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PG&E's Rate Hikes Opposed by Green Guerrillas

Customers should not be forced to pay for activities preventing customers from choosing affordable, renewable, green energy.

SAN FRANCISCO - In support of their strategy to remind the public and government representatives to prioritize affordable, safe and systemic solutions to the climate crisis, the Green Guerrillas Against Greenwash will make public comment about PG&E's rate hike at the CPUC's meeting on March 15, 2007. The CPUC Opinion from PG&E's general rate case (GRC) Settlement requires that ratepayers pay PG&E for its efforts to oppose Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) and other policies that allow customers to choose cheaper and pollution-free energy.

The CPUC Opinion includes:

- **\$4.35 million** requested by PG&E for its "Customer Retention & Economic Development program." This functions to retain their monopoly and prevent customers from choosing other utilities.
- **\$136,657** for membership fees in lobbying organizations. Meanwhile, the CPUC recognizes that it is illegal to use ratepayer money for lobbying purposes.
- **\$772,000** for PG&E's membership in the Nuclear Energy Institute, which lobbies for the expansion of Nuclear.
- A **20 percent increase** in the PG&E's multimillion dollar Area Public Affairs Department, which is responsible for fighting municipal energy proposals.
- **\$16.8 million** to study their nuclear facilities, ostensibly for their License Renewal Feasibility Study. PG&E's license does not come up for renewal for 15 years.
- Acceptance of PG&E's proposal to sign long-term Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) contracts in 2007. Long-term contracts make it more costly for communities to implement CCA.

The CPUC ruling seems to forget all the ways PG&E has spent ratepayers money against the public's interest. For instance, in 2006, PG&E spent \$11.3 million (the most ever spent on a local ballot measure) to oppose Yolo County from joining Sacramento Municipal Utility District, which offers customers 140 percent more wind and 30 percent lower rates.

Meanwhile:

- **55 percent** of Californians think that Nuclear is too dangerous.
- LNG contributes to **Climate Change**.
- The San Francisco board of Supervisors has already approved Community Choice Aggregation, a well-researched plan that would have San Francisco running on **50 percent renewables by 2017**. This would produce enough renewable energy (360 MW) to account for **1/6 of PG&E's Diablo Nuclear Plant's output**.
- CCA feasibility studies in 22 cities show that **40 percent renewable energy can be achieved at no rate increase**.

PG&E is currently positioning itself for a massive expansion of two expensive and highly polluting forms of energy, Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) and nuclear energy. Community Choice Aggregation provides an opportunity for local governments to avoid investing in this dangerous energy future.

Given the state-wide movement towards Community Choice Aggregation – with the California legislature's passage supporting CCA in 2002 and 48 communities actively considering this policy – **we urge the CPUC to help communities successfully implement this policy, or at least refrain from supporting obstacles to our right to choose an affordable green energy infrastructure.**

“Allowing PG&E to spend money fighting communities choosing affordable renewable energy infrastructure is shameful and should be illegal. To add insult to injury – the CPUC is allowing PG&E to pass the cost of this destructive activity to ratepayers.”

– Aliza Wasserman, Green Guerrillas Against Greenwash

“The exorbitant increases for PG&E are really hurting consumers and the economy while increasing profits for the only game in town for most of Northern California. Community Choice Aggregation will help reduce the burden on people by stabilizing their rates. Please stop this unnecessary fleecing of the taxpayers.”

– Bruce Wolf, San Francisco Community Choice Alliance

“By allowing PG&E to sign long-term contracts for Liquid Natural Gas, the Public Utilities Commission is effectively locking the public into a contract with PG&E. In a time when our national government is complacent in the face of Climate Change, it is city governments that are taking the lead. The CPUC must be mindful of these local initiatives when approving the budget of this monopoly.”

– Sakura Saunders, Green Guerrillas Against Greenwash

Green Guerrillas Against Greenwash (GGAG) is a citizen group formed out of disgust for PG&E’s ‘Lets Green This City’ greenwashing campaign and is further outraged at PG&E’s attempt to prevent cities from implementing Community Choice Aggregation. Green Guerrillas stand opposed to the promotion of dirty energy, such as LNG and nuclear and we stand for the use of clean renewable energy.

By holding high-profile actions and through their website, letsGREENWASHthiscity.org, Green Guerrillas focus on embarrassing PG&E and exposing their plans to undermine truly green legislation.

Collective members have been involved with a number of local campaigns including shutting down PG&E’s Bay View Hunters Point power plant, Community Choice SF, Sweatshop Free San Francisco and the League of Pissed Off Voters.

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) is a policy that allows communities to take over the role of purchasing electricity for its residents and provide reliable, locally generated renewable power that meets or beats PG&E’s rates. CCA feasibility studies of 22 cities show that 40 percent renewable energy can be achieved with no rate increase. By building in best practices in energy efficiency, San Francisco and Marin’s CCA plans call for 50 percent renewable energy supplies by 2017. (In contrast, PG&E is currently violating state renewable energy minimum law and its stated goal is to achieve minimum state mandates of 20 percent by 2010). Locally generated, renewable power cushions ratepayers from fossil fuels – which have highly volatile prices and are largely imported from regions suffering military oppression.

Community Choice Aggregation was passed by California’s legislature in 2002 (AB117-Migden) and is actively being considered by 48 cities and counties in California. Eleven of these, including San Francisco, Marin, and Chula Vista – are in the late stages of implementation planning. Throughout the country, 1.5 million people already get their energy from Community Choice. Cleveland, for example, demonstrates that CCA can save ratepayers more than 5 percent on each bill and reduces air pollution by 70 percent. CCA also demonstrates that nuclear power is not necessary for our state to seriously address climate change.

Community Choice Aggregation is endorsed by dozens of environmental and public good advocates including: Senior Action Network, Community First Coalition, Sierra Club, Local Power, Green Party, Our City, Women’s Energy Matters, Greenpeace, and League of Young Voters.