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*****UPDATED PRESS RELEASE*****

FAIR California Coalition Rallies Against Proposed PG&E Rate Hikes

A diverse coalition unites at the San Francisco CPUC, demanding accountability from investor-owned utilities in response to PG&E's substantial rate hike proposals on consumers.

San Francisco, CA—Today, in a powerful display of unity and accountability, FAIR California, a new and diverse coalition comprising of electeds, small businesses, ratepayers, consumers, labor, equity, and environmental groups, will gather in demonstration on the steps of the San Francisco CPUC at 11:00 a.m. PST. At the same time, former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo will emcee a group of speakers during a press conference at the steps that will include speakers including San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu, former Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope, AARP senior executive Rita Saenz, San Francisco African American Chamber of Commerce CEO Dr. Matthew Ajiake, Tubbs wildfire survivor Will Abrams, and representatives of labor and ratepayer organizations.

FAIR California's mission is to champion accountability in the management and operations of PG&E and other for-profit utility companies to prioritize fair treatment of ratepayers and enhancement of safety measures. This demonstration takes place in anticipation of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) General Rate Case (GRC) decision scheduled for November 2, 2023, in Sacramento, which focuses on wildfire mitigation and safety and proposes a steep [26% increase in revenue for PG&E](#) through increasing rates. FAIR California stands together to emphasize that the rapid escalation of rates by PG&E and other for-profit electric utility companies in recent and forthcoming years imposes a heavy burden on hardworking California families and small business owners, with the greatest impact felt by those with lower incomes. It is imperative that the CPUC scrutinizes these rate increases with the utmost care and consideration.

“As investor-owned utilities like PG&E seek to increase their rates, let's not forget they aren't the only options,” said San Francisco Mayor London N. Breed. “We have successful public power utilities up and down our state, including San Francisco's CleanPowerSF, that have provided cleaner, more reliable, and more affordable power for decades. Our power rates are more transparently structured with high-quality and dependability in mind. Thank you to the FAIR California Coalition for working hard to demand accountability and fair rates for all Californians.”

Apprenticeship Coordinator and member of Operating Engineers Local 3, Meg-Anne Pryor, stated, “In the upcoming General Rate Case, PG&E is presenting the CPUC with a false choice between safer infrastructure and more affordable rates. Ratepayers and residents deserve to have both safety and affordability and the CPUC needs to hold the company accountable.”



“For decades, PG&E has reaped enormous profits while tragedy after tragedy occurred on its watch,” said San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu. “PG&E cannot stick working-class Californians with the bill for infrastructure projects the company should have completed long ago. At every turn, PG&E raises rates, increases executive pay, does not provide reliable service, undermines public power, and endangers Californians. At some point, we have to say enough is enough.”

[The Utility Reform Network](#) (TURN) and partner organization for the November 1st FAIR California event found that residential rates have already doubled since 2006, and for low-income customers, they've nearly tripled. In the two proposals, [PG&E's plan](#) amounts to \$50 more per month for an average bill, with the state's counter-proposal amounting to about \$28 more. These rate increases will add to the financial strain on residents and small businesses already struggling and cause disproportionate harm. Remember that these services are not a luxury that struggling Californians can forgo — PG&E's product is essential to people's livelihoods. However, PG&E contends that the proposed higher rates are necessary to finance long-overdue infrastructure upgrades aimed at reducing the risk of wildfires and gas explosions.

“We need to stop the sky being the limit for PG&E requests for rate increases, and sky being the limit to how much the CPUC can approve!” said Mark Toney, Executive Director for TURN. “What we need is legislation that caps annual rate increases to no more than the Cost of Living Allowance received each year by people on Social Security. Make PG&E live within a budget like its customers have to.”

FAIR California demands that the CPUC should refuse to grant any rate increases that could fund executive compensation or other expenditures within the CPUC's defined category of “Administrative and Other General Expenses,” which conceals much of PG&E's wasteful spending. The [\\$51.2 million compensation](#) package awarded to PG&E CEO Patti Poppe in 2021 has highlighted the need for accountability and transparency in the utility's operations. The coalition also urges that the CPUC defer any rate increases until PG&E more transparently defines the ultimate source of funding for such expenditures as advertising, lobbying, political contributions, and all other corporate communications, which have collectively consumed tens of millions of dollars, burying ratepayers in a blitzkrieg of TV commercials. The coalition urges that PG&E direct ratepayer dollars toward basic service, wildfire prevention and safety, particularly in light of the [tragic failures in recent years](#).

PG&E's unique position as the primary energy distributor in Northern and Central California necessitates heightened scrutiny of its request to raise rates, according to FAIR California. The coalition maintains that with PG&E's market control on energy services in these regions, the utility company wields substantial influence over countless households and businesses. Coalition members state the company's status places an even greater responsibility on regulatory bodies, like the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), to ensure that any rate increases are warranted and justifiable and contribute to the welfare of Californians, not just PG&E's pockets. The demonstration at the CPUC later today will be the official rollout of a region-wide movement to play an active and positive role in communicating to the CPUC the significance of their supporting PG&E in the lives of those they represent.

ABOUT FAIR California

To learn more about FAIR California and join the movement, please visit FAIRCA.org.

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