

NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

CASE 12-E-0201
CASE 12-G-0202

ELECTRIC AND GAS DELIVERY RATES FOR
NIAGARA MOHAWK POWER CORPORATION
D/B/A NATIONAL GRID FOR ELECTIRC
AND GAS SERVICE

DATE: January 10, 2013
TIME: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Onondaga Community College
Whitney 210
4835 West Seneca Turnpike
Syracuse, New York
BEFORE: A.L.J. DAVID PRESTEMON

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2 (The public hearing resumed at
3 7:00 p.m.)

4 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: All right.

5 It's a little after seven, so we'll get started. I
6 apologize to all of you who have heard this all
7 before this afternoon, but for the few new people
8 that are here I'm going to run through it again.

9 Good evening, ladies and
10 gentlemen, and welcome to the second session of the
11 Public Statement Hearings in Public Service
12 Commission Cases twelve E O two O one and twelve G
13 O two O two concerning the rates for electric and
14 gas delivery service charged by National Grid in
15 the service territory of Niagara Mohawk.

16 My name is David Prestemon. I'm
17 an administrative law judge with the New York
18 Department of Public Service. With me tonight is
19 Commissioner Gregg Sayre, who is one of the five
20 Public Service Commission Commissioners who have
21 ultimate responsibility for making the decisions in
22 these cases. In the back at the entranceway, as
23 you were coming in, is Jeff Wagner, also of the
24 Department of Public Service. He has information
25 sheets concerning these cases that you can get from

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2 him. He also has information for you about other
3 ways that you or others, friends, neighbors can
4 submit comments on these cases to the Public
5 Service Commission. He'd be happy to help you with
6 any questions you have.

7 The cases we're concerned with
8 tonight began in April 2012 with the filing by
9 National Grid of a rate case requesting Public
10 Service Commission approval to raise rates for
11 electric delivery service by about one hundred and
12 forty-five million dollars per year, and for gas
13 service by about twenty-nine million. Testimony
14 was filed by a number of parties in this -- the
15 case, the parties that entered into negotiations in
16 an effort to develop a resolution to the case.

17 That resulted in what is called a
18 joint proposal to the Commission that was
19 ultimately signed by many of the parties to the
20 case, most of the parties to the case, and was
21 filed on December 7th. That joint proposal is
22 merely a proposed resolution of the cases to the
23 Commission. The Commission does not have to accept
24 it. It can reject it in whole or in part. It can
25 accept it in part. It can modify it.

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2 Under the terms of the joint
3 proposal as it was presented to the Commission, the
4 rates for electric delivery service and for gas
5 service would be set for a three-year period. The
6 total increase in rates for electric service would
7 be about a hundred and twenty-three million over
8 those three years. The increases would be staged
9 with the increase in the first -- first year being
10 approximately forty-three million. The total
11 increase for gas service would be about nine
12 million, compared to the twenty-nine million that
13 was requested. Again, it would be in three steps
14 and the first year would actually be a rate
15 reduction of about three million dollars.

16 The impact of these delivery rate
17 increases would be substantially mitigated, or in
18 the case of electric rates completely offset by the
19 expiration of a surcharge that has been in effect
20 for the last ten years for electric service on the
21 National Grid system and also by a number of
22 ratepayer credits that would be returned to
23 ratepayers. As a result, actual bills would go
24 down while delivery rates went up for electric
25 service. There would be some increase for gas

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2 service in the second and third years.

3 The purpose of this hearing is to
4 give anyone who is interested in these cases an
5 opportunity to present their comments in person,
6 live. All the comments here will be recorded by
7 our reporter and transcribed. They will be filed
8 with the Commission and made a permanent part of
9 the record in this case, and that record will be
10 before the Commission when it makes its decision.
11 You do not have to have any prepared statement. To
12 keep the process orderly, the only thing we ask is
13 that you fill out a card which you can get from Mr.
14 Wagner, and we will call everybody in the order
15 that we receive the -- the cards.

16 Okay. We will -- we are starting
17 a little after seven. We will remain here until
18 everyone who has expressed an interest in speaking
19 has done so. We can go as late as necessary, but
20 it doesn't look like we're going to have to go
21 beyond nine o'clock.

22 So are you ready, Deborah?

23 MS. SMITH: Yes.

24 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Our first
25 speaker is Deb Smith.

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2 MS. SMITH: All right. Good
3 evening. My name is Deborah Smith and I'm a
4 volunteer delegate to the Central New York Workers
5 Benefit Council. And as such, I am speaking on
6 behalf of twenty -- twenty thousand low-income,
7 unemployed, disabled workers and their family.

8 We demand that the P.S.C. fulfill
9 its mandate to protect the ratepayers by denying
10 National Grid a hundred and twenty-three million
11 electric rate increase and eight point eight
12 million natural gas rate increase. Furthermore, we
13 are asking that the Commission consider the demands
14 we brought forth -- forward five years ago, to
15 lower the utility rates, establish a -- a
16 memorandum -- a moratorium on utility shutoff, and
17 a direct -- and direct National Grid to revise its
18 debt forgiveness program as it is grossly
19 inadequate to deal with the hundreds of thousands
20 of customers that can't -- that can't afford
21 utilities.

22 This area once boasted thousands
23 of good paying manufacturing jobs. In recent
24 years, companies like Syracuse China and New
25 Process Gear have shut down. In the financial

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2 crisis that began in 2008, the economy shed eight
3 point eight million jobs. Since then, the economy
4 has created less than half of that number of jobs,
5 mostly part-time and in low payer service sectors.
6 It is not surprising to see the number of families
7 living below the poverty line in Central New York
8 has increased -- has increased by another thirteen
9 percent in the last three years, with fifty-three
10 percent of the children in the city of Syracuse
11 living below poverty -- poverty line. Syracuse has
12 the highest poverty rate of northeastern cities in
13 populations over a hundred thousand.

14 I am here today to call on this
15 body to fill its official mandate to serve the
16 residents in this state according to the Public
17 Service Commission's 1907 mandate, and I quote, to
18 protect utility customers from potential abuse of
19 monopoly power as well as to protect the rights of
20 New Yorkers while ensuring access to reliable and
21 low cost utility service.

22 The working poor of Central New
23 York are suffering because the P.S.C. has failed to
24 fulfill its obligation to protect the consumer. We
25 pay the third highest utility rates in the United

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2 States. Since the Public Service Commission issued
3 its vision order in 1996 ushering in utility
4 deregulation, utility costs have increased instead
5 of decreasing as was promised. Instead of the
6 State -- instead, the State has worked with utility
7 companies in other industries -- insiders to
8 guarantee their profits at the expense of the
9 ratepayers' ability to afford utility services.

10 For example, the Commission
11 proposed or -- purported that the New York State
12 Independent System Operator would cost ratepayers
13 less to run than the New York Power Pool that was
14 established in 1996. The Power Pool cost fourteen
15 point five million annually to run in 1996. The
16 Independent System Operators cost one point -- one
17 hundred and forty-four million to run annually
18 today. The executives that run the Independent
19 System Operators are some of the highest paid
20 nonprofit executives in the Capital District. That
21 hundred and forty-four million comes out of the
22 pockets of the ratepayers each year, ratepayers
23 that are barely making ends meet.

24 According to the studies
25 commissioned by the state government last year the

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2 poorest New Yorkers pay more than forty percent of
3 their income for heat and electricity despite the
4 P.S.C. mandate to ensure costs are affordable.
5 National Grid carried out an average of four
6 hundred and twenty-three shutoffs per day since
7 December 2010 until March 2011, some ten thousand
8 households, while National Grid made four point
9 ninety-nine billion in operating process --
10 profits.

11 The P.S.C. is protecting National
12 Grid's profit at eight point nine percent, allowing
13 increasing rates on growing numbers of households
14 who can't afford utility services and literally do
15 without. There is nowhere to run, no other
16 company -- or nowhere to turn, no other company to
17 get heat and electric from.

18 I know this situation personally
19 because I am -- I have been a low-income worker all
20 my life and I live on a fixed income now. Because
21 I -- because I have not been able to afford utility
22 services, utilities eat up forty percent of my
23 income. I have a large debt with the utility
24 company that I will never be able to pay off in my
25 lifetime. I have a payment plan which is a

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2 struggle for me to keep up with, but if I am ten --
3 five or ten dollars short of that payment plan in
4 any given month, and I am just one example out of
5 tens of thousands, then National Grid can shut me
6 off. The P.S.C. must end this clear abuse of
7 monopoly power.

8 Let me be clear. We are not
9 saying National Grid cannot make a profit, but we
10 object to the State protecting the profits of the
11 company at the expense of the low-income households
12 and small business -- businesses that the P.S.C.
13 should be protecting. Section 65 of the New York
14 State Public Service Law states every gas
15 corporation, every electric corporation shall
16 furnish and provide such service as shall be safe
17 and adequate and in all respect just and reasonable
18 all charges shall be just and reasonable. Every
19 unjust and unreasonable charge is prohibited.
20 Furthermore Section 51 of the New York State Public
21 Service Law states the Commission shall adopt
22 additional rules and regulations as it deems
23 necessary and proper to implement the provisions of
24 this act.

25 Clearly, the Commission has both

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2 the duty and the power to act in the interest of
3 the low-income ratepayers in order to fulfill its
4 most basic mandate to ensure access to low cost
5 utilities for all New Yorkers. We, the central New
6 York Work -- Workers Benefit Council, demand that
7 the Public Service Commission install the following
8 policies. One, deny National Grid request to the
9 hundred and twenty-three million electric rate
10 increase and the eight point eight million natural
11 gas rate increase. Two, implement a year-round
12 moratorium on utility shutoff for families whose
13 income is at or below two hundred and fifty of the
14 poverty level. Three, allow the reconnection and
15 renegotiation of payment plans without penalties or
16 fee or down payment for those -- for those whose
17 service has been terminated due to economic
18 inability to pay.

19 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER:

20 That's right.

21 MS. SMITH: And finally, cancel
22 all utility debts for those at or below two hundred
23 and fifty of the federal poverty guideline. Thank
24 you.

25 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Thank you, Ms.

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2 Smith.

3 Next we have Ann Reynolds.

4 MS. REYNOLDS: Good evening. My
5 name is Ann Reynolds. I'm also a volunteer
6 delegate to the Central New York Benefits Council.
7 And I'm also speaking on behalf of thousands of
8 low-income families and retired workers that are
9 struggling to make ends meet. The Public Service
10 Commission has a legal responsibility to ensure low
11 cost families -- or utilities to all New Yorkers.
12 You are ensuring just and responsible rates, but
13 are not just -- that are not just reasonable or if
14 they can't afford them. I'm here to ask you do you
15 still have your nine hundred and twenty-nine
16 signatures I gave you this afternoon?

17 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: I do. Right
18 here.

19 MS. REYNOLDS: Would you like a
20 duplicate copy?

21 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Not necessary,
22 you can give it to me if you'd like.

23 MS. REYNOLDS: Do you want a
24 duplicate?

25 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Sure. Thank

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2 you.

3 MS. REYNOLDS: We know you have
4 them now.

5 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Make it Two.
6 Okay.

7 MS. REYNOLDS: All right. I'm
8 asking you, number one, lower the rates. Two, stop
9 the shutoffs of low-income families, those that are
10 below two hundred and fifty percent of the -- of
11 poverty level. Three, debt forgiveness for low
12 income families, those that owe thousands and
13 thousands of dollars but who will ever be able to
14 pay those debts. And those people are usually two
15 hundred and fifty percent below the poverty level.
16 And reconnect service to all those shutoff
17 economically inability pay without down payment.

18 I'm asking you what are you going
19 to do about our demands. All I get's a smile. Can
20 we get a seat at that board when they have that
21 meeting?

22 MR. SAYRE: It will be a public
23 meeting if that's what you mean.

24 MS. REYNOLDS: Where is it going
25 to be?

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2 MR. SAYRE: Probably in Albany.

3 If it's the March meeting, it will be in Albany.

4 MS. REYNOLDS: We'd like an
5 invitation.

6 MR. SAYRE: There are not
7 opportunities for the public to speak at the
8 Commission hearing, but the -- but --

9 MS. REYNOLDS: Oh, we're not
10 going to speak. We just want to see what's going
11 on.

12 MR. SAYRE: -- the public --.

13 MS. REYNOLDS: We want to help --
14 we want to help the little people, the people that
15 need it.

16 MR. SAYRE: The public is welcome
17 to attend.

18 MS. REYNOLDS: Thank you.

19 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: You can -- you
20 can also see the -- the session online on the
21 computer for those who can't make the trip. But
22 I'm trying to think -- on the Commission's website,
23 it gives you the link that you can connect to.

24 MS. REYNOLDS: Can I get that
25 from you?

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2 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: We
3 haven't updated it.

4 MS. REYNOLDS: You have it?

5 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Okay. You can
6 check on the Commission website. There is a spot
7 on the -- on the front page of the Commission
8 website, I believe, that -- that --.

9 MS. REYNOLDS: Is that being
10 March?

11 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Be the
12 March -- it will be the March session most likely.

13 MS. REYNOLDS: Thank you.

14 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: You'll have to
15 check.

16 MR. SAYRE: The agenda gets
17 published usually the Friday before.

18 MS. REYNOLDS: Just before --
19 just after Easter -- just before Easter.

20 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Easter's that
21 early this year? Before Easter, though, because it
22 will probably be around middle of March.

23 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Well,
24 then before --.

25 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Before Easter.

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2 It will be -- right. And -- and but the session
3 is -- is public. You can come in and attend in
4 person or you can see it online. All right? Thank
5 you, Ms. Reynolds.

6 MS. REYNOLDS: Thank you.

7 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: And next we
8 have Tammie Bush.

9 MS. BUSH: Good afternoon. My
10 name is Tammie Bush. And I'm also a delegate from
11 the -- I mean from the Central New York Workers
12 Benefit Commission -- Council. I work as a home --
13 I worked as a home aide in the hospice and a
14 specialist, a job at which I worked very hard but
15 did not make lots of money. So now I'm on
16 disability because of the hard work I did. Now I'm
17 living on a fixed income and it's very hard to make
18 ends meet.

19 I have health problems such as I
20 require a CPAP machine and a nebulizer so I can --
21 so I can't afford to do without electricity. I
22 certainly can't -- I certainly can't afford to be
23 without heat in the winter. I've been -- I've been
24 hospitalized four times in the last year because I
25 could not afford to adequately heat and cool my

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2 apartment for the fear of the high utility bill
3 that result from doing that. When I inquired about
4 the Lifelong Program a National Grid response -- I
5 mean representative said I did not qualify, that I
6 should go to a neighbor's house if I don't have
7 power. I can't sleep at a neighbor's house though
8 my neighbors are very nice. I know other people in
9 my circumstances who have contacted the P.S.C. and
10 the P.S.C. will no -- not do anything to protect
11 people who are low income and have health problems
12 that require electricity. This is a lot of stress
13 to all undergo when you don't have money and you
14 don't have -- and you have health problems.

15 Since there is no other place I
16 can get electricity or gas service from, National
17 Grid is a monopoly. And to live under the constant
18 fear that you could get shut off, I consider that
19 abuse of monopoly power. That is against the
20 P.S.C.'s basic mandate.

21 I demand that the P.S.C. do its
22 job, represent the ratepayers and not the
23 profiteers, freeze the rates not the ratepayers,
24 stop the shutoffs of low-income families, and start
25 a real debt forgiveness program for the low income,

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2 and lower the rates. Thanks.

3 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Thank you, Ms.

4 Bush.

5 Next, John Miranda?

6 MR. MIRANDA: Do we have a limit

7 on time?

8 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: What's that?

9 MR. MIRANDA: Do we have a limit

10 on time?

11 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: No, as long

12 it's within reason.

13 MR. MIRANDA: No, I won't ramble

14 on for hours. It's okay. But I do have a few

15 things to say. One is my name is John Miranda. My

16 own consulting company is C.N.Y. Renewable Energy

17 Associates. I spent twenty-one years in

18 information technology at AXA Equitable. And when

19 they purchased money, I went to my boss and said,

20 listen I want to keep my job. I work in -- I

21 survived eight purges so if, you know, we're

22 talking corporate, you'd know what I mean. And he

23 said go to Syracuse because nobody wants to go

24 there. We need company officers there. So I came

25 up here and I had a two hundred thousand dollar a

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2 year job and I left that to do what my wife calls
3 my very expensive hobby, which is sustainable
4 energy systems.

5 Now what does that have to do
6 with the Public Service Commission? It has a lot
7 to do with it, actually. What I learned in the
8 corporation is that corporate management moves
9 under three circumstances, they're going to get
10 sued, they're going to go to jail, or they're going
11 to lose profit. Those are the three reasons why
12 corporate management takes action. They have a gun
13 to their head, essentially. In fact, my manager
14 used to always get his money when he would push the
15 projects that he was pushing because that's what he
16 defined as the risk to the management team, not the
17 risk of the project, but how they might go to jail.
18 So I support these folks.

19 They cornered me one day and said
20 would you deliver food for us. And I said, yeah,
21 sure. So since that time, I have delivered food
22 for them when I can, but you have to understand
23 something. What these people do is something you
24 don't understand. You don't. And I'm going to
25 assume that the Public Service Commission is part

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2 and parcel with -- with National Grid. To me,
3 you're all in bed together. You don't represent
4 the people; you represent the interests of National
5 Grid. I'm sorry. That's my opinion. All right.
6 I don't know whether it's a fact.

7 Okay. Now with that said, I'm
8 going to put on the record my assumption that I'm
9 speaking to National Grid. You know, it -- it's
10 just to me, it's a transparency. So on that note,
11 of course, I'll try to help them find one of those
12 three angles to go after you because that's the
13 only reason why senior management moves.

14 Okay. So what I heard them say
15 is they're talking about people two and a half
16 times below poverty. You don't know what that is.
17 I'm sorry. You don't. But delivering food to
18 them, I go to places in Syracuse where this white
19 boy wouldn't go otherwise. I'll tell you that
20 right now. You don't know what that is. You
21 simply have no idea. I know what it is to sit in a
22 corporate office. My office used to overlook
23 Rockefeller Center. I had a corner office, two
24 thousand bucks a month just for the office. So
25 I've been through that game of corporate world.

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2 And it has no idea what's going on here.

3 And I'm not asking you to be kind
4 at all because you won't. You simply won't.
5 You'll sit here and say, well, hmm, yeah, well, and
6 go on and do what you normally do. The numbers,
7 though, that I heard -- what is it five billion
8 dollars; right? And you got people here who -- who
9 are thousands in debt. I mean, they're a headache
10 to you. So I am suggesting that the Public Service
11 Commission, the spokesperson for National Grid as
12 far as I'm concerned, consider a win-win for these
13 people and you.

14 Now I know about the socialized
15 charge for the service charge and most people have
16 no idea what that service charge goes to. You
17 don't pay for any of those grants that you give.
18 That's the service charge. There's nothing
19 generous about National Grid, but it looked like a
20 good smoke screen, you know. So with all that
21 profit, may I suggest you consider an alternative?
22 Again, these people are two and a half times below
23 poverty that they're talking about. You know. I
24 know. Poverty isn't even enough to live on. Two
25 and a half times below that, think about it for a

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2 minute. All right? So it's chump change to you.
3 And, in fact, you could put solar
4 panels -- I've asked this of experts. You could
5 put solar panels on every house north of New York
6 City for the cost of one nuclear power plant. And
7 what would that do? Reduce your transmission
8 lines, blah, blah, blah. You know what I'm talking
9 about. I don't need to explain it to you. So my
10 suggestion is take a serious look at how you can
11 win because you're in business. You have a
12 fiduciary responsibility to your stockholders to
13 make a profit, not to be nice. You're in business,
14 so you have to cut off the -- that's the rules. I
15 understand. But you could do a business
16 proposition, I believe, that would help them help
17 you. And that would be put solar panels on these
18 people's roofs.

19 Oh, but they owe them rent. Yes,
20 that's right. So you put it up on the house where
21 they rent today and the house where they rent
22 tomorrow. Do you know solar panels are so cheap
23 right now, they're seventy percent lower than it
24 was last year? Last year. Sixty-two cents a watt,
25 installed -- I mean, not installed, but sixty-two

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2 cents a watt. Thank about that. It used to be
3 five dollars a watt. So sixty-two cents.
4 Now in addition, what I am
5 proposing since you're not nice people but you're
6 in business -- and you may be nice people, you
7 know, but business is business. All right. Put
8 these panels up on these people's roof, use it
9 as -- you know, you know how to bury it in tax
10 dollars. I don't need to -- I mean, God only knows
11 National Grid knows how to write, you know, tax
12 laws and all that nonsense. My point is figure out
13 a way to take those people two and a half times
14 below poverty and put solar panels on their houses.
15 Get rid of your own headache. Get rid of this
16 complaining. All right. Don't -- you know, just
17 see it as a business thing for you. Be selfish,
18 but give them solar panels because you can collect
19 the energy that they're not using, none of which --
20 when they make an excess of energy. Keep it. That
21 helps you.

22 You don't own the power
23 generation facilities. You need that. You'd need
24 to reduce your stranded infrastructure. You need
25 to be able to have local generation. So put it on

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2 their houses. What does that do? It helps you.
3 It's just something to help you. You can be as
4 selfish as you want, but give them a piece of the
5 pie and keep making your profits. That way you
6 have generation coming in, income coming in off
7 their roofs. And if you would give them this debt,
8 you know, relief how many people are we talking
9 about? I don't know the answer. But out of five
10 billion dollars, I suspect you can probably find it
11 somewhere in there.

12 So that's my proposal. Get smart
13 about it. You're not going to be nice. That's not
14 your job. Your job is to be business people.
15 You're not going to listen to their pleas. Just
16 like Les Mis, I mean, you're just not going to
17 listen to their pleas, so figure out some way to
18 make it a win for you, great P.R., all that blah,
19 blah, and make it more profitable. Thank you.

20 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Thank you.

21 All right. Next we have Mary
22 Margaret Peicow.

23 MS. PEICOW: Hi. I'm from
24 Catholic Charities in Oswego County. And we're
25 actually on here just to talk on behalf of the

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2 advocates that we work with that National Grid that
3 do help us help the people that everyone is talking
4 about because we are able to then help reduce and
5 get rid of -- we help deter the shutoffs and help
6 to get the payments down where people can negotiate
7 and make payments that they can afford. So we're
8 really speaking on behalf of those advocates that
9 work there that I believe that their salaries are
10 part of some of the cuts that are in there. So
11 we're really here to talk about the advocates that
12 work for National Grid that help us help the
13 people.

14 We service -- in Oswego County is
15 one of the highest unemployment rates in New York
16 State as well as in the country, and we service
17 anywhere between thirteen to up to twenty families
18 a month just in helping with utility -- the high
19 utility bills that they're paying. And because of
20 the relationship we have with the advocates that do
21 come out to our office and that do help the people
22 directly, either via phones or coming to our office
23 or whatever it may be, we're able to help negotiate
24 some of the payments and -- and help with all of
25 that through National Grid, the high energy costs.

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2 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: These are
3 advocates who work for National Grid?

4 MS. PEICOW: Yes. The advocates
5 work for National Grid. They have a relationship
6 with us. They actually come to our office. And
7 we're able to call -- so if we have somebody that
8 calls us, for example, up and has a -- owes
9 whatever, thousands of dollars to National Grid,
10 which obviously is -- can't afford to pay five
11 thousand dollars to National Grid to avoid a
12 cutoff -- a shutoff, we're able to, with the
13 advocates' help, to negotiate that, to -- for us to
14 pay some of it, not anywhere near five thousand.
15 We negotiate with them to pay a much smaller
16 amount, that we can avoid the shutoff and get those
17 payments knocked way down where they are something
18 that people can afford to live with.

19 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: And did you
20 say it was your understanding that --

21 MS. PEICOW: Some of the -- we
22 were just --.

23 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: -- some of the
24 funding for these advocates was going to be cut?

25 MS. HOEFER: Yeah, part of

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2 the --.

3 MS. PEICOW: This is Helen

4 Hoefer. She's in the emergency --.

5 MS. HOEFER: Part of the -- this

6 whole hearing --.

7 THE REPORTER: Ma'am -- ma'am,

8 can you come up to the mic, please? I need to have

9 your name, too.

10 MS. PEICOW: Her's is on the card

11 as well.

12 MS. HOEFER: Helen Hoefer.

13 THE REPORTER: Spell your last

14 name.

15 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Oh, I'm sorry.

16 I did see that.

17 MS. HOEFER: H-O-E-F-E-R.

18 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

19 MS. HOEFER: Part -- part of

20 the -- of their salaries is paid through the

21 delivery charges and the surcharges and the fees

22 that your -- this hearing is about. So we just

23 wanted to kind of come and give support to them to

24 let -- to let you know that they do really make a

25 difference, you know.

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2 MS. PEICOW: The advocates.

3 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Was it your
4 understanding that some funding for the advocates
5 was going to be cut or you're just concerned that
6 it might be?

7 MS. HOEFER: We're concerned that
8 it might be --

9 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Okay. Okay.

10 MS. HOEFER: -- and we wanted to
11 lend some support to -- to them.

12 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: I just wanted
13 to make sure there wasn't something --.

14 MS. PEICOW: Yeah, that it might
15 be that -- no, that it might be part of this
16 because of the negotiations.

17 MS. HOEFER: Because of the
18 negotiations.

19 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Okay. Okay.

20 MS. HOEFER: And that would
21 definitely be a detriment to our agency to -- you
22 know, to some.

23 MS. PEICOW: As well as to the
24 people that we serve because that --

25 MS. HOEFER: Right.

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2 MS. PEICOW: -- because of them
3 and our relationship with them, we are able to not
4 have the shutoffs and get the payments down and get
5 people into a more comfortable situation where they
6 can --.

7 MS. HOEFER: If there is a
8 shutoff, we can get it almost immediately turned
9 back on.

10 MS. PEICOW: With it -- put it --
11 in that day.

12 MS. HOEFER: Right.

13 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Really?
14 Within the same day?

15 MS. HOEFER: With very minimal
16 payments --

17 MS. PEICOW: Yes.

18 MS. HOEFER: -- from us because
19 we -- we're a small agency. We can't afford to pay
20 five thousand dollars per client either, so --

21 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Right.

22 MS. HOEFER: -- you know, we do
23 have a great relationship with them. They are very
24 supportive of us and they do come out to our office
25 and really work with the folks.

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2 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER:

3 That's why they should --.

4 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER:

5 They should have debt forgiveness.

6 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: There
7 were sixty thousand shutoffs last year.

8 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Thank you. Do
9 you have anything more?

10 MS. PEICOW: No.

11 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Okay. Thank
12 you very much.

13 And next, we have Fred Pierce.

14 MR. PIERCE: I'm here to speak on
15 behalf of SUNY Cortland. I'd like to talk about a
16 partnership that SUNY Cortland has with National
17 Grid. It really runs much deeper to making a
18 difference in the -- the lives of many inner-city
19 students that -- it's called our Cortland Urban
20 Recruitment of Educators Program. National Grid
21 has provided support for a number of years. And
22 because of that support, we're able to recruit
23 students, talented students from challenged
24 situations in inner cities who have a desire to
25 become teachers and go back to similar situations

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2 and with an understanding of what -- what inner
3 city schools face and with the education that we
4 can provide. Because of National Grid, we're
5 putting quality teachers with the desire to educate
6 kids in schools that might not other -- that suffer
7 from a lack of quality teachers.

8 Under the program, these students
9 commit two years of going into a high-needs school
10 district and they recruit then other kids that want
11 to come and follow some other path.

12 In addition to this program, SUNY
13 Cortland is a charter signatory of the American
14 College of Unity -- Universe and University
15 president's climate commitment. And as such, we
16 are impressed by National Grid's dedication to
17 energy conservation and sustainability. And thank
18 you very much.

19 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER:
20 Yeah, they're helping them out by taking our money.

21 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Is -- is
22 your -- does the funding from this program come
23 from the National Grid's foundation, do you know?

24 MR. PIERCE: I'm not quite sure
25 where it comes from --

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2 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Or the --?

3 MR. PIERCE: -- I just know that
4 we recently reached agreement for fifty thousand
5 dollars.

6 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Well, the
7 difference is that the foundation is funded by
8 Niagara Mohawk or National Grid's shareholders, not
9 by rates paid by customers, so --.

10 MR. PIERCE: Well, all I can tell
11 you is that it's a -- it's a program that needed
12 help and would not exist if it wasn't for the
13 assistance that we get from National Grid.

14 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Right. Thank
15 you. Thank you.

16 MR. PIERCE: Thank you.

17 MS. LITTLEJOHN: And I can just
18 clarify where that -- that comes from National
19 Grid's shareholders.

20 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: I just wanted
21 to make that clear that it's not the ratepayers
22 that are paying for that. Do we have anyone else?
23 No one?

24 MR. BILLIPS: I'd like to say
25 something.

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2 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Oh, you'd like
3 to speak?

4 MR. BILLIPS: Yes, sir.

5 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Come on up.
6 Give your -- just give your --.

7 MR. BILLIPS: My name is Lester
8 Billips. I've been incarcerated for over -- Lester
9 Billips.

10 THE REPORTER: Spell the last
11 name?

12 MR. BILLIPS: B-I-L-L-I-P-S.

13 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

14 MR. BILLIPS: I've been
15 incarcerated for over twenty years, so I don't know
16 a whole lot about this system, but what grabbed my
17 attention was the fact that National Grid made over
18 five billion -- nearly five billion in profits in
19 2010 and ask for a rate hike the next year. I
20 noticed that the -- the Republican presidential
21 candidate, Mitt Romney, thought it strange that the
22 poor seemed to think that they were guaranteed food
23 and housing.

24 Well, P.S.C. seems to believe
25 that they're guaranteed a certain level of profit.

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2 And I believe that this is simply corporate welfare
3 and it's being legislated expense at the very
4 people who can least afford it.

5 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: You
6 go ahead, Brother.

7 MR. BILLIPS: I endorse the
8 demands of the Central New York Workers Benefit
9 Council. Thank you.

10 A.L.J. PRESTEMON: Thank you.
11 Thank you.

12 All right. Is there anyone else
13 that's interested in speaking? I -- we have this
14 room from seven to nine, so we'll wait a few more
15 minutes to see if anyone else shows up. If you're
16 interested in sitting with us, you can, but --.

17 All right, folks. We are
18 officially adjourned now. Feel free to stick
19 around and chat if you wish, but we're adjourning
20 the hearing now. It doesn't look like we're going
21 to have any more speakers. Thanks.

22 (The hearing adjourned at 7:45
23 p.m.)

24

25

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2 STATE OF NEW YORK

3 I, G. Michael France, do hereby certify that the
4 foregoing was reported by me, in the cause, at the
5 time and place, as stated in the caption hereto, at
6 Page 1 hereof; that the foregoing typewritten
7 transcription consisting of pages 1 through 34, is
8 a true record of all proceedings had at the
9 hearing.

10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
11 subscribed my name, this the 16th day of January,
12 2013.

13
14 G. Michael France, Reporter

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A					
<p> ability 8:9 able 9:21,24 13:13 23:25 25:4 25:23 26:7,12 29:3 30:22 abuse 7:18 10:6 17:19 accept 3:23,25 access 7:20 11:4 act 10:24 11:2 action 19:12 actual 4:23 addition 23:4 31:12 additional 10:22 adequate 10:17 adequately 16:25 adjourned 34:18,22 adjourning 34:19 administrative 2:17 adopt 10:21 advocates 25:2,8,11,20 26:3,4 26:13,24 28:2,4 afford 6:20 8:9 9:14,21 12:14 16:21,22,25 25:7 26:10,18 29:19 34:4 affordable 9:4 afternoon 2:7 12:16 16:9 agency 28:21 29:19 agenda 15:16 ago 6:14 agreement 32:4 ahead 34:6 aide 16:13 Albany 14:2,3 allow 11:14 allowing 9:12 alternative 21:21 American 31:13 amount 26:16 angles 20:12 Ann 12:3,5 annually 8:15,17 answer 24:9 apartment 17:2 apologize 2:6 approval 3:10 approximately 4:10 April 3:8 area 6:22 asked 22:4 asking 6:13 13:8,18 21:3 </p>	<p> assistance 32:13 Associates 18:17 assume 19:25 assumption 20:8 attend 14:17 16:3 attention 33:17 average 9:5 avoid 26:11,16 AXA 18:18 A.L.J 1:15 2:4 5:24 11:25 12:17 12:21,25 13:5 14:19 15:5,11 15:14,20,25 16:7 18:3,8,11 24:20 26:2,19,23 27:15 28:3,9 28:12,19 29:13,21 30:8,11 31:21 32:2,6,14,20 33:2,5 34:10 </p> <tr> <th data-bbox="250 779 834 814"></th><th data-bbox="850 779 1435 814">B</th></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="250 821 834 1927"></td><td data-bbox="850 821 1435 1927"> <p> back 2:22 29:9 30:25 barely 8:23 basic 11:4 17:20 bed 20:3 began 3:8 7:2 behalf 6:6 12:7 24:25 25:8 30:15 believe 15:8 22:16 25:9 33:24 34:2 Benefit 6:5 11:6 16:12 34:8 Benefits 12:6 beyond 5:21 bill 17:2 billion 9:9 21:7 24:10 33:18,18 Billips 32:24 33:4,7,8,9,12,14 34:7 bills 4:23 25:19 blah 22:8,8,8 24:18,19 board 13:20 boasted 6:22 body 7:15 boss 18:19 boy 20:19 Brother 34:6 brought 6:14 bucks 20:24 bury 23:9 Bush 16:8,9,10 18:4 business 10:12 22:11,13,15 23:6 23:7,7,17 24:14 businesses 10:12 B-I-L-L-I-P-S 33:12 </p> </td></tr>		B		<p> back 2:22 29:9 30:25 barely 8:23 basic 11:4 17:20 bed 20:3 began 3:8 7:2 behalf 6:6 12:7 24:25 25:8 30:15 believe 15:8 22:16 25:9 33:24 34:2 Benefit 6:5 11:6 16:12 34:8 Benefits 12:6 beyond 5:21 bill 17:2 billion 9:9 21:7 24:10 33:18,18 Billips 32:24 33:4,7,8,9,12,14 34:7 bills 4:23 25:19 blah 22:8,8,8 24:18,19 board 13:20 boasted 6:22 body 7:15 boss 18:19 boy 20:19 Brother 34:6 brought 6:14 bucks 20:24 bury 23:9 Bush 16:8,9,10 18:4 business 10:12 22:11,13,15 23:6 23:7,7,17 24:14 businesses 10:12 B-I-L-L-I-P-S 33:12 </p>
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