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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
OF OREGON
UE 435

In the Matter of
PORTLAND GENERAL ELECTRIC
COMPANY,
Request for a General Rate Revision.

**TRANSCRIPT
OF
May 16, 2024
PUBLIC COMMENT
HEARING**

BEFORE: ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE, KATHARINE MAPES

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1 ALJ MAPES: Before we begin the public
2 comment hearing, we wanted to inform everybody
3 that this evening we have Spanish translation
4 services available through the Zoom platform which
5 will enable you to hear this proceeding translated
6 into Spanish, and to have any comments provided in
7 Spanish translated into English.

8 So I am now going to turn it over to the
9 interpreters to introduce themselves in English
10 and Spanish, and to provide instructions for
11 accessing the Spanish translation channel.

12 *(Interpreter speaking in Spanish)*

13 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

14 Let's turn on the interpretation feature.
15 All right. Everyone should now see a little globe
16 at the bottom of your screen. So if you click on
17 that button you can select either the English or
18 Spanish channel. If you're on a mobile device,
19 you might need to click on three dots at the
20 bottom of the screen to see the option. If you
21 click the Spanish option, you will hear a Spanish
22 translation of everything this evening, and we'll
23 be able to have your comments translated from
24 Spanish to English.

25 You must choose a channel, either English

1 or Spanish, in order to participate and properly
2 hear the proceeding this evening. I will give
3 everyone a moment to choose a language channel.

4 *(Pause)*

5 ALJ MAPES: All right. Thanks everyone.
6 Let's get started.

7 It is 6 p.m. on May 16th, 2024. I am Katie
8 Mapes, an Administrative Law Judge at the
9 Commission assigned to these proceedings.

10 We are here tonight to hear your comments
11 on the rate increase proposed by the Portland
12 General Electric Company in Docket No. UE 435,
13 PGE's request for a general rate revision.

14 With me tonight are Commission Chair Megan
15 Decker, Commissioner Letha Tawney, and
16 Commissioner Les Perkins.

17 We are recording tonight's session so that
18 we have a record of your comments for
19 consideration by PUC staff and Commissioners.

20 Chair Decker, do you have any introductory
21 remarks?

22 CHAIR DECKER: Yes. Thank you, Judge
23 Mapes. And thanks to the interpreters that are
24 going to help us improve the accessibility of our
25 public comment hearing tonight.

1 These hearings are a really important part
2 of our rate case process. You're going to hear a
3 bit tonight about this specific rate request, and
4 about how the PUC examines rate increase requests
5 with the help of our expert staff, and many
6 others, including consumer advocates and
7 environmental justice advocates, and others who
8 join in to scrutinize the rate case request.

9 What we hear from you tonight will be
10 recorded and made part of the record, and more
11 importantly, it puts us in direct touch with the
12 people who will be affected by our decision in
13 this matter. It helps our staff focus inquiry on
14 areas of relevance to those directly affected, and
15 like I said, it just gives us that direct view
16 into the people who are being directly affected.

17 So, I really appreciate the time that
18 people take to comment with us, and I'll invite my
19 fellow Commissioners to introduce themselves, and
20 to say any words of welcome that they would like
21 to add.

22 COMMISSIONER TAWNEY: Thank you, Chair,
23 for that.

24 I'm Commissioner Tawney, and I appreciate
25 everyone taking time out of their busy evening

1 schedule to share your perspectives with us.
2 That's all I'll say so we can get on to that
3 important part of the -- of the agenda.

4 COMMISSIONER PERKINS: Thank you, Chair
5 Decker.

6 Good evening. I'm Commissioner Les
7 Perkins, and I also just want to say thank you for
8 spending some time with us tonight on this
9 important topic.

10 CHAIR DECKER: All right, back to you,
11 Katie.

12 ALJ MAPES: Thank you, Commissioners.

13 Before we turn to comments from the public,
14 I'm going to provide a brief overview of the
15 process in these proceedings, and then PUC staff
16 will provide a brief presentation on PGE's request
17 for a general rate increase and Staff's role in
18 these proceedings.

19 So, Candice, do you mind starting the
20 slides? Great. It looks like they're up.

21 So, this public comment hearing is before
22 the Oregon Public Utility Commission, which serves
23 as the regulatory body overseeing utility service
24 in the state including rates and requests for rate
25 changes such as that requested by PGE.

1 Today's public comment hearing is one step
2 of many in these proceedings. After today's
3 hearing we will prepare a transcript of the
4 comments received, and Commission staff will file
5 them with their opening testimony along with any
6 other comments received.

7 All comments will be considered by the
8 Commission along with other evidence provided by
9 PGE, Commission staff and interveners in deciding
10 whether and to what extent to grant PGE's request.

11 In making this decision, the Commission
12 will balance the interest of utility customers and
13 the utility itself. The Commission could decide
14 to grant the request in full or with changes, or
15 to deny the request.

16 In addition to today's public comment
17 hearing, the Commission has scheduled some
18 additional proceedings. There is an evidentiary
19 hearing scheduled for October 10th, oral arguments
20 from the parties are scheduled for November 14th.

21 The Commission anticipates issuing a Final
22 Order in this docket by December 20th, and any new
23 rates will become effective on January 1st, 2025.

24 Let's go to the next slide.

25 Any members of the public who wish to

1 comment, but cannot do so this evening, may submit
2 written comments via our website, by email, or by
3 mail, or by calling Consumer Services as shown on
4 the slide and on our website. Please include an
5 attention line that identifies the docket as UE
6 435.

7 Members of the public may request an
8 interpreter at that time that they call and will
9 be connected to an interpreter to the extent that
10 one is available for their language.

11 PUC Consumer Services representatives will
12 provide a summary of any comments received to
13 Staff, and Staff will provide an overview of any
14 comments received by June 14th, 2024 as part of
15 its opening testimony.

16 I will now turn things over to Melissa
17 Nottingham with Commission Staff for a brief
18 presentation.

19 MS. NOTTINGHAM: Thank you.

20 Good evening. My name is Melissa
21 Nottingham, and I'm the manager of Consumer
22 Services at the Public Utility Commission.

23 Part of my role is to gather comments.
24 Tonight I will be providing a high level overview
25 of Portland General Electric's general rate case,

1 and the potential impact to residential customers.
2 Please note the information provided is the
3 Company's proposal and does not necessarily
4 reflect the final decision.

5 As part of the process Staff will be
6 reviewing the Company's request to ensure it is
7 reasonable and necessary for providing safe and
8 reliable electric service to Oregonians.

9 Next slide, please.

10 General rate case impact base rates.
11 Portland's rate case includes the following items:
12 capital investment, which includes new facilities,
13 upgrading existing facilities and other grid
14 modernizations; operation and maintenance costs,
15 which are the day-to-day running operational costs
16 of the company; the cost of capital, which is the
17 cost of financing, issuing debt, includes return
18 on equity and taxes.

19 Next slide, please.

20 The Company is asking for a \$202 million
21 increase to base rates, representing a 7.3%
22 increase effective on January 1st, 2025. The
23 impact of the rate increase will vary across
24 customer classes. This table demonstrates the
25 impact on residential customers. Residential

1 includes both single, family, and multi-family
2 homes. Using an average kilowatt hour usage for
3 each type of service the approximate increase is
4 6.4 for single family homes and 6.9 for multi-
5 family homes. It's important to know that the
6 percentage of increase will vary dependent on how
7 much power or kilowatt hours used by the customer.

8 Next slide, please.

9 So what is driving -- what are the cost
10 drivers? The largest bucket at 58% are capital
11 projects. This includes two battery storage
12 facilities which will allow the Company to meet
13 peak customer loads, and also ongoing investment
14 and transmission and distribution projects for
15 reliability and resiliency.

16 The second largest bucket at 26% is
17 increase in operational maintenance costs, and to
18 offset the total impact of the price increase, the
19 Company is proposing to reduce revenue
20 requirements by 18.1 million, which includes
21 eliminating portions of incentives, reduce labor
22 costs, and other reductions of operational costs.

23 Next slide, please.

24 Rate cases are complex. To review Portland
25 General's proposal, the Public Utility Commission

1 employs experts from a variety of areas. The
2 Company must demonstrate that spending is
3 necessary, prudent, and reasonable. Staff's
4 responsibility encompasses a range of tasks, from
5 technical analysis, economic review, risk
6 analysis, and then how are those costs going to be
7 distributed among different types of customers.
8 To do this analysis, a team of accountants,
9 financial specialists, economists, and engineers
10 are employed to make sure the projects, forecasts,
11 and the models used by the Company are reasonable.
12 Legal guidance is provided by the Department of
13 Justice.

14 Next slide, please.

15 So, what are the next steps? Rate cases
16 are a quasi judicial proceeding and are conducted
17 in a manner similar to court proceedings, which
18 you may be familiar with. It requires preparing
19 testimony, a discovery process with data requests,
20 rebuttal testimony, settlement talks, et cetera.
21 Staff has already begun this process by requesting
22 additional information from the Company, and will
23 be filing its opening testimony on July 15th.

24 I strongly encourage everyone to follow the
25 docket to receive updates by going to

1 www.oregon.gov/puc, go to the "e-dockets" tab and
2 follow UE 435.

3 Next slide, please.

4 You can also feel free to contact us at
5 Consumer Services at 1-800-522-2404.

6 And I want to thank everyone for attending
7 tonight and I look forward to hearing your
8 feedback.

9 Thank you.

10 ALJ MAPES: Thank you, Melissa.

11 We're going to move on to the public
12 comment portion of tonight. I'm going to go over
13 the process briefly.

14 Just a reminder, to make sure you have
15 selected either the English or the Spanish channel
16 at the bottom of your screen by clicking the
17 "interpretation" button. If you click the Spanish
18 option, you'll hear a translation of everything
19 that's said and you can have your comment
20 translated from Spanish to English.

21 Second, to stay organized, we're going to
22 be using the raise your hand function of Zoom.
23 For participants using a computer or a mobile
24 device, you can find that at the bottom of your
25 screen. If you're on the phone, you can raise

1 your hand by pressing *9. That's *9.

2 I will call on individuals by name or last
3 digits of your phone number. My apologies, I'll
4 do my best to pronounce names. And I will unmute
5 you at that time. You may also need to unmute
6 your computer microphone or telephone. If you're
7 on the telephone, unmute yourself using *6.

8 I ask that everyone stay muted until called
9 upon to minimize background noise while others are
10 speaking.

11 So this is an opportunity for comments from
12 the public on PGE's rate request. As you can see,
13 all three Commissioners are here and will be
14 listening carefully, but they will not be
15 answering questions or responding to individual
16 comments tonight.

17 At this time, I ask that anyone wishing to
18 provide comment raise your hand so that I can get
19 an idea of how many people are interested in
20 commenting.

21 Okay. Thank you, everybody. It looks like
22 we have a significant number of comments tonight.

23 So, we're going to ask that you do your
24 best to not repeat comments that have been made by
25 other folks, you can refer back to their comments.

1 If you have a written statement, you can submit
2 that written statement via the information we
3 provided earlier, by email or on our website, and
4 we ask that you summarize that statement tonight.

5 A couple of other instructions. When
6 called, please speak clearly and state and spell
7 your name for the record. Your comments are being
8 recorded and we want to ensure we have a complete
9 record of the comments that are being provided.

10 And with that, let's get started. I'm
11 going to take people in the order that I see them
12 on my Zoom screen. So, our first commenter
13 tonight is Branden Dross.

14 MR. DROSS: Good evening, Judge. Good
15 evening, Commission. Can you hear me okay?

16 ALJ MAPES: We can. Thank you.

17 MR. DROSS: Thank you.

18 So, my name is Branden Dross. I am the
19 City Administrator with the City of Lafayette.

20 I have sent some stuff over to you all via
21 the public comment portal on the website, but as
22 due diligence and the commitment of public
23 service, I have decided to be here tonight just to
24 echo some of the notifications that we received,
25 and just to let you know that this is impactful,

1 not to just Lafayette residents, but also Yamhill
2 County.

3 We've gotten support from Yamhill County
4 Commission to not go ahead with this rate
5 increase, as well as my City Council.

6 We've had numerous conversations with PGE.
7 Lovely people, as I'm sure everybody would confirm
8 that.

9 But on a day-to-day basis, I run this City
10 and I have -- I have to listen to the concerns
11 about the future of poverty in our city, the
12 future of not being able to live in a city that
13 they moved here from to be more -- to live in a
14 more affordable place.

15 I have been on the other side. I used to
16 work for CPS Energy in San Antonio, Texas. It was
17 a publicly owned utility, similar size, similar
18 structure of PGE. We would never do more than
19 three or four percent a year. Almost 40% over
20 three years is a little egregious. Not only are
21 our residents seeing 40% over three years, but you
22 also have to take into account wastewater, water,
23 any other fees or taxes that are associated with
24 other cities. I mean, with our water and
25 wastewater and trash, we're seeing 10 to 15% just

1 on that. Then you throw in Northwest Natural and
2 then PGE, we're looking at close to 80% of
3 increases in utilities in three years. It's
4 damaging -- it's damaging the pocketbooks of the
5 working class, and I would really appreciate it if
6 you can just think about what this does, not just
7 to the people in Portland or the people in the
8 three county metro area, but all along the service
9 territory as constituents of the state and yours.
10 That's all I ask. I ask you just please think
11 about this.

12 None of my peers wanted to come speak about
13 this. I don't see any public officials here. I
14 have to be the one to talk about this at a public
15 official level. People are scared to do this
16 because we get franchise fee money off this. That
17 franchise fee money is not worth the pain and
18 suffering of our residents.

19 So, please think about what this does for
20 the residents and for the community. That's all I
21 ask. Because somebody in your family is going to
22 be impacted by this just as much as we can, and
23 they may not be in the financial situations we all
24 are in. So please think about that.

25 Thank you.

(MVWBC)

1 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

2 All right. Our next commenter is Soledad
3 Molina, and following that we'll have a
4 representative from the Willamette Valley Workers
5 Benefit, and Maria D.

6 So, Soledad Molina.

7 *(Pause/No audible response)*

8 ALJ MAPES: Okay. I'm going to ask to
9 unmute again. It looks like the mute is going in
10 and out.

11 *(Pause/No audible response)*

12 ALJ MAPES: Ms. Molina, can you hear us?

13 *(Pause/No audible response)*

14 ALJ MAPES: Okay. Ms. Molina, we'll come
15 back to you, okay? We'll go to the next person
16 and then we'll circle back to you and see if we
17 can get your audio working.

18 So, next we have the Willamette Valley
19 Workers Benefit -- I don't see the entire name.
20 And then following that, Maria D. And then Nikita
21 Darya -- I'm sorry -- anani. So, the Willamette
22 Valley Workers Benefit Council.

23 VIVIANA: Hi. Can you guys hear me?

24 ALJ MAPES: We can.

25 VIVIANA: Can you guys please turn my

(MVWBC)

1 camera on? We have 50 people here that would like
2 to be seen, if it's possible. Thank you.

3 Hello. My name is Viviana. I am a
4 representative from the Willamette Valley Workers
5 Benefit Council. The Willamette Valley Workers
6 Benefit is a delegate party representing thousands
7 of local paid workers in a variety of industries
8 throughout Washington and Multnomah Counties. We
9 speak for those who labor as farm and nursery
10 workers, childcare workers, house cleaners,
11 construction workers, landscapers, as well as a
12 variety of other jobs, including working in low
13 end manufacturing, often through temporary
14 agencies.

15 Our local economy could not function
16 without these workers, and yet our jobs general
17 *(audio cut out)* --

18 ALJ MAPES: Your audio just cut out. You
19 can turn your video on now though.

20 *(No audible response)*

21 ALJ MAPES: All right. We're -- we
22 switched them from a participant to a panelist to
23 get their video through, so there might be a
24 little bit of a lag as they switch over.
25 Apologies for that. We'll just hold on for a

(MWWBC)

1 minute while they come back.

2 *(Pause while Viviana handles technical*
3 *difficulties)*

4 VIVIANA: Hello. My name is Viviana, I am
5 a representative from the Willamette Valley
6 Workers Benefit Council.

7 The Willamette Valley Workers Benefit
8 Council is a delegate party representing thousands
9 of low paid workers in a variety of industries
10 throughout Washington and Multnomah Counties. We
11 speak for those who labor as farm and nursery
12 workers, childcare workers, house cleaners,
13 construction workers, landscapers, as well as a
14 variety of other jobs, including working in low
15 end manufacturing, often through temporary
16 agencies.

17 Our local economy could not function
18 without these workers, and yet our jobs generally
19 pay far below a living wage adequate to support a
20 family. Our struggle to survive is made all the
21 more difficult by skyrocketing utility rates,
22 which the Oregon Public Utility Commission has
23 allowed in contradiction with your mission under
24 state law.

25 We are here today to oppose PGE's proposed

(MWWBC)

1 7.4% rate increase, UE 435.

2 We call upon the Oregon Public Utility
3 Commission to act in the interest of the public by
4 doing the following:

5 1. Deny all of PGE's proposed rate
6 increase.

7 2. End all shut-offs of residents at or
8 below 200% of the federal poverty level.

9 3. Make utility providers finance
10 conversion to renewable energy through their
11 massive profits not repeated rate increases.

12 4. Make large industrial users, like data
13 farms, pay for the cost of utility infrastructure
14 expansion in accord -- with the massive increase
15 in energy consumption the operations require and
16 that these industrial users pay equal rate to
17 residential users.

18 The OPUC granted PGE 30% in rate increases
19 in the last 18 months. This has directly
20 contributed to the frequency that farm seasonal
21 and service worker families are forced to go
22 without adequate food or needed medical care in
23 order to keep their electricity on.

24 PGE's reported profit in 2023 were \$228
25 million, a 217% increase from 10 years earlier.

(MVWBC)

1 Maria Post, PGE's executive officer, made \$6.97
2 million last year. That is almost \$20,000 per
3 day, every day of the year.

4 The mission statement of the Oregon Public
5 Utility Commission states that your mission, "Is
6 to ensure Oregonians have access to safe,
7 reliable, and fairly priced utility prices that
8 advance state policy and promote public interest."

9 PGE shut-off 27,407 households last year,
10 76 of those were medical certificate holders who
11 may have lost their life as a direct result of the
12 policies of the OPUC and the State of Oregon.
13 Maria Post's pay alone could have prevented every
14 customer in the state of Oregon from suffering a
15 shut-off.

16 You cannot say that the utility service are
17 safe, reliable, and fairly priced when a single
18 executive's compensation could have prevented the
19 shut-off of thousands. That does not promote the
20 public interest.

21 We call on the OPUC to serve the majority
22 of people in the state who are not benefitting
23 from the decisions. Data farms use our clean
24 energy, then pass on the cost of building new
25 power generation to ratepayers, most of whom are

1 residential ratepayers. Industrial users, like
2 data farms, pay a far lower rate than residential
3 customers and small business customers, and the
4 gap is growing as more and more of the burden is
5 put on us. That must stop.

6 The Willamette Valley Workers Benefit
7 Council demands that you stop this rate increase
8 and pursue all of the demands we listed today.

9 Thank you.

10 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

11 All right. I'm going to call on Maria D.,
12 and following her it'll be Nikita Daryanani, and
13 Angelica.

14 So, Maria D, you are up.

15 MS. MARIA D.: I'm here. Can you hear me.

16 ALJ MAPES: Yes, we can. Thank you.

17 MS. MARIA D.: Good afternoon everyone. My
18 name is -- well, today is May 16, 2024. I'm here
19 and I'll introduce myself. My name is Maria D. I
20 live in Washington County and have been a PGE
21 customer for over 20 years.

22 I am concerned because this rate increase
23 will impact members of my community and family
24 members. I come from living in situations where
25 \$20 makes a difference. I understand what it

1 means when paths are closed and for such basic
2 services you have to go through traumatic
3 situations when you ask for support.

4 Many times you don't find those doors that
5 would make the difference to your family and your
6 children. The traumas of feeling unheard and
7 abandoned can be avoided. We have unfair and
8 inequitable systems.

9 To that end, I'm going to include some
10 questions and answers that will help you
11 understand why I stand in solidarity with my
12 community at this time.

13 Was there a time when you felt vulnerable
14 or let down by the energy system? Yeah. When I
15 get home to make the payment -- to get the payment
16 or estimate from the representative of the energy
17 company, I know that it is no longer possible for
18 me and my family to avoid the electricity being
19 cut off.

20 How did you feel? I felt helpless.

21 Well, did you know about your
22 inflexibility? No matter how much I could explain
23 or plead, they would proceed. And if I didn't
24 have the payment in my hands at that time, they
25 would turn off the power.

1 What would I like that to change? How
2 would I like it to change? I would like there to
3 be more options for people who do not qualify for
4 government programs or because of your legal
5 status, and less requirements when there are
6 children in a home.

7 Reflect on a time when you lived with a
8 power outage or a time of PGE unreliability. What
9 happened? It destroyed me to see my children not
10 being able to do their homework due to lack of
11 energy, to see them cold because they couldn't use
12 a heater.

13 Did you feel a lack of empathy from the PGE
14 department? On occasions, when I was able to
15 avoid power outages, I had to give part of what
16 was for rent and face late payment charges for not
17 having all the money.

18 Was there something at risk? Feeling that
19 we could lose the food in the refrigerator due to
20 lack of power, such as milk and other dairy
21 products, losing the few food supplies for two
22 weeks. Just remembering, my heart breaks for my
23 children, even though they are adults now. I
24 wouldn't want any family to go through that
25 situation.

1 What should be improved? Take into
2 consideration the basic needs of the children in
3 those places, elderly, or people with
4 disabilities, and have special programs so they
5 can access with less bureaucracy and more
6 empathy.

7 A domino effect happens when electrical
8 outages, such as energy or light, are made for low
9 income families or those with little or no access
10 to aid programs.

11 Example: They lose physical or mental
12 health when experiencing these needs and
13 frustrations. They are affected by extra charges
14 for disconnection and reconnection. They lose the
15 few resources they have. Trauma is caused at the
16 family level, et cetera.

17 Are there any questions that need answers?
18 Yes. Where is the equity? How can you be so
19 inhuman? How can I receive help if I do not meet
20 requirements? Most of the time absurd. Where do
21 I go if I don't have valid insurance or paystubs
22 to prove my income?

23 What if I don't qualify for aid when only
24 \$20 separates me from the resource qualification
25 tables? And many other questions to ask.

1 Thank you for taking my testimony into
2 account. I hope you can support not raising
3 rates. Good afternoon.

4 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

5 Before we continue, I just want to make
6 clear that if anybody else from the group that is
7 with the Willamette Valley Benefit Council or
8 other groups that are here wants to speak, you can
9 raise your hand again and get back in the queue.
10 We would allow multiple speakers.

11 So, next I'm going to call on Nikita
12 Daryanani, followed by Kendal and Bill Burgess.

13 MS. DARYANANI: Good evening, Chair Decker
14 and Commissioners Tawney and Perkins.

15 My name is Nikita Daryanani. I'm the
16 climate and energy policy manager at the Coalition
17 of Communities of Color. I'm also a PGE customer.

18 I'm here today to express our opposition to
19 PGE's rate increase proposal. This request cannot
20 come at a worse time. The cost of rent, food,
21 transportation, and other living expenses are sky-
22 rocketing, while people are already struggling to
23 make ends meet and pay their bills, as you've
24 heard from the previous commenters.

25 The rate increases from last year hit folks

1 so hard this winter. I've heard of folks paying
2 \$300 to \$400 on their PGE bills for apartments
3 after the ice storm this January. On top of this,
4 many folks were left without power for several
5 days, including those that I work with.

6 Those on the front lines of climate change
7 often live in housing that is already poorly
8 insulated, requiring them to use more energy to
9 stay warm or cool in the summer. And some people
10 go without heating or cooling when they really
11 need it just to keep costs low. And some adjust
12 their whole daily routines just to use energy
13 during off-peak hours, and sit in the dark during
14 the day.

15 Unaffordable utility costs is really top of
16 mind for so many of our partners and community
17 leaders. You've heard many of their stories
18 during the other rate case public hearings these
19 past few weeks, and if these requests continue to
20 pour in as they have these past two years, you'll
21 continue to hear harrowing emotional stories of
22 people trying to struggle -- or people of --
23 people struggling to keep up with all of their
24 mounting expenses and debts with limited incomes.
25 I also always think of the stories and experiences

1 that we don't get to hear in these spaces.

2 Annual increases in rates cannot be the new
3 norm. This cannot continue yearly with no end in
4 sight and there has to be another way. We have a
5 duty to our neighbors and those in our communities
6 to ensure that energy assistance programs actually
7 provide relief from energy burden, that it's not
8 difficult or burdensome to receive this
9 assistance, and that we're preparing for and
10 adapting to climate change equitably.

11 Once again, I urge the Commission to use
12 your authority to diligently scrutinize this
13 request in light of the current economic climate
14 and the way it's impacting real people.

15 Thank you.

16 ALJ MAPES: Thank you.

17 We'll go to Kendal, followed by Bill
18 Burgess and Philip M.

19 KENDAL: Hello, my name is Kendal and I --
20 I'm severely opposed to this rate increase. The
21 last increase more than doubled my monthly bill,
22 and I haven't -- I've used less electricity and I
23 have less occupants in my home. That's not
24 acceptable.

25 My pay has not increased for that matter.

1 It's not acceptable to have a company making
2 billions in profit to raise the rates on income of
3 people that aren't getting their incomes raised.
4 And they're certainly not making the income that
5 those corporations that are making either.

6 I agree with the Willamette Valley Workers
7 in the proposals that they've requested, and I
8 also agree with the other people in that the shut-
9 offs are -- like, they're at a corporate level,
10 they're not at a personal level, and it's not
11 acceptable to raise all the rates and expect
12 people to live while we want to say we have a
13 homeless crisis. Well, I wonder why. It's --
14 they can't have their basic needs met, and it's
15 not fair.

16 There has to be other ways to make it so
17 that PGE can do their business without rate
18 increasing on the people that are hurting the
19 worst.

20 I really hope the Commission takes into
21 consideration that as Yamhill County or Lafayette
22 had mentioned, that the rate increases over the
23 last three years are astronomical. It's not just
24 a little three percent here or four percent, it's
25 a lot, and that's -- you wouldn't expect that from

1 yourself. Like, you wouldn't just go and say,
2 "Hey, I'm gonna put an extra 30% into savings
3 every month, because you know, I need to prepare
4 for whatever." And that's what PGE's doing to us,
5 while on top of making billions a year. And
6 that's unacceptable.

7 So, I really -- I really hope the
8 Commission listens to the people and understands
9 that it's -- it's a burden that's not one that can
10 be helping the crisis that we have in terms of
11 mental health, physical health, employment
12 options, and then housing.

13 I appreciate your taking your time to
14 listen.

15 ALJ MAPES: Thank you.

16 We'll go to Bill Burgess, then Phillip M.,
17 then Stephen. So, Bill Burgess.

18 MR. BURGESS: Okay. Do you hear me now?
19 Great. Thank you.

20 Bill Burgess, Marion County Clerk in Salem,
21 Oregon. And I got quite a few notes from other
22 constituents telling me they could not afford the
23 increase. And from what I've heard tonight, it
24 really gives you the feeling, and I'm sure you
25 Commissioners understand it, that it can affect

1 some people much more than other people and we
2 need to find a fairer way to make sure that the
3 improvements that PGE is asking for can take
4 place, but it may be a completely different type
5 of rate structure.

6 We certainly want those local battery
7 storage projects, those investments in
8 transmission and distribution, those upgrades in
9 technology for increased resilience. We know all
10 that is important. We know it's important for
11 people to have electricity, too, and that we just
12 have to find maybe a different way of funding
13 this. And I guess I was surprised when I heard so
14 many people before me tonight speaking about the
15 pain that this is causing them.

16 And so I just plead for you to find a
17 different way to have the funding available to get
18 the job done so that we can all depend on clean
19 electricity and renewable energy for the future.

20 So, thank you.

21 ALJ MAPES: Thank you.

22 We'll go to Phillip M., and then next up
23 are Stephen and Lucas.

24 PHILLIP M.: Hi. My name's Phillip. I
25 live in Washington County.

1 For many years now I've been part of PGE's
2 time of use plan. This plan, along with the newly
3 formed time of day plan only represents about one
4 percent of PGE's customers. Because of this, I
5 believe that the rate changes for those plans have
6 been getting overlooked, I can say it definitely
7 did for the 2024 rate increases. These proposed
8 2025 is also definitely unreasonable.

9 If you're unfamiliar, these plans help
10 shift the usage of customers' energy to off-peak
11 times, such as at night and weekends when the
12 demand on the grid is less. It also helps PGE
13 save money. In turn, they offer a discounted rate
14 to shift your usage. But then, on the other hand,
15 you get charged more during these on-peak rates.

16 Now for my residence, based on my 2023
17 usage, I have shifted -- I have 74% of my usage is
18 on the off-peak, and so with these new rate
19 increases, compared to my 2023 time of use rates,
20 the new 2025 rates would be an increase of 190%
21 for my off-peak and 87% for on-peak, which based
22 on my overall usage, that's a net increase of
23 152%. So, my rates are going up astronomically
24 compared to what I was paying in 2023.

25 And I think, you know, because -- and the

1 one percent of customers, I think that that's just
2 getting -- you know, it's down on page 25 or
3 whatever, it's not getting looked at and
4 understood how much of an impact that is to people
5 on these special rate plans that are there. It's
6 an option to save money by shifting usage. We're
7 doing more than a lot of people to, you know,
8 shift our usage, help the grid reduce the impact
9 during these peak times so others can use that
10 electricity, but then we're now getting penalized
11 because PGE thinks maybe they can, oh, you're
12 saving money, so we're just gonna increase, we're
13 gonna double this amount and maybe no one will
14 notice. So, yeah.

15 Thanks for hearing me.

16 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

17 We'll go to Bill Burgess -- oh, I'm sorry,
18 we already had you. Could you lower your hand so
19 we don't get confused?

20 We'll go to Stephen, and then next up will
21 be Lucas and Isabel Sanchez.

22 STEPHEN: Good evening, everyone. My name
23 is Stephen, I am a resident of Multnomah County.

24 I have been in this county for five years
25 and have been paying utilities since, and the 40%

1 rate hikes over the last three years have been
2 pretty tough on this middle class. I can't
3 imagine what it's doing to people that are less
4 fortunate than I.

5 I just wanted to bring up the fact that the
6 reasoning given this year for the increase was
7 very similar to the reason given for the increase
8 last year, and it led me to believe, or at least
9 assume, that possibly the amount of money or funds
10 increase needed was spent before and is being
11 rolled out in phases. Otherwise, I feel like a
12 more elaborate or detailed excuse or explanation
13 should have been given for this reasons, 'cause it
14 was almost the same exact as last year, the
15 batteries and the grid.

16 So, with that being said, I'm not sure if
17 *(inaudible/garbled)* were just not being transparent
18 enough, or if the PR people aren't researching
19 enough as to explain why, but on top of that, the
20 solar subsidies are for people that try and
21 balance their usage with renewable energies. The
22 solar subsidies aren't there barely enough to make
23 any of that worth it, considering the initial
24 investment, along with the industries or the
25 companies being monopolized. I think there is two

1 electric companies in Portland the last time I
2 looked, and we have no other way of getting
3 electricity.

4 So, the fact that the rates keep going up
5 just feels like we can't do anything. And I'm
6 honestly pretty positive that these comments
7 aren't going to do anything because, you know, the
8 rates are still going to go up, you guys are still
9 a corporation, at the end of the day they still
10 gotta make that money.

11 But a lot of people suffer from this, I'm
12 included, hundreds and thousands of Oregonians are
13 included, and there has to be other ways to make
14 this money up, or other benefits that you can give
15 to people that are trying to separate themselves
16 from your energy monopoly.

17 Thank you for your time. Have a great rest
18 of the day.

19 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

20 We'll go to Lucas, followed up by Isabel
21 Sanchez, and Scott Phillips.

22 LUCAS: Hello. Can you hear me?

23 ALJ MAPES: We can.

24 LUCAS: Awesome. You can hear me?

25 ALJ MAPES: Yes.

1 LUCAS: Great. My name's Lucas, I'm a
2 member of the Willamette Valley Workers Benefit
3 Council. And, you know, I'm here with my fellow
4 volunteers.

5 And I wanted to mention that agreements
6 such as exclusive contracts that reduce
7 competition may also violate the Sherman Anti-
8 Trust Act and are subject to civil enforcement.
9 The Sherman Act also makes it illegal to
10 monopolize, conspire to monopolize, or attempt to
11 monopolize a market for products or services.

12 And there's another section that I wanted
13 to read about the Clayton Act, and it's *(inaudible)*
14 to promote fair competition and prevent unfair
15 business practices that could harm consumers.
16 This is on the U.S. Department of Justice website.

17 That being said, the new Amazon warehouse
18 that's being built, the giant one, it boasts that
19 they use clean energy. And I think that the
20 government should subsidize renewable energy so we
21 have access to it, and PGE has more competition.

22 You know, with all the money that they have
23 for improving infrastructure, they sure were
24 unprepared for the ice storm and power outages
25 that happened recently.

1 That's my comment.

2 ALJ MAPES: Thank you.

3 We'll go to Isabel Sanchez, followed by
4 Scott Phillips and Karyna.

5 *(Pause/no audible response)*

6 ALJ MAPES: Ms. Sanchez, you're muted.

7 *(Pause/no audible response)*

8 ALJ MAPES: Okay. Ms. Sanchez, we can't
9 hear you here, you're still on mute. Can you hear
10 us?

11 *(Pause/no audible response)*

12 ALJ MAPES: Okay. We're going to -- we're
13 going to go to the next person and we'll circle
14 back to Isabel Sanchez.

15 So the next person up is Scott Phillips,
16 and following that will be Karyna and Silvia
17 Tanner.

18 MR. PHILLIPS: Hello. Can you hear me?

19 ALJ MAPES: You have an echo. You might
20 have --

21 MR. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Is it fixed now?

22 ALJ MAPES: Yes, it is.

23 MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. I'm speaking on
24 behalf of a resident and small business owner who
25 could not attend the meeting today. She says, "I

1 live and work in a small building in Hillsboro at
2 909 Southeast Cedar Street, 97123. I am 65 and
3 semi-retired, in that I cannot afford to retire.
4 I have a small part-time chiropractic practice.
5 My reimbursement from patients' insurance keeps
6 going down, while all my expenses, especially
7 utilities, are increasing at an alarming rate.

8 "I strongly encourage you to reconsider
9 another rate increase at this time.

10 "Thank you."

11 ALJ MAPES: Thank you.

12 Let's try Ms. Sanchez again.

13 *(Pause/no audible response)*

14 ALJ MAPES: Okay. Ms. -- oh, you unmuted
15 for a second there, so whatever you did worked.

16 *(Pause/no audible response)*

17 ALJ MAPES: Okay. We're not getting you
18 unmuted.

19 Candice, is it -- is it possible for you to
20 unmute Ms. Sanchez?

21 *(No audible response)*

22 ALJ MAPES: Okay. You might consider
23 joining by -- oh, it looked like you were able to
24 unmute for a second.

25 CANDICE MENZA: Your Honor, I am not able

(MVBBC)

1 to unmute them manually.

2 ALJ MAPES: Okay. Thank you.

3 You might consider calling in. And if you
4 call in on the phone, we can -- we can get to you
5 then.

6 So, we'll move on to Karyna, and following
7 that will be Silvia Tanner, and then I think it is
8 Nina from CNK.

9 KARYNA GRAHAM: Can you hear me?

10 ALJ MAPES: Yes.

11 KARYNA GRAHAM: Would you guys be able to
12 turn on my camera? 'Cause I am -- would like to
13 show the people that are with me today as well.

14 ALJ MAPES: Yes, we can do that. It'll
15 take a minute for us to switch you to --

16 KARYNA GRAHAM: No problem. I can wait.

17 *(Pause)*

18 KARYNA GRAHAM: Can you hear me?

19 ALJ MAPES: Yes, we can. Thank you.

20 KARYNA GRAHAM: My name's Karyna Graham,
21 I am also a member of the Willamette Valley
22 Workers Benefit Council.

23 I am a single mom on disability. I have an
24 extremely fixed income. I get -- I got a three
25 percent raise of my income in January, PGE got a

(MVWBC)

1 bigger raise on their rates that affected my
2 income more greatly than my raise did for my
3 monthly income.

4 Every month I have to decide if my daughter
5 is going to be able to eat food, have heat, or be
6 cool enough to be comfortable. It is inhumane
7 that people have to choose whether they're going
8 to freeze, overheat, or buy food for the month.

9 It is not just me, a single mom, that is on
10 a fixed income. You have elderly people. You
11 have disabled people. And you're only allowed to
12 get help from community action once in 12 months.
13 I am only allowed to be poor once. I am poor
14 every single month. I am unable to have a job
15 that pays me more money, but PGE is allowed to
16 raise their rates every single year.

17 They requested a rate increase in February,
18 not even an entire month after their original --
19 their last rate increase went into effect. They
20 didn't even give it time so that they could see
21 how much the rate increase affected not only their
22 profits, but the people being effected. It is
23 year after year after year that PGE is requesting
24 rate increases and the PUC is rubberstamping them
25 saying, yes, go ahead, raise the rates, turn

(Multnomah County Sustainability)

1 people's electricity off, have people go homeless,
2 have people starve without any kind of thought for
3 the people that cannot afford to pay a penny more
4 than what they already do. People already cannot
5 afford their electricity.

6 You guys need to lower their rates, not
7 continuously increase them.

8 Thank you.

9 ALJ MAPES: Thank you.

10 *(Clapping and cheering)*

11 ALJ MAPES: Okay. We're going to go to
12 Silvia Tanner, and then we'll have Nina from CNK,
13 and then Chelsea Alatraste.

14 MS. TANNER: Chair Decker, Commissioners
15 Perkins and Tawney, ALJ Mapes, thank you for the
16 opportunity to comment.

17 For the record, my name is Silvia Tanner,
18 that is spelled S-i-l-v-i-a, last name T as in
19 tango-a-n-n-e-r.

20 I'm a Senior Energy Policy and Legal
21 Analyst with the Multnomah County Office of
22 Sustainability.

23 PGE -- as Mrs. Karyna just stated, PGE
24 requested an increase in residential rates of
25 about seven percent just weeks after the 18%

(Multnomah County Sustainability)

1 increase that you approved in 2023 went into
2 effect. They also made this filing days after
3 people in our community felt the shock of their
4 January bills due to the 18% increase, plus that
5 increase -- the increase in use that they needed
6 to keep warm during the January winter storm.

7 The increase that people experience could
8 be also larger than the proposal due to additional
9 cost recovery that PGE may seek this year,
10 including costs associated with wildfire
11 mitigation or fuel costs. And this is, again, on
12 top of the nearly one-third increase that we've
13 seen since December 2022.

14 PGE serves most of Multnomah County,
15 including areas like Wood Village, the Rockwood
16 neighborhood, and other East Portland and East
17 Multnomah County communities. These are areas
18 that have a high proportion of residents from
19 environmental justice communities and communities
20 that are very much on the front line of climate
21 change with high vulnerability to heat, low tree
22 coverage, and high energy burden.

23 Our ask throughout this last rate -- three
24 testimonies that we have offered regarding rate
25 increases that impact our community has been

(Multnomah County Sustainability)

1 consistent, and that is that you use your
2 discretion to reject any unwarranted and untimely
3 elements of this proposal.

4 Here specifically, we encourage you to
5 first reject PGE's proposal to increase its return
6 on equity by 0.25%. That makes -- PGE makes that
7 proposal although you set the current ROE at 9.5%
8 less -- at 9.5% and this happened less than six
9 months ago.

10 We also encourage you to reject PGE's
11 proposal to shift risks to customers through an
12 additional investment recovery mechanism that will
13 make it easier to add capital expenses into rates
14 every winter. The utility can already recover
15 costs deemed prudent by the Commission through its
16 rate cases. And our concern, particularly in
17 light of the issues that CUB has raised, is that
18 this proposed mechanism would not provide a
19 sufficient opportunity to vet costs in the full
20 context and visibility that a rate case process
21 provides.

22 Third, we encourage you to consider this
23 proposed risk shift in the context of PGE's
24 parallel proposed changes to the Power Cost
25 Adjustment Mechanism, which PGE describes in its

(Multnomah County Sustainability)

1 rate -- in its rate case filing. That PCAM
2 proposal would significantly change how PGE shares
3 the costs and risks associated with power cost
4 forecasting, shifting more risk to customers. We
5 encourage you to reject this additional proposal,
6 again, because it is a risk shift to customers.

7 This is not the time for proposals or to
8 raise customer rates.

9 Oh, and my time is up. No, sorry, that's
10 my own timer. I don't know why my own timer's
11 going off. I apologize for that distraction. I'm
12 just going to keep speaking (*inaudible*).

13 So, this is not the time for proposals or
14 rate customer rates -- raise customer rates and
15 shift risks to customers. This is not the time to
16 add new mechanisms -- this is not the time to add
17 new mechanisms to raise rates outside of the
18 comprehensive process afforded in a rate case. We
19 believe various elements of this proposed increase
20 are unwarranted and not well timed and encourage
21 you to reject them.

22 And finally, we encourage you, Staff and
23 intervenors, to consider the timing of any portion
24 of the increase that you may end up approving so
25 that customers do not experience the increase in

1 the middle of the heating season. You could avail
2 yourself of models that you have used in other
3 rate cases, like shifting the effective date of
4 some or all of the increase to after the 2025
5 heating season ends.

6 Again, thank you for your time. And I'm
7 sorry for the distraction of the beeping that you
8 couldn't hear, but I did.

9 Thanks.

10 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

11 Is it Nina next? And then we'll go to
12 Chelsea Alatraste and then Carmen.

13 NINA KONG: Good evening, Commissioners
14 Decker, Perkins, and Tawney.

15 My name is Chong Kway Nina Kong. I'm a
16 resident of Portland.

17 I'm here to ask you not to approve the 7.3%
18 utility rate increase PGE is asking to place on
19 residential customers with additional rate
20 increases possible.

21 Recently, PGE had already increased its
22 residential energy rates by 18% and energy rates
23 have been up 33% since December 2022.

24 PGE is passing on costs of several wildfire
25 related damages that the courts found PGE to be at

1 fault for. PGE is also raising the rates to
2 expand fossil fuel infrastructure during the
3 climate crisis. In addition, PGE is raising the
4 rates to convert the coal facilities to natural
5 gas facilities. This conversion is unsustainable,
6 damaging to the environment, and impacts the
7 health of customers.

8 The rate increases are misplaced, unfair,
9 and further damage health and livability. We've
10 had a long winter and many utility energy
11 customers are still paying for winter heating.
12 This rate increase adds additional burdens to us
13 while we face soaring costs of living. Also,
14 there are energy customers who rely on energy to
15 refrigerate medications and operate prescribed
16 medical equipment to manage health conditions.

17 Although PGE has discount programs, the
18 discount is too small to reduce energy bills. The
19 LIHEAP program only opens for application in
20 October and November for seniors and people with
21 disabilities, so many low income families cannot
22 apply for them the rest of the year.

23 Also, many low income energy customers live
24 in rented old buildings which are barely
25 insulated. These homes take up much more energy

1 to heat and cool during cold winters and hot
2 summers, while housing costs soar. Despite
3 weatherization, these buildings are not energy
4 efficient and cost much much more to heat and cool
5 for comfort.

6 So, residents are further in debt with
7 these rate increases. Many of us have already
8 done all we can to reduce energy use. I've
9 switched my energy use to off-peak hours. PGE
10 calls me energy superstar, but I still can't
11 afford its electricity. I use for basic use. I
12 use nightlights when lighting at home. I cover my
13 windows with blinds, and hang up drapes to
14 separate rooms for individual room heating
15 throughout a winter. I keep the room temperature
16 at 55 degrees throughout the winter. This has not
17 kept the rooms warm enough to fall asleep at
18 night.

19 With climate change our winter has been
20 extended, too, so the rate increases add
21 additional burdens. Many of our -- many of my
22 neighbors share the same burdens.

23 For all these reasons, I urge you not to
24 approve the energy rate increase PGE is asking.

25 Thank you.

(FOUR)

1 ALJ MAPES: Thank you.

2 All right. We'll go to Chelsea Alatraste,
3 following that will be Soledad Molina Nary and
4 Natalie Reich.

5 MS. MARTINEZ: Hello. Can you hear me?

6 ALJ MAPES: Yes, we can.

7 MS. MARTINEZ: Thank you.

8 My name is Chelsea Alatraste Martinez and I
9 serve as board secretary for Fair Oregon Utility
10 Rates for Small Businesses, otherwise known as
11 FOUR.

12 As a lifelong Oregonian born and raised in
13 Newport, I understand the vital role small
14 businesses play in rural communities. My
15 connection to the restaurant industry provides me
16 with valuable insights into the needs of the small
17 business commercial class.

18 On behalf of FOUR, I'm here to advocate for
19 the fair treatment of small commercial customers
20 amidst Oregon's efforts to decarbonize its energy
21 supply. It's important that small businesses are
22 not unfairly burdened by the financial
23 implications of these decisions.

24 In your previous presentation there was no
25 mention of small residential class, which is

1 really troubling considering that the small non-
2 residential ratepayer group is by far the second
3 most numerous group of utility customers, with
4 over 200,000 small commercial customers.

5 We are concerned that the directly previous
6 rate case, which combined with this one, creates
7 an increase of well over 20%. Small businesses
8 have had to pay Covid-19 costs and face pressures
9 of inflation, short staffing, higher wages, and so
10 I ask that you consider how small business -- how
11 the small business commerce class will be impacted
12 and demonstrate your commitment to ensure fairly
13 priced utility services for all.

14 Thank you so much.

15 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

16 All right. We'll go to Soledad Molina
17 Nary, followed by Natalie Reich, followed by the
18 Willamette Valley Workers Benefit Council.

19 *(Pause/no audible response)*

20 ALJ MAPES: Soledad, you're muted. There
21 you go.

22 MS. MOLINA: May I speak?

23 ALJ MAPES: Yes.

24 MS. MOLINA: Okay.

25 Dear Chairman Decker, Commissioners Tawney

1 and Perkins: My name is Solidad Molina. I live
2 in Portland and have been a PGE customer for 24
3 years. Throughout these years, bills were
4 accessible. However, over time, they have gone up
5 a lot and this has affected us economically and
6 emotionally. Before, my bills were less than
7 \$100, now they come in anywhere from \$200 to as
8 much as \$300 every month. I don't have enough
9 money to pay for all the bills and the food that
10 keeps going up.

11 Currently, I participate in the PGE
12 discount program -- sorry -- in the PGE discount
13 program, but with the increases, it is practically
14 as if they do not help me at all.

15 I understand that they want to increase
16 their rates, considering this is a business, and
17 up to a certain point, yes, I agree so that they
18 can provide the services, what doesn't make a good
19 reason is when this affects people with low
20 income.

21 I would like you to think about a process
22 where the most vulnerable communities do not have
23 their rates increased. And, likewise, that they
24 not be as affected as they are. Many of us do not
25 have better job opportunities due to our

1 immigration status, and our options are to work
2 where they pay the minimum. Taking into account
3 that our families in Mexico depend economically on
4 us, that seems to me to be a racial injustice that
5 must be taken into account when making these
6 decisions.

7 We have to choose to reduce the light or
8 heat in the winter season. In the heat, my family
9 must turn down the air conditioning, but it makes
10 me -- my food goes bad quickly.

11 My apartment is electric only. So when
12 there is snow, there are storms, or the power goes
13 out, it is very dangerous for my family. You
14 can't go out and you can't feed my -- I can't feed
15 my children.

16 I think it also affects the company, since
17 they have fallen poles, cables, et cetera, and
18 they have to work double. But for the same
19 reasons that you raise your rates, one does not
20 have a job because he cannot go out, and if we go
21 out, we are risking our lives. And if we do it,
22 it is so that we are not left on the street.

23 I would like them to think of another way
24 to continue services with affordable rates.

25 Thank you for your time.

1 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

2 All right. We'll go to Natalie Rake, and
3 then Willamette Valley Workers Benefit Council,
4 then Lucia.

5 MS. REICH: Can you hear us?

6 ALJ MAPES: Yes, we can.

7 MS. REICH: *(Singing the following words:*
8 First 12% and then 18 for pour workers. This is
9 obscene choosing whether to heat or eat. This
10 raise we must defeat. They want another seven
11 percent, meaning some couldn't pay their rent.
12 They already struggle to make ends meet, this
13 raise we must defeat. We all have families we
14 must feed. This raised up fees investors greed.
15 Do not let this new raise pass, e-i-e-i NO.

16 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I hope they heard
17 us.

18 ALJ MAPES: Thank you.

19 MS. REICH: Did you hear us?

20 ALJ MAPES: We could. Thank you.

21 MS. REICH: Okay. *(Laughs)* Thank you.

22 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Thank you.

23 ALJ MAPES: All right.

24 Let's go to the Willamette Valley Workers
25 Benefit Council, and then we'll go to Lucia, and

1 then we'll try Isabel Sanchez again.

2 *(Pause/no audible response)*

3 ALJ MAPES: All right, you're muted. I'm
4 going to send you an ask to unmute request. You
5 should have access to the video still.

6 *(Pause)*

7 ALJ MAPES: Okay, it looks like they
8 dropped off and might be trying again, so we'll
9 circle back. Lucia?

10 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Can you hear us?

11 ALJ MAPES: Yes, we can.

12 MS. LUCIA: Good afternoon. My name is
13 Lucia. It's -- I have 20 years with PGE for my
14 electricity. Sorry, I don't know how to explain
15 it well. But we, most of Cornel -- I'm talking
16 about Cornelius, Oregon, Hillsboro, Forest Grove
17 -- we are all people who work in the field. We
18 are working there and they pay us the minimum.
19 This past year there was almost no snow and there
20 were almost no fields. There were many losses.
21 Because of that, now the -- the ranch bosses, they
22 lost a lot. There were a lot of losses and now
23 there isn't much work. They hardly give us work
24 because, since they lost, they don't want to
25 invest more and hire people, and we don't have

1 enough money to survive.

2 We are paying a lot for the electricity and
3 every year it goes up more, and now it's gone up
4 quite a bit. What are we going to do if you are
5 going to increase and increase, and how are we
6 going to survive, mostly like us, who are low
7 income, we who work the mundane jobs in the
8 countryside and in the nurseries?

9 We are asking a favor that -- that they
10 please think carefully what they are doing in
11 increasing quite a bit. We don't -- we don't have
12 enough money to survive here and pay rent and our
13 food.

14 Please listen to us and don't increase the
15 lights anymore.

16 Thank you.

17 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

18 Okay, we're going to try Isabel Sanchez
19 again, then we'll have Diane Henkels, and then
20 we'll have the phone number ending in 248.

21 *(Pause/no audible response)*

22 ALJ MAPES: Okay. You know what I'm going
23 to do? I'm going to promote you to a panelist,
24 Ms. Sanchez, and we'll see if that solves the
25 problem.

(FOUR)

1 (Pause/no audible response)

2 ALJ MAPES: All right, it looks like you
3 are still muted. Do you want to try and call in
4 on the phone? Do you have a phone you can call in
5 on?

6 (Pause/no audible response)

7 ALJ MAPES: All right. While we wait on
8 that, let's go to Diane Henkels.

9 MS. HENKELS: Thank you, ALJ Mapes.

10 Hello Chair Decker, Commissioners Tawney
11 and Perkins. Thank you very much for the time
12 to address you this evening. This will be
13 brief.

14 This is in support of fair and reasonable
15 rates in terms of service for the small non-
16 residential customer of PGE. It is by far the
17 second most numerous class of ratepayers that is
18 Schedule 32. And the PGE service territory is
19 primarily in the Portland Metro down to Salem
20 area, and not quite mid-Willamette Valley, and
21 that's the area in the state of Oregon with the
22 highest concentration of small non-residential
23 customers.

24 We also want to note that the small -- as
25 our local government commenter identified earlier,

(FOUR)

1 that the small non-residential customers also
2 include small government ratepayers, and I think
3 that would be good to dive into.

4 We notice that the proposed rate increase
5 is higher for the small non-residential customer
6 at 9.5% than any other customer class. We ask the
7 Commission to dive in deep to that. We'll be
8 providing more comment -- public comment later,
9 but we are very concerned that the Commission will
10 review very closely whether fair and reasonable
11 rates with this request is actually possible, and
12 that the small non-residential customers will be
13 paying for the State's energy policy
14 implementation while others benefit unjustly.

15 Thank you.

16 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

17 All right, we're going to go to the phone
18 number 248 -- ending in 248, then to Parker
19 Berger, then to Erica Strong.

20 And remember, you press *6 to unmute
21 yourself.

22 (Pause)

23 ALJ MAPES: It looks like you're unmuted.
24 You can go ahead.

25 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (Ending in 248): Yes.

1 I want to thank you for allowing me to join in
2 your meeting.

3 I'm going to be very brief. I just think
4 that you shouldn't even consider doing this.
5 People are struggling to pay after the last rate
6 increase. You're going to have people who are
7 literally not being able to buy groceries because
8 they have to pay their power bill.

9 Please reconsider this.

10 Thank you.

11 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

12 Let's go to Parker Berger, then we'll go to
13 Erica Strong, then Nicholai Gallegos.

14 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (WVWBC): Can you hear
15 us?

16 ALJ MAPES: Yes, we can.

17 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (WVWBC): Would you be
18 able to turn our camera on, please?

19 ALJ MAPES: Yes. We can do that, as I
20 gave the previous warning, it'll be a minute of
21 lag.

22 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (WVWBC): No problem.
23 Can you hear us?

24 ALJ MAPES: Yes, we can.

25 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (WVWBC): It won't let

1 us turn the camera on.

2 ALJ MAPES: Okay. One second. Let us --
3 oh, no, there's your camera.

4 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (WVWBC): Okay. So
5 really quickly, before the speaker starts, we have
6 a couple of people here that want to speak, would
7 they be able to speak just in tandem? That way we
8 don't have to continue to do this every time?

9 UNIDENTIFIED MALE (WVWBC): Including
10 Isabel Sanchez.

11 ALJ MAPES: Oh, great. Yeah. That --
12 great.

13 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (WVWBC): Okay. Thank
14 you.

15 MS. CARDENAS: Hello, my name is Martha
16 Cardenas. I am here for a reason; for the needs
17 of all of us who are here present in the community
18 for the PGE -- for the increase in electricity.

19 I am a mother of four children. At the
20 moment, I am living in a very difficult situation.
21 I never thought I would be in this moment, but
22 this week is the last week of my job. I worked
23 for a hotel for 25 years and due to
24 (*indiscernible*) verify I have to leave my job.

25 Last month I received a note that my rent

1 is going to be increased and I am also being told
2 that PGE is going to increase as well.

3 I understand that we are living in a
4 society where those who have power or those who
5 want to generate money, want to generate more
6 money, and those who are in average society go
7 through many difficulties, those who work in the
8 fields, too.

9 And I would like to touch on a point in
10 your heart and ask you to have a little
11 consideration for the community in increasing
12 electricity.

13 I am a mother of four children, and please
14 I ask you to have that compassion with the
15 increase.

16 Thank you.

17 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

18 We'll bring up the next person from your
19 group now.

20 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (WVWBC): Can you hear
21 her?

22 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much. We'll
23 bring up the next speaker from your group now.

24 MS. VIVIANA (WVWBC): Can you hear her?

25 UNKNOWN MALE: You can start. Isabel,

1 you're very --

2 ISABEL SANCHEZ: My name is --

3 UNIDENTIFIED MALE (WVWBC): You're very
4 soft. Speak louder.

5 ISABEL SÁNCHEZ: Sorry. Yes. My name is
6 Isabel Sánchez, I was here before, and I just
7 arrived and I am here with you again. I'm not
8 very involved with everything, but I'm listening
9 to what they present.

10 And really, yes, we need that a lot,
11 because there are many elderly people, like me,
12 who is already 91 years old, and everyone insists
13 on heating, and the costs have risen considerably,
14 so we need to put our foot down on that.

15 But I'm not very related to that right now
16 because I just arrived. But what you want -- I
17 think you guys are doing a great job. And as
18 always with this program, we are supporting the
19 community, ensuring that its workers have what
20 they need. (*Indiscernible*) and that is why I am
21 very happy.

22 But they just told me that I have to leave
23 now and I'm very sorry. But I'm going to be here,
24 just excuse me because I have to go.

25 This program has really always been very

1 good and very supportive, and you must continue to
2 support it and have more staff and more people to
3 support those you are working on, I imagine.

4 For now I think that's all I can tell you.
5 Thank you for your attention. Thank you.

6 *(Clapping)*

7 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

8 Do we have anybody else from this group
9 that would like to speak?

10 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (WVWBC): Come on.

11 Yeah, we've got another. One second.

12 UNIDENTIFIED MALE (WVWBC): Good

13 afternoon, everyone. I'm here because it has been
14 very difficult for everyone lacking energy,
15 especially for me.

16 And I believe that, not just me, but the
17 entire community in general, we have problems with
18 money, with work, we don't have enough to pay and
19 the salary is very low. We need help, if you have
20 a good heart, for all of us as agricultural
21 workers in the fields that we produce.

22 It is very good for you to help us, too,
23 you who are in the front. We ask the personnel
24 that --

25 In two days they cut my energy and I was

1 not aware because I was working in the field, but
2 when I came back, my wife told me that she had
3 already installed it. That was what bothered me
4 the most, it gave me, like everyone else, the
5 courage that you work, work, you get home without
6 energy and there is no way to defend yourself.

7 But I think that the union that we are
8 here, we need everyone so that the government will
9 listen and also our voice is heard for all of us
10 in the community and not only here, but in general
11 at the national level.

12 That is all the help that I ask for
13 everyone, not only me. I went through that,
14 that's why I'm here. Nobody told me, "Come on,
15 let's go." No. I come personally to demand that
16 you help us to keep the prices low. Maybe not too
17 low, but, yes, with a fair price of energy that is
18 very high.

19 An 18%, I don't know how much it
20 represents, but it is too much that they have
21 increased. And then if they let us know, maybe if
22 they gave us information that -- personally I
23 don't understand much English, but I express the
24 little I do know in my Spanish, because I also
25 speak another language.

1 I am from a descendant group from Mexico
2 and I speak that language, too. The language I
3 call it in Spanish is the dialect that I'm telling
4 you about. That's what I can speak, but very
5 little English. And for that reason, I probably
6 don't understand it the best why they treat us
7 like that, because we don't speak much, but I
8 don't think so.

9 We are here to defend ourselves and thank
10 you for your support to all the community who are
11 present. We kindly ask you to help us with that.

12 Thank you.

13 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

14 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (WVWBC): Anyone else?
15 (Spanish). I think that's everyone here.

16 ALJ MAPES: All right. Thank you. We
17 appreciate it.

18 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (WVWBC): One more.
19 One more. Sorry.

20 ALJ MAPES: Okay.

21 ANGELICA SÁNCHEZ: I'm going to tell you
22 everything I know.

23 Good afternoon. My name is Angelica
24 Sánchez. And the reason for me being here is
25 because we, the entire community, do not agree

1 with the increase in the price of electricity.

2 And the truth is, for us, it is very
3 difficult, because it is every day that we get up,
4 we are fighting to give a better future to our
5 children. And mostly we who are (*inaudible*)
6 mothers -- who are single mothers, and we have the
7 responsibility of supporting our children ahead by
8 paying rent, by paying for food.

9 And what we earn, well, it is very little.
10 For me, I have been paying \$600 since last year.
11 And what I earn is not enough because I have to
12 pay my rent and feed my children.

13 I have a child with autism, and I have to
14 work, and I have to take care of him, too. And,
15 well, sometimes I have enough for electricity, but
16 I don't have rent. And if I have rent, I'm late
17 with the electricity. And my children's food is
18 also very difficult.

19 So we beg you to please put your hand on
20 your conscience, as much as you put your hand in
21 our pocket, because it is very difficult to pay
22 for all the public services and also rent and
23 food.

24 And we beg you, please, not to raise the
25 (cost of) electricity, because what we are paying

1 now is already a lot, and that is not fair.

2 Thank you.

3 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

4 Okay. We have two folks left. We have
5 Erica Strong and then we have Nicholai Gallegos.
6 So, we'll go to Erica Strong.

7 ERICA STRONG: Hi. Can you hear me?

8 ALJ MAPES: Yes, we can.

9 MS. STRONG: Okay. Hi. My name is Erica
10 Strong. I appreciate you guys having this meeting
11 to hear us all out.

12 I was born and raised in Clackamas County,
13 and I've been fortunate enough to have power my
14 whole life. I live in a rural area, so that does
15 mean that if I didn't have power, I would also not
16 have water service, because we rely on power to
17 our well to pump water.

18 The power bill has been so expensive
19 lately. We are making cuts left and right. We
20 are doing everything we can to keep our power bill
21 as low as possible. It's been crazy. We've taken
22 out loans to do construction on our home so that
23 we can lower our power bill. And at this time,
24 we're talking about currently for our power bill,
25 entire weeks of income are going to a monthly

1 power bill.

2 I wish that I could go back in time and be
3 involved in the meetings last year. I didn't even
4 know about this meeting until today, because you
5 guys gave two weeks notice for this meeting. This
6 is -- this is not sufficient notice for the life
7 changing changes that you're -- that are being
8 proposed here.

9 We can't afford this, and we can't afford
10 to use our own utilities right now. And this
11 increase asks us to shoulder a cost that needs to
12 come from the profits. It needs to. This is --
13 this is ridiculous. We don't have any other
14 choice. We don't have anywhere else to get our
15 power from.

16 And I think we should consider whether the
17 industrial customers should -- should shoulder
18 this expense, since they can afford it. We're
19 talking about companies as opposed to people that
20 would be out of house and home. 'Cause power is
21 required for housing, and when your power gets cut
22 off, your landlord kicks you out. So you're
23 talking about rendering people homeless to fund a
24 profitable company.

25 As Commissioners, it's your job to protect

1 us from this. Please do that.

2 Thank you.

3 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

4 So we have Nicholai Gallegos and then we
5 have K.B.

6 NICHOLAI GALLEGOS: Hello. Can you hear
7 me?

8 ALJ MAPES: Yes, I can.

9 MR. GALLEGOS: Okay. Thank you.

10 Hello, my name is Nicholai Gallegos. I am
11 a resident of Clackamas County. And I would just
12 like to bring up some numbers, 'cause numbers seem
13 to make more sense to me.

14 According to the 2023 PGE annual report,
15 revenue from retail sources was \$2,447,000,000. In
16 2022, it was \$2,223,000,000. That is a \$224,000,000
17 increase in revenue. The request that PGE has put in
18 for the rate increase expects to increase revenues by
19 approximately \$202,000,000. As far as I am
20 concerned, PGE has already gotten this increase in
21 revenue from the past year.

22 Also, it's no secret that residential,
23 i.e., the people, electricity are going to suffer
24 most.

25 In 2023, according to the same PGE annual

1 report, retail power revenue from residential was
2 \$1,263,000,000. For commercial, it was
3 \$800,000,000. For industrial, it was \$349,000,000.

4 According to the Oregon Department of
5 Energy with energy consumption by sector,
6 residential accounts for 25.2% of energy
7 consumption. Industrial accounts for 27.4% of
8 energy consumption. Commercial accounts for 18.8%
9 of energy consumption, which means despite
10 industrial energy consumption being higher,
11 residential power -- or retail sales for PGE
12 accounts for 52% of revenue, while industrial
13 accounts for 15% of revenue, commercial 33% of
14 revenue.

15 Why is PGE allowed to directly effect the
16 people this badly? This is money coming from
17 people who don't -- otherwise can't afford this,
18 and this strikes me as nothing but pure greed,
19 frankly.

20 So, please help us, the people of Oregon,
21 by not approving this rate increase.

22 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

23 The last person we have on our list for
24 tonight is K.B.

25 K.B.: Hello. Can you guys hear me?

1 ALJ MAPES: I can. Thank you.

2 K.B.: Okay. Hi -- hello, Chair Decker,
3 Commissioner Tawney and Perkins, and Judge Mapes.
4 Tonight -- or maybe tonight I should address you
5 as therapists listening to all of our community
6 struggles with the PGE rate increases.

7 I've often wondered if these decisions are
8 predetermined and the public comment sessions are
9 just formalities, but as I watch you all here
10 tonight, listening to residents for many hours, I
11 have to believe that our PUC Commissioners are
12 fair, compassionate, and concerned about their
13 residents. And we trust you to stand with our
14 constituents over billion dollar for-profit
15 companies, and please decline this request from
16 PGE for a rate increase, especially during the
17 time in which inflation is rapidly outpacing
18 wages.

19 Thanks for hearing us.

20 ALJ MAPES: Thank you very much.

21 Okay, so that is everybody we have with
22 their hand up tonight. We'll do one last call.
23 Is there anybody else who would like to speak?

24 *(No audible response)*

25 And I'll remind the people on the phone

Chair Decker's Closing Remarks

1 that you can raise your hand by pressing *9.

2 *(No audible response)*

3 Okay. Seeing no one, we want to thank
4 everybody for their time tonight, thank everybody
5 for their comments.

6 We have a couple of reminders before we
7 adjourn. First, you may still submit written
8 comments by mail or email to the Commission, or by
9 calling the Consumer Services Division. And I'm
10 putting that phone number and that email up on the
11 screen.

12 You can also contact the Consumer Services
13 Division if you have questions about your bills or
14 about your service. And you can contact PGE's
15 customer service if you have questions about low
16 income bill discounts.

17 The details for how to submit comments are
18 included in the notice for this hearing and on the
19 Commission's website as well.

20 So, I will now turn it over to Chair Decker
21 for closing remarks.

22 CHAIR DECKER: Thank you, Judge Mapes.

23 And I want to reiterate our thanks for
24 people spending their time tonight making the
25 impacts of the rate increase request known to us

1 and making it really tangible for us, what the
2 increase means in your lives.

3 People tonight have given us not only that,
4 but also some really good questions that need to
5 be asked in the rate case around reliability and
6 preparedness and resiliency, around the way we
7 structure rates to spread sort of affordability
8 burdens across the customer base, and have pointed
9 us to the ways that energy consumption in certain
10 types of housing can be higher than one would
11 expect.

12 We've heard about programs that are
13 accessible to people with different immigration
14 status, and we've heard a lot about the impact of
15 disconnections. And I'm sure there are many other
16 take-aways, but those are the things that are top
17 of mind for me as I walk away from hearing you all
18 tonight.

19 So, thank you again for presenting your
20 concerns to us, and we look forward to examining
21 issues of the type that you've raised during our
22 review of the rate case.

23 I'd like to offer my fellow Commissioners
24 an opportunity for some closing remarks of their
25 own before we pass it back to Judge Mapes.

1 COMMISSIONER PERKINS: Yeah, I'd just like
2 to say thank you for taking time out of your day.
3 I know it's not easy to get up and express
4 yourself, especially on topics that can be a
5 little emotional. So, appreciate you taking your
6 time. It was educational and we heard you.

7 Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER TAWNEY: I would echo those
9 thanks. And I think, Chair, you articulated a
10 really good list of what I heard as well from
11 folks.

12 I look forward to seeing the testimony in
13 the case unpack these issues and really appreciate
14 everyone taking the time to join us in an evening
15 when you have, I'm sure, other things you'd rather
16 be doing than talking to us. So, I want to really
17 appreciate that input.

18 There was a lot of really meaningful
19 comments and also very carefully thought out
20 analysis that folks are really trying to do at
21 your kitchen tables. I really appreciate the time
22 and attention you're giving to this. I'm sure
23 there's other things you'd like to be doing
24 instead. So, thank you.

25 ALJ MAPES: Okay. Thank you all. A

1 recording of tonight's hearing will be available
2 on the Commission's website shortly.

3 We appreciate all your comments.

4 And this concludes the public comment
5 hearing in UA 435.

6 We are adjourned.

7 **(End of Proceedings)**

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STATE OF OREGON)
) ss.
COUNTY OF Linn)

I, Jean Mueller, a Court Transcriber for the State of Oregon, do hereby certify that I transcribed the English speaking portion of the audio proceedings had upon the hearing of this cause, previously captioned herein; that I thereafter had reduced by typewriting the foregoing transcript; and that the foregoing transcript constitutes a full, true, and accurate record of the proceedings had upon the hearing of said cause, and of the whole thereof.

Dated: June 12, 2024.



Jean Mueller
Court Transcriber
541-259-1139

CERTIFICATE

I, Stefanie de Gruyter, a Court Reporter and Transcriber for the State of Oregon, do hereby certify that I transcribed the Spanish speaking portion of the audio proceedings in the public comment hearing of this cause, previously captioned herein, and it is an accurate record of that portion of the proceedings.

Dated: June 12, 2024.



Stefanie de Gruyter
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