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8/1/23 - National Grid, NY - 23-G-0225/23-G-0226

STATE OF NEW YORK

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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

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

PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARING

DATE: August 1, 2023 at 1:01 p.m.

VENUE: WebEx

BEFORE: A.L.J. MAUREEN LEARY

A.L.J. JAMES COSTELLO

Reported by Anthony McClain

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

3 THE REPORTER: We are on the record.

4 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Great. I
5 call Case 23-G-0225 proceeding on motion of the
6 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules and
7 regulations of the Brooklyn Union Gas Company doing
8 business as the National Grid, New York. And Case
9 23-G-0226 proceeding on motion of the Commission as
10 to the rates, charges, rules and regulations of the
11 KeySpan Gas East Corporation doing business as
12 National Grid.

13 Good afternoon. We're here today for
14 a public statement hearing that was noticed on June
15 20th, 2023. The Brooklyn Union Gas Company which
16 does business as National Grid New York, which I'm
17 going to refer to as KEDNY. And Key Span Gas East
18 Corporation which is doing business as National Grid
19 and which I will be referring to as KEDLI or as --
20 both companies I'll be referring to collectively as
21 the companies.

22 They filed amendments to their gas
23 tariffs schedules on April 28th, 2023. They proposed
24 to increase their annual gas delivery revenues
25 effective March 31st, 2024. KEDNY proposes to

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2 increase its revenues by \$414 million, which would be
3 a 28 percent increase in base delivery revenues or a
4 seventeen percent increase in total revenues.

5 KEDLI proposes to increase its
6 revenues by \$228 million, which would be a 24 percent
7 increase in base delivery revenues or a 14 percent
8 increase in total revenues. Although the actual bill
9 impacts of these proposed changes on any particular
10 customer class will vary based upon revenue
11 allocation and rate design, the companies state that
12 a typical KEDNY residential heating customer will
13 have a \$30.95 average monthly bill increase and a
14 typical KEDLI residential heating customer will have
15 a \$28.52 average monthly bill increase.

16 Under New York State law, the Public
17 Service Commission must consider a utility's proposal
18 and it may adopt or reject it in whole or in part or
19 it may modify it. We are holding this public
20 statement hearing so you can provide your comments on
21 these proposals for the Commission's consideration.

22 My name is James Costello, and I am an
23 Administrative Law Judge with the Department of
24 Public Service. And with me today is Administrative
25 Law Judge Maureen Leary who is also from the

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2 Department of Public Service. Together, Judge Leary
3 and I are responsible for presiding over the hearings
4 in these cases and the development of a complete
5 record in these proceedings for the Commission's
6 consideration.

7 The Public Service Commission will
8 decide what the company's terms and conditions of
9 service will be. The Public Service Commission has
10 seven members. The Chairperson Rory Christian and
11 six commissioners, Diane Burman, James Alesi, Tracey
12 Edwards, John Howard, David Valesky, and John
13 Maggiore. I will now explain what the process is
14 going to be today.

15 As stated earlier, the purpose is --
16 of the hearing is to provide you with an opportunity
17 to tell the Commission your thoughts on the company's
18 rate proposals. So statements that you make today
19 will become part of the case record. We have a court
20 reporter who will be preparing a transcript of the
21 hearing, which will be included in the official
22 record of this proceeding so that your comments can
23 be considered by the members of the Commission. When
24 it is ready, the transcript will be available for
25 view on the Department of Public Service's website.

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2 This hearing is not an evidentiary
3 hearing and it's not a question-and-answer session.
4 It's a forum to hear your comments. It's not the
5 only opportunity for you to provide comments. If you
6 did not preregister to speak in today's hearing, but
7 you would like your views included in the record,
8 there are a variety of other ways to comment that
9 were listed in the public notice for today's event.
10 There are also, if you're participating
11 electronically, you can see those different ways that
12 are listed on your screen. And you can make comments
13 by submitting them on the Department's website, by
14 email, by regular mail, or by telephone. And
15 regardless of how you make those comments, they will
16 be given equal consideration. Comments may be
17 submitted and will be considered throughout the
18 pendency of this proceeding.

19 Although you will see in the notice
20 and you'll see on the screen if you're participating
21 electronically that comments be submitted by August
22 4th, that is just so that the -- the parties in
23 preparing their testimony will have the comment -- as
24 many comments as they can have in front of them while
25 they are preparing their testimony. However, we will

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2 accept and consider, and the Commission will consider
3 all comments submitted as long as these cases are
4 pending.

5 If you have registered to make a
6 statement, we -- we please ask that you summarize any
7 lengthy written statement you have orally and you may
8 submit the full written statement via email or mail.
9 There are people basically who registered today
10 electronically and what we ask you to do is you --
11 you should have -- make sure that you have audio
12 input from one device. So if you're participating
13 electronically but you're using your phone for -- for
14 audio, just make sure that your computer also doesn't
15 have its audio on or we'll have problems with
16 feedback. We have a list of speakers and I will call
17 the persons that have pre-registered one by one to
18 speak. If someone is not available when I call them,
19 I will continue with the next person and then we'll
20 come back to those people who are not available at
21 the end.

22 After I call your name, we will unmute
23 your line. You should hear a tone and see that the
24 microphone icon is no longer red. And please be
25 reminded that if you put your own telephone line on

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2 mute, you will also have to unmute your line before
3 you begin to speak.

4 We ask that you please speak slowly
5 and clearly so that the court reporter can accurately
6 capture your statement for the record. When your
7 line is unmuted, please state your name and if you
8 are speaking on behalf of an organization, the name
9 of the organization. And once we confirm we can hear
10 you, you can then proceed to make your comments. So
11 what I'm going to do is we have a member -- somebody
12 representing the -- a member of the New York
13 Assembly, I believe, and I'm going to start with that
14 person first. So please unmute Virginia Rowllins.
15 Rowllins.

16 MR. WHITE: So if Virginia called in,
17 could she hit star three on her telephone? Raise
18 your right hand by using your telephone. All right.
19 Sangeetha, can we have that slide and have someone to
20 --.

21 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Star three, if
22 you're calling in, hit star three so that we can
23 recognize you.

24 MS. KAILAS: Joe, this is the last
25 slide. There's no more instructions after the

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2 slides. Just --.

3 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Right. So if you --
4 if you -- if you --.

5 MR. WHITE: Okay. Thank you.

6 A.L.J. COSTELLO: And the -- there's a
7 raise -- if you're calling, if you registered,
8 there's a raised hand function on the computer. But
9 if you called in, you would hit star three to be able
10 to talk. All right. I don't see anybody so I'm
11 going to go to the next person. Rebecca Duvall and
12 she's participating electronically. Okay. Your line
13 has been unmuted.

14 MS. DUVALL: Hi there. I am Rebecca
15 Duvall. I live in Brooklyn, New York, and I just
16 wanted to register my -- my voice that the rate hike
17 should not be approved. It's further investing in
18 fossil fuel infrastructure that we don't need. New
19 York needs to put money into the future and not
20 National Grid's profit-making plan.

21 Additionally, just to register sort of
22 disrespectful and anti-democratic to hold these
23 public hearings with such short notice as important
24 as they are. Thank you.

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

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2 Our next speaker is Mary Finneran. She's also
3 participating electronically. Okay. Your line has
4 been unmuted. Mary Finneran.

5 MR. WHITE: Go ahead, Mary, you're
6 unmuted. Mary?

7 A.L.J. COSTELLO: If you have -- if
8 you are muted on your end, you would have to unmute
9 that so that we can hear you.

10 MR. WHITE: Mary is unmuted. We can
11 come back to her, Your Honor, you know.

12 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Well, we'll
13 have to come back to you. Just check to see whether
14 you're -- you have mute on your own -- on your end
15 you have the mute on. Okay. Our next speaker is
16 Sara Gronim. And Sara Gronim. Okay. Your line has
17 been unmuted.

18 MS. GRONIM: Hi. My name is Sara
19 Gronim. I live in Brooklyn. I'm a member of the
20 climate group, 350 Brooklyn. My building is heated
21 by fracked gas. The price of which has soared in the
22 past few years. We are one of thousands of small and
23 medium size co-ops in New York City, a critical
24 source of housing in the city.

25 As everyone here is aware, housing is

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2 already unaffordable for too many people, both owners
3 and renters, and utility costs are a major reason why
4 in New York City alone roughly 600,000 households are
5 energy burdened including many of my neighbors in
6 Brooklyn.

7 In this context, National Grid's
8 proposal for a rate hike of seventy -- 17 percent is
9 outrageous. National Grid is already a very
10 profitable company. Its last rate increase supported
11 its profitability very nicely. 300,000 -- \$300
12 million a year as their most recent annual report of
13 profits from its New York service -- service -- New
14 York City service area shows. Moreover, National
15 Grid has not been an honest participant in our
16 efforts in New York State to decarbonize our economy.

17 For example, for years, National Grid
18 has helped design and finance a group that's called
19 New Yorkers for affordable energy which is solely a
20 fossil fuel trade group. This group has worked
21 acidulously to sow certainty in the minds of New
22 Yorkers about the affordability and reliability of
23 renewable energy compared with fossil fuels.

24 In February, New Yorkers for
25 Affordable Energy commissioned a poll asking New

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2 Yorkers their thoughts about electrifying buildings.
3 But when the results showed that a majority of New
4 Yorkers approved a ban on fossil fuels in new
5 buildings the -- for its press release, the group
6 cherry-picked subsets of the results that seem to
7 show the opposite. As for their claim of
8 affordability of fossil fuels, during the 2021
9 heating season, my building paid approximately
10 \$121,000 for gas for our boilers. A year later,
11 during the '21, '22 season, we paid 211,000, an
12 increase of nearly \$90,000. And reliability, just
13 look at Buffalo where during last December's blizzard
14 National Grid substation froze as did pipelines
15 leaving thousands literally out in the cold. I ask
16 you, why am I paying National Grid to mislead my
17 fellow New Yorkers about the affordability and
18 reliability of renewable energy with its fracked gas
19 that is unaffordable and unreliable.

20 Furthermore, while the National Grid
21 now claims it supports New York's Climate and
22 Community Protection Act, it actually works to
23 undermine its implementation by proposing a variety
24 of solutions to the climate crisis that will not lead
25 us to full electrification based on renewable energy

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2 sources. One example is its proposed hydrogen hub on
3 Long Island. National Grid's website depicts the
4 creation of a high -- of hydrogen using renewable
5 sources, in this case offshore wind. But using
6 renewable energy to create hydrogen is inefficient,
7 far better to simply use the renewable energy
8 directly.

9 The website points out accurately
10 enough that hydrogen is the most abundant in the
11 universe. But it then goes on to say that hydrogen
12 has the potential to decarbonize difficult sections
13 of the economy like and I quote, "industrial
14 processes, heavy transport, and heating." With the
15 graphic showing hydrogen flowing to a hospital and an
16 apartment building. This is deliberate deceptive.
17 National Grid cannot simply swap out its current
18 product, the fracked methane gas that currently runs
19 through a pipeline -- pipelines under our streets and
20 into our basements with hydrogen.

21 Hydrogen is an explosive substance
22 that can only be transplanted via plastic pipelines
23 or specially treated steel. The cost of replacing
24 the entire under-street network of pipelines, not to
25 say all the lines to and in individual buildings is

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2 unimaginable. And to what end? When hydrogen is
3 burned for heat, it produces nitrous oxides dangerous
4 to human health, not something you see with wind or
5 salt water. Trying to shift attention to hydrogen as
6 an alternative to renewable energy is deliberate
7 misdirection.

8 National Grid is trying to stall the
9 energy transition as long as possible in order to
10 perpetuate its plan at destroying business model as
11 long as it can. Why are we paying for this? It is
12 the responsibility of the Public Service Commission
13 to serve the public good. And at this point in our
14 history, the public good requires the transformation
15 of our economy to renewable energy.

16 I ask the PSC to carefully supervise
17 the way National Grid spends its money so that its
18 action support or at least do not obstruct our energy
19 transition. Thank you for your time.

20 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you.
21 Our next speaker is Wayn Devonish. I do not see that
22 -- him as an electronic participant. So if you're
23 participating by telephone, please hit star three so
24 that we can identify you and unmute your line.
25 That's Wayn Devonish.

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2 MR. WHITE: No raised hands, Your
3 Honor.

4 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Let's see.
5 Let's circle back. Okay. We'll go to Zoe Kaplan-
6 Lewis and I see -- no. Okay. Let's see. Okay. Zoe
7 Kaplan-Lewis. She's just raised her hand and you
8 have been unmuted. Your line has been unmuted.

9 MS. KAPLAN-LEWIS: Okay. Thank you.
10 My name is Zoe Kaplan-Lewis and I live in Brooklyn,
11 New York. I'm a volunteer with 350 Brooklyn which is
12 a grassroots climate organization. I'm here today to
13 urge the New York State Public Service Commission to
14 reject National Grid's proposal to raise rates for
15 gas service.

16 National Grid's proposal violates the
17 mission and purpose of the New York State Public
18 Service Commission to ensure access to safe, reliable
19 utility service at just and reasonable rates and to
20 protect the natural environment.

21 There is nothing safe or reliable
22 about natural gas. As the summer of 2023 has shown
23 in particular, our climate is experiencing a crisis.
24 There is nothing safe or reliable about trees getting
25 ripped up in Benson Harris. There is nothing safe or

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2 reliable about fires that burn for days and weeks and
3 months across the continent. A safe and reliable
4 approach would be for National Grid to shut down the
5 pipelines and transition to a clean energy company.

6 The National Grid is seeking more
7 money from its customers in order to fix their own
8 leaky gas pipelines that caused them to lose their
9 own gas and diminish their profits.

10 National Grid already makes over \$300
11 million in profit per year in New York and fixing
12 these pipelines would lead to even more profits. In
13 their proposal, National Grid states that they are
14 advancing and supporting the climate leadership and
15 Community Protection Act. And specifically, the
16 climate action counsel's scoping plan. However, part
17 of National Grid's proposal is to invest in renewable
18 natural gas and green hydrogen. Both of these
19 technologies are criticized in the scoping plan which
20 states that the combustion of renewable natural gas
21 and hydrogen is likely to result in polluted
22 emissions similar to or greater than fossil fuel
23 combustion.

24 If National Grid truly wanted to
25 advance this --- and support the Climate Leadership

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2 and Community Protection Act passed in 2019, they
3 will propose a plan to meaningfully reduce greenhouse
4 gas emissions caused by natural gas, which accounts
5 for 46 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in New
6 York State. Agreeing to National Grid's proposal
7 would be a mistake. National Grid must be pushed
8 toward the future and innovation. Natural gas
9 pipelines have only existed for about 100 years. But
10 if they exist for 100 more, Earth will no longer be
11 livable.

12 Just as these pipelines were once the
13 innovative new technology, it is time to -- for
14 National Grid to move forward and innovate. National
15 Grid should invest in technologies that harness the
16 power of the Earth rather than pollute the Earth. I
17 strongly urge the New York State Public Service
18 Commission to hold National Grid accountable to its
19 own failing machinery and to push them toward a more
20 sustainable future by rejecting their proposal to
21 burden customers with unreasonable rate hikes. It is
22 unjust for National Grid to bill their customers to
23 uphold infrastructure that diminishes the health our
24 environment and our quality of life. Thank you.

25 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you. Our next

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2 speaker is Dr. Stacie N.C. Grant. Your line has been
3 unmuted. And I just want to remind you that if you
4 have mute on your own end, you would have to unmute
5 for us to hear you.

6 MS. GRANT: Good afternoon, Your
7 Honor. Thank you so much. My name is Dr. Stacie
8 N.C. Grant. And I am the founder of Destiny
9 Designers University. It's a training and
10 development platform for Faith-preneurs which are
11 faith-based entrepreneurs. And I'm participating
12 today to talk about the opportunity that National
13 Grid has created when it comes to being more
14 responsible with how we approach the conversation
15 around protecting our communities and the energy
16 transition.

17 And also working around the parameters
18 that is a constant challenge of keeping it
19 affordable. While I am clear that things are not per
20 -- perfect. I am very appreciative that as a
21 community partner with National Grid, we are able to
22 find vendors and also potential workforce that want
23 to participate in creating the answers to the
24 challenges that we face with weatherization and
25 energy efficiency through the National Grid's grid

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2 collective. And that program seeks the talent that
3 can help to offset what we know has not been the best
4 opportunities for a safe environment for New Yorkers.

5 But I am confident that with the way
6 in which they are investing in community, that they
7 are partnering with those who have a desire to work
8 in the grid space. And be able to provide the right
9 solutions for effective energy sources and renewable
10 energy sources that we can get to a point where we
11 see a meeting of the minds from those of us who are
12 concerned about how we live and breathe in this
13 state. And balance that with the infrastructure and
14 the cost that is also a part of making it a
15 successful perspective.

16 So I just wanted to speak on the
17 record today as a community partner that I see the
18 opportunity, that I know there are still challenges
19 that exist. But they have made a good faith attempt
20 to work with individual vendors and workforce
21 development opportunities to bring the best ideas and
22 participation in making sure that we contribute to
23 this planet being safer for all of us to live and
24 breathe. Thank you so much.

25 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you. Our next

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2 speaker will be Matthew Aracich. If you are calling
3 in, please hit star three so that we can recognize
4 you and unmute your line. That's Matthew Aracich.

5 MR. WHITE: Yeah. You have no raised
6 hand.

7 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. We'll come
8 back. Our next speaker then will be Dave Daniels.

9 MR. WHITE: Your line is unmuted.

10 MR. DANIELS: Greetings.

11 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Hi. We can
12 hear you can go -- go ahead and give your statement.

13 MR. DANIELS: Yeah. Thank you so much
14 for being in this public hearing. And my written
15 statement was prior submitted. So I would ask this
16 panel to consider that for the record in support of
17 National Grid support. Thank you.

18 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. Thank you.
19 Okay. Our next speaker is David Manning. Okay.
20 We're just waiting to unmute your lines. Okay. It
21 looks like your line has been unmuted.

22 MR. MANNINGS: Thank you. Can you
23 hear me?

24 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Yes, we can hear
25 you.

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2 MR. MANNINGS: Good. Thank you. Yes.
3 Thank you, panel. My name is David Manning. I'm
4 appearing today in my personal capacity as a resident
5 of Long Island. I'm also appearing as Director of
6 Stakeholder Relations for Brookhaven Science
7 Associates. We are a -- a corporation which operates
8 the Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island.
9 It's the only national laboratory in the U.S.
10 northeast and its 5,000 acres, 300 buildings, 3,000
11 employees. So it's a very significant customer of --
12 of KEDLI and -- and National Grid. It also is very
13 intimately involved in the research that will be
14 required to decarbonize and meet the goal set out in
15 the New York state CL-CPA. I think it's premature to
16 say what technologies will be available that will
17 help us meet those goals and decarbonize by 2050.
18 But we're working very seriously on grid storage, on
19 various different challenges to electrification.

20 What we are very -- and -- and I speak
21 in support of this application for the -- for KEDLI
22 and KEDNY because they are investing in the
23 technology and the infrastructure which will
24 facilitate that future. The investment they are
25 making in terms of the distribution system will

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2 accommodate hydrogen, will accommodate renewable --
3 natural gas and I would suggest to you that both in
4 additional supplies of non-carbon fuels will be
5 necessarily for the future. It's also noteworthy
6 that they're very heavily involved in the community.
7 We rely on them for input in terms of our own
8 performance and their support for the community is --
9 is ever present. We have been experiencing in just
10 the last few months the most extreme cases of climate
11 change. And we believe that the effort that they are
12 making to upgrade their system and to blend fuels and
13 -- and fund research and do research into the future
14 energy mix of Long Island and New York will be
15 critical to our future.

16 So in summary, we don't know what
17 technologies are going to deliver the carbon-free
18 state of the future. But it's critical that we
19 pursue all of them. There's -- there's a fortune
20 being invested in the future of hydrogen. There's
21 like a very advanced and sophisticated sources of --
22 of -- of renewable and natural gas. And I would
23 suggest that KEDLI and KEDNY are in the forefront of
24 all of those efforts.

25 So once again, we thank them for the

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2 support that they provide in the community. And we
3 are very much part of this community and see them
4 everywhere that they should be and supporting the
5 community in the ways that the community needs to be
6 supported. And we also of course have -- have
7 enjoyed a highly reliable service. And I think
8 reliability is very, very important to all of us,
9 particularly this instant -- this facility, that even
10 as individuals, I think reliability is a forefront.
11 I am a gas customer. But we also, of course, know
12 that this investment for the future will be critical
13 to getting us where we need to go. Thank you very
14 much.

15 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you. Our next
16 speaker is Fred Harrison. Okay. Your line has been
17 unmuted.

18 MR. WHITE: Good afternoon, Fred.
19 Your line -- your line is unmuted. You can go ahead
20 and speak. You might be muted on your end.

21 A.L.J. COSTELLO: No. I'm still not
22 hearing anything.

23 MR. WHITE: I'm not hearing anything
24 either, Your Honor.

25 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. What I'm

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2 going to go do is just go back through the names of
3 the people that we've called before. And I will come
4 back to you as well, Mr. Harrison. So I'm going to
5 start with Mary Finneran. Mary Finneran, if you are
6 on the line, please hit star three. There we go.

7 MS. FINNERAN: Hi. Can you hear me?

8 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Yes, we can hear
9 you.

10 MS. FINNERAN: Okay. Okay. My name
11 is Mary Finneran. I live in Greene County, New York,
12 home of the proposed -- one of the proposed
13 compressor stations that is going to be expanding in
14 order to supply gas to New York City and Long Island.
15 I -- I really -- this proposal to expand the gas
16 going through this pipeline which was badly built 38
17 years ago and was the second largest fine in EPA
18 history at the time, second only to the Exxon Valdez
19 spill. And the -- and the pipeline was never
20 properly rectified for all the mistakes that were
21 made.

22 I'm afraid that if they increase their
23 compression at the Athens Gen Power Plant, the
24 compressor station from 10 to 22 and to Dover from 20
25 -- 10 to 18. And at the -- the two plants -- or

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2 rather the Brookfield in Connecticut to a whooping
3 42,000 gas will really be putting National Grid in a
4 bad light should and likely will there be some
5 incidents. There was an incident in Massachusetts
6 and one in Connecticut where when they opened up
7 pipelines to greater capacity, there were explosions
8 with many homes being destroyed. I oppose using the
9 Iroquois Pipeline. It has not had its air permits
10 approved in either New York State nor Connecticut.
11 And Connecticut has no connection to this except for
12 being used as a means for National Grid to get gas.

13 I would request that National Grid and
14 -- and think that with their power and their money,
15 they could look into things in New York State in the
16 same area where these compressor stations are, the
17 Hudson Valley, and using the Hudson River for in-
18 stream turbine hydroelectric. They could use that
19 hydroelectric. I recognize that National Grid down
20 in New York City and Long Island, they use gas only.
21 So they are desperate to maintain that business, to
22 maintain the gas in New York. And -- but it's -- it
23 will behoove -- New York City, New York State, the
24 country, and the planet, nothing when there's going
25 to be explosions, when there's going to be further

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2 climate catastrophes. Please Public Service
3 Commission, do your job and serve the public. All of
4 this power and all of this gas would be public and
5 not for private gains for their shareholders who have
6 no benefit and don't live in the area. Thank you.

7 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you. And
8 before we go to our next speaker, I just want to say
9 for people that are having difficulty for whatever
10 reason, there's a -- there's a phone number that you
11 can call for technical difficulties which I will read
12 out. And also if for whatever reason you cannot
13 speak this afternoon. And if you call that number
14 and -- and figure out what the difficulty was. We
15 are having another hearing at six p.m. this evening.
16 And we will gladly hear your comments then if we
17 can't get your comments today at this time. So that
18 number is 1-800-342-3330.

19 MR. WHITE: I think Fred is unmuted
20 now.

21 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay.

22 MR. HARRISON: Yes.

23 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Mr. Harrison.

24 MR. HARRISON: Yes. Can you hear me?

25 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Yes, we can hear

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2 you.

3 MR. HARRISON: Thank you very much for
4 straightening this out. My name is Fred Harrison. I
5 live in Merrick on Long Island. I'm a retired
6 teacher and I'm a volunteer with Food and Water Watch
7 on Long Island. I'm also a doubled National Grid
8 ratepayer because I heat my home and hot water with
9 natural gas plus I also use electricity So I get
10 treated to National Grid services and rates twice. I
11 don't mean to be humorous by what I'm going to say
12 next. But I'm -- but it may come off that way. I'm
13 here to ask for a rate reduction for everybody.

14 I was hoping given the current climate
15 situation that National Grid would be asking for a
16 mea culpa or some kind of apology or some kind of
17 expression of their past transgressions to where
18 we've gotten and to where we are right now. But
19 clearly, that's not the case. What we've gotten is
20 another rate increase. And what is rather stunning
21 about this rate increase is that there never seems to
22 be enough.

23 Because when I looked up from their
24 own National Grid report of their natural
25 performance, it listed that in 2023, they had a 12

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2 percent increase in their underlying operating
3 profit, a 12 percent increase up to almost \$900
4 million in New York for the year. They report that
5 their underlying operating profit, that is the rate
6 of return that they received, averages 13 percent in
7 New York and again this is from their own report.
8 Now this is astounding. It's astounding for lots of
9 reasons. It's astounding because first of all we
10 know that rates have continually gone up even though
11 they've gone up in a jagged fashion over the past 10
12 years.

13 Natural gas rates have continued to
14 increase as has their delivery charges. So rather
15 than coming into the Public Service Commission,
16 seeking a way to wind down their activities, to
17 actually reduce rates so that ratepayers like myself.
18 I'm a retiree on a fixed income on social security
19 could devote more of my energy down to putting it
20 into renewable energy. But they come in and ask for
21 a rate increase. So I very simply ask and hope that
22 the Public Service Commission will deny any rate
23 increase until National Grid can show very clearly a
24 plan to wind itself down and to end the damage that
25 it's doing. Thank you very much.

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

3 I'm going to try again Wayn Devonish. Wayn Denonish,
4 if you are calling in, please hit star three so that
5 we can identify you and unmute your line. I am not
6 seeing anyone. So I'm going to go on to Matthew
7 Ararich -- or I'm sorry, Matthew Aracich. Again, if
8 you're calling in, please hit star three.

9 MR. WHITE: No raised hand, Chairman.

10 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. And then
11 we'll go to Virginia Rowllins. Again, if -- if you're
12 calling, please hit star three so we can identify you
13 and unmute your line.

14 MR. WHITE: No raised hands.

15 A.L.J. COSTELLO: No. I don't see
16 anyone. Okay. So we've reached the end of the end
17 speakers that we have that are registered. We will
18 open it up now. If there's anyone who is
19 participating or on the line and did not register but
20 would like to make comments here today, if you're
21 participating by telephone, we'd ask you to hit star
22 three. And I -- otherwise -- okay, we see a few
23 raised hands.

24 MR. WHITE: So I'm going to go with
25 the first one, sir. Yeah.

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2 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Andrew Saaverda.

3 MR. WHITE: Okay. Thank you.

4 MR. SAAVERDA: I just want to make
5 sure that you can hear me.

6 A.L.J. COSTELLO: We can hear you.

7 Yes. You can make your statement.

8 MR. SAAVERDA: Good afternoon, A.L.J.s
9 Leary, and Costello. My name is Andrew Saaverda and
10 I'm speaking today on behalf of the Public Utility
11 Law Project of New York, a/k/a PULP. PULP is a 40-
12 year-old non-profit whose mission is educate,
13 advocate, and litigate on behalf of low and fixed
14 income utility customers throughout New York State.
15 I'm here this afternoon to share some of PULP's
16 concerns with KEDLI and KEDNY's proposed rate
17 increases and to encourage the commission to closely
18 examine this requested increase to ensure that
19 customers are not saddled with unjust rates.

20 As was noted in the beginning of this
21 hearing, KEDNY or National Grid of New York City, is
22 requesting a revenue increase of 414 million. KEDLI
23 or National Grid Long Island is requesting an
24 increase of roughly 228 million. These increases if
25 permitted would result in a typical New York City

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2 gas-heating customer receiving a monthly bill
3 increase of \$30.95 and an increase of \$28.52 per
4 month for a typical Long Island gas-heating customer.

5 And these increases in and of
6 themselves will prove completely unaffordable for
7 many of the low- and fixed-income customers who PULP
8 represents. But it is important to consider the
9 context in which the companies are requesting this
10 rate increase. As of June 2023, there are 253,682
11 accounts in the company's service territories that
12 are at least sixty days behind on their gas bills,
13 253,000. That's over a quarter of a million
14 households who are struggling to keep the gas on in
15 their homes right now.

16 In total, they owe nearly \$200
17 million. These figures have been steadily increasing
18 since the application of phase two EAP credits,
19 illustrating that the affordability crisis is still
20 ongoing. Moreover, we must not ignore the fact that
21 KEDNY customers will also be seeing increases in
22 their electric bills resulting from the recently
23 approved Con Edison rate hike.

24 At a time when many customers are
25 forced to choose between paying their rent, paying

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2 their utilities bills, and paying for food or
3 medicine, we cannot reasonably expect customers to
4 endure these requested increases to their gas bills.
5 This process is at a very early stage and PULP has
6 joined the proceeding as a party. Our organization
7 is currently working on our initial testimony and we
8 look forward to continuing our advocacy during the
9 remainder of this rate case. Thank you.

10 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you. Okay.
11 The next speaker will be Jean Belford. Okay. Your
12 line has been unmuted.

13 MS. BELFORD: Just unmute -- hi. Good
14 afternoon. My name is Jean Belford. I am a resident
15 of Rockaway Beach in Queens and founder of a group,
16 Rockaway Women for Progress, and survivor of
17 Hurricane Sandy, particularly after deadly fires
18 ravaged Sandy on the night of her -- ravaged Rockaway
19 on the night of Hurricane Sandy leaving the next day
20 at least a hundred fifty homes burned to the ground.
21 And that was the result of having passed off
22 electrifying responsibilities to National Grid. And
23 National Grid had not turned off the electric in
24 Rockaway which caused electrical fires and then from
25 gas that was on the water, the fires just spread, and

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2 -- and basically took out parts of the community that
3 would have just been dealing -- just I say with
4 devastating flooding. But instead, houses were
5 burned to the ground. So as far as my lived
6 experience with National Grid and LIPA when it comes
7 to worrying about customer safety, I don't have a lot
8 of confidence there.

9 As an organization and as -- and as a
10 ratepayer, we are -- we have fought the Williams
11 Pipeline. We are in such -- like everyone is on this
12 planet. But in Rockaway on a little spit of land
13 between Jamaica Bay and the ocean, we are about as
14 vulnerable as you get. So safety really does matter
15 to us. And we are very interested in renewable
16 energy. As someone who's in the five boroughs, I
17 know that, or at least I am under the assumption from
18 contractors, that as of the end of December 2023, new
19 construction, at least residential construction will
20 no longer accept gas into the homes.

21 So I -- this really just feels like an
22 infrastructure grab at a time that particularly on
23 the five boroughs, all the laws and policies are
24 phasing out fossil fuels. So it almost feels like
25 either a money grab for a short-term gain because the

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2 long term is going to be lost or maybe to hold us to
3 fossil fuels longer because, hey, this is the safe --
4 we'll say that this is the safest way. Either way,
5 it's not what as an individual or a group here in
6 Rockaway. It's -- it's not the right direction and
7 it's certainly not how we want to be spending our
8 money. And if we're talking about safety, I think
9 you've lost the confidence of a lot of people in
10 Rockaway a long time ago. Thank you.

11 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you. Okay.
12 Our next speaker will be Kim Fraczek. Your line has
13 been unmuted. It looks like it's been muted again.
14 Let's -- can we try to unmute. There we go.

15 MS. FRACZEK: Okay. Thank you so
16 much. Yeah. I'm going to have a longer testimony at
17 one of the evening hearings. But, you know, I'm Kim
18 Fraczek. I'm from Sane Energy Project. And I think
19 a number of you know who I am. And, you know, you
20 announced these public hearings on July 25th. And I
21 just want to let you know what Sane Energy Project
22 did. We scrambled to make sure that we could prepare
23 our members and other community groups to the fact
24 that these hearings even existed.

25 And people were like oh no, I'm on

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2 vacation. You know, we had, you know, about five
3 days to prepare the public for these hearings. And I
4 just don't think that that is adequate.

5 So I just want to let you know that,
6 you know, we as a very, very, you know, under-
7 resourced community group moved mountains to make
8 sure that people got to this hearing today. And I
9 also want to let you know that I understand some
10 folks spoke in favor of National Grid. And those are
11 -- those are folks that are getting what National
12 Grid calls community grants.

13 So, you know, National Grid is really,
14 you know, pushing and they want to invest 4 billion
15 of our dollars over the next 4 years into fracked gas
16 infrastructure. And as Jean just pointed out, you
17 know, this is in the wrong direction. I am asking
18 every single one of you, Your Honors and at the --
19 and folks at the Department of Public Service, please
20 be conscientious objectors. This is real. The --
21 the climate crisis is real. I will have more
22 substantive -- substantive comments at one of the
23 evening hearings but thank you for your time.

24 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you. Okay.
25 Before we go, I'm just going to open it up again. If

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2 you're participating electronically and you want to
3 make a statement, you can use the raise-hand function
4 at the bottom of your screen. If you are
5 participating by telephone, you would hit star three
6 which would show us that you want to make a
7 statement. And I see somebody, a call-in user who
8 has raised their hand. Your line has been unmuted.
9 Please state your name and you can give us your
10 statement.

11 MR. HARRINGTON: All right. Thank
12 you. This is Mark Harrington from Newsday. I'm
13 calling not to make a statement but to -- to make
14 sure I understand something correctly. At the
15 beginning of the --the conference, you mentioned the
16 stated revenue increases in the billing packs. I
17 noticed in a most recent filing that there was a -- a
18 notice of corrections and updates that this -- that
19 the National Grid had filed. And it seems as though
20 those are substantially higher than the initial
21 request, something like 272 million --.

22 A.L.J. COSTELLO: We're -- we're --
23 we're not here to answer questions at this time. If
24 you do have questions, you can -- you can call our
25 public information officer. The information that we

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2 have used is -- and information that's in the notice
3 was from the initial filing.

4 MR. HARRINGTON: Okay. So the -- the
5 notice of this meeting has the notice of corrections
6 and updates on it. That's where I saw this. And I
7 was asking a question. I'm just -- I was just
8 telling you to understand exactly what the -- the
9 initial notice you made when you opened the segment.

10 A.L.J. COSTELLO: We can do this
11 offline. It's -- this is not the proper forum unless
12 you're going to make a statement.

13 MR. HARRINGTON: Okay. No problem.
14 Thank you.

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

16 MR. WHITE: Your Honor, Mary Finneran
17 has her hand up.

18 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay.

19 MS. FINNERAN: Hi. I just wanted to
20 correct some things I said. I said ten horsepower.
21 Its 10,000 horsepower for the amp to 22,000 for the
22 Athens and its 18,000 horsepower from the Dover to
23 30,000 horsepower and a -- a full -- probably the 20
24 -- or I think 18,000 horsepower in Brookfield to
25 42,000 which is onerous in a 24,000 -- 24-inch

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2 pipeline cannot handle that increased capacity. I
3 just wanted to correct myself. And I also wanted to
4 the commend the words of Sara Gronim and a woman
5 named Zoe, both from Brooklyn. I applaud their
6 statement and you can just reiterate all of what they
7 said for me and Kim Fraczek as well. Thank you very
8 much. And I will try to be signing on for other --
9 to say other things too later, thank you, if I may.

10 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you. So I
11 just want to remind everyone that they may sit --
12 submit public comments throughout these proceedings
13 and by the various means that I've described earlier
14 and that are listed in the public notice of statement
15 hearing that was issued earlier. And it was issued
16 on June 20th of 2023. We will be holding an
17 additional public hearing --.

18 MR. WHITE: Your Honor, we have one
19 more -- we have one more raised hand. I apologize.

20 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Okay. That's all
21 right. Thank you.

22 MR. WHITE: Sure. Unmute.

23 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Go ahead, unmute.

24 MR. WHITE: Thank you.

25 MS. WILSON: Hi.

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2 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Hi.

3 MS. WILSON: Good afternoon. I'm
4 Angie Wilson and I reside in Brooklyn. And I'm
5 calling in with my brief comments to oppose the rate
6 hike by National Grid. You know, it seems to me that
7 this infrastructure, enhancement and maintenance and
8 the pre-point hub should all be expenses that are
9 part of the business plan of National Grid and not a
10 cause to rate hikes. And that the PSC should really
11 consider and wonder why the ratepayer should bear the
12 burden of these hikes while the -- these shareholders
13 will profit more.

14 And with regard to the -- the nuance
15 of safety and reliability as a clause by which these
16 expansive solidifications of the fossil fuel grid
17 should be reviewed with an independent study of these
18 demands for these rate hikes and plans by National
19 Grid.

20 So I'm asking the PSC to please assign
21 an independent study looking into these claims and
22 these needs and the profits that would be made as a
23 result of the granting of such a rate hike. And
24 ultimately on the bigger picture, expanding fossil
25 fuels is not where we need to go. And obviously, the

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2 grid is a profit-making industry. And what we need
3 to be looking at a publicly-owned grid whether it be
4 for electrical transmission, whether it be pipelines,
5 even for so-called clean hydrogen, whatever.
6 Highways, grids, these are public goods and they need
7 to be maintained to benefit the public through public
8 interest. Thank you. Good-bye.

9 A.L.J. COSTELLO: Thank you. So as I
10 was saying, there will be an additional public
11 statement hearing this evening at six p.m. And we'll
12 hold additional public statement hearings at one p.m.
13 and six p.m. tomorrow. And we will be holding in-
14 person public statement hearings. We have not
15 determined the locations and the dates yet for that.
16 As soon as the notices go out, the notices are posted
17 on -- on the case file. So any parties who are on
18 the party file will get notice of that. And we ask
19 generally that the company publish that closer to the
20 date of the public statement hearing so that people
21 get reminded and note -- and notified of it at that
22 time. But that will be sometime probably the end of
23 September that we'll be having in-person public
24 statement hearings.

25 So Judge Leary and I would like thank

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2 everyone for participating. And we also we would
3 like to thank Joe White and Sangeetha Kailis from our
4 consumer services office for administering this
5 hearing. And we'd like to thank the court reporter.
6 Our hearing is now concluded and we're going to go
7 off the record.

8 MR. WHITE: We are off the record,
9 Your Honor.

10 (The hearing concluded at 1:55 p.m.)
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2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 I, ANTHONY MCCLAIN, do hereby certify that the foregoing
4 was reported by me, in the cause, at the time and place,
5 as stated in the caption hereto, at Page 1 hereof; that
6 the foregoing typewritten transcription consisting of
7 pages 1 through 40, is a true record of all proceedings
8 had at the hearing.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
10 subscribed my name, this the 8th day of August, 2023.

11

12 ANTHONY MCCLAIN, Reporter

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