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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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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.

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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.

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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?

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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?

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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.

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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,

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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.

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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.

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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.

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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.

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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.

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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 --

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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.

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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.

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY
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

1 Cases 12-E-0201, 12-G-0202 - Syracuse, NY

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 _____
15 G. Michael France, Reporter

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

C	
call 5:14 7:14 26:7	climate 31:15
called 3:17 30:19	collect 23:18
calls 19:2 26:8	College 1:13 31:14
cancel 11:21	come 16:3 25:21 26:6 27:8,23 29:24 31:11,22 33:5
candidate 33:21	comes 8:21 31:25 32:18
Capital 8:20	comfortable 29:5
caption 35:3	coming 2:23 24:6,6 25:22
card 5:13 27:10	comments 3:4 5:5,6
cards 5:15	Commission 1:2 2:12,20 3:5,10 3:18,23,23 4:3 5:8,10 6:13 8:2,10 10:21,25 11:7 12:10 14:8 15:6,7 16:12 19:6,25 21:11
carried 9:5	commissioned 8:25
case 1:5,5 3:9,15,16,20,20 4:18 5:9	Commissioner 2:19
cases 2:1,12,22,25 3:1,4,7,22 4:1 5:1,4 6:1 7:1 8:1 9:1 10:1 11:1 12:1 13:1 14:1 15:1 16:1 17:1 18:1 19:1 20:1 21:1 22:1 23:1 24:1 25:1 26:1 27:1 28:1 29:1 30:1 31:1 32:1 33:1 34:1 35:1	Commissioners 2:20
Catholic 24:24	Commission's 7:17 14:22
cause 35:3	commit 31:9
Center 20:23	commitment 31:15
central 6:4 7:7,22 11:5 12:6 16:11 34:8	Community 1:13
cents 22:24 23:2,3	companies 6:24 8:7
certain 33:25	company 9:16,16,24 10:11 18:16 18:24
certainly 16:22,22	compared 4:12
certify 35:2	complaining 23:16
challenged 30:23	completely 4:18
change 22:2	computer 14:21
charge 10:19 21:15,15,16,18	concerned 3:7 21:12 28:5,7
charged 2:14	concerning 2:13,25
charges 10:18 27:21	connect 14:23
Charities 24:24	conservation 31:17
charter 31:13	consider 6:13 17:18 21:12,21
chat 34:19	consisting 35:4
cheap 22:22	constant 17:17
check 15:6,15	consulting 18:16
children 7:10	consumer 7:24
China 6:24	contacted 17:9
chump 22:2	cool 16:25
circumstances 17:9 19:9	copy 12:20
cities 7:12 30:24	corner 20:23
city 7:10 22:6 31:3	cornered 19:19
clarify 32:18	corporate 18:22 19:8,12 20:22 20:25 34:2
clear 10:6,8 32:21	corporation 1:7 10:15,15 19:8
Clearly 10:25	Cortland 30:15,16,19 31:13
client 29:20	cost 7:21 8:12,14,16 11:4 12:11 22:6
	costs 8:4 9:4 25:25
	Council 6:5 11:6 12:6 16:12

<p>34:9 country 25:16 County 24:24 25:14 course 20:11 CPAP 16:20 created 7:4 credits 4:22 crisis 7:2 customers 6:20 7:18 32:9 cut 22:14 26:24 28:5 cutoff 26:12 cuts 25:10 C.N.Y 18:16</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <hr/> <p>DATE 1:11 David 1:15 2:16 day 9:6 19:19 29:11,14 35:6 deal 6:19 Deb 5:25 Deborah 5:22 6:3 debt 6:18 9:23 13:11 17:25 21:9 24:7 30:5 debts 11:22 13:14 December 3:21 9:7 decision 5:10 decisions 2:21 decreasing 8:5 dedication 31:16 deems 10:22 deeper 30:17 defined 19:16 definitely 28:21 delegate 6:4 12:6 16:10 deliver 19:20 delivered 19:21 delivering 20:17 delivery 1:6 2:14 3:11 4:4,16 4:24 27:21 demand 6:8 11:6 17:21 demands 6:13 13:19 34:8 deny 11:8 denying 6:9 Department 2:18,24 deregulation 8:4 desire 30:24 31:5 despite 9:3 deter 25:5 detriment 28:21 develop 3:16</p>	<p>difference 27:25 30:18 32:7 direct 6:17,17 directly 25:22 disability 16:16 disabled 6:7 district 8:20 31:10 doing 17:3 dollar 18:25 dollars 3:12 4:15 10:3 13:13 21:8 23:3,10 24:10 26:9,11 29:20 32:5 due 11:17 duplicate 12:20,24 duty 11:2 D/B/A 1:7</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <hr/> <p>E 2:12 early 15:21 Easter 15:19,19,21,25 Easter's 15:20 eat 9:22 economic 11:17 economically 13:17 economy 7:2,3 educate 31:5 education 31:3 Educators 30:20 effect 4:19 effort 3:16 eight 6:11,11 7:2,3 9:12 11:10 11:10 18:21 either 25:22 29:20 ELECTIRC 1:7 electric 1:6 2:13 3:11 4:4,6,18 4:20,24 6:11 9:17 10:15 11:9 electricity 9:3 16:21 17:12,16 emergency 27:4 endorse 34:7 ends 8:23 12:9 16:18 energy 18:16 19:4 23:19,20 25:25 31:17 ensure 9:4 11:4 12:10 ensuring 7:20 12:12 entered 3:15 entranceway 2:22 Equitable 18:18 essentially 19:13 establish 6:15 established 8:14</p>
---	--

evening 2:9 6:3 12:4
everybody 5:14
example 8:10 10:4 26:8
excess 23:20
executives 8:18,20
exist 32:12
expense 8:8 10:11 34:3
expensive 19:3
experts 22:4
expiration 4:19
explain 22:9
expressed 5:18

F

face 31:3
facilities 23:23
fact 19:13 20:6 22:3 33:17
failed 7:23
families 7:6 11:12 12:8,11 13:9
 13:12 17:24 25:17
family 6:7
far 21:12
fear 17:2,18
federal 11:23
fee 11:16
Feel 34:18
fees 27:21
FEMALE 11:19 30:4 31:19 34:5
fiduciary 22:12
fifty 11:13,23 13:10,15 32:4
fifty-three 7:9
figure 23:12 24:17
filed 3:14,21 5:7
filing 3:8
fill 5:13 7:15
finally 11:21
financial 6:25
find 20:11 24:10
first 4:9,9,14 5:24
five 2:19 6:14 8:15 10:3 21:7
 23:3 24:9 26:10,14 29:20
 33:18,18
fixed 9:20 16:17
folks 19:18 29:25 34:17
follow 31:11
following 11:7
food 19:20,21 20:17 33:22
foregoing 35:3,4
forgiveness 6:18 13:11 17:25
 30:5

forth 6:14
forty 9:2,22
forty-five 3:12
forty-four 8:17,21
forty-three 4:10
forward 6:14
foundation 31:23 32:7
four 9:5,8 16:24
fourteen 8:14
France 35:2,8
Fred 30:13
free 34:18
freeze 17:23
Friday 15:17
friends 3:3
front 15:7
fulfill 6:8 7:24 11:3
funded 32:7
funding 26:24 28:4 31:22
furnish 10:16
Furthermore 6:12 10:20

G

G 2:12 35:2,8
game 20:25
gas 1:6,8 2:14 3:12 4:4,11,25
 6:12 10:14 11:11 17:16
Gear 6:25
generation 23:23,25 24:6
generous 21:19
gentlemen 2:10
get's 13:19
give 5:4 12:22 21:17 23:18 24:4
 24:7 27:23 33:6,6
given 10:4
gives 14:23
go 4:23 5:19,20 17:6 18:23,23
 19:10,17 20:12,18,19 21:6
 30:25 34:6
God 23:10
goes 21:16
going 2:8 5:20 13:18,24 14:10
 14:10 19:9,10,10,24 20:8 21:2
 24:13,15,16 26:24 28:5 31:9
 34:20
good 2:9 6:2,23 12:4 16:9 21:20
government 8:25
grabbed 33:16
grants 21:17
great 24:18 29:23

Gregg 2:19
Grid 1:7 2:14 3:9 4:21 6:10,17
 9:5,8 10:5,9 11:8 17:4,17
 20:2,5,9 21:11,19 23:11 25:2
 25:12,25 26:3,5,9,11 30:17,20
 31:4 32:13 33:17
Grid's 9:12 31:16,23 32:8,19
grossly 6:18
growing 9:13
guarantee 8:8
guaranteed 33:22,25
guideline 11:23
gun 19:12

H

half 7:4 20:15 21:22,25 23:13
happy 3:5
hard 16:14,16,17
head 19:13
headache 21:9 23:15
health 16:19 17:11,14
heard 2:6 20:14 21:7
hearing 2:2 5:3 14:8 27:6,22
 34:20,22 35:5
Hearings 2:11
heat 9:3,17 16:23,25
Helen 27:3,12
help 3:5 14:13,14 20:11 22:16
 22:16 24:3 25:3,3,4,5,5,12,12
 25:21,23,24 26:13 32:12
helping 25:18 31:20
helps 23:21 24:2
hereof 35:4
hereto 35:3
hereunto 35:6
Her's 27:10
Hi 24:23
high 17:2 25:18,25
highest 7:12,25 8:19 25:15
high-needs 31:9
hike 33:19
hmm 21:5
hobby 19:3
Hoefer 26:25 27:4,5,12,12,17,19
 28:7,10,17,20,25 29:7,12,15
 29:18,22
home 16:12,13
hospice 16:13
hospitalized 16:24
hours 18:14

house 17:6,7 22:5,20,21
households 9:8,13 10:11
houses 23:14 24:2
housing 33:23
hundred 3:11 4:7 6:10 7:13 8:17
 8:21 9:6 11:9,13,22 12:15
 13:10,15 18:25
hundreds 6:19
H-O-E-F-E-R 27:17

I

idea 20:21 21:2,16
immediately 29:8
impact 4:16
implement 10:23 11:11
impressed 31:16
inability 11:18 13:17
inadequate 6:19
incarcerated 33:8,15
income 9:3,20,23 11:13 13:12
 16:17 17:11,25 24:6
increase 4:6,9,11,25 6:11,12
 11:10,11
increased 7:8,8 8:4
increases 4:8,17
increasing 9:13
Independent 8:12,16,18
industries 8:7
information 2:24 3:2 18:18
infrastructure 23:24
inner 30:24 31:2
inner-city 30:18
inquired 17:3
insiders 8:7
install 11:7
installed 22:25,25
interest 5:18 11:2
interested 5:4 34:13,16
interests 20:4
invitation 14:5
issued 8:2

J

jail 19:10,17
January 1:11 35:6
Jeff 2:23
job 16:14 17:22 18:20 19:2
 24:14,14
jobs 6:23 7:3,4
John 18:5,15

joint 3:18,21 4:2	lot 17:12 19:6 33:16	
judge 2:17	lots 16:15	
<hr/> K <hr/>		
keep 5:12 10:2 18:20 23:20 24:5	low 7:5,21 11:4 12:10 13:11 17:11,25	
kids 31:6,10	lower 6:15 13:8 18:2 22:23	
kind 21:3 27:23	low-income 6:6 9:19 10:11 11:3 12:8 13:9 17:24	
knocked 26:17	<hr/> M <hr/>	
know 9:18 13:3 17:8 18:21,22 20:6,9,16,20,21 21:14,20,23 21:24 22:8,22 23:7,9,9,11,16 24:8,9 27:24,25 28:22 29:22 31:23 32:3 33:15	machine 16:20	
knows 23:10,11	making 2:21 8:23 24:5 30:17	
<hr/> L <hr/>		
lack 31:7	MALE 15:2,23 30:2,6	
ladies 2:9	management 19:8,12,16 20:13	
large 9:23	manager 19:13	
late 5:19	mandate 6:9 7:15,17 9:4 11:4 17:20	
law 2:17 10:14,21	manufacturing 6:23	
laws 23:12	March 9:7 14:3 15:10,12,12,22	
learned 19:7	Margaret 24:22	
left 19:2	Mary 24:21	
legal 12:10	ma'am 27:7,7	
legislated 34:3	mean 13:23 16:11 17:5 18:22 21:9 22:25 23:10 24:16	
lend 28:11	meet 8:23 12:9 16:18	
Les 24:16	meeting 13:21,23 14:3	
Lester 33:7,8	memorandum 6:16	
level 11:14 13:11,15 33:25	merely 3:22	
life 9:20	mic 27:8	
Lifelong 17:4	Michael 35:2,8	
lifetime 9:25	middle 15:22	
limit 18:6,9	million 3:12,13 4:7,10,12,12,15 6:10,12 7:3 8:15,17,21 11:9 11:10	
line 7:7,11	minimal 29:15	
lines 22:8	minute 22:2	
link 14:23	minutes 34:15	
listen 18:20 24:15,17	Miranda 18:5,6,9,13,15	
literally 9:14	Mis 24:16	
little 2:5 5:17 14:14	mitigated 4:17	
LITTLEJOHN 32:17	Mitt 33:21	
live 5:6 9:20 17:17 21:24 26:18	modify 3:25	
lives 30:18	Mohawk 1:7 2:15 32:8	
living 7:7,11 16:17	money 16:15 17:13 18:19 19:14 31:20	
local 23:25	monopoly 7:19 10:7 17:17,19	
LOCATION 1:13	month 10:4 20:24 25:18	
long 18:11	moratorium 6:16 11:12	
look 5:20 22:10 34:20	moves 19:8 20:13	
looked 21:19	<hr/> N <hr/>	
lose 19:11		

name 2:16 6:3 12:5 16:10 18:15
 27:9,14 33:7,11 35:6
National 1:7 2:14 3:9 4:21 6:10
 6:17 9:5,8,11 10:5,9 11:8
 17:4,16 20:2,4,9 21:11,19
 23:11 25:2,12,25 26:3,5,9,11
 30:16,20 31:4,16,23 32:8,13
 32:18 33:17
natural 6:12 11:10
near 26:14
nearly 33:18
nebulizer 16:20
necessary 5:19 10:23 12:21
need 14:15 18:24 22:9 23:10,23
 23:23,24 27:8
needed 32:11
negotiate 25:6,23 26:13,15
negotiations 3:15 28:16,18
neighbors 3:3 17:8
neighbor's 17:6,7
never 9:24
new 1:2,14 2:7,17 6:4,24 7:7,20
 7:22 8:11,13 9:2 10:13,20
 11:5,5 12:6,11 16:11 22:5
 25:15 34:8 35:2
Niagara 1:7 2:15 32:8
nice 17:8 22:13 23:5,6 24:13
nine 4:11 5:21 9:12 12:15 34:14
ninety-nine 9:9
nonprofit 8:20
nonsense 23:12
normally 21:6
north 22:5
northeastern 7:12
note 20:10
noticed 33:20
nuclear 22:6
number 3:14 4:21 7:4,6 13:8
 30:21
numbers 9:13 21:6
NY 2:1 3:1 4:1 5:1 6:1 7:1 8:1
 9:1 10:1 11:1 12:1 13:1 14:1
 15:1 16:1 17:1 18:1 19:1 20:1
 21:1 22:1 23:1 24:1 25:1 26:1
 27:1 28:1 29:1 30:1 31:1 32:1
 33:1 34:1 35:1

O

O 2:12,12,13,13
object 10:10

obligation 7:24
obviously 26:10
office 20:22,22,23,24 25:21,22
 26:6 29:24
officers 18:24
official 7:15
officially 34:18
offset 4:18
Oh 14:9 22:19 27:15 33:2
okay 5:16 13:6 15:5 18:14 20:7
 20:14 28:9,9,19,19 30:11
once 6:22
online 14:20 16:4
Onondaga 1:13
operating 9:9
Operator 8:12
Operators 8:16,19
opinion 20:5
opportunities 14:7
opportunity 5:5
order 5:14 8:3 11:3
orderly 5:12
Oswego 24:24 25:14
overlook 20:22
owe 13:12 22:19
owes 26:8
o'clock 5:21

P

page 15:7 35:4
pages 35:4
paid 8:19 27:20 32:9
panels 22:4,5,17,22 23:8,14,18
parcel 20:2
part 3:24,25 5:8 19:25 25:10
 26:25 27:5,19,19 28:15
parties 3:14,15,19,20
partnership 30:16
part-time 7:5
path 31:11
pay 7:25 9:2,24 11:18 13:14,17
 21:17 26:10,14,15 29:19
payer 7:5
paying 6:23 25:19 32:22
payment 9:25 10:3 11:15,16
 13:17
payments 25:6,7,24 26:17 29:4
 29:16
Peicow 24:22,23 26:4,21 27:3,10
 28:2,14,23 29:2,10,17 30:10

penalties 11:15
people 2:7 13:14 14:14,14 17:8
 17:11 19:23 20:4,15 21:8,13
 21:15,22 23:5,6,13 24:8,14
 25:3,6,13,21 26:18 28:24 29:5
 34:4
people's 22:18 23:8
percent 7:9,10 9:2,12,22 13:10
 13:15 22:23
period 4:5
permanent 5:8
person 5:5 16:4
personally 9:18
phones 25:22
pie 24:5
piece 24:4
Pierce 30:13,14 31:24 32:3,10
 32:16
place 17:15 35:3
places 20:18
plan 9:25 10:3
plans 11:15
plant 22:6
pleas 24:15,17
please 27:8
pockets 8:22
point 6:11 7:3 8:15,16 9:8,12
 11:10 23:12
policies 11:8
Pool 8:13,14
poor 7:22 33:22
poorest 9:2
populations 7:13
potential 7:18
poverty 7:7,11,11,12 11:14,23
 13:11,15 20:16 21:23,24 23:14
power 1:7 7:19 8:13,14 10:7
 11:2 17:7,19 22:6 23:22
prepared 5:11
present 5:5
presented 4:3
presidential 33:20
president's 31:15
Prestemon 1:15 2:4,16 5:24
 11:25 12:17,21,25 13:5 14:19
 15:5,11,14,20,25 16:7 18:3,8
 18:11 24:20 26:2,19,23 27:15
 28:3,9,12,19 29:13,21 30:8,11
 31:21 32:2,6,14,20 33:2,5
 34:10

probably 14:2 15:22 24:10
problems 16:19 17:11,14
proceedings 35:5
process 5:12 6:25 9:9
profit 9:12 10:9 19:11 21:21
 22:13 33:25
profitable 24:19
profiteers 17:23
profits 8:8 9:10 10:10 24:5
 33:18
program 6:18 17:4,25 30:20 31:8
 31:12,22 32:11
prohibited 10:19
project 19:17
projects 19:15
promised 8:5
proper 10:23
proposal 3:18,21 4:3 24:12
proposed 3:22 8:11
proposing 23:5
proposition 22:16
protect 6:9 7:18,19,24 17:10
protecting 9:11 10:10,13
provide 10:16 31:4
provided 30:21
provisions 10:23
public 1:2 2:2,11,11,18,20,24
 3:4,9 7:16 8:2 10:14,20 11:7
 12:9 13:22 14:7,12,16 16:3
 19:6,25 21:10
published 15:17
purchased 18:19
purges 18:21
purported 8:11
purpose 5:3
push 19:14
pushing 19:15
put 20:8 22:3,5,17,20 23:7,14
 23:25 29:10
putting 31:5
p.m 1:12,12 2:3 34:23
P.R 24:18
P.S.C 6:8 7:23 9:4,11 10:6,12
 17:9,10,20,21 33:24

Q

qualify 17:5
quality 31:5,7
questions 3:6
quite 31:24

quote 7:17		
<hr/> R <hr/>		
raise 3:10	resolution 3:16,22	
ramble 18:13	respect 10:17	
rate 3:9 4:14,16 6:11,12 7:12 11:9,11 33:19	response 17:4	
ratepayer 4:22	responsibility 2:21 12:10 22:12	
ratepayers 4:23 6:9 8:9,12,22 8:22 11:3 17:22,23 32:21	responsible 12:12	
rates 1:6 2:13 3:10 4:4,6,18,24 6:15 7:25 9:13 12:12 13:8 17:23 18:2 25:15 32:9	result 4:23 17:3	
reached 32:4	resulted 3:17	
ready 5:22	resumed 2:2	
real 17:25	retired 12:8	
really 25:8,11 27:24 29:13,25 30:17	returned 4:22	
reason 18:12 20:13	revise 6:17	
reasonable 10:17,18 12:13	Reynolds 12:3,4,5,19,23 13:3,7 13:24 14:4,9,13,18,24 15:4,9 15:13,18 16:5,6	
reasons 19:11	rid 23:15,15 25:5	
receive 5:15	right 2:4 6:2 11:20 12:17 13:7 16:2,4 20:5,20 21:8 22:2,20 22:23 23:7,16 24:21 28:25 29:12,21 32:14 34:12,17	
reconnect 13:16	rights 7:19	
reconnection 11:14	risk 19:16,17	
record 5:9,9 20:8 35:5	Rockefeller 20:23	
recorded 5:6	Romney 33:21	
recruit 30:22 31:10	roof 23:8	
Recruitment 30:20	roofs 22:18 24:7	
reduce 22:7 23:24 25:4	room 34:14	
reduction 4:15	rules 10:22 22:14	
regulations 10:22	run 2:8 8:13,15,17,18 9:15	
reject 3:24	runs 30:17	
relationship 25:20 26:5 29:3,23	<hr/> S <hr/>	
reliable 7:20	s 17:20	
relief 24:8	safe 10:16	
remain 5:17	salaries 25:9 27:20	
renegotiation 11:15	saying 10:9	
Renewable 18:16	Sayre 2:19 13:22 14:2,6,12,16 15:16	
rent 22:19,21,21	school 31:9	
reported 35:3	schools 31:3,6	
reporter 5:7 27:7,13,18 33:10 33:13 35:8	screen 21:20	
represent 17:22 20:3,4	seat 13:20	
representative 17:5	second 2:10 5:2	
Republican 33:20	Section 10:13,20	
request 11:8	sectors 7:5	
requested 4:13	see 7:6 14:10,20 16:4 23:17 27:16 34:15	
requesting 3:9	selfish 23:17 24:4	
require 16:20 17:12	Seneca 1:14	
residents 7:16	senior 20:13	
	serious 22:10	

serve 7:15 28:24	25:8 34:13
service 1:2,8 2:11,14,15,18,20 2:24 3:5,10,11,13 4:4,5,6,11 4:20,25 5:2 7:5,17,21 8:2 10:14,16,21 11:7,17 12:9 13:16 17:16 19:6,25 21:10,15 21:16,18 25:14,16	specialist 16:14
services 8:9 9:14,22	Spell 27:13 33:10
session 2:10 14:20 15:12 16:2	spent 18:17
set 4:5	spokesperson 21:11
seven 2:5 5:17 34:14	spot 15:6
seventy 22:23	staged 4:8
shareholders 32:8,19	start 17:24
shed 7:2	started 2:5
sheets 2:25	starting 5:16
short 10:3	state 1:2 7:16 8:6,6,11,25 10:10,14,20 25:16 35:2
shows 34:15	stated 35:3
shut 6:25 10:5 17:18	statement 2:11 5:11
shutoff 6:16 11:12 13:16 26:12 26:16 29:8	states 8:2 10:14,21
shutoffs 9:6 13:9 17:24 25:5 29:4 30:7	steps 4:13
signatory 31:13	stick 34:18
signatures 12:16	stockholders 22:12
signed 3:19	stop 13:8 17:24
similar 30:25	stranded 23:24
simply 20:21 21:4 34:2	strange 33:21
sir 33:4	stress 17:12
sit 20:21 21:5	struggle 10:2
sitting 34:16	struggling 12:9
situation 9:18 29:5	students 30:19,23,23 31:8
situations 30:24,25	studies 8:24
sixty 30:7	submit 3:4
sixty-two 22:24,25 23:3	subscribed 35:6
sleep 17:7	substantially 4:17
small 10:12 29:19	sued 19:10
smaller 26:15	suffer 31:6
smart 24:12	suffering 7:23
smile 13:19	suggest 21:21
Smith 5:23,25 6:2,3 11:21 12:2	suggesting 21:10
smoke 21:20	suggestion 22:10
socialized 21:14	SUNY 30:15,16 31:12
solar 22:3,5,17,22 23:14,18	support 19:18 27:23 28:11 30:21 30:22
somebody 26:7	supportive 29:24
sorry 20:5,17 27:15	surcharge 4:19
speak 14:7,10 30:14 33:3	surcharges 27:21
speaker 5:25 11:19 15:2,23 30:2 30:4,6 31:19 34:5	sure 12:25 19:21 28:13 31:24
speakers 34:21	surprising 7:6
speaking 5:18 6:5 12:7 20:9	survived 18:21
	suspect 24:10
	sustainability 31:17
	sustainable 19:3
	Syracuse 1:14 2:1 3:1 4:1 5:1 6:1,24 7:1,10,11 8:1 9:1 10:1 11:1 12:1 13:1 14:1 15:1 16:1

17:1 18:1,23 19:1 20:1,18 21:1 22:1 23:1 24:1 25:1 26:1 27:1 28:1 29:1 30:1 31:1 32:1 33:1 34:1 35:1 system 4:21 8:12,16,19 33:16 systems 19:4	tonight 2:18 3:8 total 4:6,10 transcribed 5:7 transcription 35:4 transmission 22:7 transparency 20:10 trip 14:21 true 35:5 try 20:11 trying 14:22 turn 9:16 turned 29:8 Turnpike 1:14 twelve 2:12,12 twenty 6:6,6 25:17 33:15 twenty-nine 3:13 4:12 12:15 twenty-one 18:17 twenty-three 4:7 6:10 9:6 11:9 two 2:12,13,13 11:11,13,22 13:5 13:8,10,14 18:25 20:15,23 21:22,24 23:13 31:9 typewritten 35:4
T	U
take 22:10 23:13 takes 19:12 talented 30:23 talk 24:25 25:11 30:15 talking 18:22 20:15 21:23 22:8 24:8 25:3 Tammie 16:8,10 tax 23:9,11 teachers 30:25 31:5,7 team 19:16 technology 18:18 tell 20:19 32:10 ten 4:20 9:7 10:2,3 tens 10:5 terminated 11:17 terms 4:2 territory 2:15 Testimony 3:13 thank 11:23,25 12:25 14:18 15:13 16:4,6 18:3 23:2 24:19 24:20 27:18 30:8,11 31:17 32:14,15,16 33:13 34:9,10,11 Thanks 18:2 34:21 thing 5:12 23:17 things 18:15 think 14:22 21:25 33:22 third 5:2 7:25 thirteen 7:8 25:17 thought 33:21 thousand 6:6 7:13 9:7 18:25 20:24 26:11,14 29:20 30:7 32:4 thousands 6:19,22 10:5 12:7 13:12,13 21:9 26:9 three 4:8,13,15 7:9 11:14 13:11 19:9,11 20:12 three-year 4:5 time 1:12 18:7,10 19:21 35:3 times 16:24 20:16 21:22,25 23:13 today 7:14 8:18 22:21 tomorrow 22:22	ultimate 2:21 ultimately 3:19 undergo 17:13 understand 19:22,24 22:15 understanding 26:20 28:4 31:2 unemployed 6:7 unemployment 25:15 UNIDENTIFIED 11:19 15:2,23 30:2 30:4,6 31:19 34:5 United 7:25 Unity 31:14 Universe 31:14 University 31:14 unjust 10:19 unreasonable 10:19 updated 15:3 Urban 30:19 use 23:8 usher 8:3 usually 13:14 15:17 utilities 6:21 9:22 11:5 12:11 utility 6:15,16 7:18,21,25 8:3 8:4,6,9 9:14,21,23 11:12,22 17:2 25:18,19
	V

vision 8:3	18:17 30:21 31:9 33:15
volunteer 6:4 12:5	year-round 11:11
<hr/>	York 1:2,14 2:17 6:4 7:7,23
W	8:11,13 10:13,20 11:6 12:6
Wagner 2:23 5:14	16:11 22:5 25:15 34:8 35:2
wait 34:14	Yorkers 7:20 9:2 11:5 12:11
want 12:23 14:10,13,14 18:20	<hr/>
24:4 31:10	1
wanted 27:23 28:10,12 32:20	1 35:4,4
wants 18:23	10 1:11
wasn't 28:13 32:12	12-E-0201 1:5 2:1 3:1 4:1 5:1
watt 22:24 23:2,3	6:1 7:1 8:1 9:1 10:1 11:1
way 23:13 24:5,17 26:17	12:1 13:1 14:1 15:1 16:1 17:1
ways 3:3	18:1 19:1 20:1 21:1 22:1 23:1
website 14:22 15:6,8	24:1 25:1 26:1 27:1 28:1 29:1
welcome 2:10 14:16	30:1 31:1 32:1 33:1 34:1 35:1
welfare 34:2	12-G-0202 1:5 2:1 3:1 4:1 5:1
went 4:24 18:19	6:1 7:1 8:1 9:1 10:1 11:1
West 1:14	12:1 13:1 14:1 15:1 16:1 17:1
we'll 2:5 34:14	18:1 19:1 20:1 21:1 22:1 23:1
we're 3:7 5:20 14:9 18:21 24:24	24:1 25:1 26:1 27:1 28:1 29:1
25:7,11,23 26:7,12 28:7 29:19	30:1 31:1 32:1 33:1 34:1 35:1
30:22 31:4 34:19,20	16th 35:6
WHEREOF 35:6	1907 7:17
white 20:18	1996 8:3,14,15
Whitney 1:13	<hr/>
wife 19:2	2
win 22:11 24:18	2008 7:2
winter 16:23	2010 9:7 33:19
win-win 21:12	2011 9:7
wish 34:19	2012 3:8
WITNESS 35:6	2013 1:11 35:7
work 11:6 16:12,16 18:20 25:2,9	210 1:13
25:12 26:3,5 29:25	<hr/>
worked 8:6 16:13,14	3
worker 9:19	34 35:4
workers 6:4,7 11:6 12:8 16:11	<hr/>
34:8	4
working 7:22	4835 1:14
world 20:25	<hr/>
wouldn't 20:19	5
write 23:11	51 10:20
<hr/>	<hr/>
Y	6
yeah 19:20 21:5 26:25 28:14	65 10:13
31:20	<hr/>
year 3:12 4:9,14 8:22,25 15:21	7
16:24 19:2 22:24,24 30:7	7th 3:21
33:19	7:00 1:12 2:3
years 4:8,20 5:2 6:14,24 7:9	7:45 34:22

