

1 11/14/2023 - Brooklyn Union & KeySpan Gas - 23-G-0225/0226

2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

4 CASE 23-G-0225 - Proceeding on Motion of the
5 Commission as to the Rates, Charges, Rules and
6 Regulations of The Brooklyn Union Gas Company
7 d/b/a National Grid NY for Gas Service.

8
9 CASE 23-G-0226 - Proceeding on Motion of the
10 Commission as to the Rates, Charges, Rules and
11 Regulations of KeySpan Gas East Corporation d/b/
12 a National Grid for Gas Service.
13

14 PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARING

15 DATE: November 14, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

16 LOCATION: Brooklyn Central Library
17 The Dweck Center
18 11 Grand Army Place
19 Brooklyn, New York 11238

20 BEFORE: ALJ DAKIN LECAKES

21 ALJ MAUREEN LEARY
22

23
24 Reported by Danielle Christian
25

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2 (The hearing commenced at 5:30 p.m.)

3 A.L.J. LEARY: It's -- it's really
4 great to see so many people here participating in a
5 proceeding like this. And I'm sure there's a lot of
6 emotion here. I'm Judge Leary, as Judge Lecakes told
7 you, many of you know me because I did the last rate
8 case and I did the Greenpoint vaporizer case, which
9 wasn't actually a case.

10 I am going to ask everyone right now
11 to turn off your cell phones. That's probably the
12 fifth or sixth time I've heard somebody's alarm or
13 cell phone or email come in. So would you, you know,
14 give the -- the room that courtesy? Just turn off
15 your cell phone and keep an eye on it, so you don't
16 miss a -- a call from your babysitter.

17 This is a public statement hearing.
18 And it was noticed by the Secretary to the Public
19 Service Commission on October 16th, 2023. Copies of
20 that notice are available in English and Spanish at
21 the registration desk. Just see the folks out there.
22 I'm an Administrative Law Judge as Judge Lecakes says
23 and I'm working with another judge.

24 They're really three of us in the mix
25 here, Judge Costello, who is in Jamaica Queens right

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2 now, doing a public statement hearing up there.

3 We're responsible for presiding over the multitude of
4 things that happen in this proceeding. And I
5 actually forgot to ask, Ms. Christian, are we on the
6 record? I'm sorry. My -- my bad.

7 THE REPORTER: Uh-huh.

8 A.L.J. LEARY: Let me just call the
9 case. So we have that. I call case 23-G-0225,
10 Proceeding on Motion of the Commission as to the
11 Rates, Charges, Rules and Regulations for the
12 Brooklyn Union Gas Company, doing business as
13 National Grid New York for Gas Service.

14 And case 23-G-0226, Proceeding on
15 Motion of the Commission as to the Rates, Charges,
16 Rules and Regulations of KeySpan Gas East
17 Corporation, doing business as National Grid, again
18 for Gas Service.

19 So a couple things I wanted to focus
20 your attention on, one of which is the timeline that
21 was -- that was up on the PowerPoint presentation.
22 So we're having public statement hearings tonight.
23 And then, there's this gap of -- of time between now
24 and when rates actually go into effect.

25 During that period of time, there's a

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2 lot of people, some of whom are in this room, who are
3 working with the Company, with Department of Public
4 Service staff, and other parties to hammer out an
5 agreement that has the potential to reduce the -- the
6 rate impact of this filing over a period of generally
7 three years or so.

8 I'll get into a little bit more detail
9 about that later. As some of you know, we had -- and
10 Mr. Decicco said we held virtual public statement
11 hearings in August. If you testified at or provided
12 a public statement at that hearing, your statement is
13 on the record. You do not need to speak this evening
14 to say the same thing.

15 In fact, we urge you not to because we
16 have a lot of people who have registered to speak,
17 many of whom did not attend the August virtual public
18 statement hearing. So please be courteous to the
19 other folks in the room. If you've already had your
20 chance to provide a comment and unless you're saying
21 something absolutely new, which I -- I don't know but
22 I tend to doubt, there is no need to comment tonight.

23 Please, you know, take -- take a back
24 seat for the time being. We'll try to get to
25 everyone tonight but the reason we had to start at

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2 five o'clock is because the library needs us to be
3 out of here by 7:45. So I have to ask you all to
4 impose on yourselves, and I will impose on you, a
5 three-minute time limit.

6 If you have lengthier comments, please
7 provide them to the Secretary in writing. You can
8 give them to me this evening and I will get them to
9 the Secretary. But please be conscious that there
10 are lots and lots of people that want to speak.

11 This public statement hearing is not a
12 question and answer session. It is all about
13 listening to you. That's what we're here for and
14 what the Company is here for. There are a number of
15 parties that are not in the room. They advanced
16 positions that in some cases are very very different
17 than the Company's.

18 Just remember, there's a lot of sides
19 to this story and a lot of people trying to create
20 the best result here. So what does the company want?
21 I just want to stress, Mr. Decicco made it pretty
22 clear that they're looking to increase by April 1,
23 their revenues to \$414 million which represents a 28
24 percent increase in base delivery revenues or a 17
25 percent increase in total revenues that would be

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2 reflected on utility bills in this service territory
3 for KEDNY and KEDLI is, I think a long -- mostly Long
4 Island service territory.

5 So these two cases are brought
6 together. I called two numbers. Keep in mind those
7 two numbers because if you want to get into our
8 system, our electronic database in the Department of
9 Public Service, you're going to need those numbers to
10 get in and look at -- for information in the case.

11 Again, all of that information is out
12 at the registration table. So the actual bill
13 impacts associated with the proposal by the companies
14 is going to vary on any particular customer class.
15 Now, many of you are probably residential customers.
16 You'll have a certain impact.

17 And within that impact as a
18 residential customer, if you have gas heat, it's
19 going to be a different impact from someone who's
20 just cooking with natural gas. So keep that in mind
21 when you're trying to sort of say what is the impact
22 on me?

23 It's not necessarily something that we
24 can say Mr. Decicco or I -- no one can say what that
25 impact is actually going to be. So there are

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2 customer -- residential customer classes, there are
3 commercial customer classes, so if you own a
4 business, there are industrial classes that if you
5 own a big business, so it's all done by classes.

6 Different classes pay different rates
7 or different shares, I should say. So what's our
8 role, the Administrative Law Judges? Really, it
9 comes down to creating a complete record. That's
10 what we're after. And your comments tonight are all
11 about being a part of that record.

12 That's why they're important because
13 the Commission will consider your comments just like
14 it does all the other evidence in the case. Your
15 comments tonight will be trans -- are being
16 transcribed. There'll be a written transcript. It
17 will be posted to our website and you will be able to
18 read those comments, as will the Commission.

19 They will consider those comments when
20 making a decision here. So what else is included in
21 the record in addition to your comments? It's all
22 about different testimony by experts and different
23 documentary evidence that is associated with that
24 testimony.

25 They're a part of the record in

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2 addition to your comments. So one of the things that
3 Mr. Decicco touched on and I want to just put a finer
4 point on it, is that, many of these rate case
5 filings, they result in a negotiated settlement that
6 generally covers a three-year term.

7 And -- and the reason that that's
8 beneficial is because the rate impacts get sorted out
9 over three years rather than just one year. And so
10 the bill impacts potentially are less over that
11 three-year term. That's why a negotiated settlement
12 is a positive thing. Those settlements are called
13 joint proposals.

14 If you see on our website a joint
15 proposal, that's the document you're going to want to
16 read to see what -- what the settlement among the
17 parties is. Not everybody signs it. Sometimes
18 everybody signs it but that's the document that is --
19 that we call the negotiated settlement.

20 So let me just talk about the
21 Commission's role for a moment. This is really
22 important because the Commission rather than us, is
23 really the ultimate decisionmaker on what happens in
24 this proceeding. We are responsible for making
25 recommendations after a review of the record.

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2 And I'm not saying that, you know,
3 that -- that doesn't mean a lot. It does. But it
4 all goes into the mix because the Commission can take
5 our recommendations, toss some, adopt some. They can
6 take the settlement, the joint proposal, say no or
7 yes, this is good thing or let's revise this. So
8 they have a lot of discretion in the process.

9 And it is a really -- it's a really
10 good and thorough process. So we have six
11 Commissioners now, we previously had seven. our
12 Chair is Rory Christian. And the other Commissioners
13 are Diane Burman, James Alesi, John Howard, David
14 Valesky and John Maggiore. They meet and discuss the
15 record and come up with their decision. That's the
16 process.

17 So let's talk about the process this
18 evening because we have lots of people. I am going
19 to call you as you have signed up. And again, this
20 is not question and answer session. This is just to
21 hear you. Please would all of you be respectful of
22 anyone who is up here speaking? It's very important
23 that we not have disruption and so forth.

24 As I mentioned, the court reporter
25 really needs you to come up, spell -- state your

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2 name, spell your last name and then speak fairly
3 clearly and somewhat more slowly than you otherwise
4 might, so that your comments can be taken with
5 accuracy and put into the record. This is not an
6 evidentiary hearing.

7 If you want to provide me with your
8 comments, I will see that they will be posted as.
9 But evidence and those types of things are not for
10 this session here. I want to stress that this is not
11 the only opportunity to comment. The notice that the
12 Secretary issued provides you the other ways. You
13 can call up, you can write and send it by snail mail.

14 You can post it to the Department's
15 website. You can send it by email to the Secretary.
16 So there are a couple of other things that you can do
17 besides standing up here and providing a comment that
18 is being transcribed. If you're shy or something
19 occurs to you later tonight or tomorrow, you -- you
20 absolutely have the opportunity to comment later.

21 And those comments will be considered
22 throughout the proceeding. So I'm going to -- oh, if
23 anybody has not completed a registration card but
24 wants to come up and make a statement, please return
25 to the registration table outside of the room.

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2 Complete a card and our outreach folks will bring it
3 in and you'll get in the queue.

4 I'm going to call two people. The
5 first one's going to come up to give comment and the
6 next one I'm going to call is "on deck," to use a
7 sports term. They should be ready, probably come sit
8 up here, so we save time. You will be next, so
9 that's my protocol.

10 And again, keep any lengthy statements
11 as short as possible because we're going to hold you
12 to a three-minute limit. And I'll just ask you very
13 nicely to wrap up when that three minutes is up. So
14 our first -- where's Ms. Spindelma?

15 So you spoke at the virtual public
16 statement hearing. Would you mind stepping aside for
17 the time being? I know you were first but I really -
18 - unless you're saying something new, I'd really
19 rather get to people who have not had the
20 opportunity.

21 MS. SPINDELMAN: I'm -- I'm happy to
22 let other people go before me but I still would like
23 to deliver my statements tonight. There are
24 different points of view and you have never heard
25 them before.

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2 A.L.J. LEARY: Okay.

3 MS. SPINDELMAN: But I will wait to
4 allow everybody's statements.

5 A.L.J. LEARY: Okay. Good. Fair
6 enough. Thank you. All right. So I'm just going to
7 skip you for the time being. Paul Scariano, come on
8 up and Barbara Hertel. Ms. Hertel, were you also at
9 the virtual? Your name sounds -- where is Ms.
10 Hertel? Come on up.

11 MS. HERTEL: Hi.

12 A.L.J. LECAKES: Hello.

13 MR. SCARIANO: Good evening. My name
14 is Paul Scariano, S-C-A-R-I-A-N-O. And I am the
15 Chair of the Board of Cristo Rey Brooklyn High
16 School. We are part of a national network of schools
17 that serve predominantly low-income students
18 including in East Harlem and here in Brooklyn.

19 A.L.J. LEARY: Uh-huh. Okay.

20 MR. SCARIANO: Since our founding in
21 2004, we have been strengthening the competence,
22 confidence, and aspiration of students from
23 economically disadvantaged families and empowering
24 them to build fulfilling lives that advance the
25 common good. I am also a Brooklyn native and a New

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2 York City educated civil engineer working in the
3 field of public works construction in both
4 transportation and clean energy.

5 I am proud to testify today in support
6 of National Grid's rate proposal. National Grid has
7 been an invaluable partner to Cristo Rey High School
8 -- to the Cristo Rey High School community. And it
9 has helped us in our endeavor to shape bright minds
10 for future success.

11 National Grid partners with us to
12 support our Corporate Work Study Program, sponsoring
13 three of our students each year to gain hands-on in-
14 depth experience in a real-world professional
15 setting.

16 This innovative program enables
17 students to directly contribute to the cost of their
18 education while exposing them to the world of work.
19 These students learn firsthand the values of hard
20 work and responsibility while -- while building
21 professional relationships. It's a unique program
22 that provides exposure to career paths in their own
23 backyards and equips our students for future success.

24 In addition to the critical support of
25 the corporate work study program, the National Grid's

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2 foundation also provides a yearly grant for our
3 summer program. The summer program, happens every
4 summer, obviously. And every student goes to this
5 where they learn computer skills, professional
6 etiquette, basic office tasks, networking schools --
7 networking skills, resume writing as well as basic
8 math and literature.

9 The program incorporates not only
10 traditional classroom style instruction, but also
11 hands-on learning opportunities including visits to
12 partner organizations and a practice networking
13 event. These programs are critical to ensuring
14 student success throughout their academic and
15 professional careers.

16 We are proud to have a steadfast
17 partner in National Grid to change the lives of our
18 students, their families and communities.

19 A.L.J. LEARY: Okay.

20 MR. SCARIANO: National Grid goes
21 above and beyond the call of duty for an energy
22 company, not only providing energy for our homes and
23 businesses but energizing our student's futures. I
24 have seen National Grid's commitment to the community
25 first hand.

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2 Brooklyn is the company's home and
3 National Grid employees are literally our neighbors.
4 And they're active support in helping make our
5 students leaders in their local communities of
6 Brooklyn. National Grid's impact in Brooklyn goes
7 far beyond Cristo Rey Brooklyn.

8 Through their Project C commitment,
9 National Grid provides tens of thousands of dollars
10 in grant funding and dedicates 100s of volunteer
11 hours to supporting pillars of the Brooklyn community
12 like the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and the Brooklyn
13 Library, as well as neighborhood projects like park
14 cleanup, things that, you know, make communities
15 better on a more local level.

16 National Grid's generosity has helped
17 local organizations and small businesses thrive and
18 we are thrilled to have them in our community. As
19 New York navigates the clean energy transition, it is
20 vital that National Grid have the resources necessary
21 to continue providing Brooklyn with affordable,
22 reliable electricity and heat.

23 As an engineer, I see the positive
24 benefits of National Grid's research, development,
25 and planning to use new and emerging technologies

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2 that will certainly help us protect our environment
3 and communities and improve the day-to-day lives of
4 our citizens. I'm honored to be here today to
5 support National Grid.

6 The entire Cristo Rey community is
7 deeply grateful for what National Grid has done for
8 us. And we look forward to working with them to
9 continue energizing communities and our young people
10 in Brooklyn. Thank you.

11 A.L.J. LEARY: Okay. Ms. Hertel? On
12 deck, Michael Davis. I don't want anybody to touch
13 this, okay? It's up here for a reason because you
14 can hear the pitch if you start bringing it down
15 closer to your mouth. People can hear you. You can
16 hear me, right? Okay.

17 MS. HERTEL: Hi, my name is Barbara
18 Hertel. I'm part of Food and Water Watch and SANE
19 Energy and lots of different groups. So National
20 Grid is not the most reliable. I appreciate that,
21 you know, they want to cover, you know, cover the
22 C.L.C.P.A., but they've lied to us before about the
23 pipeline they were installing.

24 They got little permits here and there
25 and here and there through East New York. And then

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2 they, you know, they tried to make it so they weren't
3 building a pipeline to Greenpoint, but they were.
4 And so I do not trust them to do what they say they
5 want to do. I really, that -- feel that their --
6 their rate hike is very extreme and it's very high.

7 A lot of people will not be able to
8 afford this. I looked at my -- in his slide there.
9 I manage a -- a three -- a multi-family building
10 which is like \$300 extra a month which is really
11 extraordinarily high. And I don't think that's fair
12 to other people who don't have that kind of money in
13 their rents and things.

14 So I just don't believe them. I think
15 fossil fuels are, they are going out. And they do
16 say things that, you know, like they're going to try
17 to help the electricity people. But I don't believe
18 that's true. I really think they wants us do their -
19 - pay their investors more money, keep the
20 investments coming in. And I just think the rate
21 hike is ridiculous. Thank you.

22 A.L.J. LEARY: Thank you. Mr. Davis,
23 Michael Davis and Ken --

24 MR. SCHLES: Schles.

25 A.L.J. LEARY: Schles, come on up.

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2 You are on deck.

3 MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

4 THE REPORTER: Excuse me, point the
5 microphone at the ceiling the (unintelligible).

6 A.L.J. LEARY: That's not good.

7 THE REPORTER: (unintelligible).

8 A.L.J. LEARY: A little closer, just
9 say your name.

10 THE REPORTER: It's like a --.

11 MR. DAVIS: Hi, my name is Michael
12 Davis, D-A-V-I-S.

13 A.L.J. LEARY: How's that?

14 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Judges.

15 THE REPORTER: (unintelligible).

16 A.L.J. LEARY: Go ahead.

17 MR. DAVIS: Okay. I've lived in New
18 York City all my life and in Brooklyn for the last 34
19 years. The hearing we're engaged in today is
20 designed to take democracy out of the process of
21 designing our future -- of deciding our future. A
22 future we know is looking dim, fires, floods
23 intolerable temperatures, forced migrations are
24 becoming commonplace and we know why.

25 Like other lethal industries, guns and

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2 tobacco, for example, National Grid is regulated in a
3 way favorable to their interests and fatal to ours.
4 We are here because this is our chance to make a
5 public comment en masse, in-person, in front of the
6 Public Service Commission who are not here.

7 We each get two or three minutes and
8 then we're cut off by an Administrative Judge.
9 National Grid, on the other hand, gets to make a full
10 presentation during which they lie and greenwash with
11 the approval of the Commission. The Commission is
12 appointed by the governor. According to campaign
13 records, our current governor has taken nearly
14 \$500,000 from fossil fuel utilities and lobbyists.

15 The only way to sit at the table with
16 the P.S.C. staff, Commissioners, and National Grid is
17 to join a rate case. There is a rate case in
18 progress now. Its purpose is to decide if National
19 Grid will get the nearly \$4 billion rate increase for
20 which they are asking.

21 The negotiations between National Grid
22 and other interested parties are secret. It is a
23 violation to speak about the details, the numbers,
24 the reasons for the numbers, the statements made by
25 the parties inside these secret proceedings.

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2 Citizens and organizations opposing the rate
3 increases are free to join the negotiations, but they
4 may not speak about what goes on in those rooms.

5 The rate cases -- the rate case
6 process is an elaborate scheme. The rules are
7 designed to exclude. The people opposing National
8 Grid in this case and others before are brilliant,
9 and brave, and spent hours in these -- in these
10 negotiations. They are heroes. How many people
11 could spare the time to participate or learn the
12 system?

13 These rules are designed to keep the
14 public out and to keep the public ignorant of the
15 process itself. Yet, 4 billion of our dollars are at
16 stake as well as the continued survival of this
17 planet. Why are these negotiations secret? Why
18 aren't the Commissioners elected by the public?

19 Why isn't every word spoken publicly?
20 Why is the press kept out? National Grid is anything
21 but national. They are a private multinational
22 investor-owned utility with allegiance only to their
23 investors. All energy production and production
24 decisions must be public. The current process is
25 corrupt. Thank you.

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2 A.L.J. LEARY: Ken Schles and Molly
3 Ornati. Where's Molly? You're on deck.

4 MR. SCHLES: My name is Ken Schles.
5 K-E-N S-C-H-L-E-S. I volunteer with Food & Water
6 Watch, an environmental advocacy group with over a
7 100,000 supporters in New York. My family has made
8 New York City its home for over 125 years. I've
9 raised my two children in our home in Fort Greene.

10 I also volunteer with the No North
11 Brooklyn Pipeline Alliance, a diverse collective of
12 environmental groups representing environmental
13 justice communities along the path of the North
14 Brooklyn Pipeline. It was through No N.B.K.'s work
15 that National Grid's Metropolitan Reliability
16 Pipeline project was exposed as a boondoggle and was
17 halted because of its overreach and uselessness --

18 A.L.J. LEARY: Uh-huh.

19 MR. SCHLES: -- despite a \$129 million
20 P.S.C. rate approval. The project that was to be the
21 tail -- that project was to be the tail end of the \$2
22 billion Williams pipeline also rejected not only for
23 its uselessness, but it's harm to sensitive marine
24 environments.

25 In 2019 National Grid was fined \$36

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2 million for lying to the P.S.C., claiming they had
3 insufficient gas capacity to meet demand. A claim
4 proven several times since to be a fabrication.
5 Earlier this year, the P.S.C. rejected another
6 National Grid boondoggle. The \$70 million L.N.G.
7 vaporizer project again for its uselessness.

8 And here we are, National Grid now
9 wants to spend \$3.8 billion of ratepayer money to
10 rebuild infrastructure at its unnecessary Maspeth
11 facility and replace leak prone pipe throughout its
12 territories. Another make work boondoggle that
13 precedes any necessity and locks ratepayers into
14 paying for what will be by law stranded assets.

15 National Grid has been clear in its
16 forward-looking statements, proposing to introduce
17 corrosive hydrogen and so called R.N.G. into its
18 aging system of pipes to extend its business model
19 even in the face of climate calamity and against New
20 York State Climate Law. Recent research by Cornell
21 University's Dr. Robert Howard, a member of New
22 York's Climate Action council found that natural
23 methane gas is 24 to 274 percent worse for the
24 environment than coal, but still National Grid wants
25 to build.

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2 The C.L.C.P.A. stipulates that state
3 agencies must consider whether decisions are
4 inconsistent with or will interfere with the
5 attainment of the Statewide greenhouse gas emission
6 limits. National Grid's proposals do not meet these
7 criteria. Approval of National Grid's projects lock
8 us into another generation of false solutions.

9 Expensive for ratepayers, catastrophic
10 for the environment. It would be incumbent on the
11 P.S.C. to open an investigation into the malfeasance
12 of National Grid in repeatedly proposing questionable
13 projects in violation of law rather than holding
14 these rate hearings. The P.S.C. would better spend
15 its time and authority in decommissioning 287 Maspeth
16 through a public domain process, remediate its toxic
17 brown fields and transform the land for the public
18 good and in the public interest. Thank you for
19 allowing me to testify.

20 A.L.J. LEARY: Molly Ornati and Monica
21 Hunken, you are on deck.

22 MS. ORNATI: Good evening. My name is
23 Molly Ornati. I'm here as a founding member of 350
24 Brooklyn, a local organization of more than 5,000
25 people who work for community solutions to the

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2 climate crisis. I'm particularly inspired to testify
3 today because of the events of just six weeks ago on
4 September 29th, when flash flooding dumped eight
5 inches of rain on New York City, leading many of my
6 neighbors in the Gowanus Canal area to spend the day
7 bailing out their basement, struggling to leave work
8 unexpectedly to pick up their children at school, and
9 coping with raw sewage coming up in their toilets and
10 into their apartments. Needless to say, repairing
11 from that day remains ongoing.

12 These events occur because the climate
13 crisis is here. And if we continue to choose to look
14 away, deny and not plan accordingly, it is not clear
15 we will be able to survive the larger long-term chaos
16 and destruction we see occur around the world on a
17 daily basis.

18 I am here tonight to ask the New York
19 State Public Service Commission to deny any rate
20 hikes for the life extension and expansion of
21 National Grid's fracked gas infrastructure. We must
22 follow the law of the C.L.C.P.A. and retire, not
23 replace this technology that literally poisons the
24 earth, the ecosystems, the animals and the
25 communities that surround it and is a key source of

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2 today's climate crisis.

3 I am asking the P.S.C. to say no to
4 any investments in the Greenpoint Energy Center
5 located at 287 Maspeth Avenue until an independent
6 assessment of this toxic facility can be deducted --
7 conducted to facilitate closing by no later than
8 2030.

9 This facility sits on a 120 acres of
10 land in our community which is more than all of the
11 green space combined in North Brooklyn. The impacted
12 community must be involved in any future decisions
13 about this facility in a deeper and more genuine way
14 than a public hearing which in fact engages so few
15 blue -- Brooklyn residents.

16 I am asking the P.S.C. to reject any
17 investments in National Grid's leak prone pipe
18 program for any non-emergency repairs. Replacing
19 leaking, toxic, and dangerous gas pipelines with
20 another gas pipeline only guarantees we will be
21 committed to fossil fuels into the 2080s.

22 I am asking the P.S.C. to do its job,
23 to undertake due diligence, and refuse National
24 Grid's request. While there is barely still time,
25 let's choose not to force New York City residents to

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2 finance their own destruction and instead put our
3 effort and resources into a future we want to live
4 in. Thank you.

5 A.L.J. LEARY: Monica Hunken. And
6 Dewey Thompson, you are on deck.

7 MS. HUNKEN: Thank you to the judges
8 for hearing our testimonies. My name is Monica
9 Hunken, H-U-N-K-E-N. I've lived in Brooklyn for 20
10 years and have been fighting the North Brooklyn
11 pipeline and L.N.G. expansion on and off for the last
12 few years. And I've interviewed residents and fellow
13 activists who are part of the movement.

14 I've heard their stories of struggle
15 and pain, but tonight, I would rather focus on our
16 dreams. Since I am heartbroken watching the tragedy
17 unfold in Palestine where Gaza's natural gas beckons
18 U.S. interests to fuel a war, instead of my rage
19 tonight, I will share my hope.

20 A.L.J. LEARY: Excuse me.

21 MS. HUNKEN: What's happening?

22 A.L.J. LEARY: So stay back.

23 MS. HUNKEN: Should I stay far? Am I
24 too loud?

25 A.L.J. LEARY: I can hear you. They

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2 can hear you from there.

3 MS. HUNKEN: I'll be here, yeah.

4 A.L.J. LEARY: No, no. Come up --
5 come up. I think -- I think you're okay.

6 MS. HUNKEN: Am I too tall?

7 A.L.J. LEARY: Well, that's -- that's
8 true too. It's okay. Just stay sort of like in this
9 zone. Okay. All right. Thank you.

10 MS. HUNKEN: All right. You can all
11 hear me?

12 ALL: Yeah.

13 MS. HUNKEN: Okay.

14 ALL: Yeah.

15 MS. HUNKEN: That didn't take my time
16 away, did it?

17 A.L.J. LEARY: No.

18 MS. HUNKEN: Okay.

19 THE REPORTER: Is there --

20 A.L.J. LEARY: You're very --

21 THE REPORTER: Is there a soundboard
22 so we can better hear people's comments or --

23 A.L.J. LECAKES: We just -- there's
24 not a soundboard that we have access to. You have to
25 go out and talk to the people in the library, I'm not

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2 sure.

3 MS. HUNKEN: Yeah.

4 A.L.J. LEARY: Yeah, go ahead.

5 MS. HUNKEN: Okay.

6 THE REPORTER: Okay.

7 MS. HUNKEN: Okay. So tonight, I will
8 share my hope. And some of the visions that I've
9 heard for 287 Maspeth. But I need your help for
10 this, if some of you would, when I say can you see
11 it?

12 A.L.J. LEARY: Your time is --

13 MS. HUNKEN: I'm going to be over
14 here.

15 A.L.J. LEARY: Your time is up. Yeah,
16 they'll hear you over there.

17 (Off the record; 06:00 p.m. to 6:03
18 p.m.)

19 A.L.J. LECAKES: Let's go back on the
20 record.

21 MS. HUNKEN: I'll just -- I'll just
22 keep going.

23 A.L.J. LEARY: Okay. I got you.

24 MS. HUNKEN: You got that before,
25 right? Okay. Why go backwards? Okay. So -- so if

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2 some of the audience would help me with this. When I
3 say, can you see it, if you could say we can see it.
4 Yeah, can you do that? Okay, thank you.

5 So imagine if we didn't have to spend
6 our nights employing our energy and emotional labor
7 naming the many crimes of National Grid, can you see
8 it?

9 ALL: We can see it.

10 MS. HUNKEN: Imagine reclaiming that
11 space in our lives. Imagine those 110 acres opening
12 up the same amount of space as all the public
13 parkland in North Brooklyn. Envision it turning into
14 rich marshland along Newtown Creek. Green flora
15 begins to burst through the concrete, egrets and
16 herons make their home here. And dirt that has been
17 poisoned for decades, sacrificed by one fossil fuel
18 industry after another begins to slowly heal with
19 gentle remediation efforts of local gardeners. Can
20 you see it?

21 ALL: We can see it.

22 MS. HUNKEN: National Grid dries up,
23 moves out and is replaced by geothermal energy
24 networks owned by the public. The former employees'
25 transition into renewable energy jobs they can be

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2 proud of. Cooper Park Housing receives reparations
3 for living next to a poisonous neighbor for decades.

4 Imagine a Brooklyn where the value of
5 people's lives and health rises far, far above the
6 value of profit for shareholders. Can you see it?

7 ALL: We can see it.

8 MS. HUNKEN: See it with me if you can
9 a Brooklyn where low income and communities of the
10 global majority are respected, asked for their
11 consent, their input even into what industry dare
12 trespass into their homes. Imagine a New York City
13 where the human body is treated as sacred; not just
14 the wealthy human body. Where it is held as an
15 indisputable fact that we are all inextricably bound
16 together in sharing this land, air, and water and are
17 responsible for protecting it.

18 I see a city staying true to its
19 commitment to a just transition, uncorrupted by
20 corporate influence. A city that recognizes the
21 immense real threat of climate change and acts like
22 it's a gosh darn emergency because it is. Can you
23 see it?

24 ALL: We can see it.

25 MS. HUNKEN: I see us all walking out

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2 of these doors with victory in hand and never having
3 to return to beg and plea for the most basic rights
4 to not be poisoned, to have a healthy, safe
5 environment to live in, to watch our families and
6 friends grow old in together. Can you see it?

7 ALL: We can see it.

8 MS. HUNKEN: Thank you.

9 A.L.J. LEARY: Dewey Thompson. And
10 Elliot Figman, you're on deck.

11 MR. THOMPSON: Hi, my name is Dewey
12 Thompson. I am on the Board of Directors of North
13 Brooklyn Neighbors which is a non-profit, a local
14 non-profit that's dedicated to environmental and land
15 use issues in Greenpoint and Williamsburg.

16 And I -- I am here -- in -- in part, I
17 am here to -- to absorb what's going on and to hear
18 more about the case and listening to Mr. Decicco's
19 presentation, there were two really incredible and
20 kind of hilarious ironies.

21 One is that, he -- part of the money
22 that is being asked for in this rate hike is to
23 address the damage caused by climate change, Sandy,
24 and other storms from a company that creates fossil
25 fuel that is creating climate change without de --

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2 devoting any substantial money to fixing it.

3 The other incredible irony is that a
4 lot of the money seems to be addressing customer
5 support for customers who can't pay their bills which
6 is an admirable plan, except it's packaged in a
7 proposal that is going to raise everybody's rates and
8 make it more difficult for all of us to pay our
9 bills.

10 So if this is just an example of the
11 kind of double speak built into the overall proposal,
12 I think we can just go back to the initial thing
13 which a lot of people have already said which is that
14 this proposal should actually be an inspiring charge
15 into some substantial and aggressive approach to
16 change the reliance on fossil fuels and not
17 aggressive attempt to read -- to invest money in a
18 system that's already dead and that we are trying to
19 get rid of. Thank you.

20 A.L.J. LEARY: Elliot Figman. And on
21 deck is Willis Elkins.

22 MR. FIGMAN: So my name is Elliot
23 Figman, F as in Frank, -I-G-M-A-N. I live in New
24 York City. I'm the Senior Advisor of the Sane Energy
25 Project. I'm also a member of the Jewish Climate

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2 Action Network. I want to thank the judges for
3 hearing our statements today.

4 You might be surprised to know that
5 I'm actually coming before the Commission to praise
6 it. And you might be wondering why, you know, what
7 would I be praising the Commission for? Well,
8 specifically for its finding last March that there
9 was no need, okay, for the new vaporizers at the
10 Greenpoint Energy Center.

11 That -- that National Grid claimed
12 they needed. Responding to calls from Sane Energy
13 Project, other advocacy groups and individuals, the
14 Commission agreed to engage an independent consultant
15 to conduct a review of National Grid's proposal for
16 the new vaporizers.

17 And lo and behold, the independent
18 consultant found that existing capacity was
19 sufficient. And there was no need for the new
20 vaporizers in the near future. In March of 2023, the
21 Commission denied National Grid's proposal to build
22 the unnecessary vaporizers. The moral of the story,
23 National Grid cannot be trusted.

24 I want to commend the Commission for
25 doing its job. That is, denying a request for an

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2 unnecessary project that would have made access to
3 gas services less affordable to ratepayers. The
4 Commission correctly found that this would have been
5 an imprudent investment.

6 Now, eight months later here we are,
7 after that correct decision, the Commission is faced
8 with making decisions on new request from National
9 Grid. What we learned last year, again, is that
10 National Grid, it's not the first time we've learned
11 this, cannot be trusted when they claim there is a
12 need for a project.

13 Their interest is in growing profits
14 and increasing value for their shareholders. Their
15 interests are served by continuing to tie New Yorkers
16 to an outdated gas system that is a threat to public
17 health and to the climate.

18 What the Commission showed us last
19 March is that we could depend on it to make decisions
20 in the public interest. And that you -- and that it
21 was in making that decision to deny National Grid's
22 request for an unnecessary investment, a Commission
23 serving the public as opposed to National Grid's
24 profits.

25 That is in this instance, the

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2 Commission was in fact a Public Service Commission
3 and not a profit service Commission for National
4 Grid. We're calling on the Commission to do the
5 right thing again. We want the Commission to place
6 an unmistakable emphasis on National Grid retiring
7 not replacing gas infrastructure.

8 Specifically, its extensive network of
9 pipes and its facility at the Greenpoint Energy
10 Center. The Commission is charged with ensuring that
11 New Yorkers have access to affordable gas services.
12 Approving unnecessary investments in costly projects
13 will make access to gas service less affordable for
14 already overburdened ratepayers.

15 I believe that in the KEDLI and KEDNY
16 districts, there are about 250,000 people who are 60
17 days or more in arrears. So I -- I will finish up
18 now. Thank you for the extra time. The people are
19 watching, we're counting on the Commission to do the
20 right thing. And I hope to have the opportunity to
21 come back again and praise the Public Service
22 Commission for making the right decision in the
23 public's interest. Thank you.

24 A.L.J. LEARY: Willis Elkins. And
25 Joseph Therrien, you are on deck.

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2 MR. ELKINS: Good evening. My name is
3 Willis Elkins. I'm the Executive Director of the
4 Newtown Creek Alliance. Our organization, since 2002
5 has worked to restore, reveal and revitalize Newtown
6 Creek, a five -- a four-mile waterway that has
7 suffered from over 150 years of environmental
8 degradation, abuse, and neglect.

9 Newtown Creek was designated a federal
10 Superfund site in 2010 due to elevated levels of
11 hazardous toxins within the sediments that originated
12 from local industrial operations including National
13 Grid's predecessor, Brooklyn Union Gas. We stand in
14 strong opposition to this rate case.

15 And any -- any investment at the
16 Greenpoint inner -- Energy Center that does not
17 prioritize the cleanup of the site as well as a
18 transition away from the storage of hazardous,
19 Liquefied Natural Gas and processing of fracked gas.

20 Before diving into specifics about the
21 Greenpoint Energy Center, I'd also like to address
22 the Renewable Natural Gas or R.N.G. project, that
23 National Grid runs at the Newtown Creek Wastewater
24 Treatment Plant, as the R.N.G. project is mentioned
25 numerous times within this ratepayers' proposal.

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2 We are very concerned about National
3 Grid seeking to expand R.N.G. to other facilities
4 within New York City and are strongly opposed to any
5 scenario in which ratepayers are helping to foot the
6 bill of the construction, maintenance -- maintenance,
7 operation, or expansion of R.N.G.

8 The Newtown Creek R.N.G. project has
9 been a failed proof of concept to date, creating
10 adverse impacts for the local community and climate
11 emissions in the process. Originally scheduled for
12 completion in January of 2016, the massive delays,
13 which by all accounts seem to be the responsibility
14 of National Grid, have spiraled out of control.

15 Less than two months after an eventual
16 ribbon cutting that was held in June of 2023, that's
17 already seven-and-a-half years behind schedule, the
18 system went offline and has been flaring excess gas
19 ever since including today.

20 While the project has been touted as
21 visionary in a path towards meeting the C.L.C.P.A.
22 goals, it has today contributed untold amounts of CO2
23 emissions because the plant does not just burn sewage
24 methane when the R.N.G. project is offline but tons
25 of organic waste that the city collects through the

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2 brown bin program.

3 It's about 52,000 tons of excess
4 organics in 22 -- 2022 alone. I raise this issue not
5 just to highlight the negative environmental impact
6 in carbon emissions, the seven-and-a-half-year delay
7 and counting has had, but to caution against
8 encouraging expansion and considering ratepayer
9 funding of this technology.

10 We should be turning valuable organic
11 waste into compost which can sequester carbon and in
12 -- improve the health of our soils and not into a
13 health hazardous commodity for a profit-driven
14 corporation like National Grid.

15 There's another major project in my
16 backyard that's referenced within the rate case we've
17 heard a lot about and it's a significant
18 environmental burden for local residents. The L.N.G.
19 facility known as the Greenpoint Energy Center.

20 The previous operations at the
21 facility have left significant amounts of
22 contamination in both the local soils and waters.
23 According to the State D.E.C., the site is
24 contaminated by the following chemicals of concern.

25 Light hydrocarbons such as benzene,

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2 toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene, semi volatile
3 organics including P.A.H.s, Polycyclic Aromatic
4 Hydrocarbons, Polychlorinated Biphenyls, known as
5 P.C.B.s within the groundwater and manufactured gas
6 plant waste in the form of Nonaqueous Phase Liquid
7 also known as NAPL below the groundwater table.

8 Prior to 2012, there were eleven
9 separate environmental investigations at the site
10 relating to potential underground plumes, groundwater
11 contamination, and subsurface and surface soil
12 contamination from previous operations and the
13 demolition of structures.

14 The company even suspended use of a
15 baseball field following a 2010 investigation of the
16 area and interim remedial measures were overseen by
17 the State D.E.C. in 2005, 2006 and 2007. As of 2023,
18 New York State is still reviewing draft versions of a
19 remedial investigation plan.

20 The company is one of the original
21 potentially res party -- potential responsible
22 parties to the E.P.A. led Superfund Investigation of
23 Newtown Creek where data collected shows the
24 sediments off the shore of the facility to be some of
25 the most contaminated in the entire site for P.A.H.s.

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2 Remnants of coal tar that were
3 processed at this facility still bubble up to the
4 surface waters of the turning basin during low tide
5 events.

6 A.L.J. LEARY: Okay. You need to wrap
7 up now.

8 MR. ELKINS: Okay. This is an issue
9 that affects my community.

10 A.L.J. LEARY: So --

11 MR. ELKINS: This contamination --

12 A.L.J. LEARY: Does everybody see how
13 much time, I'm just --

14 MR. ELKINS: This contamination --

15 A.L.J. LEARY: I hear you.

16 MR. ELKINS: -- has been in our
17 community for over a 100 years.

18 A.L.J. LEARY: I hear you.

19 MR. ELKINS: It literally bubbles up
20 from the creek. Can I just have 30 more seconds to
21 finish?

22 A.L.J. LEARY: Sure, sure.

23 THE AUDIENCE: Let him finish.

24 MR. ELKINS: Jesus. Okay.

25 A.L.J. LEARY: (unintelligible).

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2 MR. ELKINS: In summary, if National
3 Grid were proposing a transition of this 110-acre
4 site to one that was generating cleaner, renewable
5 energy that would be a different discussion. They
6 have a proven record of not doing successful
7 operations and that would be a different conversation
8 if they had.

9 But the fact of the matter is this,
10 National Grid has poisoned Greenpoint. They've
11 poisoned Newtown Creek. And they continue to drive
12 excess CO2 emissions through a botched R.N.G.
13 project. Simply put, they do not have a track record
14 that merits large scale investments of any kind,
15 especially ratepayer monies into fossil fuel-based
16 projects, as such the P.S.C. should deny the request.
17 Thank you.

18 A.L.J. LEARY: Thank you. So Joseph -
19 - excuse me, Joseph Therrien. Jeanne Bergman, you
20 are on deck. I just want to tell everybody I have a
21 lot of people that need to speak. We need to leave
22 at a specific time. Even if I can't get to you, we
23 have to leave, so please be kind to your fellow
24 participants. Three minutes is a -- is plenty of
25 time. So go ahead. You're on.

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2 MR. THERRIEN: Good evening, I am
3 Joseph Therrien, T-H-E-R-R-I-E-N. But to my friends
4 and fellow sociopaths, I'm better known as Dr.
5 Frackenstein, F-R-A-C-K-E-N-S-T-E-I-N. I live in
6 Brooklyn and I'm very interested in this issue.

7 A.L.J. LEARY: Okay.

8 MR. THERRIEN: First, I would like to
9 commend National Grid for prioritizing the needs of
10 everyday folks like myself, a greedy madman, deeply
11 invested in the fossil fuel industry, who is
12 completely ignoring the reality of climate change as
13 well as ignoring the health and wellbeing of the vast
14 majority of New Yorkers.

15 It wasn't that long ago when I thought
16 New York was getting too expensive for a pro fossil
17 fuel supervillain such as myself. But I truly
18 believe that if National Grid implements these rate
19 hikes and effectively steals \$3.8 billion from
20 everyday New Yorkers, investors and shareholders like
21 myself stand to make obscene amounts of money and for
22 that National Grid, you have my sincere thanks.

23 With your help, we can pull this off
24 and hoodwink an entire city into investing in a gas
25 infrastructure that will poison the earth and

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2 everyone living here for decades to come. Now, I'm
3 obviously a God-fearing man, so I'd like to leave
4 National Grid with a prayer.

5 National Grid, I pray you have the
6 strength to continue your campaign to ignore the
7 voices of the residents of this city as well as
8 ignoring climate science and any modicum of common
9 sense or basic decency and continue to prioritize
10 profits over people.

11 As a wise investor once told me people
12 will pay to be poisoned because we will make them.
13 You are truly evil geniuses and I salute you.

14 A.L.J. LEARY: Ms. Bergman. Sebastian
15 -- Sebastian you're up next.

16 MS. BERGMAN: Thank you, Your Honors.
17 My name is Jeanne Bergman, B-E-R-G-M-A-N. I'm here
18 to speak against the proposed National Grid rate
19 hikes and the dangerous and unnecessary
20 infrastructure and facilities that they are asking us
21 to pay for.

22 More importantly, however, I'm here to
23 urge the Public Service Commission and I'm sorry that
24 none of them are here to step up and fulfill their
25 mandate which extends beyond the mantra of safety and

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2 reliability.

3 The P.S.C. is required and this is on
4 -- in the law to formulate and carry out long range
5 programs with economy, efficiency and care for the
6 public safety, the preservation of environmental
7 values and the conservation of natural resources.
8 Yet, year after year, one utility after another
9 submits dense arcane proposals to the P.S.C. seeking
10 cost recovery from -- from customers for capital
11 investments that they have typically already broken
12 ground on.

13 They make those investments not
14 because they are necessary for the safety or
15 reliability of the systems, but because extending
16 more capital bumps up the rate base against which the
17 return on equity is based and therefore, increases
18 the profit to shareholders and executive salaries in
19 turn.

20 The role of the P.S.C. and the Staff
21 of the Department of Public Service, in all of these
22 rate cases, has typically been to approve them
23 pending some minor decreases in the rate hikes
24 requested and some small changes to the proposed
25 capital expenditures. Most of the items on the

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2 utility's wish -- wish list are granted.

3 There is no evident concern with the
4 preservation of environmental values and the
5 conservation of natural resources at all and
6 certainly not on the part of national -- National
7 Grid regardless of what Phil Decicco said.

8 And there is certainly no alignment of
9 their energy systems with New York C.L.C.P.A., the
10 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, that
11 legally mandates emission limits. On the contrary,
12 the P.S.C. seems to resolutely ignore the context
13 within which it gently regulates utilities, operating
14 as if the conditions extend in the early 20th Century
15 which spawned the so-called regulatory compact are
16 unchanged.

17 But everything has changed. The
18 climate crisis is here with fire, floods, drought and
19 famine. We know, beyond a shadow of a doubt that
20 fossil fuels like the fracked gas that National Grid
21 is pumping into our homes is what is rapidly making
22 this planet unlivable.

23 We know that black and brown people in
24 low income communities suffer first and worst from
25 the disasters. We know that we must stop burning

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2 fossil fuels as quickly as possible. Anything else
3 is irrational. There can be no safety and no
4 reliability on a burned-out planet.

5 But there are other changes that bring
6 hope. Among these are new technologies like thermal
7 energy networks, district geothermal systems,
8 efficient electric appliances and energy storage that
9 can be quickly implemented to replace gas.

10 These technologies need to use the
11 existing and I see you back there, my brothers and
12 sisters, existing union labor force with their skills
13 and tens of thousands more workers for the good,
14 green union jobs that they would generate.

15 Those systems could be a lifeline for
16 labor and for the obsolete gas companies who need to
17 be shut down now. The Public Service Commission
18 charged with regulating public services and with
19 serving the public must step up and facilitate the
20 transition away from gas and towards affordable,
21 healthy, renewable energy.

22 You, if you were here, must not extend
23 the lifetime of the gas system by allowing leak prone
24 pipes to be replaced with other leak prone pipes.
25 You must not permit the build out of the unnecessary

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2 287 Maspeth Facility raising the rates of low income
3 New Yorkers solely for investor profits.

4 And you must drive the utilities you
5 re -- regulate to -- to design and build with union
6 labor, the thermal energy networks. You must protect
7 us, the residents of New York and not the investor
8 owned utilities that prey on us. Thank you.

9 A.L.J. LEARY: Sebastian Bouknight.

10 MR. BOUKNIGHT: Bouknight.

11 A.L.J. LEARY: Bouknight?

12 MR. BOUKNIGHT: Yeah.

13 A.L.J. LEARY: Okay.

14 MR. BOUKNIGHT: You're trying to upset
15 me.

16 A.L.J. LEARY: Yeah, sorry. Piper
17 Werle, you are on deck.

18 MR. BOUKNIGHT: Can I go?

19 A.L.J. LEARY: Oh, please do.

20 MR. BOUKNIGHT: All right. My name is
21 Sebastian Bouknight, B-O-U-K-N-I-G-H-T. I work with
22 community gardeners and public space land stewards
23 around the city. I've been working on bringing solar
24 power to some of these spaces myself, so I've seen a
25 little bit of this, but I'm also been involved with

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2 the New York -- the No North Brooklyn Pipeline
3 coalition for a while, so I'm bringing this from my
4 perspective, not perspective of.

5 I just, in -- in listening to Mr. --
6 National Grid, the suit, not the madman. Well, I
7 don't know. Listening to them speak, I -- I was
8 really struck in the way that language is sort of
9 used by these companies as a smokescreen which, my
10 friend back there commented on before.

11 It seems like everything they say is
12 exactly the opposite of what they actually mean. And
13 they're very good at doing that. And I think, you
14 know, a lot of folks here have been listening for a
15 while and -- and have -- have come to very much be
16 able to see through that, but I think the public
17 generally maybe is not always, you know, doesn't have
18 that, maybe that experience.

19 So I just wanted to say, just like
20 point out some of those things which I heard, which
21 were kind of striking to me, like they were kept
22 talking about how National Grid is trying to help
23 poor communities, you know, whether it's through
24 public programs, whether it's through giving some
25 money to some charter schools in the neighborhood.

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2 Whether it's, you know, funding like a
3 little league team or something like that. But at
4 the same time, they're trying to raise everybody's
5 rates to make it less affordable. They're also, at
6 the same time, contributing to this global disaster
7 that is climate change, which is going to hurt poor
8 communities first.

9 They also keep -- he also kept talking
10 about how National Grid is trying to invest in
11 infrastructure that will build resilience and
12 reliancy (sic). At the same time, they are putting
13 all of that money that we will potentially be paying
14 for them into infrastructure that will lock us into
15 fossil fuels for the next 80 years and push us
16 further off the cliff of climate chaos into a place
17 where our cities are battered, and demolished, and
18 destroyed.

19 And that, to me, doesn't sound like
20 resilience at all. Also, if they continue to build
21 out the Greenpoint Energy Center, is that what it's
22 called? The Greenpoint Energy Center, it's right on
23 the Newtown Creek. It's a body of water. It is
24 prone to flooding. It is a crazy idea to me that --
25 that that could be happening there.

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2 They also keep, you know, he was
3 talking about, we have options where we can refer our
4 clients to electrification which is a crazy thing to
5 me. It's like, well, if you're referring clients to
6 electrification, why aren't you just doing it
7 yourself or putting money into that, or realizing
8 that your business model is an obsolete one.

9 And passing off, you know, the -- the
10 energy utility into public control. So yeah, I --
11 it's -- I urge the Public Service Commission to deny
12 National Grid this rate hike, and to deny them the
13 ability to expand the Greenpoint Energy Center to
14 suit their interests, but rather give that land back
15 to the people, and let us invest our money in our
16 future, not theirs. Thank you. [Applause]

17 A.L.J. LEARY: Piper Werle -- Werle.

18 MS. WERLE: Werle.

19 A.L.J. LEARY: Werle and Kier Blake,
20 you are on deck.

21 MS. WERLE: Thank you for hosting this
22 public hearing. My name is Piper Werle, W-E-R-L-E,
23 rhymes with swirly. I'm a National Grid customer,
24 not by choice. It's a fact that the use of fossil
25 fuels is causing devastating and preventable damage

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2 to people's lives and our planet.

3 It's also a fact that one of my dad's
4 first jobs was working on construction of a large
5 coal fired power plant amongst other fossil fuel
6 projects throughout his career. I understand that
7 the lights need to be kept on, but I also understand
8 that they don't need to be kept on at this cost.

9 Especially when personnel that build
10 and maintain fossil fuel systems can use the same
11 skills to maintain renewable solutions like thermal
12 energy networks. This transition to renewables needs
13 complete focus and immediate attention because lives
14 are at stake.

15 Recently, about a month-and-a-half
16 ago, I found myself saying, I'm lucky to not live in
17 a basement because of dangerous flooding during New
18 York's state of emergency with Governor -- which
19 Governor Kathy Hochul says is the new normal.

20 This came a mere two years after
21 Hurricane Ida, which killed 13 people in New York
22 City, mostly living in flooded basement apartments.
23 People living close to me in Queens were among those
24 killed and that included a toddler.

25 We're in a state of emergency. And

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2 for some people this is an inconvenience, including
3 probably those that would profit off of this rate
4 hike. For some people this is an inconvenience, and
5 for others it is life or death. Extreme weather
6 events are more frequent and people of color and
7 economically disinvested communities who contribute
8 the least are affected the most.

9 Imposing a rate hike that asks lower-
10 income people to pay to expand gas infrastructure
11 that actively harms them the most is unacceptable.
12 Instead, National Grid should be putting their ample
13 resources towards renewable energy like thermal
14 energy networks, which again, requires skill sets
15 that many fossil fuel workers currently have.

16 There's a huge potential for good
17 green union jobs. The solutions must be people
18 centered and sustainable. So all decision-makers who
19 may or may not be here, but I guess we'll be reading
20 this later have an opportunity to make an immediate
21 impact on the lives of National Grid customers by not
22 raising their utility bills, which are already hard
23 to pay.

24 And also have a lasting influence in
25 creating a livable and more just future for future

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2 generations. Instead of fattening the pockets of
3 National Grid shareholders, I beg you and urge you to
4 make a choice that has life-giving impact and deny
5 this rate hike. Thank you.

6 A.L.J. LEARY: Kier Blake and
7 Katherine Thompson, you're on deck.

8 MS. BLAKE: So hello, my name is Kier
9 Blake, and my last name is B-L-A-K-E. So dear
10 National Grid, my name is Kier Blake, and I am a
11 resident of Brooklyn who was not consented when you
12 built a pipeline in my neighborhood where I live.

13 Your representative, Mr. Decicco
14 mentions that part of the reason you're proposing
15 more money in your proposal is to make your
16 infrastructure quote, unquote, safer, though you
17 promised us safety when you put it -- when you put
18 the pipeline in.

19 But then now your plan includes almost
20 \$10 million per mile of leak prone pipe
21 infrastructure and reinforcements in my neighborhood.
22 You say that you're interested in supporting the
23 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, the
24 C.L.C.P.A.

25 But you threw away your proposal to

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2 support thermal energy networks for which we can
3 provide additional testimony in written form. You
4 claimed minimal feasibility and limited options when
5 we did that same exact investigation and found so
6 much opportunity. And I want to say that I see the
7 labor and the union members that are standing outside
8 and with us today, that same personnel that can
9 install and maintain fossil fuel systems can use
10 their same skills to install and maintain thermal
11 energy networks.

12 It's the exact same skill set. From
13 John Murphy, who is also an international
14 representative of the New York State Pipe Trades
15 Association, that rep -- represents 24,000 plumbers,
16 steam fitters, sprinkler fitters, and HVAC
17 technicians across New York State. And this is in
18 city limits.

19 You also said that you mentioned,
20 especially in your equity and energy summits, that
21 you reach out to communities. But when asked who
22 you're reaching out to, you could not name a single
23 group. Perhaps these are the very honorable schools,
24 like Crystal Rain, that have benefited from your
25 resources.

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2 But I urge you to consider that these
3 same communities are all -- that you're talking about
4 are also the same communities that have been
5 contaminated on which your headquarters are -- are
6 situated on. Well, that could be hundreds of acres
7 of play space and park that could have been used by
8 the Brooklyn communities than to just wave pride
9 flags in June or pass out relief to those same
10 disadvantaged communities that you plan to build
11 under.

12 So why not imagine better? This
13 pipeline, of course, affects North Brooklyn. And I
14 love that we have so much representative --
15 representation, but I also want to stress that the
16 very same community is also at the foot of the
17 pipeline. In Flatbush, also where you've established
18 and also proposed a lot of replacements and
19 reinforcements are also here with us today.

20 And I wanted to speak to represent
21 them as well. In the saying that we do not wish to
22 continue being entrapped. We are already struggling.
23 We are those disadvantaged communities and fossil
24 fuel infrastructure that will remain until 2080.

25 And so we just encourage both the

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2 P.S.C., all the attorneys here today, and all of you
3 all here today to continue fighting and -- and I hope
4 to continue and come back and say thank you for just
5 supporting and protecting our communities as well.

6 Thank you so much.

7 A.L.J. LEARY: Thank you. Katherine
8 Thompson, Elliot Thompson, you're on deck.

9 MS. THOMPSON: Oh, I think he had to
10 leave, so.

11 A.L.J. LEARY: Oh, he did? Okay.

12 MS. THOMPSON: Katherine Thompson, K-
13 A-T-H-E-R-I-N-E, T-H --

14 THE REPORTER: Can you go a little
15 closer? I can't hear you.

16 MS. THOMPSON: Go closer to that?

17 THE REPORTER: A little. Yes.

18 A.L.J. LECAKES: The mic underneath is
19 the one that picks up over here.

20 MS. THOMPSON: Okay. Can you hear me
21 now?

22 THE REPORTER: Yes.

23 MS. THOMPSON: Okay. Katherine, K-A-
24 T-H-E-R-I-N-E, Thompson, T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N. Thank you
25 for hearing testimony. I'm here with Sane Energy and

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2 the No North Brooklyn Pipeline Alliance. I moved to
3 Greenpoint in 1996 and raised three children there.

4 To be a resident of Greenpoint means
5 you have to get involved with community issues
6 because we have so many issues to contend with, with
7 toxic spills, carcinogenic chemicals, asthma, auto-
8 immune disorders, overdevelopment, lack of open
9 space, which I am also the president of the Friends
10 of Bushwick Inlet Park, which is a very polluted
11 promised park to the Brooklyn community that I fight
12 for every day.

13 But now, we are -- we have to contend
14 with weather events nearly every rainstorm, I was
15 bailing out my basement not too long ago with others
16 in the flash flood. And so the climate emergency is
17 here, and -- and so in 2023, National Grid, which is
18 a U.K.-based corporation doing business as a local
19 utility here in New York, proposed to New York State
20 to raise our monthly bills, which would raise an
21 average residential customer bill about \$30 a month
22 to pay for its toxic frack gas system that harms all
23 New Yorkers and -- and globally, it harms everybody.

24 And it breaks our climate law, the
25 C.L.C.P.A. I'm -- I'm here to testify to ask and

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2 tell New York State, the Public Service Commission,
3 wherever you may be, not to allow this terrible hate
4 -- rate hike because we don't want to pay for more
5 fossil fuel infrastructure. And we know that
6 National Grid's business model is on building
7 infrastructure. That's how they make money. They
8 don't make money by selling gas.

9 They make money by building stuff.
10 Unless they build, they will not, you know, make
11 money for their ratepayers, their stakeholders,
12 whatever. Anyways, in 2020, I joined along with
13 thousands of my neighbors, North Brooklyn, the No
14 North Brooklyn Pipeline Alliance to fight against the
15 M.R.I. fracked gas pipeline, permanent fossil fuel
16 infrastructure because it's racist. It's harmful to
17 the health of residents and globally climate change
18 is here and we have very little time left to change
19 our course for the future of all of the earth.

20 To help with the fight, I joined the
21 rate case and witnessed firsthand how important it is
22 for the community that is the public to be involved
23 with decision-making on how to invest public money on
24 energy infrastructure and the future of fossil fuel
25 dependence.

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2 Well, you know, what was spoken about
3 earlier is, it's, you go to a -- you join a rate case
4 and it's a, you know, with the Public Service
5 Commission yet it is private and decisions are made
6 behind closed doors and all of -- it's very hard to
7 get involved. It's very complicated and I don't
8 think it's very public.

9 And so when we did fight last year, we
10 demanded that independent experts study of the
11 L.N.G., liquefied natural gas vaporizers at the
12 National Grid facility, before investing tens of
13 millions of dollars in them to investigate. And the
14 findings showed that they -- that what the National
15 Grid proposed that they were needed for reliability
16 was not true.

17 It was a lie. It was just a lie that
18 was -- and unless we had been in that case, unless we
19 had been pushing back, they would have gotten away
20 with a rate hike to pay for this, you know,
21 unnecessary L.N.G. vaporizers. Not only would it
22 spend money, but it would expand and extend the use
23 of the fossil fuel infrastructure, which we know is
24 causing us harm, causing the, you know, climate
25 emergency.

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2 So basically, we cannot trust them.

3 We demand that we retire and don't replace the gas
4 infrastructure. \$3.8 million for National Grid to
5 invest in their outdated gas system will keep us
6 burning fossil fuels into the 2080s.

7 And we want to retire the Greenpoint
8 Energy Center at 287 Maspeth Avenue, the 110-acre
9 property. And by the way, my son, Elliot, who had to
10 leave go to work, who couldn't testify, he played
11 little league there. He played. We brought him to
12 that spot where they closed it down because it was so
13 contaminated. It's actually bad for children.

14 And basically, our only hope of
15 meeting the C.L.P. -- C.P.A.'s goals is if we invest
16 in thermal energy networks. That is the truth. We
17 need to lay the -- and as Kier so adequately, you
18 know, explained, it's the same -- it's the same
19 technology. The steam pipe-fitters union is fully
20 behind this transition.

21 Instead of laying more leak prone,
22 more gas -- gas pipes. We need to be laying
23 infrastructure to move ourselves into this fantastic,
24 hopefully you know, transformative energy system and
25 -- and we have to do it right away. And I guess

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2 that's it. Thank you.

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

4 A.L.J. LECAKES: Thank you. And Ann
5 Treesa Joy and Izzy Militello, you're on deck.

6 MS. JOY: Hi, I'm Ann Treesa Joy.
7 That's A-N-N space T-R-E-E-S-A, last name J-O-Y.
8 Thank you for being here. Thank you for hearing us.
9 I feel very angry right now as I'm sure all of you
10 do, at the hypocrisy of this whole event.

11 The hypocrisy of the fact that there's
12 even a public hearing happening still where we're
13 only given three minutes to talk which you
14 specifically said, where you doubt to know nothing
15 new will be said. And that's just the thing.
16 Nothing new has been said.

17 We have been saying the same God damn
18 thing over and fucking over and we do not want it.
19 We don't want it. This is killing lives, we don't
20 want it. And if this is a public hearing, and we're
21 -- the public is fucking talking, we're saying no.
22 Listen to us.

23 And Mr. D with a small dick energy,
24 with a -- and National Grid, you have the power. You
25 all have the power to choose to do the right thing.

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2 You have the power to choose to do the right thing.
3 And you know, I know you know you're not doing the
4 right thing. Choose good. Choose good.

5 Say no, no, no to National Grid. No
6 to fossil fuels. We don't want it.

7 A.L.J. LEARY: Well, that is good.
8 Izzy Militello and Hennessy Gorkha?

9 MS. GARCIA: Garcia.

10 A.L.J. LEARY: Oh, Garcia. Thank you.

11 MS. MILITELLO: Okay. I don't know
12 where a good place is to stand. Thank you everybody.
13 My name is Izzy. I'm a high school student. I'm 16
14 years old. I'm here with Sixth Street Community
15 Center. We're a teen climate justice program and
16 we're partnering here today with No North Brooklyn
17 Pipeline. So I'm very excited to speak with you all.

18 I'm going to talk about this and why
19 this affects me personally. On September 29th, we
20 saw one of New York City's largest floods in decades.
21 Living here in Brooklyn, I saw countless videos of
22 floods in areas that I knew completely flooded. One
23 of my closest friend's basements was flooded. It
24 wasn't even the first time.

25 And so thankfully, my best friend's

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2 basement was not flooded as their family was worried
3 about it because my best friend's 90-year-old
4 grandparents live in that basement. They were
5 thankfully okay. But I'm worried about next time,
6 because this is only going to be getting worse and
7 more frequent.

8 If we don't make the sustainable
9 changes that we need to, New York is going to keep
10 suffering. Many of us, and I think most of us have
11 to commute to different boroughs to work for -- to go
12 to work or school. So many migrants, as we've said,
13 live in basement apartments, which are affected by
14 the flooding scarily.

15 It is vital to acknowledge that while
16 some can fight for climate justice out of awareness
17 and empathy, some fight for climate justice because
18 they have to for their own safety and the safety of
19 their communities. As one of the many L.G.B.T.Q.
20 youth in New York City, the climate crisis is A
21 personal issue to me.

22 As we know, New York City homelessness
23 is a huge problem, and throughout the U.S.,
24 L.G.B.T.Q. youth are 120 percent more likely to
25 experience homelessness than non-L.G.B.T.Q. youth.

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2 This is alarming. Because those experiencing
3 homelessness are impacted by climate change on a
4 massive level.

5 Having being more exposed to extreme
6 temperatures and powerful storms, not to mention
7 having no escape from poor or potentially dangerous
8 air quality. I know I wasn't the only one that saw
9 when the sky turned orange from the Canada wild
10 fires. It was dangerous just to breathe outside.

11 This is the climate crisis happening
12 right now in our city. We cannot solve this issue if
13 we continue to pollute. That's why we demand to
14 retire and don't replace gas infrastructure and
15 retire Greenpoint Energy Center at 287 Maspeth Avenue
16 in Brooklyn.

17 Fracking causes major releases of
18 methane with even higher concentrations in intensive
19 fracking regions. That harms the nearby communities.
20 That's why I am here today to oppose National Grid's
21 \$3.8 billion investment for fracked gas
22 infrastructure.

23 To ask that we protect not only me and
24 my community, but all communities in New York City
25 and beyond. Thank you.

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2 A.L.J. LEARY: Hennessy Garcia,
3 Gabrielle Roseman, you're on deck.

4 MS. GARCIA: Hi, I'm Hennessy. I'm
5 with Sixth Street Community Center, and I'm one of
6 the co-facilitators of the Teen Climate Justice
7 Program, and I'm also with No North Brooklyn Pipeline
8 Alliance. As a member of the youth, National Grid do
9 us all a favor and come back to reality with the rest
10 of us.

11 Last I checked in June, we saw orange
12 skies. In September, we saw flash floodings. Also,
13 in September, 70,000 people marched for the demand to
14 end fossil fuels. We will not fall for the
15 greenwashing and gaslighting statements from National
16 Grid today.

17 You said earlier today that you are
18 compliance -- in compliance with the C.L.C.P.A. You
19 are not. New York is supposed to get off fossil
20 fuels by 2050 to mitigate climate disaster. Yet you
21 want 3.8 billion to invest in your outdated gas
22 system that would keep burning fossil fuels into
23 2080s. Make that make sense.

24 How are you compliant when we have the
25 Greenpoint Energy Facility at 287 Maspeth Avenue?

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2 This facility houses liquefied natural gas. We are
3 supposed to be transitioning to electrifying New York
4 and not staying with fossil fuels.

5 This is stated in the C.L.C.P.A. and
6 the billed public renewables. You are proposing a
7 rate hike and increasing our bills by about \$30.
8 National Grid, on top of the climate crisis, I don't
9 know if you're aware, but we also are in a housing
10 and a rent crisis.

11 You do not pay my rent, you do not pay
12 my utilities, and I refuse to pay for something I did
13 not consent to wanting. Lastly, National Grid, we
14 shut down phase 5 of your pipeline in North Brooklyn,
15 and we will shut down your rate hike.

16 A.L.J. LEARY: Gabrielle Roseman. And
17 James Ware, you're on deck.

18 MS. ROSEMAN: Hello, my name is
19 Gabrielle Roseman. I'm 16 and I'm a high school
20 student and I go to H.B.H.S. I'm here on behalf of
21 Sixth Street Community Center and I live in
22 Sheepshead Bay with my father. Sheepshead Bay is
23 directly connected to the Atlantic Ocean, giving it a
24 major risk of flooding in as little as the next 30
25 years.

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2 I worry that his life and many other
3 lives will be at stake if we don't do something. My
4 dad has a heart monitor which needs electricity to
5 run. I can assure you that there are thousands of
6 New Yorkers who are allowing electricity for life
7 preserving necessities.

8 To get these life preserving
9 necessities, we do not need fracked gas. Over 1.5
10 million New Yorkers live in flood zones. What are
11 you going to do once their homes are flooded and
12 people are dying? Raising the price for utilities is
13 not the solution, and it is supposedly more
14 ecofriendly alternative than National Grid's showing
15 us.

16 This is not true. It's not. There's
17 other alternatives that make way more sense than
18 paying \$30 for something that's just going trash our
19 environment, but. I lived with my mom who was low
20 income and we couldn't pay for our electric bill and
21 had a week of no electricity.

22 There are thousands of people who have
23 similar situations or worse. How could you say you
24 are helping people who are lower income, yet raise
25 the bill by \$30? This is a climate crisis happening

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2 right now in our city. We cannot solve this issue if
3 we continue to pollute.

4 Fracking causes major releases of
5 methane, with even higher concentrations in intense
6 fracking regions. This harms nearby communities that
7 -- this is why I'm here today. I oppose National
8 Grid's \$3.8 billion investment for fracked gas
9 infrastructure and I hope you do as well.

10 A.L.J. LEARY: James Ware. And Aine
11 Pearson, you're on deck.

12 MR. WARE: Hi, my name is James Ware,
13 W-A-R-E. So I moved to New York about a year-and-a-
14 half ago. I moved as an energy professional working
15 in renewable energy and renewable energy development.
16 And -- and seeing kind of this rate case unfold it --
17 it kind of feels like very strange to me for being --
18 being a U.K. resident.

19 I mean, I'm sure all -- I'm sure some
20 of my pension is -- is tied up in -- in the result of
21 this case, but I do not care. I care about the
22 planet and I care about this global emissions problem
23 that we have. I hear this -- this justice washing
24 from National Grid and I hear them putting a -- a
25 dangerous chemical inside people's homes that is

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2 killing them.

3 And then they're complaining about
4 leaks and I've -- I've read many a report where leaks
5 are valuable to these gas companies. So they're
6 asking us to pay for them and then they get
7 additional revenue out of the -- the gas that is in
8 the system.

9 We hear about the -- the support to
10 the schools and the local communities and -- and
11 they're putting residents, they're putting students
12 into these schools. I guarantee that that money will
13 come back through the rate base and will come back
14 in, out of the pockets of the residents.

15 Like, working in renewable energy
16 development, I -- I've actually working with the
17 P.S.C. at the moment on the New York Harbor P.P.T.N.
18 where they're trying to put 4.7 gig of offshore
19 renewable energy into the harbor.

20 And one of the biggest problems with
21 this, and I think what they -- what it's basically
22 going to come down to is a land game. And it's who
23 can get the cheapest land in the best location. So
24 we need to stop these energy companies sitting on and
25 hoarding this -- this -- this land.

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2 And -- and make it useful and make it
3 available for the public good. So please like, say
4 no to -- to -- to the rate hike and to the -- the
5 Greenpoint Energy Center, the Maspeth 2 -- 28 -- 278?
6 287. Thank you very much.

7 A.L.J. LEARY: Thank you. Ms. Pearson
8 and Judith Can -- Canepa, you're on deck.

9 MS. PEARSON: Hello, my name is Aine,
10 A-I-N-E Pearson, P-E-A-R-S-O-N. And I'm here to
11 speak from the Brooklyn College Sustainability
12 Program. We're situated within CUNY, New York's
13 Public University, and we closely study the impact of
14 climate change and energy -- energy policy on New
15 Yorkers.

16 The most generous interpretation of
17 this rate case is to view it as a critical lack of
18 imagination on behalf of National -- National Grid
19 and the city in respect to a transition for green
20 energy. The Central National Grid site in Greenpoint
21 is located on a historic floodplain which is uniquely
22 vulnerable to the kinds of flooding and severe storm
23 events which are exacerbated by fossil fuel use.

24 Further, centralized gas
25 infrastructure is inherently prone to breakdown and

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2 stoppages in times of crisis. The U.S.'s colony of
3 Puerto Rico has learned this lesson last year and is
4 investing in decentralized renewable systems
5 accordingly.

6 Again, the literature is clear. New
7 York City will face a drastically higher amount of
8 increasingly severe flooding and storm events in the
9 coming 50 years. The system which this case -- which
10 this rate case will fund is both threatened by and
11 accelerates this kind of harmful events. And no
12 amount of capital investment in fossil fuel
13 infrastructure will change that fact.

14 An ungenerous interpretation of the
15 rate case is that it is a money grab attempted by an
16 institution within a dying fossil fuel industry. You
17 may view the environment -- environmentalists and
18 activists who oppose this plan as emotional and
19 irrational, but the truth is that we see the future
20 as clearly.

21 Fossil fuels will not serve New York
22 City through the next half century. Any further
23 investment in this destructive system is a mistake
24 that we will not accept. The history of fossil fuel
25 infrastructure bloomed here, and in Greenpoint

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2 specifically in the 1880s when Standard Oil
3 consolidated ownership of the many oil refineries
4 that are located along the creek, and it will
5 decompose there in the 2020s through our imagination
6 and tenacity. Thank you.

7 A.L.J. LEARY: Judith -- Judith Canepa
8 and Ash Drury, you're on deck.

9 MS. CANEPA: Thank you. My name is
10 Judith Canepa, C-A-N-E-P-A or J.K. And thank you for
11 this opportunity. I'm a proud member of Sane Energy
12 Project and the No North Brooklyn Pipeline. And my
13 community, I live in (unintelligible). I live across
14 the river. And we've been impacted by rate damaging
15 big time.

16 We've had health assaults. Big time.
17 Our very close neighbor, Con Edison, has been gassing
18 and poisoning us for decades. Our elders suffer from
19 heart disease. Our children breathe through asthma
20 inhalers. I have C.O.P.D.

21 Our utility has profited handsomely,
22 handsomely off of our captive need for warmth and
23 cooking. But I work all over the city. I work
24 everywhere. I have seen the seniors that I have
25 advocated for also choking and gasping, trying to get

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2 enough money together to pay for their rent, their
3 utilities, and food.

4 Staten Island, Brooklyn, Southeast
5 Queens, that's just where I work, all held in the
6 grip of National Grid. I want to talk for a minute
7 about some of their -- their vision of a kinder,
8 gentler, transformed utility. Here's some of the
9 things that they've been telling us tonight.

10 They speak of alternatives to fossil
11 fuels. Yes, they want to get us off fossil fuels.
12 How can they do that? Renewable natural gas from the
13 intense, unspeakable suffering of animals in factory
14 farms or from sewage, or even for a minute there,
15 from our compost.

16 Well, it's all methane. Methane is
17 methane. 86 times worse than carbon dioxide trapping
18 heat over 20 years. Well, that's 20 years. In the
19 shorter term, even worse. That's putting a blanket,
20 a very scary blanket over an already overheated
21 world.

22 They talk about hydrogen, the shell
23 game of hydrogen, a blend that puts to a lie the
24 claim of retiring leak prone pipe or of course, you
25 have to retire a pipe. If you're going to have to

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2 lay a new pipe to carry a gas that's one atom.

3 That's the hydrogen atom.

4 The hydrogen molecule is two hydrogen
5 atoms together. That's the smallest you can get in
6 the universe, in the entire universe. How are you
7 going to hold that in a pipe? Well, you certainly
8 have to lay a new pipe and then cross your fingers.

9 It's corrosive, it's leaky and it's
10 energy intensive. That's another one of their
11 solutions. They say that they stopped marketing gas.
12 Well, of course, they have to stop marketing gas. We
13 caught them marketing gas with ratepayer money. We
14 caught them in the act. Direct ad, direct marketing,
15 advertisements.

16 They realize they can't get away with
17 it because everybody in this room would be subjected
18 to the use of your money to market their gas. So
19 they're going to stop. They claim that they care
20 about the low-income neighbors in Brooklyn, where
21 they lay pipe.

22 But they deliberately laid the North
23 Brooklyn pipeline. What do they call it? The
24 Metropolitan Reliability Infrastructure. They
25 deliberately chose the most severely impacted

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2 communities in New York City. They chose to start in
3 Brownsville. Brownsville, which has the highest
4 asthma rate in the city. It's one of the highest in
5 the country. Those kids are on inhalers too.

6 Those elders with heart disease, why
7 would any company choose to add to the burden of
8 those children and those elders dying early of
9 C.O.P.D., of heart disease? Improving digital access
10 in their schools, that doesn't cut it. Job training
11 for sick kids with no future, that doesn't cut it.

12 And if they truly, truly want to
13 become more energy efficient, how are they going to
14 raise the bottom line? How are they going to feed
15 their executives in London? How are they going to
16 satisfy their investors? Well, they don't intend to
17 become more energy efficient. They intend to grab
18 \$3.8 billion from the Public Service Commission,
19 passing it on to us.

20 No. We say no. Close 287 Maspeth,
21 shut that door. Lock it. Tear the building down and
22 we'll take care of it. We'll take it from there.
23 Thank you very much.

24 A.L.J. LEARY: Ash Drury, Chai Smith,
25 you are on deck. I'm going to ask everyone

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2 remaining, we have too many people remaining for the
3 time we have left. I am begging you to be kind to
4 the people who also want to speak and keep your
5 comments to three minutes.

6 Much appreciated.

7 MR. DRURY: Ash had to leave early. I
8 will be speaking on their behalf. My name is Ash
9 Drury, last name D-R-U-R-Y. Hello, my name is Ash
10 and I am a compost worker with B.K. ROT, an
11 environmental justice center compost non-profit based
12 in North Brooklyn. Our neighborhoods and
13 communities, we know what environmental racism and
14 classism looks like.

15 Asthma rates, blood lead poisoning,
16 urban heat island effect, and storm flooding all make
17 it very clear that climate change and capitalist
18 accumulation create sacrifice zones like Bushwick and
19 Greenpoint.

20 More than 150 years into North able as
21 frontline Brooklyn being abused as a frontline fossil
22 fuel infrastructure. Enough is enough. National
23 Grid is one of many companies attempting to profit
24 off throwing oil on a forest fire.

25 In the sixth great extinction,

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2 National Grid tells us we need more gas, more money,
3 more pay. \$3.8 billion of our hard-earned money to
4 spread the empire of gas is to handcuff ourselves and
5 give the key to our jailer. We can't afford \$30
6 more, and we definitely can't afford the warmer,
7 dirtier atmosphere it would pay for.

8 No rate hike. National Grid out of
9 Brooklyn by 2030. Community control of the land. A
10 British corporation, National Grid is a colonial
11 empire's last breath. The record of lies to
12 community members lies to the P.S.C., secret pipeline
13 building and other sites of contamination are
14 evidence that National Grid does not care about the
15 people it profits off.

16 National Grid gives pennies to small
17 programs like the Brooklyn Botanical Garden and
18 school programs as an attempt to greenwash, to bribe
19 us to smile as the water rises. Shut it down.

20 A.L.J. LEARY: Chai Smith, Tamara
21 Wyndham, you're on deck.

22 MS. SMITH: Hi, J.K. knew how to
23 figure it out, you just got to talk into the mic. My
24 name is Chai Smith, that's S-M-I-T-H. And I'm here
25 today to stand against the National Grid's rate hike

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2 and against the existence of 287 Maspeth. I am a
3 born and raised New Yorker. I work with No North
4 Brooklyn Pipeline, but I'm here today representing
5 myself, a human being whose community's future is
6 being threatened.

7 I have been a customer of National
8 Grid. I've stopped. I will be again when I
9 inevitably move. I don't get a choice in where I get
10 my energy. \$30 more is ridiculous. You should have
11 been collecting this money. Where did it all go?
12 You say you want -- you hold this hearing because you
13 want to hear our comments, but you don't even hire a
14 sound guy.

15 I'm sorry. Are you short on cash,
16 National Grid? You should ask your C.E.O. -- C.E.O.
17 daddy, John Pettigrew, who pockets over 6 billion
18 quid a year. Another colonizer. I don't stand
19 against National Grid's employees. They are my
20 neighbors.

21 I simply believe we should all have
22 jobs that work for companies that do not threaten
23 each other's futures. I talked to many of your
24 customers on the streets. Nearly none of them
25 actually knew that they were going to receive a rate

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2 hike, nonetheless such a large one.

3 This hearing wasn't publicized enough
4 considering the toll it will take to many people's
5 monthly bills and futures. You say, we are very
6 focused on disadvantaged communities. You do a lot
7 of outreach. I hear. Outreach, right. To these
8 communities to build poison lines under their homes.

9 You should help by getting Brooklyn
10 unhooked from your poison system. I will always
11 stand against dickheads who get rich off of poisoning
12 land and poisoning families for profit. It's
13 disgusting. I see National Grid. I see your get
14 rich scheme who has no interest in a future where we
15 exist.

16 The danger is imminent; let's we work
17 towards the greater future up ahead. My arms are for
18 the earth, my heart is for the people. I mean, \$30
19 more? Shut the front door.

20 A.L.J. LEARY: Tamara Wyndham and
21 Michele Greenberg, you're on deck.

22 MS. WYNDHAM: My name is Tamara
23 Wyndham, W-Y-N-D-H-A-M. We have been fighting this
24 tooth and nail from the beginning. Fracked gas is
25 poisonous. Fracked gas is flammable. Fracked gas

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2 pipelines leak. Fracked gas pipelines can explode.
3 Brooklyn residents are being asked to pay for
4 something that could kill them.

5 The earth is dying. This is a climate
6 crisis. Why are you building a fracked gas pipeline?
7 No to fracking. No to -- no to pipelines. No to the
8 hike. We won't pay for your pipeline and we are not
9 going to stop fighting you.

10 A.L.J. LEARY: Michele -- Michele
11 Greenberg and Kathryn LaMontagne, you're on deck.

12 MS. GREENBERG: Good evening. I'm
13 Michele Greenberg, and I live near here in Brooklyn.
14 I'm strongly opposed to any rake hike by National
15 Grid with the goal of expanding or repairing their
16 infrastructure.

17 Instead, New York City and State need
18 to be working toward a transition away from dangerous
19 and leaky gas systems, and towards energy sources
20 that are both safer for city residents like us, and
21 that help us to move our State and country out of the
22 current climate catastrophe.

23 Everyone who has lived in New York
24 City for the past six months to a year has been
25 shocked to experience the most extreme heat in

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2 recorded history. To see and choke on smoke from
3 Canadian wildfires, which arrived here for the first
4 time ever, and to watch previously unimaginable
5 floodwaters shooting past our doors.

6 Climate change is no longer something
7 we need to imagine. It's here now. To get out of
8 this mess, National Grid's gas systems should be
9 retired, not replaced. We need to move away from
10 fracked gas energy and towards renewable energy.

11 This is clearly outlined under New
12 York State law. The C.L.C.P.A. goals are to
13 drastically reduce fossil fuel usage by 2030, and
14 eliminate that usage completely by 2050. This cannot
15 happen if we pay \$3.8 billion for National Grid to
16 invest in their gas system.

17 The Public Service Commission and the
18 Governor must ensure that we meet the State climate
19 law requirements and protect our residents and
20 businesses. I urge the New York State Public Service
21 Commission to reject any rate hikes for National
22 Grid's fracked gas infrastructure.

23 Postpone investments in the Greenpoint
24 Energy Center until an independent assessment is
25 conducted and deny any investments in National Grid's

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2 leak prone pipe program for any non-emergency
3 repairs. This program guarantees that we'll still be
4 burning and transporting gas in 2080. That is
5 unacceptable.

6 The Commission must mandate a rapid
7 transition to energy efficiency. Replacing dangerous
8 gas pipelines with another gas pipeline is bad for
9 everyone in the city. And is especially so for low
10 income and communities of color that continue to be
11 targeted for toxic projects.

12 We need to act now to ensure that we
13 survive and thrive into the future. Thank you.

14 A.L.J. LEARY: Kathryn LaMontagne and
15 Tohmi Barrett, you're on deck.

16 MS. LAMONTAGNE: Hi, Kathryn
17 LaMontagne. Kathryn with a Y and no E and LaMontagne
18 is L-A-M-O-N-T-A-G-N-E. Hi. Thanks for your serious
19 consideration of our testimonies tonight. I'm here
20 because I'm extremely concerned about the
21 ramifications of National Grid's proposed rate
22 increase for further investment in fossil fuel
23 infrastructure in New York.

24 We all know that fossil fuels are the
25 leading cause of climate catastrophe. And that

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2 living in close proximity to these pipelines and
3 power plants is extremely dangerous to human -- human
4 health. The communities closest to National Grid's
5 poisonous infrastructure are predominantly black and
6 brown.

7 This infrastructure proposal is
8 plainly racism. It is environmental racism. The
9 fact that we have to say that these community's
10 health should come before National Grid's bottom line
11 is sick. We need to be leaving these dangerous
12 extractive industries in the past.

13 We need to move forward to healthful
14 and renewable power sources like thermal energy. In
15 addition to the climate and health costs, approving
16 this proposal, of approving this proposal, the
17 average National Grid customer would take on an
18 additional \$360 a year. This is a lot of money that
19 most of us just don't have. It is actually a lot of
20 money for most people.

21 Please, please reject this proposal.
22 Do not force us to pay for the nail National Grid
23 wants to drive in our planet's coffin. Do not pay --
24 do not make us pay to poison ourselves, to poison our
25 neighbors, to poison our Earth. Please choose like,

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2 humanity, justice, just anything but this.

3 A.L.J. LEARY: Tohmi Barrett, Bonnie
4 Loewenstein. Ms. Barrett is not here. Is that
5 correct? Or you are here?

6 MS. BARRETT: Yes.

7 A.L.J. LEARY: Sorry.

8 MS. BARRETT: Hi, everybody. My name
9 is Tohmi Barrett, B-A-R-R-E-T-T. I wasn't planning
10 on making a statement, but I feel really inspired by
11 others, and I showed up because I deeply care about
12 this issue. I feel compelled to make a statement
13 against this pipeline but in favor of human optimism.

14 I believe deeply in human ingenuity
15 and I refuse to cede to the concept that humans are
16 inherently destructive by our nature. The desire to
17 heal our land and each other is alive within us all,
18 clouded only by shadowy desires to generate and hoard
19 monetary wealth at the expense of the only wealth
20 that is truly regenerative, which is our Earth.

21 We have the capacity for great
22 ingenuity that acts on synergy between people,
23 plants, organisms and our Earth, as well as the
24 ability to invest in a reciprocal future. We have
25 the capacity to build energetic systems that are not

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2 extractive, racist, and environmentally degrading if
3 only we saw motivations beyond profit.

4 Changing our priorities will take
5 great strength. Like addiction, it will take care
6 and commitment to turn away from what's easy and
7 indulgent, but ultimately damaging. I believe
8 without a doubt that we are capable of moving beyond
9 new sources, moving towards new sources of energy.

10 But it will only happen when we fully
11 reject new investments into a broken and
12 unsustainable future. There is not an inch on earth
13 where it is ethical to scar it. If you saw the earth
14 as our mother, our son, our daughter and ourselves,
15 you would not settle for replacing one knife with
16 another.

17 And we must say no. Thank you.

18 A.L.J. LEARY: Bonnie Loewenstein.
19 Maya Ar -- Aronoff, you are on deck.

20 MS. LOEWENSTEIN: My name is Bonnie
21 Loewenstein. L-O-E-W-E-N-S-T-E-I-N. I've lived in
22 Brooklyn all my life, all of my life, and I've been
23 an anti-fracking and climate activist on and off for
24 many years. Thank you, Public Service Commission for
25 holding this hearing.

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2 I am speaking up for the community and
3 for community and environmental health, for rate
4 paying justice, and for climate sanity. I am
5 speaking for my sons and my grandsons. I object to
6 the outrageous bill hike of more than \$30 a month
7 that National Grid has requested. The company wants
8 to -- wants it to pay for a huge renewal and
9 expansion of its toxic fracked gas system.

10 This monstrous development would keep
11 us from meeting the New York State law requiring
12 getting off all fossil fuels by 2050. It further
13 flies in the face of the climate catastrophe it has
14 done so much to cause, while stealing \$3.8 billion
15 from us to drive profits.

16 The dangerous pipeline, the dangerous
17 pipelines all need to be shut down and the gas power
18 plants retired, paving the way for hugely expanding
19 renewable energy. A prime example is the Greenpoint
20 Energy Center. No half billion dollars to keep it
21 going. We won't pay to be poisoned.

22 I urge the Public Service Commission
23 to make the sane and just decision and deny this
24 request.

25 A.L.J. LEARY: Maya Aronoff and Alex

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2 Beauchamp, you're on deck.

3 MS. ARONOFF: Do I spell the names?

4 A.L.J. LEARY: Yeah, spell your last
5 name.

6 MS. ARONOFF: Okay. Last name is P --
7 Ponton, P-O-N-T-O with a tilde, -N space, Aronoff, A-
8 R-O-N-O-F-F as in Frank. Hi, everyone. So I'm
9 actually not a resident of Brooklyn. I just moved in
10 with a relative in North Jersey who's lived there for
11 40 years from Michigan because I'm going to law
12 school in New York City.

13 Okay. So why am I up here talking
14 about an issue affecting Brooklyn when I just got
15 here and, you know, don't want to speak for y'all's
16 neighborhood. Because the place I moved from is
17 Detroit. And before that, I lived in Denver. Before
18 that, I lived in El Paso. Before that, I was a
19 consumer energy customer growing up in Michigan.

20 Okay. So I moved around a lot.
21 What's the point? I get here two seconds later, it's
22 still the same bullshit with a new zip code. I lived
23 in a sacrifice zone in Detroit. And one of the
24 biggest things I was up to for the last year there
25 was testifying against rate increases for utility

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2 companies who wanted communities to pay them to
3 poison us.

4 And that's what I was doing in Denver.
5 And that's what I was doing in El Paso. And that's
6 what I'm going to be doing in Newark. And that's
7 what I'm coming here as a neighbor to Brooklyn as a
8 law student in New York City to say, again, same
9 bullshit, different zip code.

10 So I have a lot to learn about
11 Brooklyn and, you know, the specifics of the struggle
12 that y'all are going through, but it really, it's
13 crazy how the script is exactly the same of these
14 billionaire utility corporations making billions in
15 profits, begging low income and middle income people
16 to pay for their own debts.

17 To pay for the same energy systems
18 that are destroying our planet, destroying our homes,
19 destroying our health, and is going to destroy our
20 future and my generation, and to pay more money for
21 it, when the cost of living is already insane and the
22 cost of living, particularly in New York City, is
23 absolutely like, just, I can't even put in words when
24 I hear about the rates that, you know, my new family,
25 I guess, are -- are paying.

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2 And I'm very grateful to be living
3 with a relative. So yeah, that's -- everybody's
4 pretty much all said it. And the one more thing I'll
5 say is that, it's really a trip to be a law student
6 getting up here saying this because a lot of times
7 the folks in power on these utility commissions will
8 say, oh, well, you know, run for office.

9 Why don't you be on the utility
10 commission one day? Why don't you, you know, be the
11 person who does this while pitting labor, working
12 class people against one another in order to invest
13 in this bullshit? And I'm, guess I'll just close on
14 this, we don't have time for us to get in these
15 offices. Not that these offices are actually where
16 the power to change things comes from.

17 It always comes from the communities
18 standing up and saying not in our neighborhood, never
19 in our neighborhood, and not in anybody's
20 neighborhood. Shouldn't matter the zip code. Nobody
21 should be paying to get poisoned. Please make the
22 decisions now because my generation, otherwise we're
23 -- we're not going to have time to get to those
24 positions because we're going to be focused, as so
25 many people are now already just on the basic day-to-

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2 day survival of the floods and air pollution.

3 And one more thing I'll say until they
4 tell me I have three minutes is up --.

5 A.L.J. LEARY: I'm telling you.

6 MS. ARONOFF: Oh, okay. Well, then
7 I'll finish my sentence and I'll go. Is I have a lot
8 of health issues. And back when I did live in
9 sacrifice zones, I was constantly sick day after day
10 after day after day. And so if this fracked gas is
11 going through more sacrifice zones, this is -- this
12 is not just a future thing, it's a daily thing, and
13 it's only getting worse the longer we wait.

14 So thanks for having me as a guest in
15 Brooklyn and yeah.

16 A.L.J. LEARY: Alex Beauchamp and Tim
17 -- Timothy Kent, you're on deck. If I -- if you are
18 on deck please come to the front row so you do not
19 waste one second of time getting up here.

20 MR. BEAUCHAMP: Sorry. I'm Alex
21 Beauchamp.

22 A.L.J. LEARY: Oh! Beauchamp?

23 MR. BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, Beauchamp is B-
24 E-A-U-C-H-A-M-P evens though it looks like Beauchamp.
25 I'm the Northeast Region Director at Food & Water

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2 Watch, I'm here -- and I want to thank you for
3 holding the public hearing and having the time for me
4 to speak.

5 I'm here to urge Governor Hochul and
6 the Public Service Commission to reject National
7 Grid's rate hike. Look, everyone has said it over
8 and over and over again tonight, but asking
9 ratepayers to put a bunch of our money into more
10 fossil fuel infrastructure is absurd.

11 And it's absurd for at least two
12 reasons. One, we literally can't afford it, right?
13 Utility rates are already unaffordable. We've lived
14 through maybe two years of panicked headlines over
15 and over and over again, we hear about inflation.
16 And even in that environment, a 30 percent hike is
17 crazy.

18 We just don't have 30 percent more
19 money. We don't have 30 dollars more a month to pay.
20 You can't just keep going up back and asking for
21 more, and more, and more if you're the monopoly
22 utility. So we know that that's what National Grid
23 will do. The P.S.C. and Governor Hochul have to put
24 a stop to it, stop the rate hike, we can't afford it.

25 We also, of course, can't afford to

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2 keep building new fossil fuel infrastructure anywhere
3 in the State, indeed anywhere in the world. You
4 know, I live here in Brooklyn, just in Brooklyn, this
5 fall, we suffered through historic extreme flooding.
6 This summer, we choked on smoke-filled skies for the
7 first time that I can remember as a New Yorker at
8 least from -- from wildfires.

9 And we know that's the tip of the
10 iceberg, right? It is going to get worse, even if we
11 were actually getting off fossil fuels at the speed
12 we need to and of course we are not. So we can't
13 afford it and we -- we cannot keep building new
14 fossil fuel infrastructure if we have any hope of
15 meeting the goals of the C.L.C.P.A. or of avoiding
16 climate catastrophe.

17 And by the way, the C.L.C.P.A.
18 requires all State agencies including the P.S.C. to
19 say whether something complies with the law. They
20 seem to take that just not seriously at all, right?
21 So now is the time to change that, Governor Hochul
22 and the P.S.C. have to take that responsibility
23 seriously.

24 It's impossible to say that building
25 new fossil fuel infrastructure won't make it harder

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2 to hit the goals. It makes it harder and it doesn't
3 matter whether we're burning some other form of
4 methane, we have to stop setting things on fire for
5 energy and to keep us warm. We have to do it now.

6 And the company is not going to do it
7 for us. We need Governor Hochul to act, we need the
8 P.S.C. to act, thanks again.

9 A.L.J. LEARY: Timothy -- Timothy
10 Kent.

11 MR. KENT: Yeah, K-E-N-T.

12 A.L.J. LEARY: K-E-N-T.

13 MR. KENT: Yeah.

14 A.L.J. LEARY: And Sarah Reed, you're
15 on deck.

16 MR. KENT: Hello, my name is Tim. I'm
17 a lifelong New Yorker and I volunteer with many of
18 these groups. Thank you to Governor Hochul and the
19 Public Service Commission for holding these hearings.
20 Everyone has addressed the issue in the room.
21 National Grid's creating it's own existence,
22 expanding the gas system, it is time to leave these
23 outdated forms of energy in the past.

24 New York has always been a city that
25 looks forward and sets ideals that others eventually

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2 adopt. And it is an insult to us as ratepayers and
3 taxpayers to pay more of our money to expand the
4 system that we know is only digging holes in our
5 climate. And if this hike is approved, it will not
6 be long before National Grid comes back and asks us
7 again once more to take more money from our pockets.

8 I would also like to say as an
9 individual, in future hearings, both sides should
10 have an opening statement as National Grid did, we
11 talk about a hard three minutes that National Grid,
12 you got like 15 minutes to basically just spread lies
13 about what they're doing.

14 I would hope that anyone who feels
15 that they had the public trust to have the title of
16 judge would see how unfair a position that is. And
17 thank you for your time, everyone.

18 A.L.J. LEARY: Sarah Reed. Phillip
19 Opsasnick -- Opsansnick, you're on deck.

20 MS. REED: Thank you. My name is
21 Sarah Orleans Reed. Sarah is spelled with an H,
22 Orleans is spelled like New Orleans, and Reed is
23 spelled R-E-E-D. I'm a resident of Brooklyn. And
24 I'm here to ask the P.S.C. to reject the rate hike
25 and to retire -- and to retire not replace fossil

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2 fuel infrastructure.

3 And I also just want to thank everyone
4 else who came here to testify tonight, means a lot to
5 me and to my future kid who is doing this with me
6 tonight. National Grid is asking to spend \$4 billion
7 on fossil fuel infrastructure. I'm asking you to
8 reject the rate hike, which would cost ratepayers --
9 payers 30 more dollars per month by -- by March 2024,
10 at a time when gas prices are already at an all-time
11 high.

12 By 2019, nearly 20 percent of families
13 in New York were already energy burdened according to
14 the Mayor's Office of Sustainability. The fund for
15 the City of New York found that in 2023, 50 percent
16 of working-age New Yorkers do not earn enough to keep
17 an apartment, access sufficient food and health care,
18 and pay for transportation. This is up from 36
19 percent for -- in 2021.

20 So that's 50 percent just two years
21 later, up from 36 percent, two years before. At a
22 time like this, it would be a strange public policy
23 decision by the P.S.C. to prioritize the revenue of
24 the private UK-based company reported 300 million in
25 annual profits over New Yorkers by allowing National

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2 Grid to raise its rates.

3 It's an even more flood -- flawed
4 policy decision when you consider that the fossil
5 fuel infrastructure the National Grid would like to
6 expand is what's causing unfathomable heat waves and
7 toxic air pollution locally. It's so flawed that it
8 should be against the law and it is.

9 The Department of Environment has
10 rejected on several occasions, proposals to extend
11 gas infrastructure on the grounds that doing so would
12 be in violation of the Climate Leadership And
13 Community Protection Act because the D.E.P. honored
14 our climate law, the proposed site of the Astoria
15 Energy gas plant is now slated to become a site for
16 storage and distribution of clean offshore wind.

17 The P.S.C. has also been an important
18 critic of National Grid's request for public dollars,
19 as others here have pointed out recently voting to
20 reject the request for 70 million in public money to
21 construct L.N.G. vaporizers in North Brooklyn, after
22 finding that the proposed vaporizers were not needed.

23 National Grid has a history of
24 misrepresenting the need for their proposed projects
25 with regard to energy needs. So I ask the Public

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2 Service Commission to review their -- their request
3 again with due scrutiny.

4 Finally, National Grid has a chance to
5 stay in business by becoming a non-gas utility but
6 right now they're blowing it. The Utility Thermal
7 Energy Network and Jobs Act of 2022 opened the door
8 to utilities to become providers of thermal services
9 through neighborhood-scale heat pump networks but
10 right now National Grid is doing a careless and
11 incomplete job with the pilot that they proposed that
12 was subsequently rejected in what appeared to be a
13 deliberate effort to sabotage the idea of thermal
14 energy networks. Please reject this rate hike.
15 Thank you so much.

16 A.L.J. LEARY: Thank you. Phillip
17 Opsasnick.

18 MR. OPSASNICK: Yeah.

19 A.L.J. LEARY: All right.

20 MR. OPSASNICK: Very impressive, yeah.

21 A.L.J. LEARY: Ash Wolfson is on deck.

22 MR. OPSASNICK: Good evening, all.

23 And thank you for your time and your generosity and
24 listening us to, and listening to us tonight. And
25 thank you everyone who showed up this evening. My

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2 name is Philip Opsasnick, I live in occupied
3 Canarsie, Munsee, Lenape territory colloquially known
4 as Bushwick, Brooklyn, where I am a National Grid
5 customer.

6 I work as a professor of philosophy
7 and ethics at Fordham University and as a member of
8 Sane Energy Project. I'm also a proud member of the
9 No North Brooklyn Pipeline Alliance and stand in
10 vehement opposition to the rate hike as it has been
11 proposed. I was also at the afternoon hearing.

12 So I had two different opportunities
13 to see the presentation, which for some reason, were
14 different presentations than the night -- the evening
15 one and the afternoon one. But in the presentation
16 in both of those they stated that their second
17 priority was to quote, support the clean energy
18 transition, and advancing the goals and the
19 C.L.C.P.A, unquote.

20 This does not align with the detailed
21 plan and the rate hike at all. And I cannot
22 emphasize this enough. In fact, approving the rate
23 hike as it stands would severely delay any progress
24 toward the C.L.C.P.A. goals.

25 In other words, approving the rate

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2 hike as it is would result in a clear unambiguous
3 failure to meet the C.L.C.P.A. deadlines. If you
4 notice, National Grid did not provide any details of
5 how they are quote, unquote, prioritizing this
6 transition because those details do not exist, since
7 they are not prioritizing them.

8 Paying \$3.8 billion for National Grid
9 to invest in their outdated gas system that would
10 keep us burning fossil fuels into the 2080s is a
11 direct rejection of the C.L.C.P.A. The numbers do
12 not add up and we are not that dumb.

13 My second point in regard to the
14 presentation. Under that same listing of priorities,
15 they are quote, prioritizing benefits for
16 disadvantaged communities, unquote. For those people
17 who are not familiar, this term disadvantaged
18 communities is a technical term used by NYSERDA,
19 which is the New York State Energy and Research and
20 Development Authority.

21 NYSERDA has produced a map of
22 disadvantaged communities in Brooklyn. And if you
23 look at that map, there is a remarkably high
24 concentration of disadvantaged communities in areas
25 where there is National Grid, fracked gas

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2 infrastructure, such as the entirety of the North
3 Brooklyn Pipeline from Brownsville to Bed-Stuy, and
4 then across Bushwick, Williamsburg, and Greenpoint.

5 National Grid has created and have
6 worsened to that problem that is to say they have
7 been more than complicit in this as they have been
8 proactive agents of environmental racism repeatedly
9 targeting areas like Brownsville, Brooklyn, which has
10 some of the worst asthma and cancer rates in the
11 entire country because of this very history.

12 Again, there was no sufficient details
13 of how they're doing this because those details do
14 not exist. We live in a world where climate crises
15 have become normalized in everyday occurrences. This
16 is a global problem. And the specific rate case is
17 something that impacts all of us and
18 disproportionately impacts socially vulnerable and
19 poor people.

20 Instead, National Grid focused on
21 greenwashing. And then earlier -- in the earlier
22 session this afternoon, there was a few people who
23 spoke about how National Grid gave money to a school
24 or to a garden. Now, I'm a teacher who loves to
25 garden but that's not what we're talking about right

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2 now.

3 This rate case is not about National
4 Grid -- I'm sorry, this rate case is not about
5 National Grid customers in Brooklyn paying nearly
6 \$400 more per year to support National Grid's
7 volunteer efforts. That is not their job and that is
8 not our duty.

9 Taking it -- what they are doing is
10 taking advantage of differences in power to say that
11 something is nice and good, when in fact it is
12 killing you and I mean that. A 2021 study from
13 Harvard School of Public Health found out one out of
14 every five deaths is attributable to air pollution
15 from fossil fuels.

16 That's 20 percent of deaths in general
17 are attributable to air pollution from fossil fuels.
18 How are we even still talking about this continuing
19 into the future? We are at a critical moment. A
20 rate case is meant to be a democratic process, but
21 has been designed to be anything but.

22 One critical step we can take toward a
23 legitimate and sufficiently democratic process is to
24 have an independent assessment for the requested
25 investments for the Greenpoint Energy Center. We're

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2 talking about half a billion dollars. I urge the
3 P.S.C. and their commissioners to take this request
4 seriously.

5 These moments of decision-making are
6 absolutely critical and are enormous and impact
7 people for generations. I appreciate Elliott's
8 comments about the P.S.C. and wanted to emphasize
9 that you now have an opportunity to strengthen that
10 legacy as individuals and as a collective. Thank you
11 very much for your time.

12 A.L.J. LEARY: Ash Wolfson is up. Ash
13 Wolfson. Margot Spindelman, you're on deck.

14 MR. WOLFSON: Hi, my name is Ash
15 Wolfson, that's W-O-L-F-S-O-N. It is disgusting that
16 we could be considering a rate hike during this cost
17 of living crisis. I know so many people who are
18 considering -- who are not going to the doctor, who
19 are cutting -- who are cutting back on the food that
20 they eat, who are considering going homeless or
21 leaving the State, just because they cannot afford to
22 continue to live here.

23 We are oppressed on the one hand by
24 low wages. And on the other hand by high rent, high
25 cost of food, high cost of medical care, and high

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2 cost of education. We -- it is unconscionable to
3 raise rates in this context.

4 Furthermore, the fact that these rates
5 are being raised in order to fund the continuing
6 poisoning of New Yorkers and of the climate is
7 disgusting. It'd be one thing if they wanted to
8 raise rates to do something that would benefit us,
9 but they are actively harming us, it is literally
10 poison.

11 Over the past few months, we have
12 lived through climate crisis after crisis as we are
13 buffeted, we can't continue to do this. To the
14 lawmakers who are considering this rent -- this rate
15 hike, we ask that you listen to your constituents and
16 listen to your conscious, or failing that at least
17 listen to the law to National Grid if you want to
18 help us, leave.

19 A.L.J. LEARY: I have five people that
20 still need to speak and we need to leave in 10
21 minutes. This room has to be cleared. I leave it to
22 you to respect the people that are following here.

23 MS. SPINDELMAN: I've made it real
24 short.

25 A.L.J. LEARY: Good.

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2 MS. SPINDELMAN: My name is Margot
3 Spindelman, S-P-I-N-D-E-L-M-A-M. The world is
4 breaking everywhere, even here. And this proceeding
5 is going on like there's no tomorrow. You're right.
6 There's no tomorrow, not the way you're running
7 things. Kim Fraczek read me this quote from the Cop
8 City protests where people who are waging justified
9 were tear gassed by the police this week.

10 Here's the quote. This is a global
11 war of incompatible visions for the future. The
12 P.S.C. needs to think about which side they're on,
13 thank you.

14 A.L.J. LEARY: Josef -- Josef
15 Reisenbichler and Caleb Weil, you're on deck. Josef.
16 Is Caleb Weil here? Good.

17 MR. REISENBICHLER: Hello. Yeah, you
18 said that right. Hello, my name is Josef, do you
19 need me to spell my last name? Okay.

20 My name is Josef Reisenbichler, I've
21 been a New York resident my whole life, lived in
22 Queens, Bronx, I grew up in the Lower East Side. And
23 I currently reside in Bed-Stuy.

24 Since -- since the end of school, I've
25 been a participant, a volunteer, and even a worker in

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2 many environmental organizations working to keep
3 fracking out of New York State, which we were very
4 successful at because we are facing a climate crisis
5 in which we are about to reach tipping points that
6 will be beyond our control.

7 And that will leave New York City as
8 one of the many coastal cities that will be
9 underwater if we do not take direct -- direct action
10 on this issue right now. So National Grid did not
11 inform the communities of New York about this new
12 project in order to inform them about these rate
13 hikes which we will have to pay for their
14 shareholders which they are not, which is the -- who
15 they are loyal to in the first place is generating
16 profits for themselves and their shareholders and not
17 actually using this project to meet New York's
18 immediate energy needs.

19 Therefore, I am urging the entire
20 State of New York and the entire world to come
21 together and to reject all new fossil fuel energy
22 projects. We must reject -- we must also reject the
23 idea of the emissions targets, it's the only thing
24 that we need in order to confront this crisis.

25 We need to actually stop what is

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2 causing the crisis in the first place, which is only
3 fossil fuel projects, coal-fired power plants, oil
4 and gas and right -- right now, new fracked gas and
5 infrastructure as a -- as a brown, low-income
6 resident who has lived in New York City my whole
7 life, fighting for my family who has witnessed many
8 climate disasters here in the State, as well as other
9 communities that we have worked together with.

10 I'm urging us to reject National
11 Grid's \$4 billion rate hike, and to support
12 renewables, all thermal energy networks. And also,
13 we -- in order to transition away from fossil fuels
14 and to not use fossil fuels in order to build new
15 clean energy projects. We need a new baseload of
16 energy to do this.

17 And this is why I'm currently working
18 with an organization called Nuclear New York because
19 I believe that we must -- the nuclear energy must be
20 included in the transition to a clean energy grid.
21 It is -- it is the misinformation has caused us to
22 fear this energy source and this prevent -- and this
23 actually push new fossil fuel infrastructure into New
24 York due to like the closing of Indian Point, which I
25 admit and I have campaigned for, but right now, I

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2 believe that we must work on relicensing this plant
3 and other new advanced nuclear power plants because
4 they have to be part of the whole transition to a
5 clean energy source.

6 And we must listen to the science of
7 all of this rather than the -- we must listen to the
8 words of a scientist instead of our own fears. As
9 you know, climate change has become way too urgent
10 for us to be afraid of investing in renewables,
11 investing in new thermal energy networks, and
12 nuclear.

13 So again, as a brown low-income
14 resident with a whole family of brown low-income, you
15 know, relatives I'm urging -- I'm urging everyone,
16 the entire state to reject all fossil fuel energy
17 projects and support, as I said, all -- all the clean
18 energy renewable sources that we can including
19 nuclear, so thank you. And solar wind.

20 A.L.J. LEARY: Caleb Weil. Kim
21 Fraczek, you're on deck.

22 MR. WEIL: Yeah, W-E-I-L, Caleb Weil.
23 Hi everyone, my name is Caleb Weil, I work with the
24 Urban Homesteading Assistance Board's climate
25 resiliency team, where we connect affordable co-ops

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2 across New York City with resources to help their
3 buildings become more sustainable, affordable, and
4 resilient in the face of climate change.

5 The Public Service Commission must
6 deny this rate hike, not only to halt the expansion
7 of harmful fracked gas infrastructure throughout some
8 of New York's most vulnerable communities, but also
9 because in order to meet city and State
10 decarbonization goals, we must lessen not increase
11 the burden of the cost of energy.

12 Energy burden, which is where
13 households spending more than 6 percent of their
14 income on utility bills is one of the most common
15 issues facing the community we work with. So energy
16 burden is an extra cost on those living in
17 inefficient buildings.

18 It also creates a cycle whereby people
19 cannot budget for energy upgrades because of high
20 utility bills and they're forced to put off
21 preventative and cost-saving maintenance from solar
22 to heating system optimization that would reduce
23 energy burden in the long run.

24 We've seen rising utility costs for
25 fuel and electricity over the past few years with

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2 very few options for relief for those living in
3 affordable housing. Spending more on energy means
4 saving less for cost-saving carbon-reducing upgrades
5 -- upgrades that need to be implemented in order for
6 the city's goals of eventual carbon neutrality to
7 better the air quality in some of our city's most
8 disadvantaged neighborhoods and ultimately, to lower
9 the cost of energy for all.

10 At this critical moment, we need to
11 invest in the health of our communities, in clean
12 energy, and in energy systems that work for all of
13 us, not in the expansion of toxic fossil fuel
14 infrastructure, which only benefits the investors and
15 executives of National Grid.

16 In summary, I'm here to urge zero
17 dollars for the fracked gas infrastructure. And
18 yeah, thank you very much for your time.

19 A.L.J. LEARY: Kim Fraczek. Anne
20 Basson, on deck.

21 MS. FRACZEK: I didn't present --
22 prepare a testimony tonight, I'm part of the rate
23 case as -- as you all know, my name is Kim Fraczek, I
24 live in Bushwick, Brooklyn, I'm a National Grid
25 ratepayer for the last 20 years.

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2 Tonight is the Community Board 1,
3 Brooklyn meeting right now where we're sitting in
4 this room and they are voting tonight as the
5 environmental committee of Community Board 1 has put
6 forward a motion to deny the rate hike for any fossil
7 fuel infrastructure.

8 And also, to -- the Community Board 1
9 wants to be involved in a stakeholder process to
10 really take a look at 287 Maspeth, which is a huge
11 parcel of land in our community that is dedicated to
12 fossil fuel expansion, no, we don't want this
13 anymore.

14 Additionally, so they -- I will be
15 filing that letter in the -- in the docket.
16 Additionally, there's a huge meeting for a lot of our
17 assembly and senate tonight. And there's another
18 meeting for our city council tonight.

19 So they were not able to be here and
20 speak at our press conference today, but Senator
21 Julia Salazar and Assembly member Ellen -- Emily
22 Gallagher led a letter of 30 other senators and
23 assembly members in the district of National Grid,
24 whose customers would see this rate increase.

25 They also just sent a letter to

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2 Governor Hochul and the Public Service Commission

3 which I will also be filing into the docket.

4 Additionally, the city council sent a letter to the

5 Public Service Commission that we will be uploading

6 into the docket. So I just want to -- what you see

7 here, there's more of us and people that represent

8 us, there's more of us out there that don't want this

9 rate hike.

10 And we don't want to see 287 Maspeth

11 expanded. Additionally, we're standing a few blocks

12 from -- on Saturday, National Grid had a massive

13 pipeline leak over on Atlantic Avenue. And right

14 now, there are workers over there that have shut down

15 the whole block. The pharmacy has closed.

16 The grocery store has closed because

17 of gas infrastructure that National Grid is in charge

18 of. Let us not be bailing out the basement when

19 there are holes in the roof, okay? No more digging

20 up the ground to pull out a bad piece of

21 infrastructure to put another piece of the same

22 infrastructure and thanks.

23 A.L.J. LEARY: Thank you. Anne, come

24 on up.

25 MS. BASSON: Hello, I'm Anne Basson,

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2 I'm a semi-disabled anti-fracker. I'm here, I didn't
3 prepare anything but I -- the only way I knew about
4 this was from my activist friends. So when National
5 Grid speaks about community outreach, the only way I
6 knew is because I'm part of the choir, right? And I
7 live in an area of Brooklyn called Little Bangladesh.

8 A third of my neighbors are the people
9 that deliver the high -- in the food to the high-
10 income people, racing around for 12 hours a day on
11 those, you know, motorbikes that are killing people.
12 I can guarantee you none of those people knew about
13 this public hearing and they don't have time to come
14 here because they're eking out a living delivering
15 food, like I said, to people who have no time --
16 don't take the time to go shopping for themselves.

17 The other issue is as far as we saw
18 flooding, my neighbor, my friends who don't live in
19 New York, were calling me, are you okay? You know,
20 the subways are flooding. How much more do you need
21 to know that we are in a climate catastrophe? We
22 don't have till 2080, we don't have even 10 years
23 probably.

24 So no more fracked gas, no rate hikes,
25 which I can't afford, and I can guarantee you, none

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2 of my neighbors can afford. No, no, no, thank you.

3 A.L.J. LEARY: Wow, we got to
4 everybody. And we need to leave right away. But I
5 want to thank all of you again. Just remember there
6 are other ways to comment if you have a comment that
7 you would like posted to D.M.M. There are a number
8 of people in this room including me that will help
9 you do that. I have a couple of comments here.
10 Please feel free to do that and have a wonderful
11 evening. Thank you again.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can we ask a
13 question?

14 A.L.J. LEARY: I -- I that -- it would
15 take me a long time. It's very difficult to get a
16 venue in Brooklyn. It's extremely difficult.

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's worth the
18 effort.

19 A.L.J. LEARY: This is absolutely
20 worth the effort. And it's a wonderful place. So
21 thank you to the Brooklyn Public Library for having
22 us.

23 (The hearing concluded at 7:48 p.m.)
24
25

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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 114, 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 21st day of November, 2023.

11

12 DANIELLE CHRISTIAN, Reporter

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