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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

-----Docket No.
 Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission vs. :R-00049157
 Philadelphia Gas Works. :P-00042090
 Annual 1307 (f) filing. And Petition :
 to establish a cash receipts reconciliation :
 clause. :
 Public Input Hearing. :

Pages 231 through 296

Philadelphia Community College
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 and Callowhill Streets)
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Thursday, May 6, 2004

Met, pursuant to notice, at 6:00 p.m.

BEFORE:

CHARLES E. RAINEY, JR., Administrative Law Judge

DOCKETED

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g.m

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Allyson Schwartz
(Testimony in Opposition to PGW'S Petition)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE CHARLES E. RAINEY:

1
2
3 Good evening. Welcome to this Public Input Hearing. This
4 Public Input Hearing involves the matters of Pennsylvania Public
5 Utility Commission versus Philadelphia Gas Works at Docket
6 Number R-00049157 and the Petition of Philadelphia Gas Works
7 to establish a Cash Receipts Reconciliation Clause at Docket
8 Number P-00042090. My name is Charles Rainey, and I am the
9 Administrative Law Judge who has been assigned to hear and
10 write a recommended decision in regard to these matters.

11 The Public Input Hearing is being held for the
12 purpose of allowing interested persons an opportunity to provide
13 testimony regarding PGW's filings. I believe that a brief
14 history of this proceeding may be helpful.

15 On March first, 2004 PGW filed a supplement to its
16 Gas Service Tariff designed to increase annual rates by 31.4
17 million dollars overall, effective September first, 2004.
18 According to PGW's filing, a typical residential heating
19 customer using 100,000 cubic feet, or MCF natural gas a year,
20 would see a \$5.00 increase in his or her monthly bill from
21 120 to \$125.

22 More specifically PGW's filed tarriff supplement
23 includes one, a proposed gas cost rate, or GCR of \$7.216 per
24 MCF, which represents a decrease in the GCR that was in effect
25 December first, 2003.

1 Two, a newly proposed Cash Receipts Reconciliation
2 Clause Surcharge, which based on PGW's current bill collection
3 projections is designed to recover 46.7 million dollars during
4 the first year it is in effect. Three, an increase in the
5 Restructuring and Consumer Education Surcharge. Four, an
6 increase in Universal Service Surcharge.

7 This case was assigned to me, and a prehearing
8 conference was held on March 15th, 2004. Parties present at the
9 prehearing conference were Philadelphia Gas Works, Office of
10 Trial Staff, Office of Consumer Advocate, Office of Small
11 Business Advocate, Action Alliance of Senior Citizens of Greater
12 Philadelphia, Association of Community Organizations for Reform
13 Now, Tenants Action Group and Consumer Education and Protective
14 Association, collectively referred to as Action Alliance, et al,
15 and the Philadelphia Industrial and Commercial Users Group.

16 At the prehearing conference I granted PGW's
17 Motion to Consolidate its Gas Costs Rate Filing with its Cash
18 Receipts Reconciliation Clause Petition for purposes of hearing
19 and disposition.

20 Petitions to Intervene were filed by
21 State Senator Vincent J. Fumo, Philadelphia City Council
22 President Anna C. Verna, and Philadelphia City Council members
23 James F. Kenney, Frank DiCicco, Michael A. Nutter, David Cohen,
24 Joan Krajewski, Juan F. Ramos, collectively referred to as
25 Senator Fumo, et al, the Philadelphia Housing Authority and

1 Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham.

2 No Answers in Opposition to the Petition to
3 Intervene were filed and the Petitions to Intervene were
4 granted.

5 A schedule for the submission of written testimony
6 and hearings was established at the prehearing conference and in
7 subsequent orders. The parties other than PGW were required to
8 submit written direct testimony by April 15th, 2004. Written
9 rebuttal testimony of parties other than PGW was due by April
10 30th. PGW's written rebuttal testimony was due on May third.
11 Parties written surebuttal testimony is due by May the 7th.

12 Public Input Hearings are being held today. We
13 had two Public Input Hearings today, this evening, and also we
14 had one at 1:00 p.m. and there was also a Public Input Hearing
15 that was held in Northeast Philadelphia yesterday evening.

16 Evidentiary hearings for the purpose of examining
17 the parties' technical witnesses will be held at Philadelphia
18 State Office Building on May 11 and 12 beginning at 10:00 a.m.
19 And the Philadelphia State Office Building is located at Broad
20 and Spring Garden Street. We're up on the 13th Floor.

21 The parties will file main briefs May 24 and reply
22 briefs June the first. I will subsequently render a written
23 recommended decision. The Commission will make a final decision
24 prior to September first, 2004. So concludes my brief
25 presentation of the history of this case.

1 You the public may participate in today's hearing
2 in one of three ways. The first way, and the one the Commission
3 finds preferable is that you submit sworn testimony under oath.
4 By giving sworn testimony the Commission may consider your
5 testimony when it decides this case. Sworn testimony may be
6 subject to questions from parties as well as from myself.

7 The second way is to provide unsworn testimony.
8 Unsworn testimony will not be considered by the Commission when
9 it makes its decision. The third way is to provide information
10 at a break or at the conclusion of this Public Input Hearing to
11 either the Office of Consumer Advocate, the Office of Small
12 Business Advocate or the Office of Trial Staff for its use at
13 its discretion at one of the evidentiary hearings.

14 Let me take the opportunity now to introduce Karen
15 Graves, who is the person who is sitting outside at the desk.
16 She is with our Bureau of Consumer Services, Commission's Bureau
17 of Consumer Services. There is some good information that is on
18 that desk. Some of that information may be helpful to you in
19 terms of being able to save money. So you may want to take a
20 look at that literature.

21 Also let me note that there are representatives
22 from PGW who are here, and at a break or at the conclusion of
23 this hearing they would be able to help you with any personal
24 questions that you have with regard to your bills. Let me now
25 allow Counsel who are present and who are representing formal

1 parties an opportunity to introduce themselves and also to make
2 a brief opening statement if they so choose.

3 We will start with Counsel for Philadelphia Gas
4 Works.

5 MR. STEWART: Good evening, everyone. Thank you
6 for taking the time to come out. My name is Mark Stewart. I
7 am an attorney representing Philadelphia Gas Works in this
8 proceeding before the Public Utility Commission, and with me
9 tonight are customer service representatives from Philadelphia
10 Gas Works. Should you have questions or concerns about specific
11 issues on your individual bills, problems that you have had in
12 the past we will be more than happy to try to talk to you about
13 them and try to resolve them either after the hearing or if
14 there is a break at that time.

15 This proceeding began before the PUC as part of an
16 annual filing that the company must make to set its gas cost
17 rate or the rates that PGW charges to recover costs that are
18 represented by the actual costs of natural gas that PGW uses and
19 provides to you as customers.

20 It's also to consider a Cash Receipts Reconciliation
21 Clause which PGW has proposed, and is designed to enable the
22 company to collect the money it needs to pay its bills and to
23 provide safe and reliable service. Tonight is really to hear
24 from you. It's important that you express your concerns to the
25 Commission and they're very important to the company as well.

1 So again, thank you for coming out.

2 JUDGE RAINEY: Office of Trial Staff.

3 MR. SIMMS: Good evening. First of all I want to
4 thank you for and welcome you to tonight's proceeding. My name
5 is Johnnie Simms. I am Chief Prosecutor in the Commission's
6 Office of Trial Staff. Our office is charged by statute to
7 represent the public interest in proceedings before the
8 Commission. I want to urge you to speak on the record by having
9 Your Honor swear you in so that the parties, Your Honor, and the
10 Commission can use your testimony as they make a determination
11 as to the outcome of this proceeding. Once again I want to
12 welcome you here tonight. I look forward to your testimony.

13 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you. Office of Consumer
14 Advocate.

15 MR. POPOWSKI: Thank you, Your Honor. My name is
16 Sonny Popowski, I'm a Consumer Advocate of Pennsylvania. My job
17 and my office's job is to represent consumers of PGW, PECO, and
18 other companies, and other utilities that appear before the
19 Public Utility Commission. In this particular case our office
20 has already filed papers at the PUC challenging and opposing the
21 PGW request for the reconcilable surcharge. But the purpose of
22 tonight's hearing is to hear from you. I encourage as many of
23 you to come forward as are willing to speak. I look forward to
24 hearing your testimony and I want to thank you for coming out
25 tonight.

1 JUDGE RAINEY: Office of Small Business Advocate.

2 MR. LLOYD: Good evening. My name William Lloyd,
3 and I am the Small Business Advocate of Pennsylvania. Our
4 office is a state agency which is responsible for representing
5 small business consumers before the Public Utility Commission.
6 We have filed formal testimony with the Commission in opposition
7 to PGW's proposal. Tonight is your opportunity as consumers to
8 tell us your views on this proposal. We've had good testimony
9 up in the Northeast last night and here this afternoon. I look
10 forward to what you have to say. Thank you.

11 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you. Action Alliance, et al.

12 MS. MUSKOWITZ: My name is Laura Muskowitz, I am
13 an attorney at Community Legal Services. We represent three
14 low income groups in this proceeding, Action Alliance of Senior
15 Citizens, Tenants Action Group and ACORN. We are opposing PGW's
16 surcharge because we believe it's unjust and unreasonable.

17 We welcome the public's comments.

18 JUDGE RAINEY: Senator Fumo, et al.

19 MR. HICKS: My name is Renardo Hicks. I'm a
20 private lawyer. I represent a number of Philadelphia public
21 officials in this proceeding. I want to tell you who they are
22 specifically so you know. I represent State Senator Vincent
23 Fumo, City Council President Anna Verna, Council members James
24 Kenney, Frank DiCicco, Michael Nutter, David Cohen, Joan
25 Krajewski and Juan Ramos and District Attorney Lynne Abraham in

1 this proceeding.

2 I represent them in their individual capacity as
3 PGW customers and I also represent them in their representation
4 capacity as public officials in the City of Philadelphia. I am
5 here in this proceeding principally for one reason, each one of
6 my clients opposes PGW's Cash Receipts Reconciliation Clause.

7 That's a long phrase, but in essence, each one of
8 my clients opposes customers who pay their bills having to carry
9 the weight for customers who don't pay their bills.

10 I look forward to your testimony. That's one of
11 the reasons why I wanted you to speak on the record.

12 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you. Now onto the important
13 business of taking your testimony. As I stated earlier, all of
14 those who want to testify need to sign the sign-in sheet. Also
15 prior to giving testimony I would ask that each witness provide
16 and spell their name and provide their address. Each witness
17 should also state whether he or she is a PGW customer. I will
18 begin on the list.

19 Is there someone here representing Senator Allyson
20 Schwartz? Come to the microphone and introduce who you are.

21 MR. MACNEAL: My name is Joseph M-A-C-N-E-A-L, Jr.
22 I represent State Senator Allyson Schwartz. I'm handing in
23 written testimony opposing PGW's surcharge proposal.

24 JUDGE RAINEY: What is your relationship with
25 Senator Allyson Schwartz?

1 THE WITNESS: Constituents Service Rep.

2 JUDGE RAINEY: You have written documentation
3 there?

4 THE WITNESS: I have a letter from her to you and
5 also 12 copies.

6 JUDGE RAINEY: Give me a copy, two copies to the
7 court reporter. You can hand copies to counsel as well.

8 THE WITNESS: Okay.

9 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you. Why don't we go to the
10 next person on the list. Edwina Williams.

11 EDWINA WILLIAMS,
12 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

13 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your full name for
14 the record.

15 THE WITNESS: Edwina E-D-W-I-N-A, Williams.

16 JUDGE RAINEY: Your address.

17 THE WITNESS: 5509 A-N-G-O-R-A Terrace.

18 JUDGE RAINEY: Are you a PGW customer?

19 THE WITNESS: Yes.

20 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your testimony.

21 THE WITNESS: I pay my bill two months in advance,
22 and after today I'm not going to do it anymore. I pay it two
23 months in advance, two weeks before it's due so I don't have to
24 pay it the following months because I do have other bills. I
25 don't think it's fair I should have to pay for someone else who

1 is delinquent. I pay my bills all the time. You will see I am
2 not a delinquent customer if you look on my records. It's not
3 fair. I can't afford it. I don't think it's fair to raise
4 people's bills. I know people on my block have 13 gas bills
5 \$1,300.

6 How -- I didn't do it -- you let the people's bill
7 get that high. Why didn't you shut the gas off? If I'm two
8 weeks late my bill is \$30, I guarantee you'll send a shut-off
9 notice. You know why you'll send it because I'm one of those
10 people that pay. You want to make sure you continue getting my
11 money. You don't care if I have anything to eat or I don't have
12 electric or I don't have water or I can't send my daughter in
13 college money. You're not thinking about it. You only think
14 about yourself.

15 Do you pay high gas bills? Is your gas bill that
16 high? You're not answering. Do you have to pay a gas bill that
17 high?

18 JUDGE RAINEY: Ma'am.

19 THE WITNESS: Do you have to pay the gas bill? Is
20 money coming out of your pocket? Is it coming out like it comes
21 out of mine? You're laughing. You're saying no. You're sitting
22 there in that suit, and I guarantee that suit costs \$600. It's
23 not fair. You go to nice expensive restaurants and eat steak
24 dinners. I have to cook out on a grill. I can't afford -- if
25 you shut my gas off, you're not going to suffer, I am.

1 You don't care about me the Consumer, all you want
2 is my money. Now answer, are you paying the way I'm paying?
3 Are they going to up your bill or is it free? You're not saying
4 a word? Are you paying for the bill? Are you paying like me?

5 JUDGE RAINEY: Ms. Williams, this is your
6 opportunity to testify.

7 THE WITNESS: I want to know. Just say yes or no.
8 So in other words, what you're saying if they can't answer my
9 question, what you're saying to me, this is a waste of time
10 because you're going up on my bill anyway. You went up on
11 March first. Did you go up on March first? I called the gas
12 company. I asked and they said oh, we went up March first.
13 Could you answer me?

14 MR. STEWART: The gas cost rate is adjusted
15 quarterly.

16 THE WITNESS: My gas is off. My bill went up
17 exactly one hundred bucks. When I called the lady, the first
18 thing she said, it's accurate. You know why it's accurate?
19 Because you put the meters in our house so you don't have to
20 come inside the house. You can raise the bill all you want.
21 When I call and tell you my bill is \$300 you say it's accurate,
22 it's not estimated.

23 You did this crap in advance so you could go up on
24 the customer. But you're pocketing the money, you're messing
25 up. Then you're going to make the poor people like us pay.

1 I can't afford it. You tell me what I can do because I can't
2 afford to give you \$150 during the summer months. I can't
3 afford to pay for -- my mother owes you \$800 and my brother is
4 delinquent, you should have been cut his bill off, \$1,000. I
5 can't afford it.

6 You put those people on a budget. You put them on
7 budget. If I don't pay my bill this month, I guarantee you will
8 send me a shut-off notice. You're looking at me like I'm crazy
9 but can you answer me? Do you have a gas bill like I do? Do
10 you live in Jersey, Delaware, don't go through it? Just poor
11 inner city people.

12 MR. STEWART: The employees of PGW have to pay for
13 gas.

14 THE WITNESS: How much do you pay?

15 MR. STEWART: I live in Harrisburg. I'm not an
16 employee of PGW.

17 THE WITNESS: Thank you. You just answered my
18 question.

19 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony.
20 Is there a Florence Saunders?

21 THE WITNESS: Right here.

22 FLORENCE SAUNDERS,
23 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

24 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your name, your
25 address and state whether you are a PGW customer.

1 THE WITNESS: Florence Saunders. S-A-U-N-D-E-R-S,
2 5814 North Woodstock Street. I am a PGW customer.

3 JUDGE RAINEY: Please present your testimony.

4 THE WITNESS: This is something that happened in
5 the past. It was an investigating grand jury, October of 1998.
6 Hawes and Martin, they were CEOs, they stole \$60,000 of PGW's
7 funds for the purchase and installation of a security system,
8 electric lighting and a decorative gas lantern. Martin had
9 electrical work done at his home at PGW's expense. PGW'S board
10 neither knew of or authorized any of the expenditures which were
11 paid through a third-party vendor and remained hidden until the
12 board moved to terminate Martin's employment. It was Gregory
13 Martin also.

14 It goes on and on because this really did happen.
15 What I have to say about this, it's a possibility PGW has more
16 CEO's like former James Hawes, Gregory Martin and Sharbutt, he
17 was another one. I believe the problem not only lies on PGW's
18 customers not paying their bills, but also within PGW's
19 management.

20 And if this surcharge is passed, PGW will be
21 bankrupt next year. What PGW can do, maybe they should post the
22 names of deadbeats in the local paper. If they're embarrassed
23 they should pay up.

24 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you, Ms. Saunders. Bertha
25 Middleton. May I swear you in?

1 THE WITNESS: Yes

2 BERTHA MIDDLETON,

3 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

4 THE WITNESS: I do.

5 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your name, also
6 provide your address and state whether you are a PGW customer.

7 THE WITNESS: My name is Bertha
8 M-I-D-D-L-E-T-O-N. I live at 1544 Queens Place. 769-5486.

9 JUDGE RAINEY: Are you a PGW customer?

10 THE WITNESS: Yes.

11 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your testimony.

12 THE WITNESS: First, I'm a senior citizen, I'm
13 on a fixed income. I can't afford any extra on my gas bill.
14 Because when I get a little respite in the summertime, money
15 I was spending for gas goes towards electric for air-
16 conditioning because I'm a diabetic and I need cool in the
17 summertime. I need heat in the wintertime. I don't open my
18 window to let heat out nor the cold because we can't afford it.

19 My medicine has more than tripled in the last
20 year. Sometimes I have to skip one dose, if I take it in the
21 morning, I skip at night. If I take it at night I skip it in
22 the morning, just to stretch it because it's so high now. It's
23 so high that my doctor is trying to help me get my medicine from
24 Canada. On a fixed income we have to really, let's say tonight,
25 I'm wearing clothes I had two years ago.

1 I can't afford new clothes because Social Security,
2 when they give you an increase, it's not enough to stretch. In
3 other words, I have to do without some things to pay for other
4 things. I'm opposed to the increase for the gas company. Thank
5 you.

6 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony. Is
7 there a Selina Colbert?

8 THE WITNESS: That's me.

9 JUDGE RAINEY: May I swear you in?

10 THE WITNESS: Yes.

11 SELINA COLBERT,
12 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

13 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your name, provide
14 your address, state whether you are a PGW customer.

15 THE WITNESS: Selina Colbert, S-E-L-I-N-A,
16 C-O-L-B-E-R-T, 5086 Morris Street Philadelphia, PA 19144.
17 First of all, I will say I have no other choice but to be PGW a
18 customer. We have no other competition. I have no other
19 choice. I have a couple of things.

20 I just learned Pennsylvania only gets federal
21 funds. They said the majority of all states except maybe two or
22 three get state and federal funds to help the needy. We only
23 get federal here. Why didn't they go ask the State for help?
24 Why do they have to come to me when I could be behind closed
25 doors eating cat or dog food and yet I'm trying to stay warm?

1 It's easier to try to pay the bill and stay warm
2 than to ask a neighbor for a bowl of soup. The other thing,
3 every since they put the meters in -- and we need to ask
4 everybody to crack their meters so they can't read it. That
5 would be a mass demonstration crack meters and turn the clock.

6 The next thing, do all the people on PGW live in
7 Pennsylvania or do they live over there in Jersey and come over
8 here and work over here behind closed doors? It may be cheaper
9 for them over there where they live in Jersey. They need to
10 stop their raises. All of us across the country have taken a
11 cut. I work for the state. I don't get a raise for three
12 years. I have to pay a certain percentage for medical, pretty
13 soon. My gas bill is going up. Why is that?

14 Another thing I would suggest, I have been in my
15 house for ten years. For years I paid that little bill if I
16 wanted repairs on my water heater and never used it, what did
17 you do with those funds? For years I paid that and something
18 came in my mind. You better stop paying it. I started reading
19 the fine-print. I asked the guy to come out and clean my heater
20 because I was paying the bill. They said it's not included.

21 Where did the \$80 go? You have in fine print, I
22 can't put a screw in there -- when you have so many paying the
23 \$80. We're getting ripped off big time. Someone needs to
24 disclose what about your raises. Nobody talks about what the
25 people in PGW, are they getting raises.

1 Maybe you need a new Commission. Everything else
2 is changing. Change the PGW's Commission. Change it. Get new
3 staff on there. This is the year 2000. I have one question:
4 Where does natural gas come from? Are you trying to be like
5 President Bush, and oil is going up, gas is going up? We need
6 to take it to the streets and have a mass demonstration the way
7 I just said it. Break the meters.

8 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony.
9 Elizabeth Signil. I'm sorry if I'm mispronouncing your name.
10 Let me swear you.

11 ELIZABETH SIGNIL,
12 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

13 THE WITNESS: Yes.

14 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your name. I will
15 ask you to spell your last name. Also provide your address and
16 state whether you are a PGW customer.

17 THE WITNESS: Elizabeth Signil, S-I-G-N-I-L.
18 Yes, I am a PGW customer. My address is 2328 Dickinson Street,
19 Philadelphia 19146.

20 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your testimony.

21 THE WITNESS: As I said before, my name Elizabeth
22 Signil. I am a PGW customer, who has lived on the 2300 block
23 of Dickinson Street for 40 years. I worked as a teacher in
24 Philadelphia for four decades, most recently at Lincoln
25 University before retiring in 1997.

1 I'm here today as a member of the Philadelphia
2 Workers Benefit Council, which is a delegate body representing
3 low-income workers in Philadelphia. I am also here as a rate
4 payer and a concerned citizen. I am sick and tired, and I have
5 had enough. The rates are out of hand. The PUC has sanctioned
6 it. The poor are dying from it. I and other customers are
7 paying for it. This must end.

8 There is a contradiction between what the
9 government is mandated to do by law and what it is actually
10 doing. PGW is a municipally-owned utility. It exists to
11 provide gas to the people of Philadelphia for heating and
12 cooking. It exists to do this safely and at reasonable rates.
13 But PGW is failing to do its duty.

14 By its own admission, more than half of its
15 customers cannot afford its product. In testimony submitted to
16 you, Judge Rainey, for this hearing, PGW's own expert says, and
17 I quote, "It is likely that upwards of 50 percent of households
18 will be increasingly unable to pay full gas bills due to changes
19 in the national economy for which no solution is currently
20 evident."

21 In the course of my life, I have worked as a nurse
22 and a school teacher. I think I know a little bit about what
23 makes a successful institution. A school that fails more than
24 50 percent of its students isn't worthy of its name. A hospital
25 that makes more than 50 percent of its patients sicker ought to

1 be shut down.

2 A gas company that by its own admission provides a
3 product 50 percent of its customers can't afford is not a public
4 utility. So who is at fault? If a school fails, are the kids
5 the culprits? If a hospital is broken, are the patients to
6 blame? According to PGW's own testimony, the group hardest hit
7 by economic disaster are middle-class families with children.
8 Are these the bad guys? According to PGW's latest financial
9 statement, they spent \$2.8 million last year on marketing.

10 How many ads did they pay for that attacked those
11 same middle-class families as deadbeats? How many press
12 releases did they subsidize, claiming that those families chose
13 not to pay, as if they had million-dollar dividend checks
14 flooding to them in the mail, not bills for electricity, not
15 bills for water, not bills for rent, nor bills for health
16 insurance; or a record number of foreclosure notices from banks
17 ready to put padlocks on their property if they fall two or
18 three months behind.

19 The first thing we have to do is cut through the
20 lies and deal with fact. The medium household income in
21 Philadelphia is \$30,000 per year. The average PGW bill has
22 risen more than \$900 a few years ago to \$1,450 today. Together
23 with rent or mortgage payments, that represents close to 50
24 percent of the medium household's annual income. And it's going
25 to get worse.

1 According to PGW's own testimony, Philadelphia
2 is experiencing a substantial and continuing decline in real
3 income. That affects all income groups. So how does PGW
4 propose to solve its problems? Raise the rates again, introduce
5 a \$47 million surcharge on customers it admits are already
6 increasingly unable to pay. How brilliant.

7 Is there someone in PGW'S office on Montgomery
8 Avenue who plans to invent a formula for making $0 + 0 = 1$? Do
9 they have an alchemist who can in fact squeeze blood from a
10 stone? Because their own analysis of the problem and their
11 proposed solutions are not logical. They just don't make
12 sense. Before you can choose a correct solution, you have to
13 identify the right problem.

14 The problem is as that as PGW testifies, real
15 incomes are going down for more and more Philadelphians,
16 semi-skilled or college-educated, union or non-union, service
17 worker or professional. Our local leaders are not addressing
18 that problem. PGW and City officials are not doing everything
19 that they can to lower rates to affordable levels for
20 customers.

21 They're not doing anything to bring money into the
22 bottom of our community's economy in the form of living wages --
23 jobs -- so that more of us can pay all of the bills that we're
24 trying so hard to keep up with. PGW says that in September
25 2002, it was paying \$2.45 to its suppliers for each thousand

1 cubic feet of gas. This past September, it was paying \$7.92 per
2 thousand cubic feet of gas. That's almost a four-fold increase
3 in just one year. Why is it rising?

4 As reported in the April fourth issue of the
5 Philadelphia Inquirer this year, speculative investment funds
6 poured huge sums into the oil and gasoline futures markets in
7 the last three months, scoring windfall profits for their
8 investors while driving fuel costs up for customers. The
9 article reports that hedge funds, most of whose investors are
10 well-off individuals, as the better performing funds typically
11 have minimum investment levels of at least \$100,000, with some
12 as high as \$1 million or even \$5 million have added as much as
13 seven cents to the cost of a gallon of gasoline.

14 The same process is at work behind soaring natural
15 gas prices, and the same tiny group of tremendously wealthy
16 interests are benefitting. There is another way. According to
17 the testimony that the Office of Consumer Advocates submitted to
18 you, Judge Rainey, for this hearing in the past PGW has
19 represented its rate payers in proceedings at the Federal Energy
20 Regulatory Commission. Its Federal Regulatory Affairs
21 Department has monitored FERC proceedings and has intervened in
22 several cases where the litigation might affect PGW's rate payer
23 interest.

24 In the past, the company has also participated in
25 some rule-making proceedings, and on occasion it has filed

1 petitions for review to challenge certain FERC opinions and
2 orders.

3 But he concludes that this time, PGW has not done
4 everything it could to fight for lower prices from these
5 suppliers. Instead, PGW officials are coming back to us for
6 more money. They are entreating us to buy less, to conserve.
7 But we find that no matter how much less we buy, each unit of
8 what we buy costs more. So we pay the same more or less.

9 Natural gas and oil are growing more expensive
10 just sitting in the ground, black gold has been hoarded for the
11 future. The Government conspicuously cooperates with those who
12 drain us dry.

13 In 1989, the Wellhead Decontrol Act looked at
14 regulations on the sale of natural gas. The Federal Energy
15 Regulatory Commission is aiding and abetting the process of
16 profiteering, not slowing it down.

17 Who decides whose stove gets shut off first, whose
18 furnace goes cold? Not those of us least politically
19 powerful; those of us least able to pay. We are forced to give
20 up our heat and housing first. Obviously we're deemed the
21 expendable Americans.

22 You might not think it affects you, but
23 expendability climbs up the ladder of economic strata every
24 day. Yesterday's union worker is today's downsized head of
25 household. Who will be next? This is economic triage, and we

1 are the third category, the wounded, no longer wanted. The ones
2 left to die. While they will concentrate on shrinking groups
3 who can pay more for less.

4 If this surcharge is approved, thousands of those
5 who at instigation of PGW's ads have been passionately
6 condemning delinquents this spring will be deadbeats themselves
7 next year. When will it end? I need to say something about the
8 scare tactic, PGW is trying to extort another \$47 million from
9 us by means of this surcharge. PGW says it has to raise the
10 rates because its bond holders say so.

11 On April 23rd, 2004, Fitch ratings lowered two
12 groups of PGW revenue bonds almost to junk status. Earlier in
13 the month, Standard and Poor's lowered its ratings, too.
14 Clearly the bondholders are putting pressure on PGW to increase
15 its cash flow, and PGW is doing just that. PGW is doing the
16 first reactionary management thing that comes into its mind,
17 cutting the people off and imposing a new surcharge.

18 Never mind that cutting people off is an expensive
19 procedure, never mind the PGW's own testimony characterizes its
20 customer base as increasingly unable to pay. They see no reason
21 because they are afraid. The problem with living on debt as PGW
22 has been doing is that you must maintain your credit ratings so
23 that you can borrow again and not be shunned by your creditors,
24 because when you live on credit, having no credit means you die,
25 you crash, you burn, no more living it up, you are poor. The

1 truth, is you always were and only lived at the behest of your
2 creditors.

3 Starting in September 2004, PGW plans to enter the
4 capital market yet again, earlier than it had planned for a new
5 bond issue of between \$125 and \$150 million. As Joseph
6 Bogdonavage states on testimony on behalf of PGW, if PGW's cash
7 liquidity issues have not been resolved by the time the bond is
8 marketed, it could result in substantially higher interest rates
9 at best, at worst it could substantially impede the company's
10 access to the marketplace for capital funding.

11 As of July 1, 2002, PGW had nearly \$1
12 billion dollars in debt outstanding. Over the next 12 months,
13 it proceeded to go an additional \$107 million in debt.
14 According to PGW's financial statement, from August 31st, 2003,
15 rate payers financed \$56.7 million in interest payments last
16 year. This went to out of town investors through payments to
17 institutions like Goldman, Sachs, JP Morgan, and even the
18 Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. These interest payments
19 amounted to nearly twice as much as PGW's entire budget for
20 field services, they total more than four times as much as PGW's
21 entire customer service budget. Because these are municipal
22 bonds, the owners pay no local taxes, no state taxes and no
23 federal taxes. They get dividends and they get interest. Pure
24 profit.

25 So what do we have? PGW obviously feels that the

1 bond agencies and the hedge funds have them by the neck. They
2 aren't willing to speak out, so they are holding us up for the
3 money. I thank Judge Rainey and the other staff members with
4 the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission for inviting our
5 input today. My question to the five members of PUC, who will
6 ultimately decide on this matter is a simple one: Are you
7 afraid too? Are you so threatened by schemes of those
8 profiteers that you will turn a blind eye to the total lack of
9 logic in PGW's own arguments? Are you going to let investors
10 who have \$100,000 or \$1 million or \$5 million gamble on the fact
11 that my gas will be more next winter, decide for our community
12 what our rates will be, or are you willing to join us in putting
13 up a fight?

14 I'm willing to call a spade a spade. The hundreds
15 of workers, of other low income workers I speak for on the
16 Philadelphia Workers Benefit Council are too. And I think there
17 are others in this room that feel the same way I do. If you
18 approve the increase at all, you will be making the economy
19 worse for 95 percent of all families.

20 This is yet another trickle-down economic scheme,
21 just like the Keystone Empowerment zones, work their programs
22 and the privatization of public services, like these programs
23 this surcharge, the privitization siphons money from a working
24 majority to a wealthy minority. If the surcharge is approved
25 the 300 -- 3,500 households, who by PGW's own estimate went

1 through this past winter with no heat at all, will be joined by
2 perhaps thousands more in the winter of 2005.

3 Now that the moratorium is over, their service has
4 been or will be terminated. With bills this high, they won't be
5 able to turn their gas back on. Meanwhile, those households
6 still fortunate enough to have heat will pay a total of \$47
7 million more for it. And where will all this money go? Into
8 profits concentrated in the hands of a group, the richest one
9 percent of the population, whose income has more than doubled in
10 the last 25 years while its tax burden has fallen.

11 Real economic recovery and survival starts with
12 placing money at the bottom. This can be done, but it's only
13 possible if local officials, including the members of the PUC
14 decide they have had enough of a policy that profits a few at
15 the expense of the lives of the public they are supposed to
16 defend. I call on you today to band together with the
17 low-income working families who are targeted, fight with us
18 against manipulation of wealthy energy market speculators and
19 the tightening grip of large bondholders.

20 After all, you have to pay utility bills, too.
21 Denounce the application of responsibility on the part of
22 federal officials, notably the agents in charge with overseeing
23 the nation's energy industry, the Federal Energy Regulatory
24 Commission in allowing natural gas rates to rise this high.
25 Urge PGW to fight to defend its rate payers as it has done in

1 the past. Fight to freeze the rates, not the rate payers.

2 Thank you for your time.

3 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony.

4 MR. STEWART: I have a few questions for

5 Ms. Signil.

6 JUDGE RAINEY: Attorney for PGW has some questions

7 for you. Would you mind coming back to the mike? You can take

8 your time. Would you mind coming back to the microphone?

9 MR. STEWART: Thank you very much. Just a few
10 questions. You were here earlier today, but did not testify at
11 that time. Is there any particular reason for that?

12 THE WITNESS: No, I wasn't supposed to speak at
13 the first hearing. I was scheduled for this evening. When I
14 spoke, I spoke for a person who had to leave early.

15 MR. STEWART: Well, let me ask you, is the
16 Philadelphia Workers Benefit Council represented by an
17 attorney?

18 THE WITNESS: We have attorneys that are
19 volunteering.

20 MR. STEWART: Did they assist in the drafting of
21 your statement?

22 THE WITNESS: That I wouldn't know.

23 MR. STEWART: You referenced quite a bit of
24 testimony from this proceeding. Have you personally reviewed
25 the testimony in this case?

1 THE WITNESS: Did I?

2 MR. STEWART: Have you personally reviewed the
3 testimony that you quoted in your statement?

4 THE WITNESS: Yes.

5 (Whereupon, the audience began to make comments.)

6 JUDGE RAINEY: The court reporter needs to take
7 down the testimony of people who have identified themselves, and
8 to the extent that people are calling out, we don't know who
9 they are. Of course it's very disruptive to the proceeding
10 itself. Counsel, I am going to cut you off with regard to your
11 questions at this particular point in time because I think that
12 it can have a chilling effect with regard to the testimony which
13 the Commission needs to hear this evening from the public. I
14 don't want to get bogged down in technicalities you appear to
15 want to be involved in. . .

16 MR. STEWART: I would ask -- this is clearly
17 testimony along the lines of testimony that intervenors would
18 submit in this case. Obviously the deadline for that type of
19 testimony has long since passed.

20 JUDGE RAINEY: To extent that you're making an
21 objection, I will overrule your objection.

22 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much, Your Honor.

23 MR. STEWART: I'm asking for a chance to respond.

24 JUDGE RAINEY: I'm going to overrule any objection
25 you made, Counsel. We're going to continue taking testimony.

1 JUDGE RAINEY: Della Reese Clayton.

2 THE WITNESS: I'm Della Reese Clayton.

3 DELLA REESE CLAYTON,

4 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

5 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your name, address
6 and state whether you are a PGW customer.

7 THE WITNESS: D-E-L-L-A R-E-E-S-E, C-L-A-Y-T-O-N,
8 2129 South Garnett Street. Yes, I am a PGW customer.

9 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your testimony.

10 THE WITNESS: I just moved into a home, actually
11 the 21st of December. I hadn't been in my home for a month and
12 a half. On the second month, which was February, I received a
13 bill for \$450. I wasn't even in the house for a month and a
14 half. I had to call and ask where was my bill. Because all my
15 bills came in, I paid all my bills. I wanted to know how did my
16 bills get so high. I was in my home two weeks in December, into
17 a whole month of January. When I called to ask about the bill,
18 they were telling me they couldn't bill for the short period of
19 time I was in the house. So it went over into January, then
20 into February.

21 They told me I used 334 cubic meters. From that
22 point, January to February, to March to read my meter on the day
23 that you told me you come out to my house, you come out to my
24 house -- this was quoted -- you come to read my meter on the 8th
25 I have been marking down each and every one of my meter reads.

1 I only use 51 kilowatts a month.

2 So where you got from December, last two weeks in
3 December through the month of January and February to 334 cubic
4 meters. My heat stays on 67. When we were coming up my mother
5 had our heat on 69. So 67 my house is burning up. I leave out
6 my house at a quarter of six and get home at 5:30. I cook once
7 a week. That's 5:30 on a Sunday.

8 I don't understand how my bill became \$450. I was
9 told because we had a harsh winter, that's why my bill was that
10 high. If my heat was on 67 with me not touching the thermostat
11 at all, there is no reason that my bill should be that high.

12 I called February eleven, I faxed a letter, they
13 told me to fax a letter in. So I faxed it right in. I spoke to
14 three supervisors. I was told Mr. Lopez was going to call me.
15 He didn't call. Three others called me. I called, I faxed a
16 letter in with dates of readings and what was told to me.

17 I then went into the office. They told me not to
18 pay the bill until they checked the bill out. No one got in
19 touch with me. March came, and I still didn't receive a bill.
20 I had to call again and I was told, "Ma'am, your bill is being
21 printed now and sent right out."

22 My bill was supposed to be from May eighth to
23 April eighth, \$106. You tell me from the end of December until
24 the month of January to the beginning of February, 52 days,
25 because it's a 30-day billing cycle, not a 52- billing cycle.

1 I can't afford to pay \$450 gas bill for a month's and a half
2 time. If I moved in my house on the 21st of December I would
3 think from the date I got the gas cut on in my name until the
4 next following month would be my 30-day billing cycle.

5 If I sit here and calculate and subcontract my
6 meter reading from January to February that determines cubic
7 feet that I use, am I correct, you send me a bill, you have down
8 here my usage is \$239. You have customer charges of \$12, that's
9 every month, just for using gas, you have distribution charge,
10 and that's for \$178, and gas cost adjustment, \$15. Then weather
11 normalization charge, \$7.00. Could someone explain to me, my
12 total bill comes to \$450.

13 When I called and received \$106, then they tagged
14 on an extra \$200. So my bill that's waiting is 650, plus 106
15 that I just paid. It's not just to low income or senior
16 citizens. Because I am a mother of three and taking care of a
17 grandchild.

18 Let me tell you, I make \$14 a hour, the time they
19 deduct taxes and medical out I'm bringing home \$800. My rent is
20 \$700. I'm left with \$300 to pay a gas bill, electric bill and a
21 phone bill, because it don't permit you to have cable. It's not
22 a necessity, do you understand? Which leaves me nothing to put
23 food on the table. So that means we can't cloth ourselves or
24 feed ourselves. A lot of people don't live in Philadelphia so
25 you don't have to feel it.

1 I'm not getting paid on salary. I'm getting paid
2 hourly. So I'm not making six figures, four figures where I
3 can be able to afford for you to tell me every month my bill is
4 something different. Let them cut my heat off. I'm waiting for
5 my bill to come in this month and tell me what it is. Now if I
6 use 51 kilowatts, where did you come up with 52 days, 334 cubic
7 meters?

8 They haven't called me. I wrote to Commissioners.
9 Here is my letter that I faxed. I still didn't hear nothing as
10 of this point. But yet I receive a letter telling me you're
11 going to shut my gas off. I have coworkers that live in a
12 single-family house, and they told me, "Della, it's no sense,
13 you can't argue, you can't win. They will make you pay. He
14 lives in a single-family home. His bill is \$650 for a month.
15 That is a pure rip off.

16 If I have to walk around with jackets and sweaters
17 on and my thermostat is 67 that is a rip off. I don't cook
18 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, but on Sunday,
19 because I get home and I'm tired. Don't tell me that cooking
20 gas is going to cost 80 or \$90. Cooking gas don't cost that
21 much.

22 It just don't make sense. You're talking about
23 raising people's gas up for people that can't afford to pay.
24 But how about people that might not be able to pay because their
25 bills have been escalated over the years or over the months.

1 That's the reason they can't afford to pay, because
2 you're coming up with enormous amounts, saying people are using
3 that amount when they're not. So take my name. I haven't heard
4 anything. I have to call the gas company every month to find
5 out when I'm receiving a bill. I want to pay my bills. But I
6 want my bill to be correct. I want it to be true to what I use.
7 I don't have a problem paying my bill. I want it to be true.
8 No one got back in touch with me yet with regard to the bill.

9 You tell me the billing cycle goes from 32 days to
10 another 32 days. It's either a 28 or 30 day cycle. I rest my
11 case, Your Honor.

12 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony. Let
13 me state also that, Karen Graves, who I made note of earlier,
14 who is sitting outside, is with the Bureau of Consumer Services,
15 can help anyone interested in filing an informal complaint
16 against the company, to the extent that you feel that you've
17 exhausted all remedies you felt you had with the company itself
18 in terms of the problems that you have pursued with it.

19 With that the next speaker is Jacquelin Clayton.
20 Ms. Clayton, let me swear you in.

21 JACQULYN CLAYTON,
22 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

23 JUDGE RAINEY: I will ask you to provide your full
24 name, spelling your first name, and also state whether or not
25 you are a PGW customer, and provide your address.

1 THE WITNESS: My name is Jacquelyn J-A-C-Q-U-L-Y-N,
2 Clayton. I live at 209 Mifflin Street. I'm a Philadelphia Gas
3 customer. I want to thank all of the speakers who spoke before
4 me. They have all of their homework together. I may not have
5 all of the information, but on my behalf I'm on a fixed income,
6 I have arthritis, and I feel as though I can't afford to pay for
7 someone else's gas that I'm not using. Mine is high enough.

8 If you look around in my neighborhood, you see
9 homes are depreciated. They're not there. You can look around
10 and see not that many people here because they can't come and
11 voice their opinions because they know they're going to override
12 what they're saying. I'm trying to explain for myself, but I do
13 appreciate the people that came out to say what they had to say.

14 Because the City, State and everybody has so much
15 money that they're taking from other things, but they want to
16 take everything we have. We can't afford the bills. We don't
17 have money to pay them. I don't work. I don't have any more
18 money coming to me. I can't afford to pay them. I want to
19 thank you all for hearing my testimony.

20 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you. Leola Tate.

21 LEOLA TATE,
22 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

23 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your full name,
24 also provide your address, and state whether or not you are a
25 PGW customer.

1 THE WITNESS: My name is Leola Tate. L-E-O-L-A,
2 T-A-T-E. I am a gas customer. I pay my gas bill. Plus I work
3 for LIHEAP. I do applications, too.

4 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your testimony.

5 THE WITNESS: My testimony is, taking from the
6 needy, giving to the greedy. I don't think it's fair for what
7 the gas company is doing. The gas company and electric and
8 water is doing the same thing, taking from the people money what
9 they can't afford to pay. Like they said, people are on fixed
10 incomes and can't afford to pay these things. I don't think
11 it's right for them charging charges like they're a bank,
12 interest and late charges.

13 I mean some of these applications I do, people
14 got a little bit of money, that's a little pension or Social
15 Security check, here they come in with a five or \$600 gas bill.
16 How are they going to pay it? If people have to freeze to death
17 because they can't pay gas, or you have water cut off because
18 you can't pay water or electric cut off because you can't pay
19 your electric bill.

20 I think it's a disgrace, the Government took the
21 seal off utility companies and they're outrageous. I think the
22 Government needs to come back and put seals back on. It's
23 against the law for utilities to be more than your cost of
24 living. How can you pay for medicine? How can you pay for rent
25 or mortgage, when they're taking everything.

1 Another thing I wanted to bring up, LIHEAP, the
2 reason a lot of people can't get LIHEAP, because they're going
3 by your gross. They should go by the net and they would be able
4 to get LIHEAP and help them on their bills. We need to work
5 together. If the money is that bad let the top dollars go,
6 lower their salary.

7 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you. Next we have Tully
8 Speaker. Let me swear you in, sir.

9 TULLY SPEAKER,
10 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

11 THE WITNESS: Yes.

12 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your full name,
13 spell your first name, also provide your address and state
14 whether or not you're a PGW customer.

15 THE WITNESS: Tully, T-U-L-L-Y Speaker, like
16 Speaker of the House, 2112 Cherry Street. Yes I am a
17 Philadelphia Gas Company rate payer.

18 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your testimony, sir.

19 THE WITNESS: Thank you. First I want to say
20 that I oppose the proposed surcharge. I base that on the belief
21 that PGW has apparently not exercised its responsibilities to
22 collect delinquent accounts from people who are able to pay
23 them. It has failed to enforce its own regulations stating that
24 delinquent accounts will be shut off, because there are
25 repeatedly in the newspapers, several media, statements that

1 people are two and three, four years in arrears, they have
2 enormous bills. PGW has not acted to stop those accumulating
3 deficits.

4 PGW has apparently not exercised the usual and
5 customary management responsibility in its operations. We moved
6 twice within the last four years and had enormous difficulties
7 getting bills for the prior residence taken care of, getting
8 service established at a new residence, disentangling bills from
9 one residence versus another.

10 When we went to PGW offices my wife and I, we
11 encountered delay, stalling, failure to understand, loss
12 of or misplacement of records, just a horrendous tangle of
13 mismanagement and failure on the part of clerks who staff
14 PGW offices to accommodate the needs of their up-to-date rate
15 payers.

16 I wanted to point out that there is a very strong
17 difference in the performance of the office clerks and guys who
18 come out and dig up the streets and hookup gas and take care of
19 breaks and mains. Those heavy laborers do beautifully. The
20 managerial staff seem, at least from my perspective, to be a
21 disaster.

22 There is also a concern on my part, and on my
23 wife's part, I will speak for her on this, in this use of a
24 substantial amount of PGW's funds to support community
25 activities -- perfectly okay to have community activities --

1 reasonable, responsible, desirable community activities. But if
2 PGW is telling us it's broke or is going broke then it shouldn't
3 be handing out dollars to every community group that comes
4 asking for some minor or major support.

5 I have said what I have to say.

6 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Jane
7 Speaker. Mrs. Speaker, let me swear you in.

8 JANE SPEAKER,
9 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

10 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your name, address
11 and also state whether you are a PGW customer.

12 THE WITNESS: Jane Speaker, J-A-N-E, S-P-E-A-K-E-R.
13 I live at 2112 Cherry Street. And I am a PGW customer. I think
14 this meeting is getting long and I will simply confirm what
15 Tully has said.

16 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you, Mrs. Speaker.

17 Mae Lester. May I swear you in?

18 THE WITNESS: Yes.

19 MAE LESTER,
20 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

21 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your full name for
22 the record, spell your last name, and also state whether you're
23 a PGW customer, and provide your address.

24 THE WITNESS: My name is Mae, M-A-E, Lester,
25 L-E-S-T-E-R, 5466 Arlington Street, Philadelphia 19131. Yes, I

1 am a PGW customer. I start my statement by saying I am incensed
2 and irate and mad. Why? First I am already dissatisfied with
3 disservice of PGW. On February ninth a crew replaced my
4 neighbors' and my gas lines leading to the street. To make a
5 long story short we still have a hole the size of a child's
6 grave with two capped pipes sticking one and a half foot above
7 the ground. We have made numerous calls to no avail. We now
8 have a new neighbor with five or six children, and I absolve
9 myself of any responsibility if those children tamper with those
10 pipes, an accident waiting to happen.

11 My gas bill in February was approximately
12 \$415.84. On my fixed income I could only squeeze my budget to
13 pay 315.84. In March it was 312, plus 100 left over. I still
14 paid 312. I couldn't afford to pay \$400 out of a fixed income.
15 Since the amount for this month is 212, plus 100 I will be able
16 to bring it up-to-date.

17 The gas company already includes a weather
18 normalization fee which I haven't -- I only heard one person
19 mention but according to my understanding that weather
20 normalization helps the company if the winter is not as cold as
21 expected to be. We're paying that already. This month on my
22 bill, which has \$212 plus \$100 I owe, I think I got a credit of
23 \$4.00. That was from the weather normalization fee. What more
24 can the gas company expect frankly? Consumers pay so their
25 bills don't get out of hand.

1 It's not that they have all the money they need.

2 Give us a break. We can't afford to pay more.

3 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony.

4 Barry Hicks. Let me swear you in.

5 BARRY HICKS,

6 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

7 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your full name, also
8 provide your address, and state whether you are a PGW customer.

9 THE WITNESS: My name is Barry Hicks. I live at
10 124 North Edgewood Street, Philadelphia, PA. I'm a PGW customer
11 and have been since 1969. First, it's ironic that I'm in this
12 room tonight because in this very room by running Boys and Girls
13 Club, YMCA, teaching in the Philadelphia School District I have
14 been in here talking to young folks about doing the right thing,
15 go to school, get a job, start a business pay your bills on
16 time.

17 This is wrong, everybody who's paid their bill on
18 time, as I have, every month ahead of time, this is totally
19 wrong. You're sending the wrong message. You're saying to
20 those folks who do the right thing we're going to screw you
21 anyway. It's wrong. For all those past CEOs, and those who've
22 done wrong to PGW, make them pay full restitution, if they have
23 not paid, make them pay today. For the good lawyer, who's
24 probably making \$150 an hour, do it for free, see if you like
25 it. I'm trying to -- I don't want to pay for everybody else.

1 I made a decision to not have cable, not go out
2 sometimes. I send my daughter to college so she can do the
3 right thing and pay her bills on time. If this is what she has
4 to look forward to I will be leaving Philadelphia as everybody
5 else is as soon as they can because this is totally unfair.

6 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony. Is
7 there a Cassie Prichard? Let me swear you in?

8 CASSIE PRICHARD,
9 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

10 JUDGE RAINEY: Provide your name, spell your name,
11 and also provide your address and state whether you are a PGW
12 customer.

13 THE WITNESS: Cassie Prichard, C-A-S-S-I-E,
14 P-R-I-C-H-A-R-D. I am here representing my mother who is a PGW
15 customer, Germaine G-E-R-M-A-I-N-E, R-O-H-L-F-S.

16 JUDGE RAINEY: Can you tell us where she resides?

17 THE WITNESS: 244 Newcome Street Philadelphia
18 19140.

19 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your testimony.

20 THE WITNESS: It's absurd the way the company is
21 being run. I'm a native born of Philadelphia, 52 years. I have
22 seen the gas company decline. Everybody has their hand in the
23 pot. That's the whole problem. We have to suffer because you
24 people can live nice and easy on easy street. That's going to
25 stop.

1 I'm sorry to say I did a genealogy on my family
2 tree, to think my third or fourth uncle had something to do with
3 Gas Works. I'm ashamed.

4 My mother is on a fixed income, 72 years old.
5 She has a daughter with ms, a son mentally-challenged. The gas
6 company tries to rip him off because he moved to an apartment
7 two or three years ago. They say he owes \$100. He keeps the
8 thermostat at 60, 65. How can he owe 90 or \$100? It's
9 ridiculous.

10 My mother is on a fixed income on medicine,
11 diabetic, has Parkinson's. I have to take care of her. She
12 can't make it out here because she can only stand on her feet so
13 long. This is a disgrace to think how you people can handle a
14 company and expect people to pay for your problem. It's not
15 happening, not now not ever, not as long as I'm breathing, I
16 have ounce of breath left on this earth.

17 You people have to get your monies elsewhere
18 before you start picking on the little people. I would say more
19 but I would get thrown out of here. The utilities are a
20 disgrace in Philadelphia.

21 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your time.

22 Delores Phatts. Let me swear you in.

23 DELORES PHATTS,

24 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

25 JUDGE RAINEY: Provide your name, spell your name

1 for the court reporter. Also provide your address and state
2 whether you are a PGW customer.

3 THE WITNESS: My name is Delores Phatts,
4 D-E-L-O-R-E-S, P-H-A-T-T-S. My address os 1310 North 24th
5 Street. I'm sorry to say I am a PGW customer. If I had the
6 money to change trust me I would not be. I am a retired worker
7 from the federal government putting in 31 years, I went out on
8 early retirement. I think it's a disgrace the way PUC and
9 officials allow PGW to do whatever they want to do.

10 I have a question, I know you won't answer, has
11 there been any internal budget changes before you ask us to pay
12 for people who aren't paying? I don't mean little people who
13 are digging out the street. I mean CEO's, have any of you taken
14 cutbacks?

15 Also, they said some years ago they were putting
16 in the meters that are read by a truck that goes by. Has anyone
17 seen the truck? Are you familiar with that?

18 JUDGE RAINEY: Automatic meter reading.

19 THE WITNESS: They are supposed to be a truck that
20 comes by and something, reading, it must be invisible. Nobody
21 has ever seen it. I have looked at my bill to see what the date
22 is. I have sat outside and looked for the truck. I'm
23 nearsighted but I'm not that damn nearsighted. I haven't seen a
24 truck. I have asked other people, and nobody has seen the
25 truck. So we're paying for an invisible truck. Thank you.

1 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you. Elizabeth Robinson.

2 Let me swear you in.

3 ELIZABETH ROBINSON,

4 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

5 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your name. I will
6 ask you to spell your first name, provide your address, state
7 whether you are a PGW customer.

8 THE WITNESS: My name is Elizabeth Robinson, and I
9 am a PGW customer. I live at 1349 West Sedgley Avenue.

10 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you. Please provide your
11 testimony.

12 THE WITNESS: This is what I wanted to know
13 mainly. I went down in my basement and I cut my gas off by the
14 switch in the basement. I do this all the time in March, and I
15 shouldn't have gas because I'm not using gas because I'm not
16 home, I'm staying at my daughter's in Lower Merion. I only come
17 to check on my house.

18 I am a senior citizen. I live by myself. I don't
19 use the gas to cook with. I have a rotisserie oven. That's all
20 I use. Using gas for myself I don't, my bill should not be as
21 high as it is. You put your money in pocket. You're living
22 high off the horse, fine houses and cars, and we have to pay for
23 what you want. It's not right.

24 You need to get it together, we have to protest or
25 do something. We're paying too much. Thank you.

1 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony.

2 Perry White. Let me swear you in.

3 PERRY WHITE,

4 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

5 JUDGE RAINEY: Provide your name, keep your voice
6 up as much as possible. Spell your name, provide your address,
7 and state whether you are a PGW customer.

8 THE WITNESS: P-E-R-R-Y, W-H-I-T-E. My address,
9 625 Spruce Street. I don't have anything written or prepared.
10 I am going to speak from my own personal experience.

11 JUDGE RAINEY: Did you say you're a PGW customer?

12 THE WITNESS: I am a PGW customer. Like I said,
13 I don't have anything written or prepared. I will speak from
14 my own experience around what my thoughts are. I'm opposed to a
15 rate surcharge. I think that it penalizes people that are
16 trying to do the right thing and lets the people that willingly
17 don't pay their bills off the hook.

18 Early in the fall, it was a well-known fact that
19 the rates for natural gas were going to rise. It has been in
20 the newspaper. PGW sent messages in the bill informing people
21 of steps we could take to conserve. During September, our
22 family lowered the thermostat 3 degrees so we could conserve. I
23 feel like having to pay for people that didn't take those steps
24 is just unfair.

25 I know -- I think it was the president of PGW said

1 he thought it was the fairest thing that could be done. He's
2 wrong. It's unfair. Others here have talked about billing
3 problems, talked about clerical problems. Those are symptoms,
4 they are symptoms of mismanagement. That's where the problem
5 is, it's mismanagement. All across in private companies all
6 across the United States, workers and companies are doing more
7 for less.

8 Where I work, we're working more, the same salary,
9 but we're working more. That's what needs to happen within
10 PGW. They need to tighten management structure. What I would
11 like to see from the PUC is some support for gas choice in
12 Philadelphia. I have been waiting. PGW advertised it. The
13 only thing that has happened as a result, PGW has changed the
14 gas bill so it's broken down into distribution, gas costs rate,
15 and I notice distribution seems to have an additional cost rate
16 attached to it. It's changed. It used to be that cost rate was
17 described as the amount of gas that you use.

18 Now I see it's changed. For some reason, it's
19 tied into distribution. It wasn't that way in the past. I
20 understand the gas bill being broken down into separate parts.
21 I'm okay with that because I subscribe to electric choice. I
22 make a choice about the electric supplier that I use. I'm
23 expecting to have the same choice. It's in other parts of
24 Pennsylvania. It's not in Philadelphia. Without that the gas
25 company does not have incentive to provide better service to its

1 customers.

2 There are other things that could be done. They
3 could improve management. Why is PGW still linked to the City
4 of Philadelphia? Why can't the people here get their gas from a
5 private company? Look at the advantage. We know for instance
6 that PECO provides gas service, PECO provides gas service to
7 poor people. But PECO has a broad range. So they can withstand
8 the changes or they can better withstand the fact that some
9 people can't pay as much or some people actually do pay their
10 bills. They have a broader scope. So it's less impact when the
11 weather is warm and when the weather is cold.

12 If we had the ability to choose our gas supplier
13 it could be from a private company, that would solve a big part
14 of the problem. Already PGW's saying that we can't pay our \$18
15 million payment to the City. Why are gas customers paying taxes
16 to the City through PGW? That's what it amounts to. I would
17 like some support from the PUC to encourage Gas Choice to come
18 to Philadelphia.

19 The second thing, PGW comes along and turns gas
20 off in the summer, but they are not allowed to turn the gas off
21 in the winter. That's a PUC regulation that the gas can't be
22 turned off. It should be turned off. People should get cold.
23 I realize there are senior citizens that are on a fixed income
24 and are unable to pay. One thing that could happen that the gas
25 turn-off is based on gross income, not net, gross because. . .

1 (There were comments from the audience.)

2 THE WITNESS: No, I mean gross. Because net when
3 you get your net, some things are taken out like taxes and
4 you're left with things to do. I think gross is the thing that
5 should be taken.

6 (There were comments from the audience.)

7 JUDGE RAINEY: We can't have comments from the
8 audience. I'm going to ask please everyone allow the person at
9 the microphone to speak. Go ahead.

10 THE WITNESS: This is just my suggestion. So I
11 think a means test or something like that could be used to
12 determine whether people are going to get shut off or not. At
13 least we would have confidence in knowing that the people who
14 can pay or outright working the system are being penalized.

15 The next thing I am thinking of in addition to the
16 management improvement I think I mentioned privatizing PGW. I
17 also realize that if you look back at past history a lot of
18 decisions that the PUC has made, a decision comes in half-way.
19 And by that what I'm saying is that even though we're going
20 through the hearings, there is a chance there is still going to
21 be a surcharge. If you look back at history, that's what has
22 happened, it's happened in PECO and for other cases, and it
23 would more than likely happen this time. But at least in
24 considering how to generate the surcharge it should be on the
25 amount of gas used, that way the people that are trying to

1 conserve are not unfairly punished by having a surcharge based
2 on let's say the customer charge. There is nothing you can do
3 about customer charges. As long as you're a PGW customer you
4 will pay \$12 a month. So by raising customer charges two or
5 three dollars it doesn't matter what you do. You're still going
6 to pay. If there has to be a surcharge, again I am opposed to
7 that. If there has to be a surcharge it should at least be
8 based on the cubic feet of gas you use because I will turn my
9 thermostat down even further. That's uncomfortable. We're in
10 the house in fleece clothing, and went to bed early and did
11 everything we could and then to pick up the paper and see we
12 will face \$84 a year surcharge because PGW can't collect their
13 bills.

14 It goes beyond can't collect. Sometimes they
15 can't control the billing system. They don't know the billing
16 system. So it goes back to management. I'm in favor of gas
17 choice. So I can pick the company I want and leave the company
18 I want. I am in favor of privatization of the gas company,
19 disconnected from City of Philadelphia.

20 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you, Mr. White.

21 (Whereupon, a 5-minute recess was taken.)

22 JUDGE RAINEY: Why don't we go back on the
23 record. The next person is Brenda Reavis. Let me swear you in.

24 BRENDA REAVIS,

25 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

1 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your full name, I
2 will ask you to spell your last name, provide your address, and
3 state whether you are a PGW customer.

4 THE WITNESS: Brenda Reavis, R-E-A-V-I-S,
5 130 South Ruby, R-U-B-Y, Street, Philadelphia 19139. I am a
6 customer of PGW.

7 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your testimony.

8 THE WITNESS: I'm here to say that I oppose the
9 rate increase. The speakers that spoke before me said it very
10 clear. So I'm just standing up reiterating. You've been given
11 a lot of suggestions. It seems like if you're going to play
12 the market and you're not doing so well with your choices or
13 shareholders are reaping the benefits then I hope that you will
14 go back to the table -- what I see, if you have a product, you
15 put it out there, everybody needs it, not just want it, they
16 need it, you offer it to them at a rate that they can all pay,
17 you're going to get 100 percent participation, 100 percent
18 payment. If you put the product and make it designer everybody
19 won't get it.

20 I'm a committee person, as Ms. Middleton said,
21 that is the second complaint from everybody that I try to
22 represent in my division the seniors, I've lived on my block
23 since '69. A lot of the residents have passed away or moved
24 away. Those that are left can't afford it. You have to do the
25 human thing, if you want to stay a part of Philadelphia.

1 I think, I feel that you should work with us. As
2 you can look around you have very medium and low income people
3 here, and we just can't afford to pay any more. My bill went
4 from \$200, I never had a \$300 a month bill to pay with no
5 residual. I want to be a good customer. I want to pay. But
6 you're going to find if I have to pay my electric, my gas, food,
7 I have a son that I pay tuition for, you will get slighted. I
8 don't want to, but it does not balance out.

9 You want to go up four percent, you could put an
10 ad in the paper, you're saying \$120 a month your rate goes to
11 \$125. I don't know anyone that's paying \$125 a month for gas.
12 Everybody is paying 200 plus. That was a blatant lie.

13 So, more or less I would like to say again what
14 Ms. Middleton said is very, very important, a lot of people's
15 health care has gone through the roof and a lot of the seniors
16 on my block have to run air-conditioning. I would like to be a
17 good customer.

18 I would like to pay in full. So work with us and
19 find someone who will give you the product, negotiate your butt
20 off like if you're paying and your income is fixed. Get out,
21 negotiate, and whatever you do to keep the rates down. You
22 don't have to pay what everybody else is asking you. There are
23 ways. I don't go buy a car and say, or lease a car, and say to
24 the salesperson telling me that's the price. I tell them what I
25 want to pay, what I can afford, and we work on the amenities.

1 There you go. That's what I get. So I would like
2 for the Commission to go back and work on whatever they are
3 getting wholesale from, and know you have low and medium income
4 myself, medium income, to low, I'm struggling. Tuition is going
5 through the roof, health care is going through the roof. We
6 will be sicker. So, basically I'm done.

7 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you, Ms. Reavis.

8 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

9 JUDGE RAINEY: Paulette Cunningham. Let me swear
10 you in.

11 PAULETTE CUNNINGHAM,
12 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

13 THE WITNESS: Yes.

14 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your full name,
15 spell your name and also provide your address and state whether
16 you are a PGW customer.

17 THE WITNESS: Paulette, P-A-U-L-E-T-T-E, Cunningham
18 C-U-N-N-I-N-G-H-A-M, 56400 Sage Avenue, Philadelphia. I am a
19 PGW customer. I basically hadn't planned to speak but after
20 listening to speakers I had a question that I am sure I won't
21 get the answer, but I want to put this out there. I'm definitely
22 opposed to an increase. I'm on a budget, and I'm on a budget
23 because I have a fixed income, and that's a fixed income, this
24 budget that I have sat down with the customer service people
25 and worked out and what is affordable to me at this time.

1 If you increase this it means that budget becomes increased.

2 I can't afford to pay that.

3 One of my concerns after listening to Ms. Signil,
4 she made me aware of something I never thought about. If PGW
5 paid 2.8 million dollars in advertising, and you guys are the
6 only people we get gas from, what are you advertising? I don't
7 need to see a sign to know I will get a bill. If I never see
8 anything about PGW, as long as I have hot water, gas and heat
9 I have to pay. So I don't understand.

10 To me it gets into management, you have management
11 people doing advertising. You let them persuade you to spend
12 2.8 million dollars too, to advertise for us who don't need to
13 know about you because we already know about you. That in and
14 of itself to me represents mismanagement. That to me seems like
15 one of the escalating things of what has put you guys in such
16 turmoil. You have been advertising for a sign.

17 You can't say that you have re-structured your
18 buildings because they're deplorable when you have to go and sit
19 in them to make arrangements to pay these gas bills. You're not
20 even open half the day. So you're definitely not user friendly
21 to me, and I'm sure some of the other people.

22 So, basically after hearing that it really raised
23 that question to me why would a company that's the only company
24 have to advertise.

25 My next statement is about service agreements.

1 I like the other lady said, I paid my service agreement for
2 years and years, and both times that I needed to use it, it
3 wasn't covered. Fortunately, I was able to turn to a family
4 member and borrow the money to get my heater repaired because
5 carbon monoxide had built up in my home. So I'm pretty much
6 finished.

7 But again I want to say I don't think that it's
8 fair for those of us who do pay even though I'm on a budget, I
9 pay and pay on time, to have to pay for these people who are not
10 paying at all. Thank you.

11 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony.
12 Marian Davis.

13 MARIAN DAVIS,
14 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

15 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your full name for
16 the record, provide your address and state whether you are a PGW
17 customer.

18 THE WITNESS: My name is Marian Davis, M-A-R-I-A-N,
19 3349 Revere Street. And I am a PGW customer. My reason for
20 standing tonight because I oppose completely the idea of even
21 asking me to pay for someone who does not pay their bill. I
22 have had gas many years in my home. I pay my bill every month.
23 I don't think I should be liable for those persons who do not
24 pay.

25 My next thing, where we live we're in a block

1 people have been there 50, 60 years, I'm trying to work out to
2 see if they can be eligible for some help because a little bit
3 of raise in income they're not even eligible to get help.

4 How do you expect people to pay the bill if they
5 don't get an increase in money? Should they not eat? Should we
6 not have electric? What should they do just pay gas? I don't
7 even understand it.

8 Another thing, you pay your bill, and then you
9 don't get service. Like someone has said, it's not covered, but
10 you take the service charge because, because you don't know what
11 could happen to your heater. My last question, is PGW paying
12 their own bills? Is that why we're in the fix we're in now?
13 Think about it.

14 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony.
15 Roslyn Cummings.

16 ROSLYN CUMMINGS,
17 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

18 JUDGE RAINEY: I would ask you to provide your
19 name, spell your name, provide your address, state whether you
20 are a PGW customer.

21 THE WITNESS: Roslyn Cummings, my address is
22 5211 Green Street. I am a PGW customer and I'm here today out
23 of concern. I have -- I usually just sign a petition when PGW
24 is scheduling a rate hike. And then I have gotten out and
25 actually been the one with petitions to get people to sign.

1 What I am saying, there are a lot of people -- I
2 came to this one. It's not as crowded as I thought it would
3 be. But there are a lot of people who are concerned about these
4 continual rate hikes in PGW, as well as myself. Me being a
5 student, that causes more concern, because with this intended
6 rate hike in PGW that means I know it's going to interfere in my
7 whole household order as far as finances are concerned.

8 As I said I'm opposed to the PGW intended rate
9 hike. I would like to request or ask if the board or officials,
10 CEO'S, whoever is a part of distributing bills, or however you
11 handle your company, that you would stabilize your rates. Have
12 a good evening.

13 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you for your testimony.
14 Chester Skaziak. Let me swear you in.

15 CHESTER SKAZIAK,
16 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

17 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your name, spell
18 your name, provide your address and also state whether you are a
19 PGW customer.

20 THE WITNESS: Chester Skaziak, S-K-A-Z-I-A-K, and
21 I reside at 1854 Bowler Street, and my phone number is (215)
22 671-8886.

23 JUDGE RAINEY: Are you a PGW customer?

24 THE WITNESS: I most certainly am.

25 JUDGE RAINEY: Go ahead.

1 THE WITNESS: My wife pays the bills. I don't pay
2 them. I came here tonight to see and observe what was taking
3 place down here. Last evening I was in the far Northeast, there
4 was a room half this size with nearly 300 people. They turned
5 around and went back in their cars. Some were 70 or 80 years
6 old. I was watching a 75-year-old fighting an 80-year-old to
7 get to the Commission to tell their story. I was proud that
8 these people weren't going to sit back and allow it to happen.
9 I left the meeting at a quarter of ten and the room was still
10 full.

11 I can afford the \$80, but many of my neighbors
12 can't. When I have a bill and a shut-off notice, my wife sent
13 out the bill on the 10th of February, it was due the 7th. I got
14 a bill dated the 12th of February. It said a shut-off notice.
15 I went to the phone and tried to get through to PGW. We kind of
16 argued once I did.

17 What I noticed on the front of that letter, the
18 letter came from West Orange, New Jersey. If someone from West
19 Orange, New Jersey is collecting our bills in Philadelphia, if
20 they're not here, how can they do that? If that company is
21 still the company responsible for collecting those bills,
22 perhaps that's the reason we have the problem.

23 I don't know how you can get 100,000 people not
24 paying bills unless there are enablers in our political arena
25 allowing it to happen.

1 As far as that lawyer, it seems to me that if
2 PGW accepted 45 million dollars as a loan from the City of
3 Philadelphia and haven't paid the bill back it's your job to pay
4 the bill. You should find a way to collect money, not when a
5 woman brings up a subject how much someone may have taken the
6 research and done the time. It's the Commission's responsibility
7 to look up all the facts, and you to respond to facts that are
8 brought up.

9 Another thing I notice most of people that can't
10 pay the bills are senior citizens, a lot of gray haired people,
11 there was even a blind woman, and she didn't understand what was
12 going on. I tried to explain to her. There were old and poor
13 people and people who can't pay bills. If you keep raising the
14 bar, keep raising cost of gas bills you will have more people
15 falling behind.

16 When will it stop? The only analogy I can make is
17 that PGW is a cash cow and all they're doing is feeding us lies.
18 I bit into their lies and have mad cow disease. I can't believe
19 it continues to happen. If the PUC can't answer the question,
20 then the voters of the City of Philadelphia should go down to
21 the Mayor, because he gave them 45 million dollars, and there
22 are people in City Council who sit on PGW's Board and they are
23 accountable to the people in North Philly, because nobody from
24 the Northeast is on PGW's board. I am sure of it.

25 The other thing at Ninth and Montgomery, you have

1 a brand new building, what has Ninth and Montgomery done to
2 lower their costs? Have they lowered their thermostat or turned
3 off their air-conditioning in the summertime?

4 That's all I have to say Your Honor.

5 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you Mr. Skaziak. Lenora
6 Washington. Let me swear you in.

7 LENORA WASHINGTON,
8 having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

9 JUDGE RAINEY: Please provide your full name,
10 provide your address, also state whether you are a PGW customer.

11 THE WITNESS: Lenora Washington, 1026 West Cecil
12 B. Moore Avenue.

13 JUDGE RAINEY: Are you a PGW customer?

14 THE WITNESS: Yes.

15 JUDGE RAINEY: Go ahead.

16 THE WITNESS: This is something I waited a long
17 time to say. I'm opposed to the gas rate. You're all sitting
18 up there, want to make people pay. It doesn't make sense. The
19 president of the gas company should be here. He has you here.
20 I'm mad as hell. Excuse me. I'm mad as hell. I have a father
21 who is 87 years old, he was 88 on Monday. He's on a fixed income
22 and we had a problem with the heater. I called PGW, we paid
23 insurance. They had to come out four times, they had to put a
24 valve on there, a new thermostat. They had to put some kind of
25 wire on there.

1 March I get a bill for 200 some dollars. I almost
2 went through the roof. I had to go there and sit on Chestnut
3 Street two and a half hours before I was seen to try to get the
4 bill straightened out. Everything is straightened out as far as
5 I know, April comes, the damn bill, excuse me is still 200 and
6 some dollars. I had to go back there again and sit. Luckily I
7 took my lunch. This guy got it straightened out, as far as I
8 know. Hopefully when April comes around and the bill comes in
9 I hope you guys have gotten the bill straightened out. I'm not
10 going to pay 200 some dollars. I was told it was not adjusted.

11 What do you think, we're deaf blind and dumb, you
12 have a 200 bill, and just pay it. It doesn't make sense. I
13 understand everybody has been falling on bad times, but when you
14 have people trying to line their pockets, and you all had
15 someone living up in Chestnut Hill with gas lights and junk like
16 that, and my point is you want to put a surcharge on. This is
17 nothing new, you always had a surcharge other than charging
18 people money for bills. This is nothing new. We're not stupid.

19 When you people at the utility go to sleep at
20 night, I don't know if you with the dark suit on, if you have
21 silk sheets, when you lay your head down you need to think what
22 you're doing to people. What is going to happen to people who
23 pay their bills on time? When you break the back of people who
24 pay bills what are you going to do? You utility and gas people
25 need to regroup and think the whole thing over.

1 A kid in first grade could come up with better
2 solutions than this. That damn president should be here. I
3 would give him a piece of my mind. When you all go home, you
4 need to think about it. You break the back of the people. When
5 you break our backs what are you going to do? Where will the
6 money come from? You need to regroup and think things over.
7 I'm sick of it. I'm not going to pay it. I will get in the
8 street and protest.

9 So you, whatever your name is, take it back to
10 the president and tell him he needs to have his butt to these
11 meetings.

12 JUDGE RAINEY: Thank you, Ms. Washington.
13 Ms. Washington was the last name that I have on the sign-in
14 sheet. Is there anyone else who wants to testify? I would
15 like to thank everyone for appearing here this evening, for your
16 testimony and your participation and attendance is appreciated.
17 Everyone have a safe journey back to your home.

18 If there is nothing further, we're adjourned.

19 (Whereupon, at 8:10 p.m. the hearing was
20 adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify, as the stenographic reporter,
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