 it. When I go to a gas station and I'm going to buy
17 fuel or I'm going to shop for fuel, what do you look
18 at? A sign.

19 I don't have to divide anything. The
20 D.O.T. costs, the E.P.A. costs, the New York State
21 taxes, the local taxes, the road taxes, they're all
22 in there. That's what I'm paying a gallon. It's not
23 okay, well, this month you're going to pay this much,
24 that's what you're going to pay that. I don't have
25 to divide the number of taxes or add this or what the

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2 gallon is for usage.

3 It tells me what I'm going to pay.
4 It's a very simple process. Well, I think that
5 everybody else covered about everything else that I
6 said. I just wanted to make those points. And I
7 appreciate you for listening. Thank you for your
8 time.

9 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
10 speaker is Leilani Johnson.

11 MS. JOHNSON: I'm right here. Well, I
12 think everybody has said pretty much what I was
13 thinking. I just wanted to perhaps ask this panel
14 and everyone in the room like what really happens
15 after this? Because there's a lot of fiery talking,
16 everyone is very emotional and everyone is -- is --
17 is convicted in how they feel which is rightfully so.

18 And we have the two Central Hudson
19 gentlemen back there, looking quite smug. But like
20 as -- as citizens, we want to know what's going to
21 happen for real. And -- and not just a lot of -- of
22 lip service because this is -- this is very serious.
23 This is really life and death. Because if you can't
24 pay your bills and you can't -- you have nowhere to
25 like what happens? What's the recourse here? So I -

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2 - I'm on a limited or what do you call that kind of
3 budget?

4 A.L.J. MORENO: Fixed.

5 MS. JOHNSON: Fixed income, yes. I'm
6 disabled, you can't tell it because, hey, but I -- I
7 -- I am disabled and I -- I do have a fixed income.
8 So I am concerned about my bills. I am concerned
9 about budgeting. But when my budget for a necessity
10 to live is widely dis-proportioned then -- then how
11 do I go about structuring my life?

12 So my -- my question is like where do
13 we go from here? Where do we go from here? Because
14 if you live in the area, I don't know where you live,
15 obviously. But then, you're affected also. So think
16 about that.

17 A.L.J. MORENO: Uh-huh.

18 MS. JOHNSON: This -- this is real
19 life. That's all I have to say.

20 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Our next
21 speaker is Steven Pampinella. No. Okay. And then,
22 we'll turn to Christy Cushman.

23 MS. CUSHMAN: Thank you for having
24 this. I really appreciate being heard. I have seen
25 comments as most people. My biggest comment is, I

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2 don't understand my bill. I don't understand what
3 I'm paying, how much I'm paying for it per kilowatt
4 hour. I'll -- I don't understand any of it. There's
5 no reasonable explanation as to how to read the bill.

6 And then, the estimated readings, it -
7 - it kills me because you guys estimated me if I
8 would have read it myself and sent it to you, it was
9 more than what you estimated. So I had to be
10 thankful that I didn't have to pay a little bit more
11 that month. But my biggest concern is that I am
12 disabled.

13 And I live in a HUD housing. So my
14 rent is fantastically low. But it really doesn't
15 matter if my bills one month are \$98 and the very
16 next month they're \$646. It's crazy. I'm one
17 person. I live in an apartment, everything is
18 electric, it shouldn't be that high. So I -- I want
19 to really be able to understand my bill.

20 I want somebody to explain to me and
21 the biggest, biggest, biggest thing I have is
22 everybody who answers that phone, if you get a real
23 person, is nasty, and snide, and rude and that's just
24 not the way you're supposed to deal with customers.

25 FROM THE AUDIENCE: I don't know how

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2 many times you've been hung up on.

3 MS. CUSHMAN: Oh, yes. Or -- or told
4 really snide comments about how you should be paying
5 your bill. Well, I'm trying to pay my bill and it's
6 like gangster tactics. That's what I feel like it
7 is, gangster tactics. And if I don't pay my bill, I
8 don't get my services, I don't have lights, hot
9 water, nothing.

10 I'm afraid to turn my heat on this
11 year. I don't know what I'm going to get. I can't
12 afford \$600 bills. And I get HEAP, they eat up my
13 entire HEAP allotment. In a couple of months over, I
14 got a bill for \$300, then I got a bill for \$400 and
15 something, then I got a bill for \$500 and some. I
16 don't get it; I'm one person.

17 Nothing changes in my life. I don't
18 use the heat. I didn't turn it on last year because
19 I live upstairs. I get a great benefit from the man
20 downstairs because he likes it hot. So I don't have
21 to really turn the heat on, but I'm really afraid
22 what am I going to do. If it's too cold and I do
23 have to turn it on, how am I going to afford it? And
24 that's really all I've got to say.

25 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you very much.

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2 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Thank you.

3 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. I believe that
4 we have reached the end of the list of speakers. I'm
5 just going to go through because there was a few
6 folks who when I called them did not come to the
7 front. So perhaps it's because they changed their
8 mind or maybe they were just stepped out for a
9 moment.

10 Rochelle Parker, I believe you said
11 that you were going to submit in writing. Okay.
12 Thank you. Marina Kollkantias. I'm sorry, if I'm
13 getting your pronunciation wrong. And Steven
14 Pampinella. Okay. I'm not seeing anybody else. So
15 with that, I --.

16 MR. KENNEDY: Hold on.

17 A.L.J. MORENO: Yes, sir.

18 MR. KENNEDY: I got so fired up that I
19 skipped a really important thing that you guys told
20 me to do. I need to say it.

21 A.L.J. MORENO: Sure.

22 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Go ahead.

23 A.L.J. MORENO: Go right ahead. Can
24 you just --

25 MR. KENNEDY: Listen --.

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2 A.L.J. MORENO: -- remind for the
3 record, your name again?

4 MR. KENNEDY: Ed -- Edward Kennedy.

5 A.L.J. MORENO: Uh-huh.

6 MR. KENNEDY: I spoke earlier. The
7 answer they gave me when I contacted them instead of
8 filling out all the paperwork and stuff, they said if
9 you want help on your bill, you know, when they
10 messed up my bills and overcharged me and stuff, they
11 said take them to small claims court. That's --
12 that's what they said to do. As long as my bill was
13 -- as long as I was trying to get under \$5,000, I
14 could get that back.

15 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay.

16 MR. KENNEDY: So I don't know if
17 anybody else, that's what I have to do. Very obvious
18 why they're asking for a rate hike because I sent
19 nothing but letters in, you should be giving
20 everybody a discount. It's been said here over and
21 over again, tonight. They're asking for this rate
22 hike, so they can at least keep things the same way.

23 That's why they're asking for the rate
24 hike. If you look at the fortunes of this company,
25 every year they've given a bigger and bigger

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2 dividend. They're the biggest dividend giver in --
3 in the country of Canada. They have plenty of money.
4 They can take care of all this. They're asking for
5 this rate hike because we're asking for something
6 back.

7 And so they're trying to keep what
8 they're getting, so that they don't have to give
9 anything back. You should not give them a rate hike.
10 In fact, you should do what most of the people ask
11 for, a decrease and everybody should be given a
12 discount for the last couple, especially for the
13 mistakes that were made over and over again for the
14 last couple of years.

15 Since they made these changes, we
16 should be given at least a 10. You know, I called my
17 electric provider today and I told him this was going
18 on and how much and, you know what they said, Mr.
19 Kennedy, we're going to send you a \$235 check because
20 of what Central Hudson did, not because of what they
21 did.

22 To make up for Central Hudson's
23 mistakes, that's ridiculous. No way, no money to
24 them and they better be giving us a discount back.

25 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. Okay.

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2 That is the end of our, the folks that we have who
3 have registered to speak. I want to thank you all
4 very much for your time, and your attention, and your
5 comments, and for taking the time to be here until
6 the end to listen.

7 MR. JACOBSON: How long is the comment
8 period going?

9 A.L.J. MORENO: Pardon?

10 MR. JACOBSON: How long is the comment
11 period go, people want to --?

12 A.L.J. MORENO: People are free to
13 make comments throughout the entirety of the case up
14 until the time that the Commission will make a
15 decision. At this point, I know that there was a
16 question earlier about what the process is. Usually,
17 the rate case process by law is an 11-month process,
18 so that the Commission must make a decision within
19 that timeframe unless the utility grants additional
20 time essentially.

21 So at this point in time, we're sort
22 of in the beginning phase of the process. But -- so
23 as long as the case is open, you are very free to
24 make additional comments. If you would like to do so
25 you can do it online or by phone. That's all in the

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2 notice that there's a copy out on the table if you're
3 interested.

4 But thank you all for coming. Thank
5 you for your comments and thank you for taking the
6 time this evening.

7 FROM THE AUDIENCE: Thank you --.

8 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. We'll just
9 go off the record. Thank you.

10 (The hearing concluded at 8:11 p.m.)

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2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 I, DANIELLE CHRISTIAN, do hereby certify that the
4 foregoing was reported by me, in the cause, at the time
5 and place, as stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1
6 hereof; that the foregoing typewritten transcription
7 consisting of pages 1 through 103, is a true record of all
8 proceedings had at the hearing.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
10 subscribed my name, this the 25th day of October, 2023.

11
12 DANIELLE CHRISTIAN, Reporter
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