

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 STATE OF NEW YORK

4 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

5 CASE 24-E-0322; 24-G-0323 - In the Matter of Niagara
6 Mohawk Corporation d/b/a National Grid for Electric
7 Service and Niagara Mohawk Corporation d/b/a National
8 Grid for Gas Service

9 PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARING

10 DATE: SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

11 LOCATION: Webex

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13 BEFORE: ALJ ANTHONY BELSITO

14 ALJ MICHAEL CLARKE

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19 Reported by Shakeia Fleeks

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1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 (The hearing commenced at 1:05 p.m.)

4 A.L.J. CLARKE: I call case 24-E-0322,
5 proceeding on motion of the Commission as to the
6 rates, charges, rules, and regulations of Niagara
7 Mohawk Power Corporation, doing business as National
8 Grid for electric service. Case 24-G-0323,
9 proceeding on motion of the Commission as to the
10 rates, charges, rules, and regulations of Niagara
11 Mohawk Power Corporation, doing business as National
12 Grid for gas service.

13 Good afternoon and welcome. We're
14 here today for a public statement hearing that was
15 noticed on August 26th, 2024. The hearing concerns
16 proposed changes in the electric and gas delivery
17 rates and practices of National Grid, which filed
18 amendments to its tariff schedules on May 28th, 2024,
19 proposing to increase its annual electric and gas
20 delivery revenues effective April 1st, 2025.

21 More specifically, National Grid seeks
22 to increase its electric delivery revenues by
23 approximately \$525 million and its gas delivery
24 revenues by approximately \$148 million. These
25 increases would result in total monthly bill

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 increases for the average residential customer of
4 approximately \$18.92 for electric and \$18.34 for gas.

5 The rate request filing states the
6 company is focused on three priorities: continuing to
7 deliver safe, reliable energy service to its more
8 than two million customers, enabling customers to
9 affordably meet their energy needs while improving
10 customer service, and supporting the goals of the
11 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

12 My name is Miachel Clarke. I'm an
13 administrative law judge for the Department of Public
14 Service. With me is Administrative Law Judge Anthony
15 Belsito. We're presiding over the hearings in this
16 case and responsible for the development of the
17 record on behalf of the New York State Public Service
18 Commission. At the conclusion of our process, we'll
19 make recommendations to the Commission, which is the
20 ultimate decision-maker in this case.

21 The Commission has seven members, the
22 chairperson Rory Christian, and Commissioners James
23 Alesi, David Valesky, John Maggiore, Uchenna Bright,
24 Denise Sheehan, and Radina Valova. We're fortunate
25 this afternoon to have Commissioner Maggiore and

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 Commissioner Sheehan with us.

4 Commissioner Maggiore, would you like
5 to make a statement?

6 MR. MAGGIORE: Thank you very much,
7 Judge Clarke. I would like to thank everybody who is
8 joining us today to participate, taking the time out
9 of their schedule to give feedback on this important
10 matter. I am just here to listen. I am very
11 interested in what people have to say, and you're not
12 here to listen to what I have to say, so I'm not
13 going to say anything after this. But I do want to
14 express my appreciation for your turning out.

15 This is obviously a very important
16 matter, and I know that my fellow commissioners get a
17 lot of insight into how matters that come before us
18 affect people's lives by either listening to public
19 statements or reading the transcripts after the fact.

20 So thank you very much. And like I
21 said before, I very much look forward to hearing from
22 you. Thank you.

23 A.L.J. CLARKE: Thank you,
24 Commissioner.

25 Commissioner Sheehan, would you like

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 to say anything?

4 MS. SHEEHAN: Sure. Thanks, Judge
5 Clarke.

6 Good afternoon, everyone. I want to
7 just echo the comments of Commissioner Maggiore. As
8 a commissioner on the Public Service Commission we
9 take our role very seriously. These cases are
10 important for us. Your participation and sharing
11 your feedback and comments are an important part of
12 the record. So we appreciate you taking the time to
13 share your thoughts and feedback. And I can assure
14 you that we give a lot of attention to the comments
15 we receive from the public. So thank you again for
16 participating.

17 I'll hand it back to you, Judge
18 Clarke.

19 A.L.J. CLARKE: Thank you,
20 Commissioner.

21 In making its decision, the Commission
22 must consider a utilities proposal and may adopt or
23 reject it in whole or in part or modify it. The
24 purpose of today's hearing, as the commissioners just
25 mentioned, is to provide you, the public, with an

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 opportunity to tell the Commission your thoughts on
4 the proposal. It is not an evidentiary hearing or
5 question and answer session but a forum to hear
6 comments from you. Any statements made today will
7 become part of the case record.

8 We have a court reporter on the line
9 who will prepare a transcript of the hearing, which
10 will be included in the official record of this
11 proceeding so that your comments can be considered by
12 all members of the Commission. When it's ready, the
13 transcript will be available for view on the
14 Department of Public Service website.

15 This is not the only opportunity for
16 comment. As you can see on the screen, if you did
17 not register to speak at today's hearing, but you
18 would like your views included in the record, there
19 are a variety of other ways to comment that were
20 listed in the public notice for today's event. You
21 can do so by submitting comments on the Department's
22 website, by email, by regular mail, or by phone.
23 Regardless of how comments are submitted, they will
24 be given equal consideration by the Commission.

25 Getting back to today. We have about

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 twenty registered speakers. We're not going to
4 impose a time limit, but we do request that you try
5 to be concise and avoid repeating yourself. If you
6 have a lengthy written statement, please summarize it
7 orally and submit the full statement by email or by
8 mail. When we call your name, we will unmute your
9 line and notify you that you've been unmuted. Please
10 remember that if you've put your own line on mute,
11 you will also have unmute your end before you begin
12 to speak.

13 Please state your name and speak
14 slowly and clearly so the court reporter can
15 accurately record your statement. If you're speaking
16 on behalf of an organization, please also provide the
17 organization's name.

18 Today's first speaker is Fred Gates.

19 Sangeetha, do you see Mr. Gates?

20 MS. KAILAS: No, Your Honor, I'm not
21 seeing Mr. Gates.

22 A.L.J. CLARKE: Mr. Gates, if you've
23 called in please press star 3 so we can identify you
24 and unmute your line. So we'll come back to Mr.
25 Gates.

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 The next registered speaker is Tonya
4 Dunn.

5 Ms. Dunn, same instructions. If
6 you've called in, please press star 3. We can unmute
7 your line and let you provide your statement.

8 Sangeetha, I don't see Ms. Dunn. Do
9 you?

10 MS. KAILAS: No, Your Honor, I'm not
11 seeing Ms. Dunn.

12 A.L.J. CLARKE: Okay. We'll come back
13 to Ms. Dunn as well.

14 I don't see Nancy Perrini on the line.
15 However, if you've called in, Ms. Perrini, please
16 press star 3. We can unmute your line, let you make
17 your statement.

18 Oh, there she is, right at the top.

19 Okay. Ms. Perrini, you've been
20 unmuted. Please make your statement.

21 MS. PERRINI: Hi. My name is Nancy
22 Perrini. I live in Albany, New York. I am a
23 ratepayer, and I'm here to speak in opposition to
24 National Grid's request to raise their rates. I
25 believe that this interest in -- it's immoral for the

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 CEO who makes \$8 million a year to raise rates for
4 essentially the purpose of increasing the profits for
5 shareholders. It's based on patterns of -- they have
6 patterns of greed, superiority, arrogance, and
7 pretense. I say I think the patterns of greed are
8 obvious, but again that -- you know, that it is
9 immoral for someone to make so much money and
10 charge -- increase the rates by \$400 a year on people
11 who cannot afford that.

12 I am a retired teacher, and I am on a
13 fixed income. And you know, I've done everything I
14 can to reduce my load of what I use, but it's -- it's
15 just wrong. It's just wrong to raise those rates.
16 It's -- the superiority and arrogance is that it's
17 defying the science.

18 We are in existential threat of
19 climate crisis -- of the climate crisis, and we need
20 to be getting off of fossil fuels. So to spend money
21 on improving and restructuring a gas system that we
22 should be moving away from as rapidly as possible is
23 unconscionable and immoral.

24 We are already feeling the effects of
25 the climate crisis here in New York State. We are

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 having incredibly strong storms. We had an
4 incredibly hot summer. It is time to move away from
5 fossil fuels and to move towards helping the
6 customers be able to electrify their homes.

7 And I feel that -- and it also is the
8 patterns of pretense because it's basically a lie.
9 It's a lie that this is the direction that needs to
10 be done to increase gas -- natural gas production as
11 if it's renewable. It is not renewable. Gas is --
12 gas or fossil fuels are caused by the death of
13 dinosaurs. They died a long time ago. They are not
14 going to be dying again anytime soon. They're
15 extinct. So we are using up materials that should
16 not be used.

17 It was a mistake. It was a mistake to
18 start using fossil fuels. Sure, lots of great things
19 happened because we started using fossil fuels, but
20 it was still a mistake and we need to correct that
21 mistake, because we are damaging and polluting our
22 planet. It is our only home.

23 So again, I think that these increases
24 are -- are unnecessary, and it's going in the wrong
25 direction. We do have a lot of climate and

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 community -- the CLCPA and they need -- National Grid
4 needs to be in compliance with that law and moving
5 away from fossil fuels.

6 That's all I have to say. Thank you.

7 A.L.J. CLARKE: Thank you, Ms.

8 Perrini.

9 Esmin, I apologize, but we're going to
10 skip down to people that I can tell are here and
11 we'll come back to some of those people at the top of
12 the list who weren't here earlier.

13 The next speaker is Ryan Silva.

14 Mr. Silva, you've been unmuted.

15 MR. SILVA: Excellent. Can you hear
16 me?

17 A.L.J. CLARKE: Yes, we can.

18 MR. SILVA: Excellent. Thank you very
19 much. Good afternoon. My name is Ryan Silva. I am
20 a ratepayer. I also serve as executive director of
21 the New York State Economic Development Council. We
22 work with our partners in public utilities as well as
23 representing over 1,000 organizations from Long
24 Island to Buffalo and everywhere in between.

25 I am here to speak on behalf and in

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 support of National Grid, who is a very important
4 economic development partner, not only to New York
5 State but to our localities, our municipalities, and
6 helping to facilitate public and private partnerships
7 that increase the quality of life in New York State.

8 National Grid is continuing to --
9 proposing to continue its economic development grant
10 programs at their current level of funding. We
11 would, of course, love to see those grant programs
12 increase, particularly their ShovelReady development
13 funding programs, their marketing programs, as well
14 as their main street revitalization funding programs.

15 All of these continue to have a major
16 impact on the attraction, expansion, and retention of
17 businesses not only in upstate New York but Long
18 Island as well. Since these programs were
19 introduced --

20 Was I muted? I'm sorry. Can you hear
21 me?

22 National Grid has invested 150 million
23 in the regional economy that has helped to create or
24 retain 70,000 jobs and is leveraged to \$12 billion
25 in new capital investment across New York's upstate

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 service territory. They continue to invest in energy
4 infrastructure that's critically important, and they
5 are also working to improve their transmission lines
6 and their systems to meet capacity, reliability, and
7 resiliency while also meeting our necessary renewable
8 and clean energy goals through the CLCPA.

9 Thank you very much for the
10 opportunity.

11 A.L.J. CLARKE: Thank you, Mr. Silva.

12 Next registered speaker is Laura
13 Faulk.

14 Ms. Faulk, you --

15 MS. FAULK: Hi, I'm Laura --

16 A.L.J. CLARKE: We can hear you.

17 MS. FAULK: I'm Laura Faulk, and I'm a
18 National Grid gas and electric customer in Saratoga
19 Springs. I have three requests of the PSC related to
20 these rate proceedings.

21 My first request is related to
22 transparency of the rate proposal. The PSC should
23 require National Grid to provide more detail to
24 ratepayers on their website. They list general
25 projects and the total amount of money National Grid

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 plans to invest in its energy network across upstate
4 New York but there's no information on how the total
5 would be divided up between projects. The projects
6 should also be described in more detail.

7 On a similar note, the PSC should
8 require National Grid to post on their website in a
9 clear and understandable way how much they expect to
10 invest in upstate New York operations from all
11 revenue sources and not just rate increases. Such
12 sources might include the issuance of corporate
13 bonds, the issuance of new stock shares, and the
14 potential, if any, for investments from the federal
15 government through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
16 and/or the Inflation Reduction Act.

17 A National Grid press release dated
18 May 23 of this year states they expect to raise seven
19 billion pounds by issuing new shares in order to help
20 fund a capital investment of around sixty billion
21 pounds in energy network infrastructure. There is no
22 information in that release as to how much, if any,
23 of that money might be distributed to Niagara Mohawk.

24 Presumably all of the information
25 requested is somewhere in the hundreds of pages of

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 documents submitted by National Grid to the PSC, but
4 ratepayers should not have to be attorneys, have an
5 MBA, and a lot of time on their hands to pour through
6 case filings in order to understand how their money
7 will be spent and the extent to which National Grid
8 has explored alternative means of financing.

9 The high rate increases currently
10 being sought by National Grid are simply unaffordable
11 for many of their customers and the PSC should push
12 National Grid to find alternative means of financing
13 critical projects.

14 My second request is that the PSC deny
15 any rate increase for the purpose of fossil fuel
16 infrastructure expansion. Such expansion is not
17 compatible with the state's climate law and with what
18 climate science tells us we must do to avoid
19 continued escalation of the human and monetary costs
20 of climate disruption. If there are regional
21 capacity constraints of National Grid based on their
22 website, investment should be made in electrification
23 and not gas infrastructure.

24 My final request is for the PSC to use
25 this proceeding to start transitioning investments

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 away from the gas system. As a ratepayer, I'm
4 looking forward to the day when I will be paying to
5 maintain one large energy distribution system instead
6 of two separate systems. I understand the need to
7 maintain a safe and reliable gas system during the
8 transition, but National Grid should be required to
9 evaluate alternatives to simple replacement of aging
10 gas lines, such as thermal energy network.

11 Thank you for your time.

12 A.L.J. CLARKE: Thank you very much.

13 The next speaker is Michael McGlynn.

14 Mr. McGlynn, you've been unmuted.

15 MR. MCGLYNN: Can you hear me?

16 A.L.J. CLARKE: Yes, we can.

17 MR. MCGLYNN: Great. Thank you for
18 permitting me to make a comment on this hearing. The
19 Public Service Commission's notice for these hearings
20 about National Grid's proposed changes in electric
21 and gas delivery rates and practices is essential to
22 protect our ecology from the greenhouse gas emissions
23 produced by National Grid and other utilities, and
24 from global warming.

25 Our State Constitution, Article 14,

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 Section 4, states "The policy of the state shall be
4 to conserve and protect its natural resources. The
5 legislature in implementing this policy shall include
6 adequate provisions for the abatement of air and
7 water pollution."

8 The Public Service Commission, Section
9 5, authorizes the Public Service Commission to
10 encourage public service responsibilities with
11 economy, efficiency, and care for the public safety,
12 the preservation of environmental values, and the
13 conservation of natural resources. In addition,
14 Executive Law Article 2-B authorizes the State
15 Disaster Preparedness Commission to establish our
16 State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to be
17 administered by the Division of Homeland Security and
18 Emergency Services.

19 The Commission selected the Department
20 of Public Service as lead agency of the Energy
21 Emergency Support Function Annex to provide response
22 and short-term recovery assistance to a negative
23 impact of any of New York's energy supply.

24 The legislative findings of the
25 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 includes New York should therefore minimize the risks
4 associated with climate change to a combination of
5 measures to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions
6 and improve the resilience of the state.

7 National Grid's study and testimony of
8 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act
9 indicated key findings to the carbonized gas and
10 electric energy services include the increasing
11 funding to support energy, efficiency, and customer
12 side technology, policies to support development of
13 supply and integration of renewable fuels and energy
14 as well as ensuring improved coordination and
15 planning across gas and electric networks.

16 Therefore, I ask advocacy for the
17 Department of Public Service and the Division of
18 Homeland Security and Emergency Services to conduct a
19 county emergency preparedness assessment of the
20 energy emergency support function in each county
21 within the Grid's territory. The assessment of
22 buildings and designated disadvantaged U.S. Census
23 track within social -- within the county's social
24 service districts where low to moderate income
25 households live will quantify the need for essential

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 customer side energy efficient HVAC systems.

4 Interagency cooperation with the
5 Department -- or by the Department with the
6 Environmental Conservation Climate Smart Communities
7 can utilize the assessment's data to improve planning
8 and implementation of decarbonization efforts of
9 residential and commercial buildings within the
10 Grid's service territory.

11 The assessments demand side data can
12 enhance development of manufacture, purchase,
13 installation, and maintenance of customer side energy
14 efficient technologies to meet our ecological needs.
15 National Grid's partnership with Climate Smart
16 Communities can submit a consolidated funding
17 application to our State Regional Economic
18 Development Council for capital, technical, and human
19 resources to establish a sustainable supply chain of
20 energy efficient equipment to reduce greenhouse gas
21 emissions within each county.

22 Also, I ask advocacy by the Department
23 of Public Service, as lead agency of the energy
24 emergency support function, to coordinate with
25 National Grid and county emergency management

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 services agencies to conduct a federal correct and
4 hazard identification assessment. FEMA's authorized
5 assessment could include the New York State
6 standardized interconnection requirements and
7 application process for new distributed generators
8 and/or energy storage systems for utilization at
9 emergency facilities -- at emergency management
10 facilities.

11 Public private partnership utilization
12 of the assessment can enhance access to the federal
13 natural gas distribution safety and modernization
14 grant program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
15 leaking from existing Grid gas pipelines. In
16 addition, the assessment may enable a partnership of
17 National Grid and the Division of Homeland Security
18 and Emergency Services to include NYSERDA's clean
19 energy communities to access federal and state funds
20 for installation of distributed energy resources with
21 New York Power Authority's battery energy storage
22 systems at state and municipal emergency management
23 service facilities.

24 The Department of Public Service
25 requested responsible utilization of the federal and

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 state assessments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
4 through interagency partnership with National Grid
5 can protect our energy infrastructure, our
6 environment, our public health from global warming.

7 In addition, our energy infrastructure
8 can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, assist economic
9 development with the -- with an estimate for a market
10 demand for energy efficient HVAC systems, assist low
11 and medium income households with lower rates for gas
12 and electric services, and hopefully lower National
13 Grid's debt management.

14 I want to thank you for letting me
15 speak.

16 A.L.J. CLARKE: Thank you, Mr.
17 McGlynn.

18 Our next registered speaker is P.L.
19 Mousaw.

20 I apologize if I pronounced your name,
21 but you have been unmuted.

22 MS. MOUSAW: Hi. My name is Peggy
23 Mousaw. Can you hear me?

24 A.L.J. CLARKE: Yes, we can.

25 MS. MOUSAW: Great. Thank you.

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 First, I would like to thank the PSC
4 Board and the administrative judges for giving me the
5 opportunity to speak. I appreciate that.

6 I would like to state that my
7 statements are no reflection of the frontline
8 employees of National Grid. I think the frontline
9 people do an excellent job.

10 I would like to point out other people
11 have mentioned that what the PSC -- what their
12 mission is. But the mission of the PSC is to ensure
13 affordable, safe, secure, and reliable access to
14 electric, gas, steam, telecommunications, and water
15 services for New York State residential and business
16 customers.

17 I think one of the things that's very
18 important to point out in New York State is National
19 Grid is a worldwide player. They're one of the
20 largest investment owned utility companies in the
21 world and their largest shareholder is BlackRock. So
22 when we're talking about National Grid, we're not
23 talking about a local municipal -- a local electric
24 company who is only providing services to New York
25 State because that is not the case.

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 I was not aware until this meeting
4 started what the rate was going to be increased
5 because I've heard everything from \$5 to \$40 per
6 month per electric bill. But on a quick calculation
7 on the electric alone, the roughly \$19 per two
8 million people times twelve, which may be taking a
9 lot of advantages of a lot of factors in that
10 calculation, but that's basically a \$480 million
11 increase to National Grid's budget. That's not all
12 going to New York State.

13 If you look at their financial
14 statements, you will see that most of their money --
15 as previously has been pointed out by other speakers,
16 that money is going to their executives and to their
17 shareholders. And as I pointed out, the largest
18 shareholder is BlackRock, and most of their
19 shareholders are not -- not only are they not New
20 York State shareholders, they're not even U.S.
21 shareholders.

22 Many people -- as another lady had
23 stated, many people have done everything they can do
24 to be energy efficient with their resources. They
25 have unplugged things. They have changed to LEDs,

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 all the other options that go on with trying to do
4 energy conservation within your own home or business.
5 And the benefit -- and the reward that they get for
6 making those energy conservation efforts is to
7 these -- are these never-ending rate increases.

8 So even though you try to be more
9 energy efficient, you get a rate increase so a
10 company such as National Grid can keep their budget
11 balanced and keep their shareholder dividends going
12 accordingly. I think that's a good work model. To
13 me, that's not being an affordable plan for New York
14 State.

15 Every rate increase to a utility
16 company is another form of inflation. Like fuel,
17 everything is driven by utility rates. An additional
18 increase, especially of this size, would threaten
19 more property owners in New York State to lose their
20 homes and go into foreclosure and small business
21 owners to the point of termination or bankruptcy.
22 That is not a sustainable plan for New York State.

23 This increase is roughly a twenty
24 percent increase on an average home electric bill,
25 and I'm only speaking for electric because I don't

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 personally have gas. This is a twenty percent
4 increase on a home residential electric bill. That's
5 substantial.

6 Again, most of this will fall on the
7 middle class who already bears the burden with heat
8 and other benefits that go to lower income families
9 for their utility services, fuel, electricity, gas,
10 propane wherever that's available. It's not
11 available throughout all of New York State.

12 If National Grid's points were valid,
13 there are, I believe, forty-two municipal electric
14 utilities in New York State. Those are Lake Placid,
15 Town of Tupper Lake, Town of Massena, et cetera. You
16 can go to the municipal electric utility website and
17 see the list of municipal electric utilities in New
18 York State.

19 The salaries in those municipalities
20 are comparable and their rates are approximately --
21 right now -- are approximately one-fifth of National
22 Grid's rates. People who live in those
23 municipalities pay roughly one-fifth of what National
24 Grid is charging everyone else in New York State.
25 And those municipal electric utilities are not having

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 the rate increases that National Grid is doing.

4 So my question is this. How can our
5 local municipal electric utility companies in New
6 York State be more efficient than National Grid? One
7 of the reasons are they have to be. They are
8 responsible to the local residents and the local
9 citizens and it will be an uproar if they are -- if
10 they are not affordable within their home
11 municipalities. That's why they can be efficient and
12 National Grid can keep coming to the PSC for rate
13 increases.

14 Many municipalities in New York State
15 right now -- and I am referring to New York State.
16 Please bear in mind, National Grid is worldwide. It
17 is not a New York State only company.

18 Many municipalities in New York State
19 are preparing their budgets right now.
20 Municipalities, per what was put in the legislation
21 years ago, have a two percent property tax cap. This
22 type of rate increase may cost many New York State
23 municipality budgets to exceed their budgets or their
24 property tax cap allowance. And because they're
25 doing their budgets now and this rate, depending on

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 the results of this meeting and the decision of the
4 PSC, will not know until 2025. This could drive
5 another fund balance or this could raise more of
6 their property tax caps next year. Right now it
7 would take away from their fund balances if they
8 don't have the -- if they haven't budgeted
9 accordingly for this substantial rate increase,
10 because it does affect businesses as well as
11 residential.

12 My question is -- is, one, why isn't
13 the National Grid rates tied to the tax cap of the
14 CPI like municipalities are required to do in New
15 York State? How can they come in and keep requesting
16 these outrageous rate increases? A twenty percent
17 rate increase is just unbelievable.

18 National Grid in New York State has
19 cut their staff and moved to contractors. They have
20 not met the mission to operate and they operate
21 reactively instead of proactively. Some of the
22 examples of this are they -- they reduce their
23 employees. The only time they repair poles and lines
24 is when they have a storm and they're forced to do
25 so. They're not out cutting down trees. They've

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 been more proactive in that in the last three years.
4 But overall that's something that they haven't been
5 doing for the last 10 or 15 years because they moved
6 their money to profits and not to operations.

7 And I found it very interesting the
8 opening statement was based on National Grid's plan
9 about increasing revenues, increasing revenues, and
10 then there were two brief statements on how their
11 operations are going to work. I think that clearly
12 shows what the -- what the direction of National Grid
13 is in this rate increase, which is increasing
14 revenues.

15 Some of the broadband issues in New
16 York State is due to National Grid not having the
17 poles available, moving the paperwork necessary for
18 the broadband companies to lease the poles for
19 broadband. That has created a big problem in
20 northern New York of not being able to get broadband.
21 And what does it stem back to? It stems back to
22 National Grid.

23 New York State has a New York power
24 authority. We have and should have some of the
25 cheapest electric in the U.S., but we don't.

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 Municipal electric utility companies have some of the
4 cheapest electric in New York State, but not the
5 state overall. Why is this? The town that I live in
6 has six hydros. And we get -- and the town itself
7 gets absolutely no local benefit from those hydros
8 because our power goes other places. It goes back
9 into the system, and it gets benefited from the
10 system, not from the local residents, which is the
11 same thing that's going to happen with this rate
12 increase with National Grid. It's not going to
13 benefit the local residents of New York State, it's
14 going to benefit National Grid's overall
15 shareholders.

16 Again, I -- as another lady pointed
17 out, I really would like to see the operational
18 plans. And my first thing is, is where is the
19 accountability? If you look at their financial
20 statements the money doesn't stay in New York and the
21 operations aren't benefiting New York. The money
22 goes to the shareholders -- I'm sorry to be
23 repetitive -- outside of New York State.

24 If you look at -- if you look at your
25 electric bills and go back to how the rates are

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 established, I believe that roughly ten percent of
4 the rate was supposed to go to renewable energy. So
5 my question is, is who has been accountable for
6 watching how that reserve was put aside and how that
7 money for renewable energy was used because I don't
8 see it happening. I don't see -- I mean, in mid and
9 upper New York State where you have a lot of storms,
10 you have car accidents, you have a lot of snow, we
11 get a lot of utility issues. Lately it's been
12 storms, ice on the lines.

13 The proactive thing to do would be to
14 bury those lines underground and not have the issues.
15 That is not National Grid's. As soon as a storm come
16 out, they'll send somebody out sometime. You'll get
17 it back. In probably twenty-four hours you'll get
18 your power back, if you're lucky. I mean, we had the
19 ice storm in '98 and my power was out 21 days in --
20 when we had the ice storm. They are not proactive in
21 their thing.

22 So I'd like to know, one, what they're
23 doing with that renewable energy reserve that they
24 had to put aside to do with it because honestly,
25 this -- everything that's going on with 5G and having

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 to put up the power for the solars and having the
4 do -- have great electric -- electrical broadband
5 width -- I'm sorry, electrical utility work -- I'm
6 not really sure what to call it -- but to increase
7 those lines to handle the 5G and the solar and
8 everything else, that hasn't been done.

9 But that's been out there for over 40
10 years, so why is it a surprise now? Why do they need
11 the money to put those renewable infrastructure
12 systems in place when they've been collecting money
13 on renewables for 40 from everybody? It's part of
14 our rate. So where is the accountability on that?
15 And to put it back onto the -- onto the local
16 residents here in New York State because of the lack
17 of accountability, that's just wrong. That -- and so
18 personally, I -- anyway, that's just wrong.

19 I think some of the actions and -- and
20 I realize this is a public forum. I think some of
21 the actions of the PSC are self-perpetuating with
22 regards to these rate increases. The reason I say
23 that is, is some of the things they put in, like
24 allowing -- forcing smart meters onto residents.
25 Basically you're penalized if you don't do it, and

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 you're penalized if you do do it. But forcing smart
4 meters has required the need for more electric. The
5 need for more electric means that they've got to
6 increase their lines and the capacity of those lines.
7 And again it becomes self-perpetuating. But the
8 problem is, this has been in place for forty years.
9 Where is the accountability and who didn't do their
10 planning?

11 My father used to tell me, poor
12 planning on your part does not constitute an
13 emergency on mine. And I would really like to know
14 who is going to be oversight and accountability of
15 the planning of National Grid with what they got the
16 money for and what they did with it,

17 Basically -- and I told some of my
18 friends today that I had signed up to speak at this
19 meeting, and they thought I lost my mind because they
20 thought that my opinion wouldn't be heard, that you'd
21 let me talk but it wouldn't be taken into
22 consideration and the PSC would basically let
23 National Grid have their rate increase.

24 New Yorkers have lost faith in the PSC
25 due to some of the decisions that have been made and

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a

2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 the constant rate increases to New Yorkers. And to
4 take an international company like National Grid and
5 try to bury a rate increase out to us because of the
6 fact that they want one when they're an international
7 company with some of the largest profit sharing -- or
8 shareholder dividends going out, I think is
9 unconscionable.

10 Anyways, I seriously hope that you
11 will consider my input and restore the faith in PSC
12 to the New York residents. Thank you.

13 A.L.J. CLARKE: Thank you, Ms. Mousaw.

14 Our next registered speaker is Ethan
15 Gormley.

16 Mr. Gormley, you've been unmuted.

17 MR. GORMLEY: Thank you. Good
18 afternoon. My name is Ethan Gormley. I'm a National
19 Grid ratepayer and a climate organizer with Citizen
20 Action New York, and I live in Clay, New York.
21 Citizen Action is a grassroots organization with
22 thousands of members across the state. We take on
23 the problems affecting everyday New Yorkers from New
24 York City to Albany to Buffalo.

25 I'm here today because earlier this

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 year, National Grid asked to increase upstate New
4 Yorkers' energy bills. We know that this is the
5 largest increase National Grid has requested in
6 decades. For the typical household it amounts to
7 over \$30 more per month if they're on electric heat
8 and gas from National Grid. That's over \$400 per
9 year.

10 A bill increase of that size will do
11 serious harm to a family living paycheck to paycheck
12 or on a fixed income. At the same time, National
13 Grid's CEO was paid \$8 million last year. With
14 National Grid raking in such massive profits, how can
15 we even consider further burdening regular working
16 class families?

17 What's worse is that these proposed
18 bill increases would pay for nearly \$2 billion
19 investments in the gas infrastructure. This is the
20 same dirty and dangerous fossil fuel infrastructure,
21 like pipelines, that pollute our homes and fuel the
22 climate crisis.

23 New York State passed the Climate Act
24 in 2019 that made it so New York State must
25 transition away from fossil fuels into renewal

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 energy. Instead, National Grid is showing that they
4 are above the law by trying to invest nearly \$2
5 billion of ratepayer money into more fossil fuels and
6 fake climate solutions like renewable natural gas.
7 By investing in gas infrastructure, National Grid
8 shows that it isn't serious about tackling the
9 climate crisis. That point is made further by
10 acknowledging that the corporation sits on the Board
11 of the American Gas Association, a massive lobbying
12 group well known for killing real common sense
13 climate policy.

14 We already see the impact of the
15 climate crisis at our doorsteps with extreme weather
16 and extreme heat events all across the state, and
17 especially here in central New York. Now is not the
18 time for National Grid to price gouge upstate New
19 Yorkers and continue to invest in dirty and climate
20 damaging gas.

21 Thankfully New York State still has an
22 opportunity to stop National Grid's plan. As the
23 Public Service Commission, you're empowered to reign
24 in for-profit monopolies like National Grid. The
25 PSC, New York State, and Governor Kathy Hochul must

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 put New Yorkers' wallets and health over the profits
4 of National Grid. We need common sense protections
5 for massive utility bill increases and for the state
6 to follow the law and push New York State to meet the
7 climate targets outlined in the State's Climate Act.
8 New York State needs to be a leader in protecting its
9 people.

10 This August, New Yorkers assembled and
11 spoke out against the rate hike in Syracuse, Albany,
12 New York City, and Long Island because people have
13 had enough. The PSC cannot let for-profit monopolies
14 like National Grid ransack our wallets so they can
15 continue to pollute our communities and make millions
16 upon millions of dollars in the process. New York
17 State must protect its people, our environment, and
18 public health over National Grid's profits, and the
19 PSC can do exactly that by rejecting a rate hike that
20 invests in fossil fuel infrastructure.

21 Thank you.

22 A.L.J. CLARKE: Thank you.

23 Next registered speaker is Nancy Crom.

24 Nancy Crom.

25 Ms. Crom, if you've called in, please

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 press star 3. We can recognize you and unmute your
4 line.

5 Esmin, I don't see Ms. Crom, do you?

6 MS. BROWN-ANDERSON: No, Your Honor.

7 A.L.J. CLARKE: All right. We'll move
8 on to David Eastman.

9 Again, Mr. Eastman, same instructions.
10 If you've called in, please press star 3. We can
11 unmute you and allow you to give your statement.

12 MS. BROWN-ANDERSON: I am not seeing
13 Mr. Eastman either.

14 A.L.J. CLARKE: All right. We're
15 going to move down to Carol Diote, D-I-O-T-E. There
16 is a Carol, Esmin, about midway down.

17 Hi, Carol. Is this Ms. Diote? Hello,
18 Carol. You've been unmuted on our end.

19 MS. DIOTE: Can you hear me?

20 A.L.J. CLARKE: Yes, we can.

21 MS. DIOTE: Okay. So I'm -- I've
22 never done this before.

23 A.L.J. CLARKE: That's okay. Take
24 your time. But please confirm that you are Carol
25 Diote so we can make sure we got you.

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 MS. DIOTE: Yes --

4 A.L.J. CLARKE: Okay. Good.

5 MS. DIOTE: -- I am.

6 A.L.J. CLARKE: Thank you. Take your
7 time and say what you'd like to say.

8 MS. DIOTE: Well, recently we received
9 a notification from National Grid that they were
10 moving to smart meters. We were told that if we
11 opted out there would be an additional charge if we
12 chose to keep the same meters. I called, spoke with
13 National Grid, and was told that the additional
14 charges were to read the meter, that they would have
15 to send somebody out in a car to actually read the
16 meter versus what they're doing now, going around and
17 you know, being able to do it with a front meter.
18 They would just be able to read the usage right from
19 their location.

20 So I asked about -- there's already a
21 fee built into the bill for administrative tasks for
22 both gas and electric for the smart meter reading
23 or -- not for the smart reading but for preparing the
24 bill, reading the meters, and things like that. So
25 they've already increased an additional \$30 a month

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 between the gas and the electric meter rates for
4 processing paperwork that they're doing now anyway.
5 And we already have that charge. So to increase
6 rates above and beyond that is absolutely ridiculous.

7 And I hope that the Public Service
8 Commission takes a hard look at the fact that
9 National Grid is already charging customers a fee.
10 It's right on the billing statements that they send
11 every month. They already charged a billing fee, but
12 yet now they're charging an additional billing fee
13 whether or not you get the meter. And if you don't
14 get the meter, it's an additional cost on top --
15 above and beyond the original charge.

16 So it's like they're charging fee on
17 top of fee on top of fee and hoping nobody pays
18 attention or notices. And I was told by the national
19 state representative that the Public Service
20 Commission already agreed and approved this
21 additional charge, which I don't know whether that's
22 the case or not, but it's concerning, nonetheless.

23 And that's all I have.

24 A.L.J. CLARKE: Thank you very much.

25 Our next registered speaker is Craig

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 Eddie.

4 Craig Eddie, if you've called in,
5 please press star 3. We can identify you and unmute
6 your line.

7 MS. BROWN-ANDERSON: I'm not seeing
8 any attendee by the name of Craig Eddie, Your Honor.

9 A.L.J. CLARKE: Okay. I agree. We'll
10 skip to the next registered speaker. Fabiola Normil,
11 N-O-R-M-I-L.

12 Fabiola Normil, if you've called in,
13 please press star 3. I don't see anybody. Do you,
14 Esmin?

15 MS. BROWN-ANDERSON: No, I don't. No,
16 I don't, Your Honor.

17 A.L.J. CLARKE: All right. Thank you.
18 We'll skip down to Chevon Duryea, D-U-R-Y-E-A.

19 Chevon Duryea, if you've called in,
20 please press star 3. We can unmute you and let you
21 make your statement.

22 All right. We're going to move on to
23 Jenny Casinelli.

24 Ms. Casinelli, same instructions. If
25 you've called in, please press star 3. We can unmute

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 you and let you make your statement.

4 Jacqueline Lasonde.

5 Jacqueline Lasonde, if you've called
6 in, please press star 3.

7 Tanisha Perez.

8 Tanisha Perez, if you've called in,
9 please press star 3. We can identify you and unmute
10 your line.

11 Esmin, I don't see anyone. Do you?

12 MS. BROWN-ANDERSON: No, Your Honor.

13 A.L.J. CLARKE: Okay. Dr. Majadi

14 Baruti.

15 Dr. Baruti, B-A-R-U-T-I, if you've
16 called in, please press star 3. We can unmute your
17 line.

18 Amy Turner.

19 Ms. Turner?

20 West McNeill.

21 West McNeill, if you've called in,
22 please press star 3. We can unmute your line and let
23 you make a statement.

24 And how about Joseph Scalzo?

25 Okay. I'm going to go back to Fred

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 Gates.

4 Mr. Gates, if you've called in and
5 would like to make a statement, please press star 3.

6 Finally, Tonya Dunn.

7 Okay. We've done our list of
8 registered speakers. It appears that several of them
9 have not made it to the hearing, at least as of yet.
10 So what we'll do is open up the hearing to anyone in
11 attendance who did not register to make a statement
12 and allow them to do so if they would like to.

13 For the -- Esmin, Sangeetha, can you
14 move to the next slide, please. For electronic
15 users, you can follow the instructions on the screen
16 to raise your hand, hopefully. There we go. And
17 anyone who called in and would like to make a
18 statement, please press star 3. All right, we have a
19 hand from Mr. Behm -- Alex Behm.

20 Mr. Behm, you've been unmuted.

21 MR. BEHM: Good afternoon. My name is
22 Alex, and I'm here on behalf of today -- I'm here
23 today on behalf of Clear Path for Veterans.

24 Clear Path for Veterans is a non-
25 profit organization that serves veterans, military

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 members and their families throughout 33 counties in
4 New York State. I serve as the chief community
5 officer for the organization. I am not here today on
6 behalf of Clear Path for Veterans or myself to
7 represent any favoritism towards a rate increase or
8 the lack of an increase.

9 We are here today to simply state our
10 long-term relationship and partnership with National
11 Grid, specifically the Veterans Employee Resource
12 Group that works out of Syracuse, New York. We have
13 had a relationship with this group for over a decade.
14 They closely align to our mission of serving
15 veterans, service members and their families. We
16 have had several instances of interaction with this
17 group to include individuals -- National Grid
18 employees volunteering at Clear Path for Veterans
19 throughout our different programs and services to
20 include service dog training for veterans and their
21 families, career services support, also support to
22 individuals for peer mentorship as well.

23 The group has also held massive
24 volunteer projects at our 78-acre campus which helps
25 us to improve the quality of services to veterans and

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 their families. They have done this on an annual
4 basis for over a decade. The veteran resource group
5 also supports both the camo hard hat and tee shirt
6 campaign. Again, to support our vital mission of
7 serving veterans and their families across New York
8 State.

9 Our mission is closely connected to
10 the community and we view National Grid and their
11 individual members as community advocates, especially
12 for veterans and their families. We have also taken
13 part in direct hiring initiatives for National Grid
14 and their local family members throughout our
15 communities.

16 So again, we are not advocating for
17 anything to do with the rate increase or decrease, we
18 are simply recognizing that Clear Path for Veterans
19 has a longstanding relationship with National Grid
20 and the monetary budget line items that they are
21 awarded to interact with different community members
22 and especially in the veteran community, as I stated
23 earlier, has done nothing but increase our ability to
24 deliver critical programs and services to veterans
25 and their families.

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 Thank you again for your time today.

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

5 Esmin, it looks like that we have at
6 least one call-in user who would like to make a
7 statement.

8 Okay. You've been unmuted.

9 MS. PAPALE: Good afternoon. This is
10 Shawna Papale with Mohawk Valley Edge, a regional
11 economic development organization here in Oneida and
12 Herkimer Counties. We've had a great experience in
13 working with National Grid. And one of the things we
14 have seen in the Mohawk Valley is tremendous growth
15 and opportunity based upon being able to secure the
16 presence of some new companies such as Wolfspeed.

17 And the important piece that that
18 brings is it does increase the opportunities in our
19 community as well as help raise the buying power of
20 the people who get hired at Wolfspeed. But that
21 project would never have been possible without the
22 involvement of National Grid from first supporting,
23 you know, through the grant programs our economic
24 fund initiative, but also we have found it critical
25 for us to be able to grow the industry of the

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 semiconductor area. Without upgrades and without
4 investment in infrastructure we would never been able
5 to secure their presence here.

6 And it's not just Wolfspeed; it's
7 other companies that are growing and expanding. If
8 we do not invest in our infrastructure, we fail.
9 Nobody wants to see increased costs in business or in
10 their life, but it is a critical component of if
11 you're going to move the needle on your region and
12 make that happen.

13 So it's -- you know, we definitely are
14 in support of what National Grid has to do to
15 increase the bandwidth and the viability of having a
16 better infrastructure as well as providing more power
17 to the region. We also want to, you know, support
18 this effort because of the contributions National
19 Grid has made to our organization and the efforts
20 we've had to see new opportunities to the region.
21 Those opportunities will result in more people. It
22 will result in more housing needed to be built, more
23 individuals coming to live here and stay here. Thus,
24 it also then becomes a more viable community.

25 So that's -- the opportunity to help

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 support National Grid is critical. We understand the
4 challenge it presents to some individuals, and we're
5 just hoping that, you know, moving the needle on the
6 community overall will be able to be an offset, and
7 people get better jobs with higher-paying
8 opportunities. Thank you.

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

10 Esmin, if you could unmute Mr.

11 Boutman -- Ryan Boutman, please.

12 Mr. Boutman, you've been unmuted.

13 MR. BOUTMAN: Hi. Can everybody hear
14 me?

15 A.L.J. CLARKE: Yes, we can.

16 MR. BOUTMAN: Thank you. I'm here
17 today speaking on behalf of Chautauqua Institution.
18 I just wanted to take a minute here to acknowledge
19 the partnership we had with National Grid's Make
20 Ready program. We were able to have this partnership
21 allow Chautauqua Institution the opportunity to
22 install a few EB chargers for our grounds.

23 For those that are unfamiliar,
24 Chautauqua Institution is a national historic
25 landmark community. And with that being said, a lot

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 of the properties and property owners that own homes,
4 condos, and apartments here on campus do not have the
5 available space to be able to install EB chargers for
6 themselves.

7 So as a community, we took the
8 opportunity to partner through this Make Ready
9 program with National Grid to kind of take one of
10 those climate-related initiatives and bring that to
11 our community to impact a lot of people that own
12 electric vehicles and were looking for that sort of
13 thing to allow them maybe to purchase an electric
14 vehicle in the effort of mitigating climate-related
15 issues that they see great importance in considering
16 high priority of.

17 So again just wanted to thank National
18 Grid and acknowledge the great partnership that we
19 had for that and look forward to new opportunities
20 with different incentive programs the National Grid
21 may be able to bring in the future.

22 Thank you.

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

24 Okay. I'd like to, one more time,
25 give anyone an opportunity to make a statement. If

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 you'd like to throw out a comment this afternoon but
4 you didn't register to speak, please press the raised
5 hand icon on the bottom right of your screen if
6 you're an electronic user. If you're a call-in user,
7 press star 3.

8 I don't see any hands. Do you, Esmin?
9 Sangeetha?

10 MS. BROWN-ANDERSON: No, Your Honor.
11 I'm not getting any raised hands.

12 MS. KAILAS: I didn't see any raised
13 hands either.

14 A.L.J. CLARKE: All right. Well,
15 thank you very much.

16 I'd like to remind anyone listening
17 that they may submit public comment throughout this
18 proceeding by the other means described earlier and
19 in the notice of public statement hearing issued on
20 August 26, 2024.

21 Judge Belsito and I would like to
22 thank everyone for their participation here today,
23 especially staff from our consumer services office
24 and the court reporter.

25 The hearing is concluded and we're off

1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323
3 the record.

4 Thank you all very much.

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

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1 9/25/2024 - Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation d/b/a
2 National Grid - 24-E-0322, 24-G-0323

3 STATE OF NEW YORK

4 I, SHAKEIA FLEEKES, do hereby certify that the
5 foregoing was reported by me, in the cause, at the
6 time and place, as stated in the caption hereto, at
7 Page 1 hereof; that the foregoing typewritten
8 transcription consisting of pages 1 through 50, is a
9 true record of all proceedings had at the hearing.

10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
11 subscribed my name, this the 30th day of September,
12 2024.

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17 *Shay Fleeks*

18 SHAKEIA FLEEKES, Reporter

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