

1 9/12/2023 - Central Hudson - 23-E-0418/23-G-0419

2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

4 Case 23-E-0418 - Proceeding on Motion of the
5 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules and
6 regulations of Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.
7 for Electric Service.

8
9 Case 23-G-0419 - Proceeding on Motion of the
10 Commission as to the rates, charges, rules and
11 regulations of Central Hudson Gas & Electric for Gas
12 Service

13 PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARING

14 DATE: September 12, 2023

15 TIME: 1:07 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

16 VENUE: WebEx

17 BEFORE: A.L.J. Ashley Moreno

18 A.L.J. James A. Costello

19
20
21 Reported by: Anthony McClain
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2 (The procedural conference hearing
3 commenced at 1:07 p.m.)

4 (On the record)

5 A.L.J. MORENO: I call Cases 23-E-0418
6 and 23-G-0419 Proceedings on Motions of the
7 Commission as to the Rates, Charges, Rules and
8 Regulations of Central Hudson Gas and Electric
9 Corporation for Electric and Gas Service.

10 Good afternoon and welcome. We are
11 here today for a public statement hearing that was
12 noticed on August 18, 2023. On August 31st, 2023
13 Central Hudson Gas and Electric Corporation, who I
14 will refer to Central Hudson, filed amendments to its
15 electric and gas tariff schedules proposing to
16 increase its annual electric and gas delivery
17 revenues effective July 1st, 2024.

18 Central Hudson proposes to increase
19 its electric delivery revenues by approximately 139.5
20 million which is a 31.9% increase in base delivery
21 revenues or a 16.4% increase in total revenue. In
22 its natural gas delivery revenues, it proposes to
23 increase by approximately 41.5 million which is a
24 29.2% increase in base delivery revenues or a 19%
25 increase in total revenues.

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

11 My name is Ashley Moreno and I am an
12 administrative law judge for the Department of Public
13 Service. With me today is Administrative Law Judge
14 James A. Costello, also from the Department of Public
15 Service, and together we are responsible for
16 presiding over the hearings in these cases and the
17 development of a complete record in these
18 proceedings. And I'm just going to take a quick
19 pause. Ms. Gutierrez, I just wanted to confirm that
20 the pace is okay for interpretation?

21 THE INTERPRETER: Yes, your Honor,
22 everything is fine. Thank you.

23 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. Great.

24 THE INTERPRETER: If I could just
25 please remind everyone to please mute your computer

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2 and your telephone if you are not speaking. Thank
3 you.

4 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you so much.
5 The Public Service Commission will decide what
6 Central Hudson's terms and conditions of service will
7 be. The Public Service Commission has seven members;
8 the chairperson Rory Christian and six commissioners;
9 Diane Burman, James Alesi, Tracey Edwards, John
10 Howard, David Valesky and John Maggiore. And
11 Commissioner Maggiore we are fortunate to have with
12 us today. Commissioner, would you like to address
13 the participants?

14 COMMISSIONER MAGGIORE: Thank you,
15 Judge. I -- I really appreciate everybody who's
16 taking time out of their day to participate in this
17 process. As a commissioner it is valuable for me to
18 hear from you, and so this is the last time you're
19 going to hear from me in this session. I especially
20 want to say that it's important for me to hear how a
21 case like this, which is obviously of concern to
22 many, many people, affects your life. Or if you have
23 factual information to add or -- or data to add to --
24 to the record. So it's important for me as I
25 consider how to vote when and if this matter comes

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2 before us, and so I look forward to hearing what
3 people have to say. Thank you very much.

4 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you very much,
5 Commissioner. So as stated, the purpose of our
6 hearing is to provide you with an opportunity to tell
7 the commission your thoughts on Central Hudson's rate
8 proposal. The statements that you make today will
9 become part of the case record. We have a court
10 reporter joining us who will prepare a transcript of
11 the hearing which will be included in the official
12 record for this proceeding so that your comments can
13 be considered by all members of the commission. And
14 when it is ready, the transcript will be available
15 for view on the Department of Public Service website.

16 This is not an evidentiary hearing or
17 a question and answer session but a forum to hear
18 comments from you. And if I could ask, Esmin, are
19 you able to advance the slide? This is not the only
20 opportunity for comment. If you did not register to
21 speak at today's hearing but you would like your
22 views included in the record, there are a variety of
23 other ways to comment that were listed in the public
24 notice for today's event. You can do so, and if you
25 are participating on the computer, you can do so by

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2 the department's website, by e-mail, regular mail or
3 by phone.

4 And regardless of how the comments are
5 submitted, they will be given equal consideration.

6 Comments may be submitted and will be considered
7 throughout the case. And, again, if you're joining
8 us electronically, those other ways to submit
9 comments are on the screen. If you have registered
10 to make a statement, we ask that you please summarize
11 any lengthy written statements orally and submit the
12 full written statement by e-mail or mail. And we ask
13 also that statements today try to stay within about
14 three minutes for your comments.

15 So we have people who have registered
16 to speak and are participating electronically, and we
17 have others who are registered and are participating
18 by phone. In either case, you should have one audio
19 input otherwise you may experience some problems with
20 feedback. I will call the persons that have
21 registered one by one to speak. If someone is not
22 available when I call them, I will continue with the
23 next person and then I will come back to those who
24 are unavailable at the end.

25 And for telephone participants,

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2 participating in English, when I call out your name I
3 will ask that you hit Star 3 on your phone so that we
4 can recognize you and unmute your line. It might
5 take a little while for us to locate you and unmute
6 your line so please be sure to wait until you hear a
7 beep or are notified that your line has been unmuted
8 before you speak. And, again, if you've muted your
9 own telephone you will also have to unmute your line
10 on your end.

11 For the people that have registered
12 electronically, after I call your name we will unmute
13 your line. You should hear a tone and see that the
14 microphone icon is no longer red. Please be reminded
15 that if you put your own -- if you called in, for
16 example, or use the audio of your telephone and you
17 put that on mute that you will also have to unmute
18 your line before you begin to speak. We will start
19 by calling on the members of the public who have
20 registered to speak and then we will move to
21 individuals who are parties to the proceeding.

22 As parties you have greater privileges
23 and opportunities to build the record in these
24 proceedings and consequently we'll ask that you
25 summarize any lengthy comments and submit them in

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2 writing. Please speak slowly and clearly so that our
3 court reporter can accurately capture your statement
4 for the record. When your line is unmuted, please
5 state your name, and if you are speaking on behalf of
6 an organization the name of that organization. Once
7 we can confirm that we can hear you then you can
8 proceed to make your comments.

9 And before I call the first speaker,
10 if you could please for -- just for people who will
11 be listening to or providing comments in Spanish by
12 using a separate number to set up for that purpose,
13 we ask that you please mute your phone when you enter
14 the meeting. When we call out your name you would
15 unmute your line and then let the interpreter know
16 that you are there and provide your statement. The
17 interpreter will interpret your statement into
18 English in this WebEx so that the court reporter can
19 include it in the record for consideration by the
20 commission. And I'll just pause if I could ask that
21 that be interpreted into the WebEx meeting please.

22 (Interpreter provided statement in
23 Spanish)

24 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you. So with
25 that I will call our first speaker who is Jonathan

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2 Jacobsen. And if you have called in if you could
3 press Star 3 on your telephone. Jonathan Jacobsen.
4 Okay. I'm not seeing that person. We'll proceed on
5 to Thomas Wright, participating electronically and
6 your line has been unmuted.

7 MR. WRIGHT: Hi there. I have not
8 prepared comments. I'm not prepared to speak at this
9 time. Thank you.

10 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. Thank you very
11 much. Our next speaker will be Allison Turenchalk.
12 And I see a hand raised. If you could please unmute
13 that line. Okay. Ms. Turenchalk?

14 MS. TURENCHALK: Can you hear me?

15 A.L.J. MORENO: We can now. Thank
16 you.

17 MS. TURENCHALK: Okay. This thing
18 keeps saying you're unmuted. I just want to say that
19 I am against such a massive increase in gas and
20 electric prices. I went through a major fiasco with
21 Central Hudson this year and I still feel that I was
22 right because they didn't properly bill me. And they
23 told the public commission something totally
24 different and I never even heard that from Central
25 Hudson. So what they told the commission was nothing

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2 that they told me as a customer. So I feel that I've
3 been double charged.

4 We as individuals never get a 16 or a
5 19% pay increase. Across the board everything is
6 going up and you're driving seniors out of their
7 homes with all of these rate increases. And I don't
8 feel that a rate increase, especially to the
9 magnitude of what they want, is fair to us as people
10 whether we're in an apartment, whether we're owning
11 our own home because it's going to drive more people
12 out of their homes. And I'm just -- I'm totally
13 against this and that's all I have to say.

14 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. Thank you very
15 much. And I will also say, Erin, could I ask you to
16 go quickly just to the last slide? I will just note
17 that to the extent that you are having any billing
18 problems or you are dissatisfied with the resolution
19 of an issue with the company, we do offer consumer
20 assistance, and we have a help line that you could
21 reach out to. And that number is 1-800-342-3377.
22 Thank you very much again.

23 Our next speaker will be Judith Green
24 and if you have called in if you can press Star 3 on
25 your phone so that we might recognize you. Judith

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2 Green. Okay. And we will circle back. And Ms.
3 Turntalk if I could ask you the favor of pressing
4 Star 3 again to lower your hand on our end that would
5 be very helpful.

6 Thank you. And our next speaker will
7 be Katherine Brainard. Katherine Brainard, and if
8 you have called in if you could press Star 3 on your
9 phone. Okay. We will circle back. Malcolm Burn.
10 And, again, if you have called in if you could press
11 Star 3 on your telephone. Malcolm Burn. Okay.
12 We'll turn to Ronald Giordano (phonetic spelling).
13 And, again, if you've called in if you could press
14 Star 3 on your telephone so that we might recognize
15 you. Ronald Giordano.

16 I see a couple of raised hands now.
17 Could you please proceed to unmute our first call in
18 user?

19 MR. GIORDANO: Hello, this is Ron
20 Giordano.

21 A.L.J. MORENO: Hi there. We can hear
22 you now. Please -- please go ahead and proceed.

23 MR. GIORDANO: Okay. I just have some
24 concerns. I noticed that Central Hudson saying they
25 need this one year only raise to comply with

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2 upgrading their system as far as security of the
3 transmission distribution system. Does that mean
4 that after one year the rate's going to go back down
5 because if that does happen it will be historic as
6 far as I can tell since their rates never go down?
7 Is this a misconception on my behalf? Hello?

8 A.L.J. MORENO: Hi, there, Mr.
9 Giordano. Yes, this -- the hearing is primarily to
10 hear comments from you. But -- but once a rate is
11 set that would be the rate until it was changed.

12 MR. GIORDANO: So it will increase by
13 16 which really is even more than that because you
14 have the electric costs and then the electric
15 distribution costs. And I know that Central Hudson's
16 saying that they are in arrears right now but that
17 was part of the S.A.P. system that they implemented
18 that never went completely online. I mean, I'm a one
19 percenter that's still not getting automated bills
20 because I'm on a budget plan and I'm also on
21 community solar both of which Central Hudson said
22 they wanted to see.

23 So I'm a little concerned about that.
24 I just feel that the rate increase is not really
25 something we should be giving Central Hudson based on

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2 their performance. If anything we should freeze
3 their rates. I don't think we should be rewarding
4 Central Hudson with a rate increase because they
5 claim they need it. I feel that that would be not in
6 the best interest of the consumer and I'm just
7 opposed to it. I'm sorry but I can't believe we're
8 going to reward Central Hudson with a rate increase.
9 It just irks me. That's all I have to comment on.
10 Thank you.

11 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you very much.
12 And if I could please ask Mr. Giordano if you could
13 press Star -- oh, you already took care of it. Thank
14 you. And I see we have one more hand raised. Okay.
15 Your line has been unmuted.

16 MR. MOLINA: (phonetic spelling) I'm
17 calling in as a resident of Newburgh area and I just
18 wanted to express my concerns on the following
19 community members about the increase to the Central
20 Hudson billing.

21 A.L.J. MORENO: Sure. Before you
22 begin, could you just please state your name for us?

23 MR. MOLINA: Yeah, my name is Juan
24 Molina.

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

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2 MR. MOLINA: Not a problem. So, yeah,
3 I have heard comments from other people on the line
4 who've expressed concerns about how this -- this rate
5 will, you know, negatively impact them. And you know
6 performing through Central Hudson, as it's already
7 been previously stated has not been the most
8 efficient and professional. You know, for most
9 customers they receive inaccurate and overstated
10 bills frequently, unfortunately. And these hike
11 increases would on average increase the monthly
12 billing by approximately \$30 a month for electricity
13 with another \$30 a month for gas.

14 While we increase -- while we are
15 having to pay for these increased rates our quality
16 of service is not guaranteed to increase. And also
17 Central Hudson has not guaranteed that these
18 temporary increases in payments will, again, decrease
19 after their proposed services or what have you. A
20 lot of the costs of repairing their system has been
21 placed on the consumers, but consumers have no actual
22 benefit or any kind of reassurance that they will
23 actually reap a better system from Central Hudson.

24 So along with many of the people who
25 have already called expressed a lot of concerns with

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2 these rate hikes because end of the day it's going to
3 effect the consumers who were already struggling to
4 pay their bills. That's going to make it a lot
5 harder for ...

6 So I don't know with any -- many of
7 the other people ... and would oppose such increase
8 hike unless Central Hudson made it extremely clear
9 that these hikes are only ... temporary ... and they
10 lay down some kind of plan to protect consumers. And
11 that consumers actually do have a better product at
12 the end of the service hike.

13 If not this -- this proposed plan
14 could harm consumers for years to come. And like
15 I've already stated there is no guarantee that they
16 will decrease the hikes after this increase. You
17 know, just expressing my concern as so many people
18 have before me. But thank you so much for your time
19 listening.

20 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you very much.
21 And our next speaker will be Jess Mullen.

22 THE INTERPRETER: Excuse me, your
23 Honor.

24 A.L.J. MORENO: Yes.

25 THE INTERPRETER: We just got an

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2 announcement on the telephone that the host has left
3 the meeting, therefore, it will be disconnected in
4 five minutes.

5 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. Well?

6 THE HOST: Yes, I accidentally got cut
7 off. I've redialed the -- the number so if it does
8 get cut off for some reason just use that access code
9 again, file in again. But hopefully because I've
10 dialed back in it shouldn't get cut off.

11 A.L.J. MORENO: All right. So we will
12 continue then with our next speaker Jess Mullen. And
13 your line is unmuted.

14 MS. MULLEN: Hi, can you hear me?

15 A.L.J. MORENO: Yes, we can now.

16 Thank you.

17 MS. MULLEN: My name is Jess Mullen
18 and I'm speaking as a landlord in Ulster County. My
19 property has four meters at Central Hudson. I -- you
20 know, there's been four bills that I get each month.
21 They've been randomly estimated every other month
22 with no sure way of knowing what the bill should
23 actually be since as some of you may have heard,
24 Central Hudson bills are wrong. Such audacity
25 Central Hudson has to be here today pushing for any

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2 increase let alone this high of an increase. We
3 cannot allow any increase. I'm against any rate
4 increases and I want all customers to be provided
5 with financial restitution for the financial and
6 emotional harm that Central Hudson has done to us,
7 has put upon us.

8 Really though what's happening here,
9 the proposed increase is inadvertently targeting the
10 most vulnerable people throughout the Hudson Valley.
11 Central Hudson is looking to profit more on the backs
12 of Hudson Valley residents and small businesses. In
13 my apartments -- in my apartments reside a disabled
14 man, a disabled woman of color, a single mother with
15 two children. Folks as this -- such as this as well
16 as undocumented folks who are fear -- fearful of
17 speaking on the record won't be making statements and
18 they won't be submitting comments. But they will be
19 the ones most impacted, disproportionately impacted
20 by this exploitive money grab unfolding before our
21 eyes.

22 Additionally this proposal may
23 directly result in hordes of newly unhoused families
24 living on the streets and in their cars. Landlords,
25 like myself, who pay for electric or gas will need to

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2 increase the rent they charge. And then ALICE
3 households -- ALICE households, asset limited income
4 constrained employed, a rapidly growing number of
5 households who work often numerous jobs but don't
6 qualify for any support aren't going to be able to
7 afford the rent increases.

8 They won't have the lights go out.
9 They will be evicted. The ramifications of Central
10 Hudson rate increases are exponential. Meanwhile,
11 Central Hudson has not actually made amends on the
12 overbilling. We are all going to see in the docket
13 as irate people and elected officials come forward
14 with stories that are still happening. Down with
15 Central Hudson. You are thieves as plain as day.
16 You are still under investigation -- three different
17 investigations if I'm correct and you've failed
18 everyone except for your shareholders.

19 You -- we should be at a white collar
20 criminal hearing with a path to the country club
21 penitentiary not a hearing focusing on rewarding your
22 theft. Lastly, I'm also in favor of a rate freeze
23 until all investigations are concluded. And then may
24 be a decrease or maybe they should just be taken over
25 by us. But we'll see. Thank you to the P.S.C. today

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2 and zero thank you's to Central Hudson.

3 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you very much.
4 Our next speaker will be Raya Salter. Raya Salter.
5 And I --.

6 THE HOST: Judge?

7 A.L.J. MORENO: Yes.

8 THE HOST: Can I put the slide back up
9 for just a minute with the telephone number and
10 access code just in case that line cuts out?

11 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. As was
12 mentioned just a moment ago, there may be an
13 interruption with the separate phone line that we
14 have set up in Spanish for any person who would like
15 to either listen to today's hearing or to make a
16 statement in Spanish please call 518-549-0500 and
17 enter the access code 95840632. And, Ms. Gutierrez
18 if I could ask you just to make that statement in
19 Spanish on the WebEx as well that would be
20 appreciated.

21 (Interpreter provided statement in
22 Spanish)

23 Okay. We will now proceed with our
24 next speaker. Raya Salter. And your line has been
25 unmuted.

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2 MS. SALTER: Can -- can you hear me?

3 A.L.J. MORENO: We can now. Thank
4 you.

5 MS. SALTER: Okay. Thank you so much
6 for this opportunity to comment on this case. My
7 name is Raya Salter. I am the founder and executive
8 director of the Energy Justice Law and Policy Center.
9 I also -- my organization also convenes the Energy
10 Justice Alliance, and I am also a member of the New
11 York State Climate Action Council. So thank you to
12 the commission and everyone for these comments today.

13 I do want to agree with previous folks
14 who have testified that I am against this rate
15 increase. In particular, I want to respond to the
16 company's direct testimony of the climate leadership
17 and -- and sustainability panel. And, in particular,
18 the company cites that the -- the scoping plan, the
19 New York State Climate Action Council scoping plan
20 but in fact does not either comply with the direction
21 of the plan or our climate law.

22 In -- in particular really the
23 company's statement of compliance with the climate
24 act is relying on alternative fuels such as renewable
25 natural gas. And also carbon capture and -- and

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2 renewably sourced natural gas. And I just -- I think
3 it's really important to talk about what the scoping
4 plan really said about these so called alternative
5 fuels.

6 First, the scoping plan found that the
7 full integration analysis that the state did found
8 very limited opportunity for these types of fuels.
9 Further, the scoping plan found that the state really
10 can't meet our greenhouse gas emissions limits
11 without an integrated plan to actually retire fossil
12 fuel gas plants and downsize the system period. And
13 so the scoping plan found that we will need and in
14 order to meet our G.H.G. limits we'll need a
15 substantial reduction of fossil -- fossil gas use,
16 and that includes shutting down the peaker plants,
17 retiring fossil generators and downsizing related
18 infrastructure.

19 And the plants that should be
20 prioritized for shutdown are the older plants
21 identified by the Climate Action Council transition
22 working group and the C.A.C. process which includes
23 plants in Central Hudson's territory. So really what
24 we need is to implement the actual gas transition
25 framework that the scoping plan called for. And in

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2 that plan, it -- it places very strong guardrails on
3 any use of so called alternative fuels like renewable
4 natural gas or so called technologies like carbon
5 capture.

6 And the reason that they call for such
7 a limited use is because they are unproven and
8 science is very skeptical that they can work at all.
9 And before any of them can be used, the scoping plan
10 calls for a really rigorous framework and evaluation
11 of safety, of cost and other measures. So what
12 should happen is that the commission required by the
13 C.L.C.P.A. is going to undertake a 2024 review of its
14 work done to meet the C.L.C.P.A.'s goals.

15 And in that review there should be a
16 real look at what does it mean to actually downsize
17 the gas system and retire the plants that need to be
18 retired so we can have clean energy and get off this
19 cycle of cost and rate hikes that we're currently
20 seeing. So thank you very much for giving me the
21 opportunity to testify.

22 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you very much
23 for your comments. We appreciate it. Okay. We're
24 going to go -- that is the end of the list of folks
25 who have registered that I have today. There were a

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2 couple of people who when we called on them they were
3 unavailable. So I'm going to go back through to see
4 whether any of those individuals are now available.

5 Start with Jonathan Jacobsen, and if
6 you have called in if you can press Star 3 on your
7 phone. Jonathan Jacobsen. Okay. We'll turn to
8 Judith Green. Judith Green, and if you have called
9 in, again, if you could press Star 3 on your phone.
10 Okay. Try Katherine Brainard. Katherine Brainard.
11 And, again, if you've called in if you could press
12 Star 3. And Malcolm Burn. And, again, if you've
13 called in you could press Star 3. Malcolm Burn.

14 Okay. I'm not seeing any of those
15 individuals. What we will do now is I do see that we
16 have a number of individuals who have joined the
17 hearing today, so I will open it up. If any member
18 of the public would like to make a statement at
19 today's hearing you're welcome to do so. I would ask
20 that if you are participating electronically if you
21 could use the raise hand function, and I believe we
22 have a picture of what that looks like up on the
23 screen.

24 It would be a little hand right next
25 to your name, and if you are participating by phone,

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2 if you could press Star 3 that will indicate to us
3 that you would like to make a statement. So if you
4 are looking to make a statement in English press Star
5 3. If you have joined us on our other line, in
6 Spanish, if you would like to make a statement please
7 let the interpreter know by unmuting your line that
8 you would like to make a statement. And we will ask
9 our interpreter to -- to interpret your statement in
10 Spanish into English so that it can become part of
11 the record in the proceeding.

12 And I do see now that we do have a
13 number of hands raised so we will start with Eric
14 Eckly (phonetic spelling). And I believe your line
15 is now unmuted.

16 MR. ECKLY: Yeah, you can hear me?

17 A.L.J. MORENO: Yes, now we can.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. ECKLY: Thank you. Thank you very
20 much. Thanks for having this meeting today. So, I
21 mean, I'm a homeowner in Dutchess County and the
22 energy bills are just completely out of control. I
23 mean, everybody knows the fiasco that the last year
24 or so has wrought on the community, all the incorrect
25 billing and the overcharges. And so on top of that

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2 you want, you know, more of our money.

3 You've overcharged people for years
4 and there's no reason why you need more of our money.
5 Your company is already extremely profitable. You
6 make billions in profits. You don't need more. So I
7 really don't have much more to say then, you know,
8 more profits out of our pocket is not going to solve
9 like problems that we need to solve. And people need
10 to be able to buy food and pay their rent and pay
11 their mortgage. And people aren't going to be able
12 to do that if you raise rates 16%. That's
13 ridiculous.

14 Somebody else said, you know, people
15 that work for a living don't get a 16% raise unless
16 you work on Wall Street or something. Most of us
17 don't obviously. Most of us get a 2 or 3 or 4%
18 increase. And it's ridiculous. It's just -- it's --
19 it's obscene to be perfectly honest that -- that any
20 organization would consider approving this on the
21 backs of New York State and, you know, other Hudson
22 Valley, you know, residents who, you know, are
23 suffering.

24 You know wages aren't going up. I
25 mean, the economy is not tanking but, you know,

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2 people are still struggling. And this is just --
3 this is just one more, you know, bad decision that
4 should be stopped before it's too late. Thank you.

5 MR. ARZILLO: (phonetic spelling)
6 Hello.

7 THE HOST: Hello. Mr. Arzillo?

8 MR. ARZILLO: Hello. Oh, yes. So I
9 didn't hear anything for -- for a few moments. I
10 thought there was something wrong with my computer.

11 THE HOST: No, you're all set.

12 MR. ARZILLO: Can you still hear me?

13 THE HOST: Absolutely.

14 A.L.J. MORENO: Please go right ahead
15 to make your statement.

16 MR. ARZILLO: Okay. Thank you very
17 much. Once again my name is Michael Arzillo. I'm an
18 Ulster County homeowner and once again thank you very
19 much for having this -- this hearing. It's -- it's
20 gratifying to be able to, you know, state your
21 opinions and your -- and your concerns in a forum
22 like this. So thank you very much. I read the --
23 the P.S.C. release regarding the Central Hudson rate
24 -- proposed rate increase, and as I think every other
25 speaker has said, I'm opposed to it as well.

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2 I don't see a clear explanation from
3 Central Hudson regarding the -- the need for the
4 increase. I do see a lot of generalized things
5 relating to energy delivery regarding things like
6 capital investments, replacing aging infrastructure,
7 labor expenses and so on and so forth. Quite a few
8 things recovering costs associated with major storms
9 and these sorts of things.

10 But it occurs to me that these are
11 costs that are not new. These are things that have
12 not suddenly materialized that Central Hudson needs
13 to recoup their -- their investments or needs to
14 recoup unexpected expenses. Some various things that
15 are new. That are things that have not occurred in
16 the past. It seems to me, and this is something
17 that, you know, every homeowner understands is that
18 when you need to make capital -- capital investments
19 or when you need to make upgrades to aging
20 infrastructure that this is an ongoing thing.

21 This is not new. These are things
22 that need to be budgeted for in advance so that way
23 they're not a surprise and you need to take out a
24 home equity loan to replace your roof, for example.
25 This is something that you need to budget for in

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2 advance. It seems to me that if you need to make a
3 plea to your customers saying we need to recoup costs
4 for -- for upgrades and for investments in the
5 infrastructure that this really is a failure of
6 Central Hudson management.

7 This is not an issue that is new.
8 This means that they have not correctly anticipated
9 their increased costs, their infrastructure upgrades,
10 replacement of aging infrastructure and these sorts
11 of things. They have not correctly really
12 anticipated these things, and so after the failure of
13 management now they have to put it on the backs of
14 the customers. Guess what? Now we need to -- we
15 increase our rates, substantially increase in rates
16 for what we should have been planning for all along.

17 It just seems to me to be a failure to
18 plan from Central Hudson and it shouldn't be
19 something that the customers need to bail them out
20 on. Thank you very much. That's all I had to say.

21 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you very much.
22 We appreciate it. Okay. Again, if there are any
23 members of the public who would like to make a
24 statement this afternoon, you're free to do so.
25 Please let us know that you would like to. If you're

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2 participating electronically if you can use the raise
3 hand function. And if you have called in if you can
4 press Star 3 on your phone. If you are participating
5 in the Spanish line that we have set up with our
6 interpreter, and you would like to make a statement,
7 we can accommodate that by if you can indicate to the
8 interpreter that you would like to make a statement
9 she will take your statement and interpret it onto
10 the record in English.

11 And I see we have a raised hand from a
12 call in user. We could just unmute that line. Okay.
13 Your line has been unmuted.

14 MR. BAZY: (phonetic spelling) Good
15 afternoon. I'm John Bazy from the Town of
16 Poughkeepsie. I'm against this increase due to the
17 fact that I think a few of callers have stated. It's
18 -- a lot of it is based on their infrastructure and
19 their needs it should have been preplanned better
20 than it is. We have a lot of residents in the area
21 here that live on fixed income. They're not looking
22 at 15, 16% raises in their salaries. It's just an
23 exorbitant amount of money on top of everything else
24 that's going on with Central Hudson.

25 To ask for a number of this size at

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2 this time or at any given time with the way things
3 are changing, and I do understand the grid has major
4 issues with it. But this should be a plan that's
5 been put in place. I happen to be in politics
6 locally. We have to stand by a 2% increase, you
7 know, governed by New York State. And to see a
8 corporation like this looking for a 16% increase one
9 time I think is unfeasible and unattainable for any
10 local resident to be able to handle that.

11 I do understand the increase of prices
12 of things but they have to take one step at a time
13 until they straighten their billing out. I don't
14 think they should be looking for any increase at this
15 time at all because there's still a lot of other
16 issues internally going on that need to be addressed
17 prior to raising anymore rates. Thank you.

18 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you very much.
19 And I'll offer again if there's any member of the
20 public who would like to make a statement this
21 afternoon. And if you've joined us electronically
22 you can use the raise hand function or if you have
23 called in you can press Star 3 on your telephone. If
24 you are in the Spanish line please indicate your
25 interest in making a statement to the interpreter so

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2 that she might interpret your comment into the record
3 for us.

4 THE INTERPRETER: Your Honor, would
5 you like me to make another announcement in Spanish
6 on the WebEx?

7 A.L.J. MORENO: Sure, that would be
8 great. Thank you. And at this time I do not see
9 that we have any members of the public. I see now we
10 have Mr. Wright. If we could -- Yes, your line has
11 now been unmuted, sir.

12 MR. WRIGHT: Hi there. Can you hear
13 me okay?

14 A.L.J. MORENO: We can. Thank you.

15 MR. WRIGHT: Great. I just wanted to
16 take a few minutes to say that I agree 100% with Raya
17 Salter's comments particularly relating to the --
18 Central Hudson's inability to align itself with the
19 climate act. It's the Climate Leadership and
20 Community Protection Act and specifically the scoping
21 plan.

22 What the climate crisis requires is
23 for us to be reducing fossil fuel infrastructure.
24 What the scoping plan requires is for us to be
25 reducing fossil fuel infrastructure. It is

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2 absolutely outrageous to think that the Public
3 Service Commission would allow for a revenue increase
4 that would go towards expanding fossil fuel
5 infrastructure. And while I'm on the line and
6 apologize, I forgot to introduce myself.

7 My name is Thomas Wright. I live in
8 Beacon. I work in Newburgh and I am a business owner
9 in Newburgh and a Central Hudson account payer in
10 both Beacon and Newburgh. And just while I was on
11 the phone, and this was an inspiration actually for
12 me to get on this call, I received yet another e-mail
13 from Central Hudson telling me that natural gas is a
14 cost effective choice and that it showed me the
15 comparison between natural gas, oil and propane. It
16 doesn't say anything about electrification options,
17 options that are required again by the scoping plan
18 and by the crisis that this state, this globe faces.

19 So, again, ratepayer money being used
20 to forward causes that are in opposition to the
21 scoping plan and to the -- the greater good. It
22 amounts to a misinformation campaign. So really what
23 they're asking for when they're asking for a rate
24 increase or revenue increase, they're asking to be
25 able to take some of those funds and use them for e-

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2 mails, such as this one I'm looking at right now,
3 telling me that natural gas is the cost effective
4 choice conveniently leaving out any information about
5 heat pumps, which are shown to be far more effective
6 than any of these fossil fuel options and have been
7 shown by wind climate to save -- that they would save
8 New Yorkers on average \$900 a year.

9 So I say no to expansion of fossil
10 fuel infrastructure and no to continue misinformation
11 campaigns with Central Hudson using my ratepayer
12 money for this -- these marketing campaigns which are
13 quite literally misinformation. Thank you very much.

14 A.L.J. MORENO: Thank you very much.
15 Okay. Again, I will -- I will open it up again. If
16 there's any member of the public who would like to
17 make a statement this afternoon, if you called in by
18 phone you can press Star 3 on your telephone to let
19 us know that you would like to make a statement. If
20 you have joined us electronically you can use the
21 raise hand function. And if you are in the Spanish
22 phone line and would like to make a statement, please
23 so indicate to your interpreter, and she will let us
24 know that there is someone who would like to make a
25 comment.

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2 And at this time I am not seeing any
3 additional members of the public who would like to
4 make a statement. And, Ms. O'Dell-Keller is that
5 your same understanding?

6 MS. O'DELL-KELLER: Yes, that's
7 correct.

8 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. And if I could
9 just confirm, Ms. Gutierrez, is there any person in
10 the Spanish language line who would like to make a
11 statement?

12 THE INTERPRETER: No, your Honor,
13 nobody has indicated so.

14 A.L.J. MORENO: Okay. Thank you very
15 much. So at this time I think we will wrap up. I do
16 want to remind members of the public that they may
17 submit public comments throughout these proceedings
18 by the other means described earlier. And also
19 included in the public notice of the public statement
20 hearing that was issued on August 18, 2023. For
21 those of you who are participating electronically,
22 those other ways to make a comment in the case are on
23 your screen.

24 We will be holding additional public
25 statement hearings this evening starting at 5:00 and

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2 again on September 20th, 2023 at both 1:00 and 5:00.
3 And in addition we will be holding in person public
4 statement hearings in the future as a notice with
5 locations, dates and times will be issued shortly.

6 For our part, Judge Costello and I
7 would like to thank all of the commenters for their
8 participation and our thanks also to Commissioner
9 Maggiore, all of our folks from the Office of
10 Consumer Services and our interpreter as well and
11 court reporter. Thank you all very much for your
12 time and attention this afternoon. We appreciate it.
13 With that our hearing is concluded. We'll go off the
14 record.

15 (Off the record.)

16 (The public statement hearing
17 concluded at 2:00 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 34, 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 19th day of September, 2023.

11

12 ANTHONY MCCLAIN, Reporter

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