

1 Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia

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Community Hearing

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In the Matter of the Application of Washington Gas
Light Company for Authority to Increase Existing Rates
and Charges for Gas Service

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Formal Case No. FC1180-2025-G-94

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Moderated by Emile C. Thompson, Chairman

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Monday, April 21, 2025

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5:22 p.m.

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Petworth Neighborhood Library

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4200 Kansas Avenue Northwest, Meeting Room 1

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Washington, D.C. 20011

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Reported by: Samuel Pachon

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JOB NO: 7273086

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S

2 List of Attendees:

3 Emile C. Thompson, PSC Chairman

4 Richard A. Beverly, PSC Commissioner

5 Ted Trabue, PSC Commissioner

6 Cheryl Morse, OPC

7 Brinda Westbrook, PSC

8 East Peterson-Trujillo, Green New Deal for DC

9 John Capozzi, Self

10 Charles Spring, Self

11 Claire Mills, Chesapeake Climate Action Network

12 Peter L. Weiss, Self

13 Carol Spring, Self

14 Karen Gladding, Self

15 Deirdre Joy, Self

16 Lucy Arthur-Paratley, Self

17 Matt Sehrsweeney, Self

18 Harrison Pyros, Self

19 Juan Cuellar Torres, Self

20 Jeremy Neff, Self

21 Max Broad, Self

22 Zachary Israel, Self

1 A P P E A R A N C E S (Cont'd)

2 List of Attendees:

3 Ronald Bethaid [ph], Self

4 Riley Polka [ph], Self

5 Michael Steffes, Self

6 Jeremiah Monk, Self

7 Ari Brown, Self

8 Matthias Paustian, Self

9 Paula Y. Edwards, Self

10 Neil Sauter, Self

11 Deirdre Joy, Self

12 Marja Hilfiker, Self

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. THOMPSON: Okay. Good evening everybody. Good evening. Good evening. We're going to call to order this community hearing of the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia in Formal Case Number 1180 in the matter of the application of Washington Gas Light Company for authority to increase existing rates and charges for natural gas service.

I'm Emile C. Thompson, the chairman of the Public Service Commission. I am joined by my fellow commissioners Richard Beverly and Ted Trabue.

For the record, today is April 21, 2025. It's about 5:23 p.m. at Petworth Neighborhood Library, 4200 Kansas Avenue Northwest, Meeting Room 1.

This community hearing is being held to discuss the application filed by WGL on August 5, 2024. In that application, WGL requested rates that are designed to collect approximately \$257.2 million in total revenue, representing a \$45.6 million increase in weather normalized annual revenue.

This includes a transfer of

1 \$11.7 million in costs associated with the natural gas
2 system upgrades previously approved by the commission
3 in PROJECTpipes. The net increase in new revenues is
4 33.9 million, reflecting an approximate 11.9 percent
5 increase over current rates.

6 If granted in full, the average bill
7 increase for residential sales, heating and cooling
8 customers based on an annual usage of 627 therms would
9 be \$15.33 or 17.63 percent.

10 I'll try and talk louder.

11 When you look at your bill, you may
12 wonder what rates are regulated by the commission and
13 are subject to this rate case. One part is what we
14 call a distribution rate. That's delivery. That's
15 what it costs WGL to deliver natural gas to customers.
16 And WGL is the only company authorized in the District
17 to distribute natural gas.

18 That rate covers meter reading, the
19 meters, the pipes, the customer service people, the
20 repairs, the restoration, natural storms, all the
21 things to operate the delivery system for natural gas
22 in the District. The commission regulates

1 distribution rates.

2 There's another part of the bill that
3 is for natural gas itself. The commission does not
4 regulate natural gas supply except for default natural
5 gas service.

6 And then the third part of your bill
7 are taxes, surcharges, and fees that the D.C. Council
8 authorizes and/or sets. Our role as regulators in
9 this case is to ensure that central natural service --
10 natural gas service is available, adequate, provided
11 to all who require it, and that the services will be
12 priced at a reasonable level.

13 Specifically, in evaluating WGL's
14 application, the commission must consider the public
15 safety, the economy of the District, the conservation
16 of natural resources, and the preservation of
17 environmental quality, including effects on global
18 climate change and the District's public climate
19 commitments.

20 Pursuant to its statutory and
21 constitutional rights, the utility is permitted to
22 fully recover the cost of providing this essential

1 service.

2 This community hearing is being held to
3 provide interested persons who wish to comment on WGL
4 application an opportunity to do so. Representatives
5 of organizations shall be permitted a maximum of five
6 minutes for oral presentation. Individuals shall be
7 permitted a maximum of three minutes for oral
8 presentation.

9 First, I would like to acknowledge
10 Commissioner Beverly and Commissioner Trabue for any
11 initial comments.

12 MR. BEVERLY: Thank you all for coming
13 out this evening to share your thoughts. I'm
14 definitely interested in hearing what everyone has to
15 say.

16 And for those of you interested in
17 knowing what I might have to say, I write it down. So
18 I issue statements and dissents, and you're welcome to
19 read that. And I think that will tell you about as
20 much as you need to know and as much as I'm willing to
21 share up to that point. Thank you.

22 MR. TRABUE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 Let me echo Commissioner Beverly's sentiments and
2 welcome our guests here tonight. It's great to see
3 such a big turnout for a community hearing like this.
4 I think in my two and a half years at the commission,
5 this is the largest gathering I've seen of public
6 witnesses coming to testify on any of our cases.

7 So it's really great to see so much
8 input from the community and I look forward to hearing
9 what you have to say this evening. Thank you.

10 MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. I would also
11 like to recognize the participation of the Office of
12 the People's Council for the District of Columbia. If
13 anybody -- I see one in the back.

14 MS. MORSE: I am Cheryl Morse from the
15 Office of People's Counsel. I am also accompanied
16 by -- from my office and --

17 MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. For those
18 who aren't unaware, the Office of People's Counsel for
19 the District of Columbia is a statutory representative
20 and party in all of our cases.

21 We will now begin this community
22 hearing by first calling the pre-registered witnesses,

1 and I will call on Ms. Butler [sic] to call out those
2 names.

3 MS. WESTBROOK: Matthias Paustian, John
4 Capozzi, Max Broad, East Peterson-Trujillo --

5 MS. PETERSON-TRUJILLO: Check. Good
6 evening, commissioners, and thank you for the
7 opportunity to testify. My name is East
8 Peterson-Trujillo, and I'm testifying today as the
9 campaign director for the Green New Deal for D.C. I'm
10 also a Ward 4 renter, and I've been a D.C. resident
11 for four years.

12 Our mission at the Green New Deal
13 for D.C. is to fight for racial justice, climate
14 resilience, and good jobs by bringing about a bold
15 green new deal for Washingtonians that creates
16 healthier, safer, and a more just city for all.

17 We believe in a District where workers
18 are respected and paid fairly to build and retrofit
19 the infrastructure we need to weather the climate
20 crisis, from public transportation to housing to
21 schools and energy systems and lead pipe removal. All
22 residents deserve a high quality, safe, and climate

1 resilient city.

2 I care about and I oppose higher gas
3 bills for D.C. residents because I'm concerned that
4 they will negatively impact my neighbors' ability to
5 pay for energy because further investment in methane
6 gas infrastructure runs counter to the safe, healthy
7 homes, and the climate future that our city needs.

8 D.C. is already in the midst of an
9 affordability crisis, not to mention the thousands of
10 federal workers who have recently been laid off. Now
11 more than ever, residents are struggling to pay their
12 bills from rent to utilities. Washington Gas's latest
13 hike went into effect just over a year ago, and
14 another increase coming so soon after places undue
15 burden on families.

16 Per Washington Gas, one in seven D.C.
17 residents -- residential customers are already behind
18 on their bills. Our partners at Washington Interfaith
19 Network and Beyond Gas published a report last year
20 that showed a whopping 77 percent of D.C. homes with
21 gas stoves, ovens, furnaces, and water heaters,
22 registered levels of nitrogen dioxide that the EPA

1 considers unsafe.

2 Exposure to this pollutant is linked to
3 respiratory diseases and cardiovascular issues. It's
4 clear that upgrading the current failing energy
5 infrastructure is critical, but the priority should be
6 to upgrade to non-polluting electric power to protect
7 health and meet our city climate goals.

8 Investing millions in soon to be
9 outdated technology is a poor business decision and a
10 waste of rate payer money.

11 AltaGas, the owner of Washington Gas,
12 has already failed to uphold their agreements to build
13 out clean energy and was fined \$2.1 million last year
14 for failing to develop 10 megawatts of solar energy to
15 help offset WGL's greenhouse gas emissions.

16 All PSC actions, as you know, including
17 these rate increases, must thoughtfully consider their
18 impact on workers, customers, public health, and
19 contributions to climate change. Specifically, D.C.'s
20 legally mandated climate goals would say that the
21 District is committed to becoming carbon neutral and
22 climate resilient by 2045 per the Climate Commitment

1 Act of 2022.

2 Hiking rates now to build more gas
3 infrastructure disregards the city law. Instead of
4 lining corporate pockets with hardworking
5 Washingtonians' money, the bills that we pay should go
6 to ensuring a just renewable energy transition from
7 workers and our communities.

8 Support for workers like job retraining
9 to ensure career stability in the green economy future
10 is a critical piece of this.

11 Last year I moved into a new apartment
12 just a few blocks away to move in with my partner.
13 And one of the features I was most excited about was
14 that this home is completely gas free. Our only
15 energy utility is electricity. I was so excited
16 because I know that our home is now safer from gas
17 leaks, fires, and interior pollution, very important
18 factors given that the two of us and one of our cats
19 all have asthma.

20 It also feels good to contribute less
21 to pollution in our community. I feel lucky to have
22 happened into this new and safer home. Every other

1 D.C. resident should have the same opportunity to
2 protect their family and community from pollution,
3 too. The solution does not lie in charging more for a
4 dying fossil fuel. Thank you.

5 MR. THOMPSON: Thank you for those
6 comments.

7 MR. BEVERLY: Excuse me. Before we go
8 on, I just wanted to say anybody who has written
9 testimony, could you submit a copy of it so that I can
10 have that for the record? I know you're going to be
11 invited to do that at the end of the hearing, but for
12 those that don't stay to the end of the hearing to
13 hear that, I'd like to see what you have to say and
14 read it again. Thank you.

15 MS. WESTBROOK: John Capozzi --
16 Capozzi.

17 MR. CAPOZZI: Good afternoon. My name
18 is John Capozzi. I'm a resident of Ward 7. And since
19 I spoke at the last -- the -- the last hearing, I'll
20 just skip through that. But I did want to mention a
21 few other things that -- that came up since the last
22 time I -- I spoke to you.

1 I think it's very important to talk
2 about Washington Gas and the merger from 2018.
3 Obviously, I was one of the people that worked to
4 oppose that. I was a stockholder in Washington Gas
5 for decades actually. And now I've been stockholder
6 in AltaGas.

7 And I can tell you that they made a
8 bunch of promises of \$41 million worth of commitments,
9 you know, 4.2 in energy efficiency, \$6 million for
10 clean energy, 5 million in broader energy
11 conservation, \$15 million for solar. And they just
12 weren't hopeful ideas. They were supposed to be
13 commitments that they lived up to once they were able
14 to buy the company and meet that.

15 And so since that time they failed to
16 meet those major goals, most notably the one that was
17 mentioned before about solar power. But they really
18 just did 24 percent of what they were supposed to so
19 far.

20 And on top of that, beyond the
21 \$2.1 million fine, they're going to -- looking at
22 penalties of \$10,000 a day before they meet this full

1 solar commitment.

2 So clearly in terms of rate -- a rate
3 increase, I think it's obvious they need that to pay
4 their fines, much less increase the profitability of
5 my stock and my dividend return. And just to let you
6 know, the stock hit an all-time high last week as a
7 matter of fact. And so I guess that just means that
8 they don't really need the increase. They seem to be
9 doing pretty well without it. So I did want to
10 mention that.

11 From, you know, from 1923 [sic] alone,
12 AltaGas posted a profit exceeding \$9 million Canadian.
13 At the same time Vern Yu, the president of the
14 company, received a \$6 million bonus salaries and
15 equity compensation during that time. While you know
16 citizens who live here in Ward 7 and 8 are still
17 struggling with affordability.

18 And then finally on the public
19 relations side, Brandon Todd is the person who was
20 hired as their community director of external affairs.
21 I didn't see him at the last hearing. I don't see him
22 at this hearing. I don't know if he's actually here,

1 but I would assume that if his job is to monitor the
2 community, that he would be interested in these -- the
3 input from community members. And so far, I haven't
4 seen that.

5 He gets a salary of something in the
6 order of 180,000 a year with a total compensation
7 which has exceeded \$720,000 since he was hired. So we
8 must ask, if Washington Gas can afford these public
9 relations salaries and record levels of executive pay,
10 why can't they afford to meet their community
11 obligations and not get a rate increase?

12 And then finally, what should happen
13 instead? Require AltaGas to publish a progress report
14 on the \$41 million commitments, including who
15 benefited and how the funds are spent, delay the
16 consideration of any rate increases until they met
17 their clean energy benchmarks, especially the solar
18 one.

19 And then finally, if they're having so
20 much trouble with solar, I think they can hold a
21 public forum with D.C. civic climate and community
22 leaders to talk directly with the leadership, whether

1 that's Donald "Blue" Jenkins or Vern Yu, to see what
2 they should be doing in terms of the community to get
3 this solar thing underway.

4 So in this moment, certainly demanding
5 leaderships from not just the utility but from the
6 commission and upholding public interest means holding
7 these utilities accountable, especially when they fail
8 to meet basic standards of services.

9 Thank you very much.

10 MS. WESTBROOK: -- Israel, Charles
11 Spring.

12 MR. SPRING: Hello. I'm Monopoly man,
13 and I love monopolies like Washington Gas. They can
14 get away with whatever they want and squeeze the
15 customers as tight as they want. Why do they do it?
16 To funnel profits to their well-paid CEO and to rich
17 investors like me. It's billionaire economics at its
18 best.

19 I love how it's unfolding at the
20 federal level recently with activities to benefit
21 billionaires. Now I'm excited how -- how the same
22 approach can be used here at the local level if we can

1 get this 12 percent increase passed. The idea of a
2 12 percent increase, wow, music to my ears and money
3 in my overflowing pockets.

4 So come on, commissioners. We've had a
5 great thing going over the years and I'm depending on
6 you once again to stick it to the rate payers. Thank
7 you and have a good day.

8 MS. WESTBROOK: Claire Mills.

9 MS. MILLS: Good evening, Chairman
10 Thompson and Commissioners Trabian and Beverly. Thank
11 you for holding this hearing today to hear from
12 community members. My name is Claire Mills, and today
13 I'm testifying on behalf of the Chesapeake Climate
14 Action Network. I'm also a tenant in Ward 1, and I
15 pay a monthly bill to Washington Gas.

16 On behalf of myself, D.C. residents
17 like me, and our climate, I'm asking you to reject
18 Washington Gas's proposed rate hike. Washington Gas
19 is asking for a 12 percent average bill increase up to
20 17 percent for residential customers, while District
21 residents face more uncertainty than ever before.

22 That proposed rate increase for

1 residential customers is about three times greater
2 than the compounded rate of inflation in 2023 and
3 2024. It would bring in about 257 million in total
4 revenue for Washington Gas, and the company also asked
5 for a higher rate of return for its shareholders or to
6 be allowed to make greater profit.

7 Let's put it plainly. Washington Gas
8 is asking to be rewarded for just doing business as
9 usual. And what does business as usual mean for D.C.
10 residents like all of us here today?

11 One in seven D.C. residential rate
12 payers is behind on our bills. Whether we look at the
13 average over 2024 or Washington Gas's most recent
14 report for March of 2025, Washington Gas has shut off
15 service to 606 homes in just the first three months of
16 2025 and nearly 3,000 throughout 2024.

17 For many of us, our gas bills are
18 simply too high to pay. But that burden isn't shared
19 by all of us equally. As of 2022, in Ward 8,
20 households spent an average of 6 percent of their
21 incomes on energy bills compared to just 1.45 percent
22 in Ward 3. The commission has approved rate increases

1 for PEPCO and Washington Gas since this study, likely
2 worsening that trend even further.

3 Beyond stretching our wallets, business
4 as usual is also damaging our health and planet with
5 over a thousand hazardous gas leaks reported in 2023,
6 and no new data for 2024 available publicly yet.

7 Washington Gas's rate application turns
8 a blind eye to the District's climate commitments the
9 commission is committed to implementing. Washington
10 Gas's own witness in Formal Case 1180 stated that "The
11 company is unaware of any District climate policy that
12 has an impact on the company's planned capital
13 investments."

14 In other words, Washington Gas hasn't
15 even considered the District's commitment to reducing
16 greenhouse gases by 60 percent by 2030, a deadline
17 only five years away, while planning future
18 investments into a system that delivers greenhouse
19 gas-emitting fossil fuels into people's homes and
20 businesses.

21 This failure to plan is irresponsible.
22 It ignores the District's laws in addition to signals

1 from the D.C. Council and the commission itself that a
2 more comprehensive plan is necessary.

3 And it extends to Washington Gas's
4 multi-billion dollar parent company AltaGas, whose
5 current strategic priorities of growth in near term
6 spending, rate-based growth, and system expansion, are
7 essentially unchanged over the past five years despite
8 the District's growing policy commitment to
9 decarbonization.

10 And this lack of attention to the
11 climate is obvious in the rate case application
12 itself. Washington Gas's proposed weather
13 normalization adjustment would separate methane gas
14 use from cost, discouraging energy efficiency, and
15 likely increasing the total gas used and by extension
16 increasing our bills even further.

17 As a gas customer the easiest way by
18 far to track how much gas I've used is to check my
19 last bill. When it's high, I have literally turned
20 down the heat in my apartment to save money on my next
21 bill. A weather normalization adjustment would take
22 away this signal and make it less likely for me to

1 reduce my gas use, leading to higher bills and more
2 methane emissions.

3 And Washington Gas knows this based on
4 their own numbers. If the weatherization norm -- if
5 the weather normalization adjustment was in place over
6 the past five years, it would have cost rate payers an
7 additional \$31.97 million.

8 I urge the commission to reject this
9 new method, just as you previously did when Washington
10 Gas proposed a climate progress adjustment that also
11 decoupled cost and gas use.

12 The proposed rate hike by Washington
13 Gas serves the company's desires, not the needs of
14 District residents. It raises our cost of living
15 exactly when we are all struggling to make ends meet.
16 And as our climate deadlines rapidly approach, it
17 walks us backwards deeper into the past to fossil
18 fuels.

19 Ultimately, as the Office of the
20 People's Council witness Colin Fitzhenry states, even
21 when compared to some of the worst performing
22 utilities in gas, safety, and reliability in the

1 northeastern United States, Washington Gas has a
2 higher than average leak rate per mile of distribution
3 mains and services. This clearly demonstrates that
4 Washington Gas's safety and reliability performance is
5 worse than utilities in similar positions.

6 The company should not be allowed to
7 continue to grow its rate base while demonstrating
8 neither improvements in its distribution systems,
9 reliability, and safety, nor capital expenditure
10 changes tailored to meet the District's climate goals,
11 requiring customers to incur additional costs while
12 Washington Gas continues to perform below average
13 compared to its pure utilities, creates an
14 unreasonable burden on customers.

15 I urge the commission to put D.C.
16 residents first, not Washington Gas's corporate
17 interests. I urge the commission to think of the next
18 50 years and not the last 5. And I urge the
19 commission to reject this rate hike. Thank you.

20 MS. WESTBROOK: Peter Weiss.

21 MR. WEISS: Hello, commission members,
22 I am a D.C. resident. I live in Ward 4 and I'm a

1 homeowner. And I'm here because I'm concerned about
2 this rate hike. I think it's a -- it's unwise and
3 unfair, and I also think that it's contrary to the
4 efforts of this -- the District of Columbia to help
5 fight climate change.

6 And that's, I think -- so that's the
7 first thing I wanted to encourage you is to think
8 about, you know, you're the D.C. utility regulator.
9 You're not WGL. I mean, I know you regulate them, but
10 you're not representing them. You're not representing
11 their parent company.

12 So, you know, D.C. has made it very
13 clear that it has intentions of reducing fossil fuel
14 use. And as representatives of the District of
15 Columbia, I think it's beholden to, you know -- it
16 behooves you to -- to support D.C.'s goals over goals
17 of the companies that are providing this not very good
18 form of energy.

19 I also wanted to say that I'm concerned
20 as a person who has gas in their home. I've grown
21 increasingly concerned about the -- the cost of gas in
22 terms of not only its financial cost, but the cost to

1 the health of D.C. residents, including myself.

2 And I think that we also need to be, as
3 a city, supporting reductions in fossil fuel use, not
4 be feeling like we need to support companies' bottom
5 lines so that we can -- that -- that that's an
6 adequate reason to -- to keep using fossil fuels when
7 it's very apparent that it's not, you know, it's not
8 the future. It's -- or it -- it's a -- it's a -- it's
9 leading to a future that we don't want.

10 So I hope you'll think primarily in
11 terms of what the D.C. residents need in terms of
12 avoiding the harms of fossil fuels to the climate and
13 to their difficult time today meeting their bills,
14 especially with so much turmoil from the federal
15 government and the reduction in people's abilities to
16 pay.

17 When I think about 24 percent increase
18 in two years, that's like, you know, many working
19 people would dream of having that kind of increases in
20 their salaries. And they -- everything is heading the
21 other way.

22 So it's not consistent with the way the

1 world is right now to allow, you know, wealthy
2 companies to raise their rates, you know, so high when
3 they -- it's a time when the -- the community they're
4 serving is losing its ability to pay. And you -- and
5 it's putting people in jeopardy by not only affecting
6 their health but also making it harder for them to
7 live without having adequate funds to take care of
8 themselves.

9 So I encourage you to please deny this
10 rate hike -- rate hike in the name of the people of
11 the District of Columbia. Thank you.

12 MS. WESTBROOK: Carol Spring.

13 MS. SPRING: Good evening,
14 commissioners. My name is Carol Spring. I live in
15 Ward 4. I'm a -- I'm a mother, and I have prepared my
16 testimony for you in song tonight.

17 Your mission is to serve the public,
18 the people of D.C. So why would you just raise our
19 rates? We've got families to feed. Which side are
20 you on? Which side are you on?

21 Families are struggling to pay the
22 bills round here while the CEO of AltaGas makes

1 \$8 million a year. Which side are you on? Which side
2 are you on?

3 One in seven of us can't pay our debt.
4 And now they're wanting more, so they can have their
5 yachts and cars and vacations by the shore. Which
6 side are you on? Which side are you on?

7 They should be going around D.C. and
8 fixing all the leaks. Instead they're barking "We
9 want more" and begging you for treats. Which side are
10 you on? Which side are you on?

11 To breathe clean air in good safe
12 homes, oh, this is what we dream, while Washington Gas
13 just lies to you and their lobbyists they scheme.
14 Which side are you on? Which side are you on?

15 We honor now our laborers. We need
16 jobs with good pay, but that's no excuse to raise our
17 rates. There is a better way. Which side are you on?
18 Which side are you on? Which side are you on? Which
19 side are you on?

20 Thank you.

21 MS. WESTBROOK: Karen Gladding.

22 MS. GLADDING: Is this on? Good

1 evening, commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity
2 to speak. I'd hate for you to miss my voice.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to speak
4 tonight. I'm Karen Gladding. I'm a 12-year long
5 resident of Ward 6 and a very proud resident of this
6 District of Columbia.

7 I really thank you for open meetings
8 such as this where -- when a time where transparency
9 in government and stakeholder engagement creates faith
10 in the process that we've all come to rely on in this
11 wonderfully run city.

12 I'm here to speak today against
13 Washington Gas' proposed rate hike for three reasons:
14 equity, the environment, and accountability.

15 First equity. The proposed rate hikes
16 will hit our poorest households in the District of
17 Columbia very hard. Already 40 percent of low-income
18 households pay 10 percent or more on energy bills.
19 This would only exacerbate this problem. These are
20 homes with low efficiency appliances because of the
21 cost of replacement and repairs.

22 Washington Gas has been billing these

1 same customers for a distribution charge for many
2 years in order to -- and this is language from their
3 own website -- "to provide, maintain and operate a
4 system of underground piping" and on top of this now
5 charging for PROJECTpipes. I consider this double
6 charging.

7 And let us not forget the weather
8 normalization charge, which will enable Washington Gas
9 to charge customers a further surcharge when winters
10 are warmer than average. And guess what? Our winters
11 are getting warmer than average due to the methane
12 that Washington Gas provides.

13 And that leads me to the environment.
14 Our climate is changing fast, and we need to act fast.
15 There is nothing natural about natural gas. It is up
16 to 90 percent methane. And as I'm sure you know,
17 methane is the most potent greenhouse gas and the
18 largest contributor to changes in our climate.
19 Washington Gas is the provider -- the only provider of
20 methane in our District.

21 We all know that D.C. has committed to
22 carbon neutrality by 2045 with 90 percent of our homes

1 fossil fuel free by 2040. That is only 15 years away.
2 And yet with PROJECTpipes, we are sinking billions of
3 rate payers' money into an infrastructure we won't
4 need, and we know is behind our climate crisis.

5 Why are we replacing this
6 infrastructure in its entirety? Why aren't we not
7 simply repairing known and easily detectable leaks?

8 Finally, accountability. The PSC is
9 the only entity that the residents of the District
10 have to hold WGL accountable. Questions that WGL
11 needs to answer and only you, commissioners, can
12 require response. Hasn't WGL been charging for
13 infrastructure maintenance for years, yet we're asked
14 now to pay for a full replacement?

15 I would like to know how much WGL has
16 banked through its distribution charges over the years
17 and how this money has been used to maintain our
18 distribution and pipes. Leaks have only increased
19 over the past years.

20 PROJECTpipes, which I will note has
21 been greenwashed and renamed Project Safe, is already,
22 per the Office of the People's Council, has made

1 little progress and has been consistently over budget.

2 Thank you, OPC.

3 Who will hold WGL accountable for this
4 failure to adequately meet its own financial and
5 timeline benchmarks? It's you, the commissioners.

6 Finally, we should all be aware that
7 WGL's proposed rate increase is 70 percent -- 75
8 percent higher than its Maryland charge, 67 percent
9 higher than for Virginia customers. Why? Who will
10 ask WGL to justify such a rate difference if it is not
11 you, the PSC commissioners?

12 So today I ask you, commissioners, to
13 deny this rate increase request for the sake of those
14 to be certain to be deeply affected financially, for
15 the sake of our climate and D.C.'s carbon neutral
16 plan, and to hold WGL accountable for its expensive
17 mismanaged PROJECTpipes.

18 Thank you again for this opportunity to
19 speak publicly.

20 MS. WESTBROOK: Paula Y. Edwards, Neil
21 Sauter, Deidre Joy.

22 MS. JOY: Bring that back down. So I

1 just want to thank the commissioners for holding this
2 public meeting. This is really an important part of
3 what we do, and we appreciate the opportunity to talk.

4 My name is Deirdre Joy, and I'm a
5 resident of Ward 1. I've lived there for 20 years. I
6 raised my kids there, and I'm also a volunteer with an
7 organization called Third Act. And what we do, we're
8 folks over the age of 60 working to safeguard the
9 climate and democracy.

10 But I'm speaking just as a resident
11 today, but that organization definitely informs my
12 views on this topic.

13 So you know, the American Gas
14 Association likes to refer to natural gas as clean and
15 affordable energy. And if I can quote here from the
16 American Gas Association Climate Change Commitment
17 document, they say "Natural gas is responsible for
18 about a 62 percent cumulative carbon dioxide emission
19 savings."

20 But what is never mentioned in this
21 document is the fact that natural gas is, in fact,
22 methane gas. And methane gas is, in and of itself, a

1 very potent greenhouse gas. Methane emissions, in
2 fact, are responsible for approximately a third of the
3 total warming of the planet that we've experienced so
4 far.

5 Given this, CO2 reductions is perhaps
6 beside the point. And really the important thing here
7 is that methane gas infrastructure is notoriously
8 leaky. Methane gas leaks. And to illustrate this
9 point, the EPA has not one but two programs to address
10 methane gas leaks: the EPA Methane Challenge Program
11 and the EPA Natural Gas Star program.

12 Methane gas leaks are known to occur at
13 every step of the process from production to gathering
14 and processing to transmission and distribution.

15 And there was a study done, published
16 in Nature in 2024. They used over a million aerial
17 measurements. It was the first study to really
18 attempt to quantify methane gas leaks from oil and gas
19 infrastructure. And what they found was that the EPA
20 is likely underestimating the amount of leaks by two
21 to three times.

22 The AGA and Washington Gas are being

1 disingenuous when they refer to natural gas as clean.
2 Methane gas is emblematic of the past, not the clean
3 energy future we need, and that many of us are working
4 towards.

5 A system that leaks methane throughout
6 is not clean, nor is it affordable. Washington Gas's
7 last rate hike, as others have mentioned, went into
8 effect in January 2024, barely a year ago. PEPCO has
9 already been approved for a 12 percent rate hike over
10 the next two years. Another 12 percent on gas bills
11 is unacceptable.

12 Higher rates now make no sense to me as
13 a consumer. For one thing, it means I'm investing
14 more in a system that is harming the planet when
15 alternatives exist. For this reason, I urge the
16 commissioners to vote against the proposed rate hike.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. WESTBROOK: Lucy Arthur-Paratley.

19 MS. ARTHUR-PARATLEY: Hi. Thank you so
20 much for listening this evening. I'm a Ward 1
21 resident. My husband and I own a house in Ward 1.
22 And since moving here a couple of years ago, my gas

1 bills have only gotten more expensive just as my
2 family's ability to pay those bills has decreased.

3 Like many people have mentioned here,
4 federal turmoil is tough. Our retirement accounts are
5 in free fall it seems. The price of eggs has only
6 gone up, and we just can't make it work.

7 And what I've heard this evening is
8 that not only does Washington Gas want us to pay more,
9 they also want to make us pay a consistent amount all
10 year round, which is much worse for my family. It's
11 worse because the only appliance in my house that uses
12 gas is our furnace. And of course, that means we only
13 use gas in the winter.

14 And I don't want to have to pay more
15 all year round when my electricity bill is much more
16 expensive in the summer when we're using the air
17 conditioning. So I'm paying more all summer long in a
18 way that's really difficult for my family to budget
19 for, especially in a moment when our work is less
20 certain, and general costs have been increasing.

21 My stepdaughter is in high school, and
22 as we look at college costs around the corner, which

1 have also gone up tremendously, and are trying to help
2 her figure out a career that would be financially
3 sustainable, helping her find a place to live. Maybe
4 she'll go to Montgomery College and continue to live
5 with us. And that just means our bills are going to
6 keep going up.

7 So I really appreciate you taking the
8 time to hear all of our concerns. My concerns are
9 maybe not as thoroughly researched as everyone else's,
10 but I can say from personal experience that these
11 bills are very concerning to me, to my family, and to
12 my neighbors. And I really urge you to say no.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. WESTBROOK: Matt Sehrsweeney.

15 MR. SEHRSWEENEY: All right. Good
16 evening, and thank you so much, commissioners, for
17 your time. My name is Matt. I'm a Ward 1 resident
18 and renter, and I work in environmental justice
19 policy.

20 I've lived in D.C. for about four
21 years, and I'm an organizer with We Power D.C., a
22 campaign within Metro D.C. DSA devoted to replacing

1 our investor-owned utilities with utilities managed by
2 the people that they serve, residents of D.C.

3 I'm speaking in opposition to the
4 outrageous rate hikes currently proposed by Washington
5 Gas. I'd like to begin with the broader picture. We
6 know that to minimize the already catastrophic impacts
7 of climate change, we need to radically reduce our
8 reliance on fossil fuels, like fossil gas, at an
9 exponentially faster rate than our current trajectory.

10 Washington Gas's business model
11 requires exactly the opposite. They depend on
12 increased use of fossil gas or, failing that,
13 increased rates on the decreased use of fossil gas.
14 Either way, their profit motive is in direct
15 opposition to the needs of the people of D.C. and the
16 planet.

17 The more we cook the planet, the more
18 D.C. residents are forced -- are forced to pay to
19 breathe in a gas that causes a host of cardiovascular
20 issues, the more Washington Gas profits. On that
21 basis alone, all advocates of a livable future should
22 be opposed to this -- to giving this company any more

1 money at all.

2 But now to the specific issues at hand.
3 First of all, the residents of D.C. absolutely cannot
4 afford this rate hike. According to Washington Gas's
5 own data, nearly 15 percent of residents are already
6 behind on their energy bills. And 40 percent of
7 low-income households face severe financial strain
8 from energy costs. Another 12 percent hike would --
9 in -- in rates would only deepen this issue.

10 This is, of course, within the broader
11 context of D.C.'s cost-of-living crisis. Twelve
12 percent of the District is housing insecure.
13 Homelessness increased by 14 percent in the past year,
14 and rents continue to skyrocket.

15 The -- the details of the rate hike
16 are, on their face, absurd. The proposed rate hike --
17 the proposed increase is three times greater than
18 compounded rate of inflation for 2023 and '24. It is
19 impossible to argue that it is only in keeping with
20 increased costs as a result of inflation.

21 Digging in deeper, the -- the so-called
22 weather normalization adjustment, as Claire discussed

1 earlier, is a sneaky handout to the company allowing
2 them to make more money when D.C. has warmer than
3 average winters, which we already know will become
4 more common.

5 To close out, I want to tie this back
6 to broader issues that this rate hike sits within, the
7 fundamental incompatibility between the investor-owned
8 utility model and achieving an energy just livable
9 future. If the District itself managed our utilities
10 as many cities do quite successfully, instead of a
11 coterie of millionaires and billionaires whose sole
12 focus is to increase their own wealth, we would never
13 have fights like this.

14 A municipal utility system un beholden
15 to capitalists, would prioritize the needs of D.C.
16 residents above all else, and would provide clean
17 energy without putting our working-class neighbors
18 deeper into debt.

19 As the climate crisis intensifies, we
20 need the District in the driver's seat on energy
21 decision making, not a profit-driven company.

22 So I am -- I urge you, the commission,

1 tasked with regulating utilities, to actually regulate
2 instead of handing Washington Gas everything they ask
3 for on a silver platter. The people of D.C. who you
4 were supposed to protect cannot afford this rate hike.
5 So I urge you not to grant it.

6 Thank you for your time.

7 MS. WESTBROOK: Harrison Pyros.

8 MR. PYROS: Hi there. My name is
9 Harrison Pyros. I'm a resident of Ward 4. I've been
10 in D.C. about four years, and I live with four other
11 people in a house. So I'm testifying on behalf of
12 myself and them. I'll be really short and sweet.

13 I really oppose this rate hike for a
14 number of reasons, many of them for the climate, which
15 have already been discussed, but mainly around
16 affordability and just straight up business practices.

17 I've read a lot of testimony and
18 reports and heard a lot tonight, as we all have, about
19 the failings of Washington Gas. They're a
20 multinational corporation that is failing to meet
21 their climate goals and their climate promises.
22 They're failing to easily fix detectable leaks, and

1 they're constantly nickel and diming us on top of
2 this.

3 So what is that all for? It's to
4 deliver an energy source that is actively detrimental
5 to our health and our wallets, and it's actively being
6 phased across -- phased out across the entire U.S.

7 Well from this rate hike what -- what
8 I'm seeing is that to give a 12 percent increase to
9 Washington Gas is to effectively reward bad business.
10 They are failing on all parts to deliver for the
11 consumer and to keep energy costs low and down for,
12 frankly, a middling product.

13 And I think personally that Washington
14 Gas has really gotten used to coming to the commission
15 and asking for money and simply getting it. If I was
16 in their position or if I was in your position, I
17 would ask them to stop spending so much money on
18 lawyers and lobbyists, and instead retrofit their own
19 business so that they can run like every other
20 American business clean and efficient and actually
21 deliver their product.

22 Once again, I really oppose this rate

1 hike. I think it's bad for our families and our
2 communities. Thank you.

3 MS. WESTBROOK: Juan Torres.

4 MR. TORRES: Good afternoon. So yes,
5 my name is Juan Cuellar Torres, and I am a resident of
6 Columbia Heights. I've been living in Ward 1 for a
7 year and a half.

8 And over the winter my energy bill made
9 up 15 percent of my income. And this was probably
10 above average for -- for many residents. But for me I
11 was very surprised with -- with that amount. And --
12 and now with the hot summers ahead, I know it's not
13 about the gas, but I'm also worried about those --
14 those hikes with -- with PEPCO. So just a combination
15 of, like, gas and light and electricity going up, it's
16 just a lot.

17 So I've lived in big cities in the
18 U.S., in New York City. I lived in Los Angeles, and
19 this has been the most expensive city I've lived in,
20 in regards to utilities. So I've just been amazed
21 with that.

22 Washington Gas' proposed rate increase

1 would be devastating for residents like me. The
2 increase for residential customers is nearly three
3 times the compounded rate of inflation from 2023 to
4 2024. It's not tied to normal cost increases, and
5 it's just unjustifiable burden for rate payers like
6 myself.

7 In addition, we need to face the fact
8 that methane gas is not the future. And I know I'm
9 not the first one to say this. It's a polluting
10 fossil fuel that we need to phase out, not invest more
11 money into.

12 Fossil fuels, like methane gas have
13 created great extinctions before in the past in this
14 planet. Actually, it has been one of the main causes
15 of many of the extinctions in this planet. I'm not
16 saying that that's what is going to happen just
17 because Washington Gas is going to raise the rates.
18 But just the fact that we need to face the facts that
19 methane needs to be phased out as soon as possible,
20 especially if we want to reach carbon neutrality by
21 2045.

22 So by raising the rates, Washington Gas

1 is forcing residents to fund a system that actively
2 works against clean energy progress. And AltaGas, as
3 also some have mentioned, the parent company of
4 Washington Gas, has failed to fulfill its commitments
5 to develop clean energy infrastructure and continues
6 to prioritize profits over people and the planet.

7 So this is why I believe this rate hike
8 is unacceptable, and I ask the commission to stand
9 with the D.C. residents and reject it. Thank you.

10 MR. TRABUE: Mr. Torres, can I ask you
11 one quick question?

12 MR. TORRES: Yes.

13 MR. TRABUE: You said your gas bill
14 last winter was extremely high?

15 MR. TORRES: Yes.

16 MR. TRABUE: What types of uses do you
17 have for gas in your home?

18 MR. TORRES: Just for cooking and for
19 warmth. That's all.

20 MR. TRABUE: For heating your water as
21 well, or your -- you might have a water heater that's
22 separate from the furnace?

1 MR. TORRES: The water heater is part
2 of electric.

3 MR. TRABUE: It's part of the electric.

4 MR. TORRES: So yes.

5 MR. TRABUE: So it's part of the
6 electric. Okay. So it's just your heat and your
7 cooking?

8 MR. TORRES: Exactly.

9 MR. TRABUE: You don't have to tell me
10 if you don't want, but approximately how much was your
11 bill?

12 MR. TORRES: \$200.

13 MR. TRABUE: \$200?

14 MR. TORRES: Yes.

15 MR. TRABUE: For the month?

16 MR. TORRES: For a month.

17 MR. TRABUE: Okay. Thank you.

18 MR. TORRES: Thank you.

19 MS. WESTBROOK: Marja Hilfiker, Jeremy
20 Neff.

21 MR. NEFF: Hey y'all. My name is
22 Jeremy. I live over on 10th Street. I've lived in

1 D.C. thirteen years and owned a condo here for the
2 last four. So I've seen the energy prices go up over
3 the last 13 years or so. And I'm not the only one.

4 I have a downstairs neighbor, Les, who
5 I talked to before I came here. He's a little older.
6 He's a veteran disabled guy. So I help him out with,
7 like, technology and stuff usually. Like, I helped
8 him get one of those, like, digital antennas because
9 he canceled his Comcast because he was tired of how
10 much his Comcast rates were going up.

11 So I asked him, and he was like, "Hell
12 no." And I was like -- then said some more stuff that
13 I probably shouldn't say here. I asked him if he
14 could come, and he was basically like, "Ah, they're
15 not going to listen to me." Which I -- I think kind
16 of says -- says a lot.

17 So I know you guys are listening, but I
18 think it's less that the listening and more taking
19 action to make this possible because if he could, you
20 know, do the same thing with his gas bill, I'm sure he
21 would.

22 But there's no other shop in town than

1 Washington Gas, and it's a necessity, which is why
2 it's your responsibility to help people like me and --
3 and him keep the rates as low as possible because it's
4 not like we can switch to Verizon or -- or what have
5 you.

6 Rates are already going up, and another
7 12 percent is -- is simply too much. As others
8 mentioned, that's faster than inflation. And in -- in
9 a broader context, it's really important to -- to me.
10 And, you know, I think other young people, my friends
11 are afraid to have kids because of climate change.

12 And, you know, anything we can do
13 locally for climate change I think is so important.
14 Someone in the Trump Administration the other day said
15 they were going to drive a dagger into the heart of
16 the climate change religion. That's what's happening
17 at the federal level for the next four years. So you
18 are kind of the people we need to step up and -- and
19 take action here.

20 And Washington Gas, you can't expect a
21 company with its own profit incentive, right, to phase
22 itself out in favor of clean electricity. So again,

1 that's kind of your job to step in here as the public
2 control over that.

3 I also sometimes volunteer with
4 We Power D.C. and in representing We Power D.C. I -- I
5 can say that what we need is publicly owned, publicly
6 accountable, clean energy like they have in other
7 states and other communities.

8 And the only way for us to make
9 progress right now is for hardworking public servants
10 like you to continue working hard but in favor of
11 clean energy to make tough decisions. I know it's
12 harder to change the status quo than keep the status
13 quo going.

14 So I know we're asking you to do
15 something that's not easy, but it's really important
16 for us. So I want to hopefully thank you for your
17 work in advance to do this, though I'm sure there's a
18 million other things going through your head. But the
19 time for tough decisions is now because we know the
20 federal government isn't going to help us out. So
21 yeah.

22 Thank you very much.

1 MS. WESTBROOK: Max Broad.

2 MS. BROAD: Hello. My name is Max
3 Broad, and I want to thank you, our chairmen of the
4 Public Service Commission, Commissioner Beverly,
5 Commissioner Tribue, and Chair Thompson. Thank you
6 for being here.

7 Really, this is a time where any
8 measure of upholding democracy is so important. And I
9 just want to say that I don't -- I don't know that
10 it's necessarily fun for you to be here right now.
11 But it's so important that you all are here listening
12 to the voices of the community. And I just really,
13 really value you, your time, and your attention to
14 this. Thank you.

15 It's fitting that we're here today, the
16 day before Earth Day. And -- and the reason why Earth
17 Day is so important is because the earth has no lobby.
18 Human beings, we're very motivated by profit; right?
19 We're -- we're just -- we're very driven by this one
20 thing, this lust for -- for what -- whatever it is,
21 you know.

22 But it -- the earth has -- the earth

1 doesn't have that; right? The earth doesn't have this
2 incentive to -- to speak up.

3 And when we're talking about protecting
4 the earth, we're not talking just about the trees and
5 the -- the birds and the -- and the earthworms. We're
6 talking about us. You know, you all know just as well
7 as anybody that we rely on these ecosystem services,
8 on the clean air, on stopping climate change just to
9 survive and thrive.

10 And so, you know, the earth doesn't
11 have somebody to come here and say, you know, we're
12 worried about a 12 percent increase on prices. We're
13 worried about a 17 percent increase for residential
14 customers. We're worried about a \$15 increase per
15 customer per month.

16 You know, the -- these are costs that
17 doesn't necessarily have somebody to speak up on
18 behalf of, but we're here to raise them because these
19 are really important.

20 I'll just finish by saying that, you
21 know, as you all know, we're -- we're facing off
22 against an administration that's committing an

1 ideologically -- ideological war against climate
2 change and anybody working on climate change. They --
3 you all are probably aware that they are working --
4 our federal government is currently working to
5 undermine any 501(c)(3) nonprofit that works on
6 climate change issues.

7 That means that the -- the -- our --
8 our efforts to mobilize our -- as a community are
9 going to be really diminished in the coming years if,
10 you know, this very partisan move is made. It's --
11 it's extremely, extremely alarming.

12 And -- and I hate to say it, but this
13 is where it -- the -- the burden further falls upon
14 you, our Public Service Commission, to act in the
15 interest of sustaining our climate, sustaining our
16 city, and sustaining our residents in a way that
17 our -- our communities are currently threatened by.

18 So really again, thank you for your
19 time and attention and for being here to listen to us.
20 Really appreciate it. Thank you.

21 MS. WESTBROOK: Zachary Israel.

22 MR. ISRAEL: Thank you very much for

1 holding this hearing, especially in my home
2 neighborhood of Petworth. I know it's one of just
3 three hearings you're holding.

4 My name is Zach Israel. I'm a 12-year
5 resident of the District of Columbia, and I just want
6 to state my opposition to the Public Service
7 Commission approving this rate hike.

8 I read through not all of the hundreds
9 of pages that Washington Gas submitted to y'all in
10 early August of 2024, but there are a couple of things
11 that I think are noteworthy and just worth repeating
12 here, that they say, "Current base rates in the
13 District of Columbia are inadequate due to a number of
14 factors including but not limited to," and the very
15 first thing they say is "severe underearning."
16 "Severe underearning."

17 And so looking at the history of the
18 last couple of years, where they've asked for rate
19 increases and you all have, on occasion, done that,
20 maybe not to the full scale they wanted to, but you
21 have done it.

22 The question fundamentally is, have

1 they done more on the backend internally to save
2 them -- to be more efficient, or are they just coming
3 to you all to ask for more money on the backs of
4 Washingtonians?

5 And the reality is that the
6 overwhelming percent of Washingtonians -- if you did a
7 full poll, a scientific poll, I would imagine the
8 overwhelming result -- results, a supermajority of
9 D.C. residents would be opposed to this. And they're
10 not reflected here today. And that's -- I'm not
11 blaming that on you. That's just the reality.

12 But in the current political
13 environment we're in, where many of my friends and
14 neighbors in Petworth have been laid off because they
15 happened to work for the federal government, cost of
16 livings were -- was already going up. They have kids
17 to support. They have parents to support.

18 To allow an increase to occur for a
19 for-profit utility when they could maybe cut their own
20 salaries, do other things to make up this difference,
21 especially when we want to move away from gas, it
22 doesn't seem right to me.

1 And so when I saw this hearing, I was
2 moved to come here and testify. You know, they --
3 they go on to say in their -- in their submission to
4 you all that, again, the -- the rate of return, you
5 know, they're -- they're not making enough profit
6 essentially is what it comes down to.

7 And so, you know, Washingtonians are
8 just trying to -- to get by, and a lot of folks are
9 unable to fully switch to electric, and they're
10 dependent on this to literally survive in our city.
11 And you all are in a extremely important position to
12 make the cost of living just a little bit more
13 affordable for people.

14 So I haven't talked to all 700,000
15 Washingtonians about this, but I imagine the
16 overwhelming majority would be opposed to that. And
17 so for that reason, I ask you all to disapprove of
18 this. Thank you very much.

19 MR. THOMPSON: So that is the extent of
20 the pre-signed-up witnesses that we have, and the
21 witnesses that signed in, I think, when they came. Is
22 there anybody else who wishes to speak this evening?

1 MR. BETHAID [PH]: Yes, sir. Good
2 evening, Commissioners Thomas, Trabue -- Mr. Thompson.
3 My name is Ronald Bethaid [ph], and I came in from
4 Ward 9. Now many of you know that's an inside joke.
5 That's Prince George's County; right? But the reason
6 why I came in is because my daughter lives in Ward 7,
7 and she couldn't get here.

8 Many of you are aware of the fact that
9 had it not been for Governor Shapiro of Pennsylvania
10 who filed the lawsuit in 2020 -- I think it was
11 December of 2023, we would be -- be getting hit with a
12 \$21 billion gas rate hike through the -- the PJM,
13 which is -- the District is one of those in the
14 13 states.

15 Being that the Federal Regulatory
16 Commission has denied that hike, it seems that
17 Washington Gas decided they would do a -- a reverse.
18 If playing sports, we're going to move the ball in
19 another direction.

20 So when we began to look at these hike
21 rates with the cutbacks at the HHS, human resources,
22 which many of you are aware that Colt 45 plus 2 with

1 34 felony counts coming straight at you, they've just
2 gutted \$6.2 billion for energy assistance.

3 So D.C. residents can't even apply for
4 help, especially those residents that are being laid
5 off their jobs. So as we look at what's going on here
6 in the city, you are only -- our only safety net, the
7 Public Service Commission, you gentlemen.

8 I have a great deal of respect for all
9 three of you. I know all of you, and I know that you
10 do what you can do. But I beg of you, please protect
11 D.C. rate payers. Thank you.

12 MS. WESTBROOK: Riley Polka [ph].

13 MS. POLKA [PH]: Thank you all for
14 hosting this tonight, giving us an opportunity to
15 speak. My name is Riley Polka [ph]. I live here in
16 Ward 4, just up the street. Everything has been
17 covered. Thank you, everyone, for speaking. But I
18 guess I'll add my voice.

19 Today it's 75 degrees outside, 6 p.m.
20 It's been getting hotter all day, and we've been
21 noticing this all spring. It's been getting hotter
22 throughout the day, peaking kind of in the evening.

1 In 2018 the highest temp on April 21st
2 was 65 degrees. In 2010 it was 57. Have there been
3 higher temps on April 21st in that time? Yes. It's a
4 warming trend. I think the highest ever recorded
5 temperature was 80 degrees today.

6 But we all know over time things are
7 getting hotter. And I have to ask, don't we all miss
8 the spring? Unpredictable temperatures caused by gas
9 companies. Don't we all miss predictable
10 temperatures? Unpredictable temperatures like what we
11 have seen this winter with an incredibly harsh winter
12 after many very warm winters that were unseasonably
13 warm are caused by gas companies like Washington Gas.

14 You've heard it already today. You
15 probably hear it a lot.

16 As temperatures get warmer and fires
17 rage nearby in North Carolina and winters get shorter
18 and summer gets hotter and hotter, it's no secret that
19 the cost of living is getting higher and higher. It's
20 hard enough to afford to put clean healthy foods on
21 the table in my house. I work in the service
22 industry. My partner does, too.

1 We're very lucky to rent from somebody
2 who is renting out an apartment in his childhood home.
3 His father is a barber who runs the barber shop across
4 the street from where we live. So it's very lucky
5 that we have these jobs. We're probably not going to
6 be laid off, but at the same time I do make minimum
7 wage.

8 It's hard enough to keep healthy foods
9 in the house, let alone keep up with my bills. And
10 gas is one bill that has me continuously scratching my
11 head because why? With everything that we know in
12 this late hour are we still entertaining climate
13 warming energy sources?

14 If you follow the money, it turns out
15 almost every time -- every time, that coal, oil, and
16 natural gas companies are doing pretty much all they
17 can to keep themselves a mainstay in our society.

18 And so not to be, like, glib or super
19 naive, but as the nation's capital, we should be
20 leading by example. Do we get the representation?
21 No. Can we control what happens on Capitol Hill? No.
22 A lot of really scary stuff happening on that front

1 where we're concerned.

2 But we can be a front runner locally
3 for climate and people. Instead of pricing longtime
4 residents out of the city through greedy housing
5 deals, untreated public health crises, and senseless
6 gas bills, we should be embracing a myriad of
7 solutions that would not exacerbate the climate
8 crisis; that would not give kids, future leaders
9 hopefully, if they can stay in the city, childhood
10 asthma; and set an example of what is possible for
11 cities and people in America.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. THOMPSON: Thank you.

14 MS. WESTBROOK: Michael Steffes.

15 MR. STEFFES: What's going on, fellas?
16 Thank you for listening to everybody here tonight. I
17 know it's been a long one.

18 My name is Michael Steffes. I live
19 here in Ward 4. I work at a local business here in
20 Ward 4. I know it is already hard for me and my
21 partner to afford rent and our bills, and for my
22 bosses even harder to afford their climbing rent and

1 their climbing bills.

2 So I would just like to say that a
3 20 percent rate increase for residents is just not
4 justifiable. It seems like a cash grab to me. There
5 are so many people in this city that need help paying
6 their bills already. And for us to add another price
7 increase on top of a bill that seems to increase
8 already at an extremely intense rate is just flat out
9 dumb to me.

10 And on a federal level, I know that we
11 will not be receiving help. We all depend on you
12 gentlemen to do what's best, not only for us, but
13 what's for -- what's best for people that are less
14 privileged than us as well.

15 Thank you for listening to me,
16 gentlemen. Have a great night. Thank you so much.

17 MR. THOMPSON: I think we have -- so we
18 finished a list of people who signed up, who came in.
19 I just want to do one more check to make sure that
20 somebody who didn't -- yes sir.

21 MR. MONK: Thanks for having me talk.
22 This is the -- the first time I've --

1 MR. THOMPSON: And sorry, just please
2 state your name for the record.

3 MR. MONK: Hi. I'm Jeremiah, Jeremiah
4 Monk.

5 MR. THOMPSON: Spell your last name.

6 MR. MONK: M-O-N-K, like the -- the
7 detective on TV. Yeah. This is the first time I've
8 spoken at -- at something like this, so thank you very
9 much.

10 So I live in an apartment. We've got a
11 pretty small kitchen. My brother-in-law gave me an
12 air fryer. That thing is amazing. I can fry chicken
13 wings, chicken legs, shrimp, pot stickers. It's
14 great. It's all electric.

15 Then I got this used induction cooker.
16 It's like this big. My wife was really skeptical at
17 first. That thing boils water in half the time. I
18 can fry an egg so fast, like, it's like I just started
19 and then I'm done.

20 We haven't touched our gas range in six
21 months. It's great, you know. You know, even a
22 perfect pipe leaks a little bit. And there's a lot of

1 pipes around here that are not perfect. If I could
2 have no gas in my house, I would.

3 You know, everyone has been talking
4 about the asthma, making asthma worse, giving kids
5 asthma. You know, if -- if people have to pay for
6 something instead of paying more for getting the same
7 thing we already have, but maybe a little bit worse,
8 like, let -- let's electrify this city. Let -- let's
9 get better than what we've got already, you know.

10 And I -- before I came here tonight, I
11 didn't even know about the -- the normalization thing,
12 paying for gas that you don't use because the weather
13 was too warm. That's the biggest rip-off. It's not
14 the biggest rip-off I've ever heard of, but it's on
15 the list. It's pretty high up there. So thank you so
16 much.

17 MR. THOMPSON: Okay. Oh, yes, sir.
18 And when you come, just please state your name for the
19 record, please.

20 MR. BROWN: Of course, yeah. Thank
21 you. Hi. My name is Ari Brown. I've been a D.C.
22 resident for six and a half years. I oppose this rate

1 hike. I think this rate hike is unnecessary, and I do
2 not believe it accurately reflects the needs of the
3 utilities to cover their costs. And instead, it
4 places an unfair burden on the residents of the
5 District.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. THOMPSON: Okay. I would like to
8 say first, thank you all of you for coming today, and
9 thank you for your engagement and your comments. If
10 you wish to file written comments -- I know we have
11 some from Mr. Capozzi -- but if anybody else has
12 written comments or statements they would like to
13 file, they can be filed by sending them to the
14 commission secretary at
15 psc-commissionsecretary@dc.gov.

16 For further information on this
17 application and all subsequent filings in the
18 proceeding, they can be reviewed at any time on the
19 commission's website at www.dcpssc.org. Once at the
20 website, open the E-docket tab, click on "Search
21 Database," and input "FC 1180."

22 Copies of this transcript of the

1 community hearing will be available in that docket as
2 well usually within a week.

3 There being nothing further, this does
4 conclude this hearing.

5 We do have one more hearing, and that
6 is on April 29th at 6 p.m. in the commission hearing
7 room at 1325 G Street Northwest, Suite 800. That will
8 also have dial-in capability or streaming capability
9 for those who want to watch from other locations.

10 But there being nothing further, this
11 hearing is now concluded. Thank you, once again.

12 (Whereupon, at 6:34 p.m., the
13 proceeding was concluded.)
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1 CERTIFICATE

2 I, SAMUEL PACHON, the officer before whom
3 the foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby
4 certify that any witness(es) in the foregoing
5 proceedings, prior to testifying, were duly sworn;
6 that the proceedings were recorded by me and
7 thereafter reduced to typewriting by a qualified
8 transcriptionist; that said digital audio recording of
9 said proceedings are a true and accurate record to the
10 best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; that I am
11 neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any
12 of the parties to the action in which this was taken;
13 and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of
14 any counsel or attorney employed by the parties
15 hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the
16 outcome of this action.



17 SAMUEL PACHON

18 Notary Public in and for the

19 District of Columbia
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1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

2 I, SHAUNA WOOLLEY, do hereby certify that
3 this transcript was prepared from the digital audio
4 recording of the foregoing proceeding, that said
5 transcript is a true and accurate record of the
6 proceedings to the best of my knowledge, skills, and
7 ability; that I am neither counsel for, related to,
8 nor employed by any of the parties to the action in
9 which this was taken; and, further, that I am not a
10 relative or employee of any counsel or attorney
11 employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or
12 otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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14 

15 SHAUNA WOOLLEY
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