

1 9/20/2023 - 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 & 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 & Electric
12 Corporation for Gas Service.

13
14 PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARING

15 DATE: September 20, 2023 at 5:04 p.m.

16 VENUE: WebEx

17 BEFORE: ALJ ASHLEY MORENO

18 ALJ JAMES COSTELLO

19 ALSO PRESENT:

20 RORY CHRISTIAN, Commission Chairman

21

22

23

24 Reported by Anthony McClain

25

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2 (The hearing commenced at 5:04 p.m.)

3 THE REPORTER: Yes, Your Honor. We
4 are on the record.

5 A.L.J. COSTELLO: I call cases 23-E-
6 0418 and 23-G-0419 proceedings on motions of the
7 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules and
8 regulations of Central Hudson Gas and Electric
9 Corporation for electric and gas service. Good
10 evening and welcome. We are here today for a public
11 statement hearing that was noticed on August 18th,
12 2023. On July 31st, 2023, Central Hudson Gas and
13 Electric Corporation which I will refer to as Central
14 Hudson, filed amendments to its electric and gas
15 tariff schedules proposing to increase its annual
16 electric and gas delivery revenues effective July 1st
17 of 2024.

18 Central Hudson proposes to increase
19 its electric delivery revenues by approximately
20 \$139.5 million, which represents a 31.9 percent
21 increase in base delivery revenues or a 16.4 percent
22 increase in total revenues. And it proposes to
23 increase its natural gas delivery revenues by
24 approximately \$41.5 million which would be a 29.2
25 percent increase in base delivery revenues or a 19

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2 percent increase in total revenues. The actual bill
3 impacts of these proposed changes on any particular
4 customer class will vary based upon revenue
5 allocation and rate design. Under New York State
6 law, the Public Service Commission must consider a
7 utility's proposal and may adopt or reject it in
8 whole, or in part, or modify it. We are holding this
9 hearing so you can provide your comments on these
10 proposals for the Commission's consideration.

11 My name is James Costello. I am an
12 Administrative Law Judge for the Department of Public
13 Service. With me today is Administrative Law Judge
14 Ashley Moreno, also from the Department of Public
15 Service. And together we are responsible for
16 presiding over the hearings in these cases, and the
17 development of a complete record in these
18 proceedings. The Public Service Commission will
19 decide what Central Hudson's terms and conditions of
20 service will be. The Public Service Commission has
21 seven members. The Chairperson, Rory Christian, and
22 six Commissioners, Diane Burman, James S. Alesi,
23 Tracey Edwards, John Howard, David Valesky, and John
24 Maggiore. If you could just bear with me bear with
25 me one second, please.

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2 MS. LUCY: Okay. That's the end of
3 the ... for you but you just have to bring them up.

4 MS. LUCY: Excuse, Ms. Lucy, Your
5 Honor. Can we hold one second I just have to
6 communicate with my colleague because -- so he didn't
7 --.

8 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Sure.

9 MS. LUCY: Thank you. Actually, let
10 me check if is anybody in the Spanish line, so I can
11 talk with my -- so you can continue the -- the
12 hearing, Your Honor.

13 A.L.J. COSTELLO: This evening, we --
14 so we can continue, right?

15 MS. LUCY: Yes, Your Honor.

16 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. This evening
17 we have Chair Christian with us, and we -- I'd like
18 to know Chair Christian, would you like to address
19 the participants?

20 CHAIR CHRISTIAN: Thank you Judge
21 Costello. Thank you, Judge Moreno. Good evening
22 everyone. I want to thank you for taking the time
23 out of your day to join this call and to be part of
24 this process that we've established in determining
25 the rates that Central Hudson can charge for the

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2 service that they provide. We offer this as a part
3 of a -- a normal part of our efforts to get feedback
4 from the general population. And as I believe Judge
5 Costello stated earlier, we take this information
6 you've provided and yielded from this discussion in
7 consideration when making determinations. So, we're
8 here to listen. And we want to receive your feedback
9 and looking forward to help your discussion this
10 evening. Thank you.

11 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you, Chair
12 Christian. As I stated earlier, the purpose of our
13 hearing this evening is to provide you with an
14 opportunity to tell the Commission your thoughts on
15 Central Hudson's rate proposals. The statements you
16 make today will become part of the case record. We
17 have a court reporter joining us, who will prepare a
18 transcript of the hearing, which will be included in
19 the official record of this proceeding, so that your
20 comments can be considered by the members of the
21 Commission. When it is ready, the transcript will be
22 made available for view on Department of Public
23 Service's website. This hearing is not an
24 evidentiary hearing nor is it a question answer
25 session. It is a forum to hear comments from you.

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2 And it's not the only opportunity for you to make a
3 comment.

4 I'd ask you to go to slide 5. Esmin,
5 please advance to slide 5. Thank you. If you did
6 not register to speak in today's hearing but you
7 would like your views included in the record, there
8 are of a variety of other ways to comment that were
9 listed in the public notice for today's event. And
10 for those of you who are participating
11 electronically, those ways are also listed on the --
12 on your screen, in both English and Spanish. In
13 brief, you can do so by submitting comments on the
14 Department of Public Service's website, by email, by
15 regular mail, or by telephone. Regardless of how the
16 comments are submitted, they will be given equal
17 consideration. Comments may be submitted and will be
18 considered throughout the pendency of this
19 proceeding.

20 If you have registered to make a
21 statement, we ask that you please summarize lengthy
22 written statements orally and submit the full written
23 statement by email or mail. Because of the number of
24 people who have registered to speak, we ask that you
25 try to stay within a three-minute time limit for your

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2 oral comments today. There are people who registered
3 and are participating electronically, and there are
4 people who are participating by telephone. In either
5 case, you should only have audio input from one
6 device. Otherwise, you may experience problems with
7 feedback.

8 I will call the persons that have
9 registered one by one to speak. If someone is not
10 available when I call them, I will continue with the
11 next person and will come back to those people who
12 are not available at the end. We will start by
13 calling on the members of the public who have
14 registered to speak. And then, we'll move to
15 individuals who have registered to speak, that are
16 parties to the proceedings. As parties, you have
17 greater privileges and opportunities to build the
18 record in this proceeding. And therefore, we ask
19 that you summarize any lengthy comments and submit
20 them in writing.

21 For telephone participants, making
22 comments in English, when I call out your name, I
23 will ask you to hit star three on your phone so that
24 we can recognize you and unmute your line. It may
25 take us a little while to locate you to do that. And

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2 that the court reporter can acc -- accurately capture
3 your statement from the record. And again, we -- we
4 emphasize that you speak slowly and that's also
5 important so that the interpreters can interpret your
6 comments. When you are starting with your comment,
7 please state your name and if you are speaking on
8 behalf of an organization, the name of the
9 organization, and then once we confirm that we can
10 hear you, you can proceed to make your comments. At
11 this point, I'm going to ask one of the interpreters
12 to get back on WebEx just to tran -- interpret this
13 statement into Spanish form. And just let me know
14 when you're on the line. Ms. Lucy?

15 MS. LUCY: I'm on the line, Your
16 Honor.

17 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you.
18 For people who want to listen or provide comments in
19 Spanish.

20 MS. LUCY: Sorry. I apologize, Your
21 Honor.

22 A.L.J. COSTELLO: That's okay. So I'm
23 going to start over. For people who want to listen
24 or provide comments in Spanish, we have a separate
25 line set up for that purpose. The phone number is

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2 518-549-0500. And the access number or access code
3 is 958-406-32.

4 (Ms. Lucy made a statement in Spanish)

5 MS. LUCY: Okay.

6 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Please put
7 your line on mute upon entry in the Spanish
8 interpretation line. And when your name is called
9 you can unmute yourself and tell the interpreters
10 that you will be giving a statement. They will
11 notify us that you are on the line and giving a
12 statement and they will then proceed -- you'll
13 proceed to give your statement and they will proceed
14 to interpret it for the record.

15 MS. LUCY: Okay.

16 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you.

17 MS. LUCY: Okay.

18 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you.

19 Okay. So now I'm going to turn to our first speaker
20 who is Patricia Grossman who is participating
21 electronically. Just give us a moment to unmute your
22 line. Okay. It looks like you have -- your line has
23 been unmuted. You can proceed to give your
24 statement.

25 MS. GROSSMAN: Yes. Thank you. I'm

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2 with Ulster Immigrant Defense Network and we support
3 and educate the immigrants in the area in various
4 ways. We also have a utility program to help people
5 particularly during the COVID when they could not pay
6 their -- their bills. But, you know, despite the
7 Spanish interpretation of this meeting, which I
8 appreciate, I have a strenuous objection to the
9 proposed rate hike, is the completely inadequate
10 service that Central Hudson offers its immigrant
11 customers. To our knowledge is when -- when our, you
12 know, the people we represent in this, those that are
13 not available in multiple languages. As many times
14 it is not those who call Central Hudson are not
15 connected to a Spanish speaker despite its voicemail
16 offering this option. When we have tried to get some
17 relief for immigrants who fall below the poverty
18 line, Central Hudson has repeatedly advised that they
19 should sign up for HEAP. The majority of immigrants
20 don't qualify for HEAP. And Central Hudson offers no
21 alternative to help them. Should the proposed
22 Central Hudson outrageous rate hike go into effect,
23 then it will, as it has in the past, for some
24 immigrants to choose between adequate food and
25 electricity, gas, including for heat during the

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2 winter.

3 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Are you still
4 providing a statement? We -- we can no longer hear
5 you.

6 MS. GROSSMAN: Oh no, I'm sorry, I'm
7 not. That is the end of my statement.

8 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you
9 very much. We'll go on to our next speaker who is
10 Wren Kingsley. And if you are participating by
11 telephone, please hit star three so that we can
12 identify you and unmute your line. And if you are
13 participating on the Spanish interpretation line,
14 please unmute your line and I'll let the interpreters
15 know that you wish to give a statement. Okay. I'm
16 not seeing any indication of a speaker with that
17 name. So I'm going to go on to Vivienne Knouse-
18 Frenzer. I believe you are participating
19 electronically. Just give us a moment to unmute your
20 line.

21 MS. FRENZER: Hello. Thank you for
22 having me here. My name is Vivienne Knouse-Frenzer.
23 I am a student at SUNY, New Paltz. I'm here to
24 oppose the hikes and rates for Hudson Valley Energy.
25 Many students that I know that go to both New Paltz

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2 and surrounding schools like Vassar, already have
3 major issues paying their bills along with their
4 increased rent. As you know, inflation has gone up
5 but wages have not. And this has caused many
6 students to not be able to afford housing off campus.
7 As well as that, so room and board at colleges and
8 tuition have also been going up. And so Hudson
9 Valley, you know, adding heat to that, you know, oil
10 to that flame and you know, New Paltz, the town, it
11 relies heavily on the college. It's a very big, you
12 know, presence when it comes to the culture and the
13 people in this town and it means a lot to them. And
14 the decrease of, you know, many students being able
15 to afford that is taking a hit on this town and many
16 surrounding areas. I know friends who personally
17 have unable to continue their education at New Paltz
18 because the bills around are becoming so high. And
19 so, yeah, you know -- you know, Hudson Energy should
20 not only not increase their rates but decrease them
21 for the sake of these communities and towns that they
22 claim to be helping. If Hudson Valley really wanted
23 to help out New Paltz, Poughkeepsie, and other areas,
24 they would decrease their rates and decrease their
25 profits to make sure that the most amount of people,

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2 especially college students, have the opportunity to
3 fully experience this community. And, you know, have
4 everything offered to them as it can to them. And
5 this is my first public hearing so thank you for
6 bearing with me and thank you so much for letting me
7 speak.

8 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you for your
9 comments. Our next speaker is Kayla Cleary. If you
10 are calling in, please hit star three. And I just
11 want to remind everyone, when you're giving your
12 comments, just to please try to speak slowly because
13 we are having the comments interpreted into Spanish
14 and the interpreters have to have enough time to do
15 the interpretation between your statement and their
16 interpretation. So with that, Kayla Cleary, again
17 star three, if you are calling in. And if you are on
18 the Spanish interpretation line, please let the
19 interpreters know that you're there to give a
20 statement. Okay. I'm going to move on to Joan Eck -
21 - Joan Eck. Again, if you are participating by
22 telephone, hit star three. And if you are on the
23 Spanish interpretation line, notify the interpreters
24 that you are ready to give a statement. Okay.

25 Moving on to Lillyanna Maloney. I

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2 believe you are participating -- yeah, there you are.
3 And just give us a moment to unmute your line. Okay.
4 It looks like you've --

5 MS. MALONEY: Hello.

6 A.L.J. COSTELLO: -- your line has
7 been unmuted.

8 MS. MALONEY: All right. Hello. My
9 name is Lillyanna Maloney. Thank you for the
10 opportunity to speak. I have been a resident of
11 Poughkeepsie for just over six years now as well as a
12 Central Hudson customer. I'm here today because I
13 want to -- in the strongest possible terms urge the
14 Public Service Commission to reject in whole Central
15 Hudson's request for a rate increase. Central Hudson
16 has been buried in controversies for being unable to
17 perform the basic necessary functions of their
18 business. They are unable to correctly bill
19 customers, an extremely common occurrence that I have
20 been complaining about for my neighbors for months on
21 end and something I have directly experienced. In
22 this last month, Central Hudson charged me double
23 what I have been charged to prior. That month was
24 the hottest month in recorded history in which I was
25 consistently using the air conditioner as were we

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2 all. This last month has been significantly cooler
3 and as result I have used my air conditioner and
4 other appliances less and consumed way less
5 electricity and yet I was charged twice as much.
6 With any attempt to contacting Central Hudson being
7 pointless as I was never able to get into contact and
8 learn why this huge disparity was going on. This
9 situation exemplifies the sort of behavior Central
10 Hudson has been engaging in, negligent and bordering
11 on malicious lack of attention that they give to
12 their customers and their needs. A reckless
13 disregard for ensuring that their billing is even
14 accurate or even make sense. Central Hudson has been
15 nothing but misleading and opaque during their
16 communications with customers in this submission.
17 They are requesting this rate increase, insisting
18 that they need it to continue to run their business
19 profitably at a time that they admit they are making
20 record profits in terms of hundreds of millions of
21 dollars. This -- while this community is already
22 unable to meet over \$125 million dollars in payments
23 to Central Hudson. At such a time for our country
24 and our State where there so many struggling to make
25 ends meet, we cannot be rewarding a negligent and

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2 very reckless company which cannot even accurately
3 bill its customers or allow them to dispute the
4 obviously incorrect charges in anywhere close to a
5 timely manner, something that would never be
6 tolerated for virtually any other business.

7 The actions of Central Hudson speak
8 volumes and far louder than their empty words. They
9 view our communities as simply resources to exploit
10 the people to serve. Once again, in the strongest
11 possible terms, do not give them the rate hike. The
12 livelihoods of your constituents rely on you making
13 the right choice in choosing our great State and its
14 people over the pockets of an already extremely
15 profitable yet extremely negligent and reckless
16 company that siphons its profits out of our State to
17 deploy in a multi-national corporation that owns it.
18 Please reject in whole the rate hike for Central
19 Hudson that has done absolutely nothing to conserve.
20 Thank you for your time.

21 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you. Our next
22 speaker will be Nancy Pedraza- Negrón. And just give
23 us a moment. Okay. It looks like you're line has
24 been unmuted.

25 MS. PEDRAZA-NEGRÓN: Good evening and

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2 thank you for creating this much needed forum for the
3 Central Hudson customer. I'm a five-year customer of
4 Central Hudson and I am against their rate hike. My
5 story is long but I will try to be as brief and get
6 to the point as quickly as I can. I'm actually here
7 for -- just to make a desperate attempt to get help
8 with an ongoing problem that I have with my bill.
9 And I've been waiting for Central Hudson to resolve
10 as promised. Since January, they have been sending
11 me a bill with a negative balance. And before I go
12 on, I just want to make clear that I am a good
13 standing -- I am in good standing customer. And it -
14 - when it comes to paying my bills and I am in no way
15 trying to get anything for free. The first three
16 months, I didn't think anything was wrong since I
17 hadn't got a notification stating that Central Hudson
18 was in the process of reimbursing and correcting
19 customer's bills that had errors to due to the old
20 billing. However, when I continued to get those with
21 a negative balance, with a notation saying, do not
22 pay this amount, it didn't sit right. So I made
23 numerous calls and was told each and every time that
24 my bill was correct. No one bothered to look at my
25 account. After months of calling and speaking to

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2 customer service, because they wouldn't put a
3 supervisor through for me on -- even -- even after I
4 asked for one. I finally called one day and got a
5 customer rep who was willing to go the extra mile.
6 And she told me there was something not right but she
7 couldn't figure it out. So she was going to put a
8 ticket in and have Central Office figure it out. I
9 never received a call back. What I received -- what
10 I received was 12 different bills in a matter of two
11 days one more complicated than the other. So I
12 called again and I was told that I had been a
13 customer of American Power and Gas. And once I
14 cancelled my account with them, Central Hudson never
15 switched my account back. I received a \$3,700 bill
16 from Central Hudson and my account is still not
17 correct. I have no intentions of paying that amount.
18 You know, the customer should not be penalized for
19 Central Hudson's shortcomings. And there are a lot
20 more details that I left out for the sake of time. I
21 thank you for listening. But I am opposed of this
22 rate hike.

23 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you.
24 Please, just hold on one second I'm going to ask our
25 Office of Consumer Services staff if they can switch

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2 to slide 9. And if you look on -- on the screen in
3 front you, you can see that the Department of Public
4 Service has a consumer assistance helpline, for
5 complaints and inquire -- inquiries and they might be
6 able to help you. The number for people that don't
7 have -- are participating electronically, is 1-800-
8 342-3377. And that is staffed from eight thirty a.m.
9 to four p.m., Monday through Friday. Again it's 1-
10 800-342-3377. So, you know -- you know, you can give
11 them a call if you have -- with your complaints or if
12 you want assistance with that.

13 MS. PEDRAZA-NEGRON: Thank you very
14 much, appreciate it, for you time.

15 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you for
16 your comment. Let's see. Our next speaker is Rodney
17 Paterson. And if you are participating by telephone,
18 please hit star three so we can recognize you and
19 then unmute your line. Let's see. Okay. And I'm
20 not seeing anyone. I'm going to move on to Megan
21 Zykler. Megan Zykler and again if you are
22 participating by telephone, may I ask that you hit
23 star three so we can identify you. Okay. I'm going
24 to move on to John Shumaker. John Shumaker who's
25 participating electronically. Just give us a moment

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2 to unmute your line. Okay. It looks like your line
3 has been unmuted.

4 MR. SHUMAKER: Thank you. My name is
5 John Shumaker. My pronouns are he/him and I'm
6 resident of Sardis, New York. And I'm one of the co-
7 chairs of the Mid-Hudson Valley Democratic Socialist
8 of America's Eco-socialism Working Group. I'm here
9 today to state what should already be clear to the
10 Public Service Commission. Central Hudson does not -
11 -

12 MS. LUCY: Excuse the -- excuse the
13 interpreter, Your Honor. I'm not sure if you can
14 please slow the speed of the speech, sir. I
15 appreciate it. Thank you.

16 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you.
17 Yes, please just slow down. Again, we're having this
18 interpreted into Spanish.

19 MR. SHUMAKER: Yeah, I'll -- I'll --
20 yeah I can -- I can slow down. I'm here today to
21 state what should already be clear to the Public
22 Service Commission. Central Hudson should not
23 receive a rate increase. Every year Central Hudson
24 rakes in millions of dollars in guaranteed profit on
25 the backs of ratepayers. Let that sink in for a

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2 second. What industry have you heard of where they
3 are guaranteed to make a profit yet they have the
4 audacity to ask for a rate increase? How many
5 millions of our dollars was squandered on a botched
6 billing system that caused thousands of customers
7 unduly anxiety and frustration and still has
8 unresolved issues as we just heard? Why should we be
9 paying for their gross negligence? Why should
10 corporations keep being rewarded for their sheer
11 incompetence? Let's make another thing abundantly
12 clear. The inflation does not affect a mega
13 corporation like Fortis the same way it affects the
14 everyday wage earner. While the working class
15 continues to fall behind, Fortis has made record
16 profits despite inflation. Where has that money
17 gone? And is 96 million in customer errors not
18 evidence enough that we cannot afford to keep up with
19 expensive utility bills. Increasing rates for an
20 essential public service that's already unaffordable
21 will only have disastrous results. At this rate,
22 Central Hudson will bankrupt itself as they will have
23 no customers left. If Central Hudson needs to cover
24 its deficiencies then it should be looking to Fortis
25 and looking to its shareholders, not us. The C.E.O.

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2 that earns over 5 million a year seems like they
3 might be able to figure this out, isn't that why he's
4 paid the big bucks? Let me reiterate. The Public
5 Service Commission should not allow Central Hudson to
6 charge a single cent more. In fact, we should be
7 discussing a rate decrease. It's time to end
8 guarantees for billion dollar corporations, and focus
9 on what we, the ratepayers so desperately need,
10 guaranteed affordable renewable energy. Thank you
11 for your time.

12 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you for your
13 comment. Our next speaker will be Jess Mullen who is
14 participating electronically. Just give us a moment.
15 Can I ask our -- yes.

16 MS. MULLEN: Hello.

17 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Ms. Mullen, we could
18 hear you now.

19 MS. MULLEN: Oh, great. Thank you.
20 Thank you. I'm Jess Mullen. I'm Executive Director
21 of Communities for Local Power, formally known as
22 Citizens for Local Power or C.L.P. C.L.P. opposes
23 any rate case for electric and gas service. Our
24 nonprofit's office located in midtown Kingston was
25 only sporadically used throughout the pandemic with

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2 us going months without utilizing or heating the
3 space, yet we were charged hundreds of dollars each
4 month by Central Hudson for a -- for our minimal
5 usage. Central Hudson was auto paid and there's no
6 rhyme or reason to the amounts we were charged which
7 varied greatly from month to month. The billing
8 issues have not been fixed. And there are more
9 problems like ours than Central Hudson -- Hudson
10 would like to admit. They can't even admit it
11 because they don't really know since there's no
12 tracking happening for those who are overcharged and
13 didn't realize it, like us. This rate increase will
14 have a substantial material impact on low and
15 moderate-income homes within our community especially
16 populations who are the most vulnerable. We have
17 firsthand experience of advocating for and working
18 with these populations so we know from firsthand
19 accounts that families and households will be
20 negatively impacted by this rate increase. The
21 Medical-Legal Partnership for Children reports that
22 utilities related debt, shut offs, inefficient
23 heating systems, antiquated appliances, and extreme
24 home temperatures have significant impact -- health
25 impacts including respiratory illness, pneumonia,

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2 increased fire risk, bronchitis, hunger -- hunger,
3 and stress among others. Over burdening taxpayers
4 further will have a multifaceted negative
5 ramifications on the future of all New Yorkers. A
6 proposed 30 to \$60 a month increase for households
7 will force people to choose between feeding their
8 families or keeping the lights on. According to a
9 report by the Children's Sentinel Nutrition
10 Assessment Program, CSNAP commissioned by the Joint
11 Center for Political and Economic Studies Health
12 Policy Institute has said, any change in the cost of
13 utilities can place severe strains on tight household
14 budgets. Even if bills go unpaid, they haunt
15 families throughout the year. Families' efforts to
16 meet increased heating or cooling cost during cold or
17 hot months often necessitate very difficult tradeoffs
18 like those involved in heat or eat, or cool or eat.
19 Low-income families with rising energy burdens
20 frequently attempt to cover energy expenses by
21 decreasing spending on food and healthcare. In 2016,
22 the Public Service Commission set a target that low
23 income New Yorkers should pay no more than six
24 percent of their income towards energy bills. That
25 goal remains far from reality as related proceedings

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2 by the P.S.C. continue to demonstrate, there are many
3 hundreds of thousands of customers who are already
4 unable to afford the cost of electric and gas. As of
5 June 2023, as reported by the status report of the
6 energy affordability -- Energy Affordability Policy
7 Working Group, more than 1.4 million residential
8 customers were more than 60 days behind on their
9 bills and owed upwards of 1.4 billion dollars. While
10 143 non-residential customers were more than 60 days
11 behind on their bills and owed 627 million dollars.
12 There may be no limit to the amount -- to the amounts
13 utilities like Central Hudson Fortis can charge their
14 customers. But there is clearly a limit to what this
15 monopoly market can bear. This -- this is a
16 disproportionate request and a company -- and the
17 fact that the company is the focus of three open
18 investigations including one for unscrupulous and
19 inaccurate -- inaccurate billing practices should
20 ring alarm bells for the State. In 2020, Central
21 Hudson asked for increases of \$7.76 for electric.
22 The P.S.A. -- P.S.C. instead approved -- approved a
23 three-year plan in which residential customers paid
24 \$.33 less per month for electricity during the first
25 year and monthly increases of \$1.72 and \$1.82 for the

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2 final two years. The proposed increase now in
3 comparison with the last increase is 287 percent
4 greater for the delivery of electric -- of
5 electricity. Central Hudson's track record in
6 providing the public with electric and their
7 inability to fulfill the terms of the past agreements
8 they have made need to be taken into consideration
9 when determining if any increase or for that matter a
10 decrease is warranted. Thank you so much for the
11 P.S.C. for holding these hearings. Good night.

12 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you for your
13 comment. I called out a few people earlier who were
14 signed up to make comments and they were not
15 available at the time. So, I'm going to go through
16 and call their names again. If they are
17 participating by telephone, you would hit star three
18 so that we can identify you. If you are on the
19 Spanish interpretation line, you would unmute your
20 phone and let the interpreters know that you wish to
21 give a statement. So, Wren Kingsley. Wren Kingsley?
22 The next person is Kayla Cleary. We're now to Joan
23 Eck. I'm not seeing anyone. And the last person is
24 Rodney Paterson. I'm sorry. We have one other
25 person. Megan Deichler. Megan Deichler? Okay. I'm

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2 to give their statement in Spanish.

3 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you.
4 All right, Ms. Kailas, I just want to confirm that --
5 that you also don't see anybody that -- that's
6 indicating they want to give a statement?

7 MS. KAILAS: No, Your Honor. I see no
8 raised hand.

9 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you.
10 So with that I want to remind members of the public,
11 and let me just ask if you can put slide number 10
12 up. And I want to remind members of the public that
13 they may submit public comments throughout these
14 proceedings by the other means described earlier.
15 And in the notice of public statement hearing issued
16 on August 18, 2023. And also, I'm sorry it's -- the
17 -- the statement and other ways to comment, sorry
18 about that. And if you're participating
19 electronically, you can see on -- on your screen the
20 other ways to comment. We will be holding additional
21 in-person public statement hearings in the future.
22 And the notice with the locations, states, and times
23 will be issued in the near future. And with that,
24 Judge Moreno and I want to thank all of the
25 participants this evening. And we also want to thank

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2 Chair Christian for being present. And our Consumer
3 Services Office for administering this session, our
4 court reporter, as well as our interpreters. And
5 with that, we would say good evening and we are off
6 the record.

7 THE REPORTER: We are off the record,
8 Your Honor.

9 (Off-the-record)

10 (The hearing concluded at 5:42 p.m.)

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2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 I, ANTHONY MCCLAIN, do hereby certify that the foregoing
4 was reported by me, in the cause, at the time and place,
5 as stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1 hereof; that
6 the foregoing typewritten transcription consisting of
7 pages 1 through 30, is a true record of all proceedings
8 had at the hearing.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
10 subscribed my name, this the 27th day of September, 2023.

11

12 ANTHONY MCCLAIN, Reporter

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