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PHILADELPHIA GAS COMMISSION
- - -
PGW'S PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2027
CAPITAL BUDGET AND RELATED MATTERS

- - -
April 14, 2026
10:00 a.m.

- - -
Hybrid Meeting held on the
18th Floor - 1515 Arch Street
and Virtually via Teams

- - -
BEFORE: CHRISTY BRADY, Chairwoman
MIKE DRISCOLL, Vice Chairman
EVAN URBANIA
DOMINIC McGRAW

- - -
VERITEXT LEGAL SOLUTIONS
MID-ATLANTIC DIVISION

1 APPEARANCES:

2 TRAVIS KNIFFIN, ESQ.
3 Assistant City Solicitor
4 Counsel to Philadelphia Gas Commission

5 ANDRE C. DASENT, ESQ.
6 BROOKE DARLINGTON, ESQ.
7 Counsel to Philadelphia Gas Works

8 COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES, INC.
9 BY: ROBERT W. BALLENGER, ESQ.
10 Counsel to Public Advocate

11 PRESENT ON BEHALF OF PGC:

12 BILL RUBIN
13 Alternate Commissioner
14 GEMELA N. McCLENDON, ESQ.
15 Executive Director

16 ROSLYN BELL, ESQ.
17 Hearing Examiner
18 TIMOTHY MURTHA
19 Financial Analyst/Internal Auditor

20 SANDRA FONTANEZ (Via Teams)
21 Administrative Assistant

22 PRESENT ON BEHALF OF PGW:

23 WILLIAM J. GALLAGHER
24 Vice President, Budget and Strategic
Development

DANIEL CASSIDY, P.E.
Vice President, Technical Operations

ROBERT HOAGLAND, ESQ.
Senior Attorney

1 PRESENT ON BEHALF OF PGW: (Continued)

2

ERIK WICKLEY-OLSEN, P.E. (Via Teams)
Principal Engineer

3

4

PRESENT ON BEHALF OF CITY COUNCIL:

5

6

FRANK IANNUZZI
Legislative Director

7

8

PRESENT ON BEHALF OF THE CITY:

9

10 KATHERINE LEONETTI
Deputy Director, Policy and Strategic
Initiatives

11

12

PRESENT ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLIC:

13

EMILY DAVIS

14

SARAH BAIER

15

ERIC STOWERS

16

KAREN HARVEY

17

PAUL DEVINE BOTTONE

18

MITCH CHANIN

19

20

PRESENT ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLIC: (Via Teams - and
as identified on Teams Meeting Participant Log)

21

22

PETER FURCHT

23

LINNEA BOND

24

1 PRESENT ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLIC: (Via Teams - and
2 as identified on Teams Meeting Participant Log -
3 Continued)

4 KRISTEN SCALISE

5 NAOMI

6 SUSAN PHILLIPS (WHYY) (Via Teams)

7 ANGIE (Unverified) (Via Teams)

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1 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: The second item is
2 PGW's Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Capital
3 Budget and Related Matters.

4 The Recommended Decision, which was
5 issued by Executive Director Gemela
6 McClendon and Commission Staff on
7 March 17th, will be marked as Gas
8 Commission Exhibit #2.

9 - - -

10 (Whereupon Philadelphia Gas
11 Commission Exhibit #2 was marked for
12 identification.)

13 - - -

14 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: On March 23rd, PGW
15 and the Public Advocate filed exceptions
16 and comments to the Recommended Decision,
17 which will be marked respectively as Gas
18 Works Exhibit #1 and Public Advocate
19 Exhibit #1.

20 - - -

21 (Whereupon Philadelphia Gas Works
22 Exhibit #1 and Public Advocate Exhibit #1
23 were marked for identification.)

24 - - -

1 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: We would like to
2 ask Ms. McClendon to provide a brief
3 overview of PGW's Proposed Fiscal Year
4 2027 Capital Budget.

5 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: On
6 January 2nd, 2026, PGW filed a Proposed
7 Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget of
8 \$390,561,000.

9 After Commission Staff's customary
10 due diligence, including the conduct of
11 discovery and a public hearing which was
12 held on February 9, 2026, Staff issued a
13 Recommended Decision on March 17, 2026,
14 wherein Staff recommended that PGW's
15 proposed FY 2027 Capital Budget be
16 rejected, and instead an FY 2027 Capital
17 Budget in the amount of \$208,000,000 be
18 approved.

19 This amount represents a 47.6%
20 reduction in PGW's Proposed FY 2027
21 Capital Budget.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Thank you.

24 We would like to provide the

1 participants with the opportunity to make
2 a brief presentation before we call the
3 question to vote.

4 First, we will hear from PGW.

5 Mr. Dasent.

6 MR. DASENT: Good morning,
7 Commissioners.

8 I just wanted to say, we have a few
9 challenges facing us with respect to the
10 LNG Project, which we will focus on today,
11 and in our exceptions that was the primary
12 issue.

13 Those challenges relate to getting
14 the LNG liquefier in place by 2030 in a
15 timely way.

16 The urgency of that is without it, we
17 not only risk exposing customers during
18 the coldest winters to possible harm, but
19 we also have a situation where we use the
20 LNG liquefier to avert problems with
21 system failure, other things that come up,
22 not just the weather, that allow us to
23 operate because we have the flexibility of
24 peak shaving, or addressing the need with

1 the LNG liquefier.

2 But let me first focus on those areas
3 that we have an agreement with the
4 Recommended Decision.

5 On prudence, we fully agree that we
6 made a record as to the prudence of the
7 City replacing the LNG liquefier.

8 The existing liquefier is at the end
9 of its useful life. We need to replace it
10 in a timely way, and we think the record
11 has been made that it needs to be
12 replaced.

13 Now, the only question is: Having
14 this agreement with the Hearing Officers
15 on this point, what do we do about it?

16 The prudence decision requires us to
17 act because we need to have a plant in
18 place in some reasonable timeline, and
19 we're aiming for Fiscal Year 2030.

20 Now, we have about four concerns with
21 respect to the Recommended Decision after
22 these areas of agreement.

23 For example, we need to get past the
24 sizing of the plant. We're talking

1 now and the Recommended Decision flagged
2 some of the issues that not only the
3 Hearing Officers but the Public Advocate
4 raised as to what's the appropriate size
5 for the plant.

6 PGW, based upon design winter
7 criteria, has decided that 3.2 Bcf is the
8 right production for the LNG plant.

9 At present our existing plant only
10 produces 2.2 Bcf. So this is the problem.
11 So that's a shortfall of approximately 1
12 Bcf every year.

13 We avert that problem or address it,
14 you know, by sizing the new plant in a way
15 that we don't have to truck in the
16 difference between 2.2 and 3.3 based upon
17 design winter criteria. This is the right
18 size for the plant. It doesn't produce
19 excess capacity. It produces enough
20 capacity.

21 If you truck in the LNG, you're
22 basically dealing with an issue on an ad
23 hoc basis. And we're suggesting that you
24 deal with it as a plant, and not trucking

1 also the LNG through the community around
2 the LNG plant.

3 In addition to that, you know, we
4 suggest that we need to proceed to
5 advanced engineering studies. Those
6 studies basically will tell us all the
7 detail that the Public Advocate and the
8 Hearing Officers would like to see which
9 can be provided with advanced engineering
10 studies.

11 I apologize for my voice.

12 They're called studies. They're
13 engineering studies, front-end engineering
14 studies. It gives you the precise design
15 of the plant, the sizing, it gives you
16 piping, electrical configuration, and it
17 will give you a better idea as to project
18 costs because they vet the project much
19 more carefully.

20 We're at the primary stages of the
21 project at this point. Now, the Hearing
22 Examiners' error, we believe, is in not
23 approving the LNG project at least on a
24 conditional basis.

1 On a conditional basis one of the
2 conditions would be: Provide the results
3 of the study that gives you the design
4 information, gives you better cost
5 information. It gives you all the
6 criteria you're looking for and it gives
7 you the agility, once you have it, to make
8 a decision relatively promptly to release
9 the funding that's available for the
10 plant.

11 Project approval, at least on a
12 conditional basis, is important for that
13 reason.

14 A second issue: The project should
15 not be delayed because of the P3
16 negotiations. Those negotiations are a
17 fully independent project. We are looking
18 for alternatives and trying to be creative
19 about doing it.

20 As a consequence, we have identified
21 in a transparent way, we are trying to do
22 everything we can to spare customers the
23 burden of this, if we can, or lessen the
24 burden of it. We can do that by pursuing

1 other alternatives as well.

2 But the 2030 criteria or deadline for
3 the completion of the plant doesn't go
4 away.

5 So we believe the conditional funding
6 also gives you flexibility there. If we
7 know what happens with the P3
8 negotiations, giving that information to
9 you, you can make in a very prompt manner
10 a decision about what to do next.

11 So basically, based upon design,
12 based upon P3, you have this ability to
13 sort of pivot with the information you
14 need; and I think it gives you, as a
15 regulator, enough data to make an informed
16 decision.

17 And you can go about it different
18 ways, and the Hearing Officers have
19 suggested that. We think it's more agile
20 and more prompt to address it in a
21 conditional spending authorization.

22 So just to put a line under it,
23 "conditional approval," we think is the
24 best way forward. Obviously, full

1 approval, if we had our druthers, that's
2 what we would want.

3 But conditional approval, I think,
4 gives you the ability to have the
5 information you need to make an informed
6 decision, to go forward with P3 and
7 advanced engineering outcomes, so we can
8 sort of make the right decision and
9 hopefully be in a situation where we can,
10 similar to last winter, be able to serve
11 our customers in a cold snap and have that
12 peak shaving ability and safe customers.

13 And we don't emphasize enough that
14 over the years, 30-some years or more,
15 where we saved \$3 billion easily with
16 respect to the operation of an LNG
17 facility.

18 Other utilities are sort of envious
19 of us because we have this capacity. We
20 don't have to go and access the markets
21 and buy in the worst times or at the worst
22 prices.

23 We have the ability to produce our
24 own peak shaving; keep customers warm in

1 the winter; and, in addition to that, have
2 the ability to avert system failures or
3 address system failures as to avert the
4 worst calamities that might happen.

5 We also made comments about public
6 outreach in the small and local businesses
7 in our exceptions, but I think they speak
8 for themselves.

9 We just wanted to indicate to you
10 that it's important to make a timely
11 decision here.

12 And if prudence is something we all
13 agree on, that decision, in terms of
14 prudent and reliable service, should trump
15 everything else, or at least be
16 counterbalanced with everything else, so
17 you would have all the information you
18 need to make a correct decision and a
19 timely decision in a way so that customers
20 can either save money or, even better,
21 avert interruption of service, avert all
22 the problems that come with that.

23 We take for granted that this plan is
24 in place. We take for granted for 30

1 years that we've had a system that
2 operates economically on a least-cost
3 basis. And now we're sort of acting as
4 though there's something to be gained by
5 delaying a decision to build a plant that
6 makes sense from operational purposes.

7 And Mr. Cassidy, the Operating
8 Engineer, just knows these things inside
9 and out. He, I think, made as credible a
10 record as he can with respect to the
11 plant.

12 If you look at the study we provided
13 as well, it leaves the foundation, I
14 think, that makes the prima facie case
15 that we should proceed. The Hearing
16 Officers agreed with that. We just need
17 to take the next step and get funding in
18 place.

19 That's what we have.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Thank you.

22 Mr. Ballenger, are there any
23 statements on behalf of the Advocate?

24 MR. BALLENGER: Thank you.

1 Good morning, Madam Chair and
2 Commissioners. My name is Robert
3 Ballenger. I'm serving as Public Advocate
4 in this Capital Budget proceeding.

5 As you know from the record up to
6 this point, we've reached agreement with
7 PGW on a number of adjustments to the
8 budget. Those are no longer in dispute.

9 What remains is one very, very large
10 adjustment: PGW's proposed \$182 million
11 Richmond LNG Replacement Project.

12 The Hearing Examiners recommend you
13 deny PGW spending authority based on three
14 primary factors.

15 First, they agree with the Public
16 Advocate that PGW's proposal, which is
17 capable of producing 1.1 Bcf more LNG
18 annually than its existing plant, is
19 oversized and could overburden PGW
20 customers with unnecessary debt service
21 expense.

22 And what you just heard from
23 Mr. Dasent fails to acknowledge one
24 important part of the record before you,

1 which is that PGW has historically engaged
2 in off-system sale of LNG because it has
3 had excess capacity.

4 So PGW contends that what it has had
5 in service for over 20 years now has been
6 adequate to meet PGW's needs for expanding
7 the plant.

8 Second, the Hearing Examiners
9 recognize that PGW's plant design is
10 incomplete and detailed project design has
11 not commenced. And the issue there isn't
12 getting the information now; it's getting
13 the information later, when PGW has to
14 come back and ask for more funding from
15 you and more delays and more time spent
16 because it hasn't done its homework.

17 Finally, your Hearing Examiners
18 recognize that PGW's parallel efforts to
19 partner with the private entity to finance
20 construction of this plant militates
21 heavily against authorizing expenditure at
22 this time.

23 Providing spending approval, if
24 negotiations are successful, would be

1 totally unnecessary and create a massive
2 infusion into the budget that PGW doesn't
3 even need.

4 So the Public Advocate concurs with
5 the Hearing Examiners' recommendation. We
6 did not accept or urge you to take action
7 different than what the Hearing Examiners
8 have recommended, but we do have a few
9 concerns that I think were not either
10 adequately addressed in the Recommended
11 Decision or with which we think the record
12 requires some supplementation.

13 As a policy matter, Philadelphia has
14 adopted the goal of obtaining carbon
15 neutrality by 2050. How PGW budgets align
16 with this goal is a consideration that I
17 think needs significant and ongoing
18 attention.

19 For the limited purpose of this
20 proceeding, however, I note that PGW has
21 not shown that its new plant is consistent
22 with those sustainability objectives, and
23 the Recommend Decision before you doesn't
24 make a finding on that issue. I want that

1 to be clear today.

2 Regarding the useful life of PGW's
3 plant, as we've put and explained on the
4 record, PGW's statements on its useful
5 life have changed several times. It's
6 been a moving target in proceedings before
7 you.

8 And peak shaving the plants, those
9 plants that produce LNG to meet winter
10 demand when gas prices are higher due to
11 market pressure, can and do remain in
12 service for 50 years or more.

13 PGW's plant has been in service for
14 21 years at this point and it has received
15 manufacturer guidance and operational
16 guidelines to change how it uses the plant
17 in order to extend its useful life.

18 So we maintain our skepticism
19 regarding those claims, and at least with
20 regard to the Recommended Decision's
21 conclusion that that has been resolved, we
22 don't believe that's correct.

23 We believe we will continue to
24 consider whether or not the plant is due

1 for replacement when PGW comes back in a
2 future proceeding.

3 PGW's claims regarding the savings to
4 its customers also warrant some response
5 today. Peak shaving facilities have
6 historically been cost beneficial.

7 PGW's facility has been cost
8 beneficial to customers in terms of gas
9 costs, but PGW did not save \$90 million
10 this winter due to its LNG facility.

11 PGW's claim is that in the absence of
12 LNG, it would have had to pay \$90 million
13 to supplement its existing supplies to
14 meet customer demand during the
15 January/February cold snap. That's not
16 true because PGW had already purchased the
17 gas.

18 So whatever the cost was to purchase
19 that gas is not factored in. PGW had
20 already liquefied the gas. The
21 operational expense of liquefying the gas
22 has not factored in.

23 So some of the numbers that have been
24 put in front of you in this proceeding and

1 some of the estimates that PGW has used to
2 make its case are really overstated, and
3 in some way they're scare tactics. I
4 recommend that you disregard those numbers
5 for purposes of discussion today.

6 And, finally, I just wanted to add,
7 not substantively as to the proposal, but
8 that I have heard from multiple members of
9 the public in advance of this meeting with
10 questions about the Commission's online
11 forum for public input.

12 I was kind of at a loss to explain
13 what was happening there and why the rules
14 for virtual participation changed today.

15 I request that any input that has
16 been provided electronically using that
17 form be appended to the transcript so that
18 it is on the same record as those people
19 who have come to submit comments today.

20 And I would also welcome the
21 opportunity to work with the Staff and
22 Commissioners going forward on ideas about
23 changing public input because I think that
24 it's very important that members of the

1 public have as many opportunities as we
2 can make available to them to participate.
3 And I know that online participation can
4 be a way to do that as can a written form.
5 So I would like to be involved in
6 discussions on that, if there are ideas to
7 change things going forward.

8 With that, I leave it to you.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Thank you,
11 Mr. Ballenger.

12 Next, we will take brief comments
13 from members of the public.

14 Comments will be limited to three
15 minutes and should only address PGW's
16 Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget.

17 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: First, we have
18 Emily Davis.

19 When you approach the microphone,
20 please introduce yourself; what
21 organization, if any, that you are here
22 representing.

23 After you have done that, I will
24 start your time.

1 MS. DAVIS: My name is Emily Davis,
2 and I'm just representing myself today.

3 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Okay.

4 MS. DAVIS: I live in Center City.
5 I've lived in Philadelphia for 40 years.

6 I'm concerned about --

7 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Ms. Davis --
8 and as a reminder to everyone -- again,
9 the request is that you just introduce
10 yourself. Once you're done introducing
11 yourself, I will start your time to begin.

12 So you may begin speaking now.

13 MS. DAVIS: I'm concerned about the
14 future of PGW and our planet.

15 I ask that the Commissioners follow
16 the recommendation of the Hearing Examiner
17 and remove the 182 million LNG replacement
18 line from the budget.

19 Since our City has resolved to be
20 carbon neutral by 2050, only 24 years from
21 now, this will become a stranded asset.

22 As the City moves toward carbon
23 neutrality, PGW must have a plan for its
24 employees who will still need jobs, just

1 as Philadelphia will still need heating
2 and cooling.

3 Being able to sell geothermal heating
4 and cooling is an option listed in the
5 diversification study.

6 It will provide PGW with year-round
7 income and its employees with many jobs
8 for which they already have skills.

9 As a member of Geodelphia, I'm
10 familiar with other cities and utility
11 companies that have been implementing
12 geothermal networks, and the first
13 geothermal energy network was implemented
14 in France in 1332, so it's not a new idea.

15 As for geothermal heating and
16 cooling, the first commercial use was in
17 1948 in Portland, also not particularly
18 new.

19 In Framingham, Massachusetts, Ever
20 Source Energy began planning for its
21 geothermal pilot in 2020.

22 Now, in 2026, pilot participants,
23 which include over 100 residential
24 apartments and homes, are enjoying the

1 second season of geothermal heating and
2 cooling.

3 Here in Philadelphia, four years
4 after funding for a study was put into
5 PGW's budget, PGW is finally nearing
6 completion of their study; and their study
7 investigated the smallest possible network
8 of two buildings, neither of which are
9 residential.

10 It's time to give Philadelphians an
11 opportunity to experience thermal energy
12 networks provided by the utility that they
13 own.

14 Again, I ask that you remove the
15 \$182 million LNG line from the budget and
16 to make sure that PGW's budget aligns with
17 the City's climate goals.

18 Thank you.

19 - - -

20 (Applause.)

21 - - -

22 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Next is
23 Sarah Baier.

24 And, again, as a reminder, introduce

1 yourself; any organization, if any, that
2 you're affiliated with; and then once
3 you're done with that, I will start your
4 time.

5 MS. BAIER: Hi. Thank you. My name
6 is Sarah Baier and I am here as a resident
7 of Port Richmond.

8 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Okay. Thank
9 you.

10 You may begin now.

11 MS. BAIER: Good morning. As I said,
12 my name is Sarah Baier. Thank you for
13 letting me be here today to listen and
14 speak.

15 As a resident of Port Richmond, at
16 the last public meeting I offered public
17 comment on my concerns around
18 environmental exposures and a continued
19 investment in fossil fuels that directly
20 conflicts with the Philadelphia 2050
21 carbon neutral commitment.

22 Given the decline in demand for LNG
23 for residential use, moving forward with
24 an investment of this scale at the

1 Richmond facility without fully
2 considering viable alternatives raises
3 concerns about potential cost burdens for
4 rate payers.

5 Today, I would like to also address
6 the lack of transparency --

7 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: I am so sorry
8 to everyone.

9 There is a fire drill for the
10 building. It's disturbing. I don't want
11 to take from your time while I'm speaking.
12 It's just a fire drill. It was announced.

13 We apologize, but please proceed.

14 You may resume.

15 MS. BAIER: Okay.

16 Do you want me to keep talking over
17 this?

18 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: If you could.
19 It's going to be a few minutes.

20 MS. BAIER: Okay. All right.

21 So I would like to address the lack
22 of transparency and opportunity for public
23 engagement.

24 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: To the members

1 of the public, just so that you know,
2 because of the fire drill that's going on,
3 we are going to pause this until it's
4 over. So we will pause recording. You
5 will still remain in the meeting, though.

6 And, Ms. Baier, I did stop your time,
7 so...

8 - - -

9 (Whereupon, there was a pause in the
10 proceeding.)

11 - - -

12 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Okay. Again,
13 we apologize for that. Completely out of
14 our control. So apologies.

15 We are going to resume recording and
16 go ahead and get back started.

17 Ms. Baier, you have two minutes left
18 on the clock. I'm going to go ahead and
19 start that now.

20 MS. BAIER: Okay.

21 So I don't need to backtrack at all?

22 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: No.

23 MS. BAIER: So, as I mentioned before
24 we had the fire drill, the last time I was

1 here, I spoke about environmental concerns
2 and the industrial impact of the
3 neighborhood of Port Richmond.

4 Today, I'm speaking about the lack of
5 transparency and opportunity for public
6 engagement from PGW and the Philadelphia
7 Gas Commission.

8 From my perspective, as a
9 communications professional, I don't
10 believe that due diligence has been done
11 to engage the public, especially the
12 residents of Port Richmond for whom this
13 will, you know, impact.

14 I will remind you that Port Richmond
15 is a proud working-class neighborhood
16 that's long carried more than its fair
17 share of industrial burden and investing
18 further in LNG infrastructure here raises
19 serious concerns about our safety, air
20 quality, emergency preparedness, and
21 environmental justice.

22 Approving this budget line is an
23 important step in this process,
24 essentially a foot in the door for PGW.

1 Before moving forward, it is --

2 - - -

3 (Whereupon, there was overtalking
4 during loudspeaker announcement ending
5 fire drill.)

6 - - -

7 MS. BAIER: -- clearly demonstrates
8 the need for LNG -- (overtalking with
9 loudspeaker) -- we share the Public
10 Advocate's concern that neither has been
11 sufficiently addressed to date.

12 I would also like to say that the
13 change to virtual participation is
14 concerning. I can speak that, you know, I
15 have a fairly flexible boss and job. Not
16 everyone in my neighborhood has the
17 privilege that I do --

18 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: 30 seconds.

19 MS. BAIER: -- to take a day off. So
20 for many people on a Tuesday morning, the
21 only way that we can participate is
22 through this virtual option.

23 I really do feel that the people who
24 are online today should be allowed to

1 share comments in addition to preparing
2 statements ahead of time.

3 In the future, if you would like to
4 solicit comments online like that, maybe
5 like think about digital barriers. Having
6 someone fill out a PDF, sign it, and email
7 it is a barrier.

8 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Thank you.

9 MS. BAIER: Thank you.

10 - - -

11 (Applause.)

12 - - -

13 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Next speaker.

14 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Next, we have
15 Eric Stowers.

16 Again, introduce yourself; any
17 organization, if any. Once you've done
18 that, I will let you know when you can
19 begin.

20 MR. STOWERS: My name is Eric
21 Stowers. I'm not with an official
22 organization. I'm a resident of Port
23 Richmond.

24 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Okay.

1 You may begin now.

2 MR. STOWERS: Thank you, Gas
3 Commission.

4 I'm at a loss for -- for what's out
5 there because there's, like, so many
6 underlying details that I want to comment
7 on, and really, like, the only comments I
8 would love to be able to ask questions
9 directly and not just have to state stuff
10 for your consideration, but actually get
11 answers on that kind of stuff.

12 I'm going to talk about a few main
13 points today.

14 First, I'll just comment on what I
15 heard just from right now.

16 There's a lot of talk about the
17 importance that we need to get this going
18 right now, we need to act timely. There's
19 a lot of risk-averse sentiment right here,
20 and that makes sense.

21 Like, if we're talking about a plant
22 that is, like, we're considering, like,
23 the nature of how to service the
24 community, it makes sense. But this is a

1 long-term decision. Like, it's going to
2 have major impacts down the road.

3 So when we talk about the timeliness,
4 I can't find -- can't -- I just keep on
5 thinking about the irony that we care so
6 much about the timeliness of this plant,
7 but we don't care about the timeliness of
8 how we're addressing climate change.

9 If PGW really cared about the
10 timeliness of stuff, wouldn't we really be
11 addressing our carbon neutral goals
12 already with what they've been doing, with
13 what they've had years to do?

14 So when I hear about all this stuff,
15 it really just seems like a sales tactic
16 to hurry and rush the sale on this kind of
17 stuff.

18 Let's get additional approval, so
19 that way we can already just start moving.
20 It's harder to stop stuff when you've
21 already just kind of set everything in
22 motion right there.

23 So that really bothered me about
24 today because there's a lot of important

1 conditions -- like, what are the
2 conditions going to be?

3 I mean, I'm going to call out a few
4 that I've been really thinking about the
5 last couple of months, and I've read the
6 Capital Budget three different times
7 looking for these answers and tried to
8 engage with others, and it's still unclear
9 to me.

10 The public-private partnership to me
11 is a big -- is something big that should
12 be addressed before there's -- like, would
13 we ever sign up for a mortgage without
14 knowing the rate? Would we ever sign on
15 with a real estate agent before knowing
16 what their commission will be?

17 Like, I don't even know the full
18 details of what the private partner
19 would -- like, what would it look like,
20 but those should be resolved beforehand.

21 We should know what that's going to
22 be. And if that's going to be something
23 that gets figured out later on, then,
24 great, let's do that and then get approval

1 for the budget once you already have all
2 those line items in there.

3 We talked about -- the lawyer today
4 talked about the -- like, the plant has
5 already been -- like, some things have
6 been figured out and some things haven't
7 been.

8 But, like, there's been no
9 facility-wide NOx limit on this --

10 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: 30 seconds.

11 MR. STOWERS: There's been no
12 facility-wide NOx limit on this plant
13 ever. Is that going to be addressed?

14 That could change how the
15 infrastructure needs to be done. Port
16 Richmond is already an industrialized
17 area. This is stuff that needs to be
18 taken into consideration. There should be
19 proper ways to engage the community.

20 Please read all the underlying
21 details that are going in here. There's
22 going to be a lot of excess LNG. Who's
23 going to profit from that? How is it
24 going to affect the community? Please

1 take that into consideration.

2 Thank you.

3 - - -

4 (Applause.)

5 - - -

6 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Thank you.

7 Next, we have Karen Harvey.

8 MS. HARVEY: My name is Karen Harvey.

9 I'm here as a resident of Philadelphia.

10 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Okay.

11 You may begin now.

12 MS. HARVEY: I'm a member of Here 4
13 Climate Justice and the Founding Director
14 of the Philadelphia Rent Control
15 Coalition. But today I'm here speaking as
16 an individual, a mother, a grandmother,
17 and a lifelong PGW consumer.

18 I'm here because I need to know what
19 the Commission and the City of
20 Philadelphia plan to do to improve the
21 quality of the air, which is becoming
22 increasingly difficult for me to catch my
23 breath in.

24 I've heard numerous promises for a

1 clean, green Philadelphia by 2050. At 73
2 years of age, I figure the chances are
3 pretty good that you have little concern
4 about keeping that promise to me
5 personally.

6 But what about my grandchildren, the
7 families of the people in this room, and
8 your own kids?

9 My sense is that sadly the members of
10 the Commission and the legislature of this
11 City possess even less knowledge about
12 geothermal practices and policies than do
13 I and the general public, which is
14 frightening because you literally hold the
15 futures of our children in the palms of
16 your hands.

17 How and when do you intend to educate
18 yourselves toward cleaning the air I will
19 need to breathe for however many years I
20 have left on this earth?

21 Again, what about the children we
22 kiss good night?

23 We, the public, look to you for
24 answers and for protection and for a safe

1 and healthy environment in which to live.
2 The time is now. The people are here, and
3 we want to work with you to secure all of
4 our futures.

5 Think of yourselves as instruments of
6 life, if you will, and make the decision
7 to do what is right for those you have
8 been commissioned to serve and protect.

9 Thank you for allowing me the
10 opportunity to share my thoughts and
11 concerns.

12 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Thank you.

13 - - -

14 (Applause.)

15 - - -

16 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Next, we have
17 Paul Devine -- I don't know if it's
18 Bottone or Bottone.

19 MR. DEVINE BOTTONE: It's Paul Devine
20 Bottone and I'm a pediatrician just here
21 speaking on my own behalf.

22 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Okay.

23 You may begin now.

24 MR. DEVINE BOTTONE: Thanks,

1 everyone, for being here.

2 As I said, I'm a pediatrician. I'm
3 also a dad. I'm also a PGW customer. I
4 live in Philadelphia.

5 I just want to echo a lot of points
6 the folks have made about concerns about
7 transparency; about the way that this is
8 being rushed, pretty obviously, to make
9 sure that this can get locked in, in a
10 time in which we still feel that natural
11 gas is a good viable option.

12 I want to talk about the health
13 concerns that I have as a pediatrician.

14 So we know that Philadelphia has more
15 than its burden of pediatric asthma
16 specifically. Rates of pediatric asthma
17 are somewhere in the 20 to 25 percent
18 range. We're looking at a national
19 average of about 6%. We're talking about
20 more than three times, almost four times
21 the national average for asthma.

22 We also know that all the compounds
23 that are associated with the production of
24 natural gas, with burning of natural gas

1 that affects us in our communities and in
2 our homes, increase levels of pediatric
3 asthma.

4 My husband and I are both doctors.
5 We are rich. We are actively looking to
6 replace the gas range that's in our home
7 because we have a 2-year-old and we're
8 planning to adopt another child very soon
9 and we have this option to, even without
10 the subsidies that were available that
11 have been taken away by the rollback of
12 all of the climate progress we've been
13 making at the federal level, replace our
14 system, and we are going to do that
15 because we care so much about the health
16 of our child. We want to protect him as
17 much as we can. We recognize that not
18 everybody has the option to do that.

19 In medicine, we think about
20 environmental determinants of health, so
21 that means the way that our environment
22 affects our health every day. We know
23 that certain communities are much more
24 affected than others by very poor

1 determinants of health.

2 One of the most important is
3 proximity to heavy industry. They have a
4 term they call "sacrifice zones." These
5 are the neighborhoods like Port Richmond
6 and like Grays Ferry, where Philadelphia
7 Energy Solutions was.

8 These are neighborhoods where time
9 and time again we're told we need new
10 plants, let's put it right there. We're
11 talking about how trucks might have to
12 come through this neighborhood.

13 It sounds like to me we need to think
14 about a different solution. We need to
15 think about better energy efficiency,
16 better geothermal, all these things that
17 are under PGW's umbrella but are not being
18 explored; as opposed to "Oh, well, you
19 have two options. We can either have
20 trucks or we can have a huge plant."

21 Those do not seem like good
22 solutions. Those do not seem like --

23 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: 30 seconds.

24 MR. DEVINE BOTTON: So I just want

1 to say that we need to be thinking
2 globally where we know that natural gas
3 affects not just our lifetime, our adults'
4 respiratory issues, but our children with
5 asthma, much higher rates of premature
6 birth, low birth rate with higher air
7 pollution.

8 This is a lifetime issue from before
9 birth until death, and we need to be
10 thinking about every opportunity to
11 transition away from natural gas and other
12 very polluting industries toward something
13 that would be much cleaner and much more
14 sustainable.

15 Thank you.

16 - - -

17 (Applause.)

18 - - -

19 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Thank you.

20 And, finally, we have Mitch Chanin.

21 MR. CHANIN: Mitch Chanin, resident
22 of Northeast Philly, PGW ratepayer. I'm
23 not representing any organization today.

24 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Okay.

1 You may begin now.

2 MR. CHANIN: Great.

3 Thanks for the opportunity to speak.

4 I want to begin by commenting on the
5 change to the public comment procedures.
6 If there are people waiting online to
7 speak today, I hope that you will allow
8 them to speak.

9 Many people like to tell their
10 comments based on what they've heard in
11 the moment, and I've heard no
12 justification for why people have to show
13 up in person in order to be able to do
14 that.

15 So like many people have stated, I
16 support the Hearing Examiners'
17 recommendation and hope the Commission
18 will decline to approve the \$182,000,000
19 for the LNG project.

20 There is an emergency happening in
21 this building and in Philly and it is not
22 a drill. The emergency is that we have an
23 asthma crisis. We have an energy
24 affordability crisis. We have a climate

1 crisis.

2 We need long-term real solutions for
3 those problems and we're not getting them
4 from PGW, from City Council, or from the
5 Gas Commission.

6 Seven years ago, many of us were
7 fighting a proposal to build an LNG plant
8 in South Philadelphia. We came here to
9 the Gas Commission. We came to City
10 Council.

11 At the time many people stated and
12 agreed that we have real problems to
13 solve: how do we make sure that people
14 can afford the heat that they need, that
15 the heat is reliable and safe, and that we
16 protect clean air and a liveable climate
17 and union jobs at the same time, and that
18 we needed a real long-term plan for PGW in
19 order to accomplish that.

20 That was seven years ago. I
21 testified at a hearing at City Hall about
22 that in 2019. Since then, there's been no
23 plan developed.

24 Instead, PGW is putting forward and

1 the Gas Commission is approving long-term
2 capital investments in fossil fuel
3 infrastructure year after year with no
4 long-term forecast and no long-term plan.

5 So why are we approving massive
6 fossil fuel infrastructure projects
7 lasting 20, 30, 50 years or longer with no
8 long-term plan when we know that to meet
9 the City's climates goals we need to phase
10 out the use of fossil fuels, and when we
11 know fossil fuel consumption is declining
12 even now, without the policies that we
13 need in place.

14 I understand that people have a
15 concern about making sure that people can
16 have their heat in the winter starting in
17 2030.

18 There have been years to develop a
19 long-term plan. There have been years to
20 figure out how to solve that issue with
21 winter, you know, how do we make sure that
22 in the winter --

23 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: 30 seconds.

24 MR. CHANIN: -- that we can provide

1 reliable, safe heat in the winter during
2 peak times in an affordable way, and the
3 work has not been done to answer the
4 question in the way that it needs to be
5 answered.

6 I hope the Commission will not only
7 decline to approve the \$180 million now,
8 but insist that PGW produce long-term
9 forecasts and business plans that reflect
10 the economic and technological realities
11 and the City's climate goals. Someone
12 needs to hold PGW accountable.

13 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Mr. Chanin,
14 that's your time. Thank you.

15 - - -

16 (Applause.)

17 - - -

18 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Thank you, Mitch.

19 We will now move to Executive
20 Director McClendon for the emailed public
21 comments.

22 Ms. McClendon, were all public
23 comments that were received before
24 a.m. this morning furnished to the

1 Commissioners for review?

2 EXEC. DIR. McCLENDON: Yes, they
3 were.

4 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Thank you.
5 Have all Commissioners had an
6 opportunity to review the public comments
7 that were received by 9:00 a.m. this
8 morning?

9 COMMISSIONER URBANIA: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER McGRAW: Yes.

12 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: We have.
13 Thank you.

14 Please mark the emailed public
15 comments as Gas Commission Exhibit #3.

16 - - -

17 (Whereupon Gas Commission Exhibit #3
18 was marked for identification.)

19 - - -

20 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Are there any
21 comments or questions from any of the
22 Commissioners at this point?

23 - - -

24 (No response.)

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CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Thank you all for your participation.

COMMISSIONER McGRAW: I'm sorry.

CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Yes? You have a comment?

COMMISSIONER McGRAW: Yeah. So I had a couple of questions and comments.

So I think, you know, I want to acknowledge and, you know, start with an appreciation around the last two winters and the work that PGW staff have done to ensure that these, you know, heating systems around Philadelphia were able to not experience gas service interruptions that we've seen in the surrounding counties. This is because of the LNG reserve.

So I definitely appreciate having this from a resilience standpoint, specifically this past winter having that cold snap.

But I think, you know, overall there are questions around the calculation of

1 the savings. I'd be curious, you know, an
2 official breakdown of what went into the
3 90 million figure; you know, are we
4 looking at bifurcation, as mentioned,
5 storage, vaporization, and all of that
6 that goes into that, and specifically
7 around this January event.

8 And then curious around, you know,
9 what that would look like to, like, again,
10 the trucking in of things.

11 I think that in that, too, right, are
12 the emissions calculations that have gone
13 into that, right, like, what would it look
14 like to have trucks drive in, and things
15 of that nature.

16 So these are the kind of things that
17 I would be curious to see going forward
18 for that.

19 I don't know if you want to jump in
20 now or...

21 MR. DASENT: Well, we certainly can
22 provide an answer for your question, and
23 based upon the transcript, I'll share that
24 with Mr. Cassidy.

1 COMMISSIONER McGRAW: Great. Thank
2 you.

3 And, then, I think, you know, we've
4 heard a lot about sustainability and
5 climate alignment.

6 I just wanted to address, you know,
7 in this, as we're moving forward, you
8 know, what are the considerations around,
9 you know, PGW looking to align with the
10 City's climate commitments? How is that
11 going into things, like the liquefier?

12 You had mentioned engineering
13 studies. Is that including like a
14 life-cycle analysis from a carbon
15 perspective, right, like, what goes into
16 this, because I want to make sure that
17 that's addressed.

18 I think that's an important piece of
19 the puzzle, as we're figuring this out, to
20 ensure that we are making the most, you
21 know, strategic investments.

22 I know that PGW has engaged with
23 Environmental Resources Management, as has
24 been mentioned. I think that, you know,

1 that low-carbon pathway study, I don't
2 know the timing of that particularly, but
3 I would be curious if that is going to be
4 able to or at least have portions of that
5 to be able to impact the study here, and
6 what all of that, you know, entails.

7 Or are we just looking at the
8 management of the system at current? Are
9 we looking at like a new building on the
10 diversification study?

11 And that's my question on that one.

12 MR. DASENT: And we can supply an
13 answer to that as well.

14 COMMISSIONER McGRAW: Okay.

15 MR. DASENT: And we're just trying to
16 figure out how this all sort of fits into
17 conditions that you might ask us after we
18 answer the question --

19 MR. McGRAW: Mm-humm.

20 MR. DASENT: -- for us to follow
21 through on in order to get approval.

22 MR. McGRAW: And then I think for the
23 negotiations in here, you know, as I
24 mentioned, the ability to have the

1 low-carbon pathway, you know, potential in
2 there.

3 But I think that if we're talking
4 about the ability to come forward with
5 hosts, P3, right, like, that P3 assessment
6 should be done additionally with that.

7 So, like, I think, like, if it's
8 capital only, what does that look like?
9 But, then, if the P3, you know, like, as
10 that contract negotiation, I know that
11 will take some time, but I think that
12 having that consideration in there is
13 really key as well, I think.

14 And then, on the geothermal
15 feasibility, I know that that feasibility
16 study was done, if I'm not mistaken, with
17 operating -- and it's because we were not
18 directly -- I just want to get that on the
19 record, but, like, that that is not a
20 capital obligation, right, that was an
21 operating expense that we were looking at
22 the potential to what it could look like.

23 But I think I'm just surprised to not
24 see some kind of capital, like, line item

1 that would address a potential pilot for
2 that going forward.

3 So, like, you know, I would hope that
4 there would be something like that going
5 forward to address whether it's the
6 low-carbon pathway line or something like
7 that.

8 I don't know if, like, it's within
9 the Capital Budget or if there is, like,
10 an ability to pull that out.

11 I think that would be something that
12 I'm hearing that we want to see going
13 forward.

14 MR. DASENT: Fine.

15 And it is funded and we are committed
16 to doing it.

17 But we can also give you an
18 acknowledgment of that fact so that
19 there's absolutely full transparency on
20 that issue.

21 COMMISSIONER MCGRAW: So you're
22 saying there is funding allocated to do
23 the pilot --

24 MR. DASENT: Yes.

1 MR. McGRAW: -- or the
2 post-feasibility; right?

3 MR. DASENT: The post-feasibility`
4 will be the next step.

5 COMMISSIONER McGRAW: I see.

6 But my understanding is that the
7 feasibility study is wrapping up now. So,
8 then, there is no capital assignment at
9 this point to the potential of a pilot
10 because we're asking for the liquefier
11 before we have all of the details, but,
12 like --

13 MR. DASENT: Yeah.

14 COMMISSIONER McGRAW: -- I know we're
15 kind of just curious about the geothermal
16 piece in that.

17 MR. DASENT: And we certainly can
18 answer that question for you.

19 But I think Mr. Teme will address the
20 point in terms of where we are with the
21 project; and based upon that assessment,
22 that will tell you our next step, which
23 will be to ask you for whatever funding is
24 needed.

1 COMMISSIONER McGRAW: All right.

2 And then, I would just ask that when
3 the study is completed, that we come back
4 to a public meeting and present the
5 findings of the study.

6 MR. DASENT: Fair.

7 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: When will that
8 study be done?

9 MR. DASENT: Mr. Teme is supposed to
10 be there for the next meeting --

11 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Okay.

12 MR. DASENT: -- to report --

13 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Yes.

14 MR. DASENT: -- for us, and we were
15 going to do that at the next Philadelphia
16 Gas Commission meeting.

17 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Perfect.

18 MR. DASENT: Thank you.

19 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Are there any
20 other comments or questions from any of
21 the Commissioners at this point?

22 - - -

23 (No response.)

24 - - -

1 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Thank you all for
2 your participation as we deliberate.

3 All identified exhibits will be
4 entered into the record of this meeting.

5 This matter is now before this
6 Commission for action.

7 Is there a motion on the Philadelphia
8 Gas Commission's Recommended Decision for
9 the Fiscal Year '27 Capital Budget,
10 associated forecast, and other matters?

11 COMMISSIONER DRISCOLL: Madam Chair,
12 I have a motion, and I would like to
13 comment before I make my motion.

14 While we appreciate the work put
15 forth by the Gas Commission staff, Public
16 Advocate, and others involved with making
17 this Recommended Decision, we currently
18 lack a clear recommendation that would
19 allow us to make an informed decision at
20 this time.

21 Primarily, our concern involves the
22 recommendation involving the replacement
23 of the LNG liquefier Richmond plant.

24 First, the recommendation states that

1 the Richmond liquefier is in the latter
2 portion of its service life and that
3 continued reliance upon it presents
4 reliability risks.

5 However, the Gas Commission Staff
6 recommendation is asking for us to deny
7 PGW's request for \$182 million for the
8 liquefier replacement, even though its
9 time in service is soon coming to an end.

10 Furthermore, the Staff recommendation
11 states that the replacement of the LNG
12 liquefier is prudent for safe and reliable
13 service and, if PGW needs money in the
14 future, it can request an amendment to the
15 Capital Budget.

16 We have contradictory statements with
17 what we're being asked to review and
18 approve regarding the replacement of the
19 LNG liquefier.

20 A decision of this magnitude requires
21 clear guidance for the Commission to make
22 an informed decision. This decision will
23 affect all Philadelphia gas utility
24 ratepayers. We need all the facts before

1 moving forward. This is a complex issue
2 deserving more study.

3 As such, I make a motion that we
4 table this matter to allow sufficient time
5 to obtain the necessary information and
6 clear guidance for our decision.

7 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: The Vice Chair has
8 made a motion to table the decision on the
9 Gas Commission's recommendation for the
10 Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget.

11 Is there a second?

12 COMMISSIONER McGRAW: Second.

13 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: It has been moved
14 and properly seconded.

15 Is there any discussion?

16 - - -

17 (No response.)

18 - - -

19 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: All in favor of
20 the motion?

21 COMMISSIONER URBANIA: Aye.

22 COMMISSIONER McGRAW: Aye.

23 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: No opposition.

24 The motion has been approved and we

1 will table this matter to allow sufficient
2 time to obtain the necessary information
3 and clear guidance for our decision.

4 - - -

5 (Whereupon the motion was unanimously
6 carried.)

7 - - -

8 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: The third item --

9 MR. DASENT: Madam Chair --

10 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Yes.

11 MR. DASENT: -- if I might, most of
12 the budget is not controversial. In other
13 words, the 182 million, I understand, the
14 LNG project.

15 CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Mm-humm.

16 MR. DASENT: But when you subtract
17 that from the balance of the budget, where
18 we have stipulations and agreements and
19 normal vanilla expenditures that we make
20 that need to be recommended first and then
21 approved by City Council in a timely way
22 before they go out of session at the end
23 of the fiscal year, it would be prudent to
24 have a decision on that portion of the

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budget, other than the LNG project, today or in the near future.

CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: We will consider that, but it will not happen today. If we have a special session, we could consider that, but we do have time before Council needs to pass the budget.

MR. DASENT: Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN BRADY: Thank you, Mr. Dasent.

- - -

Reported by: Mary Hammond, CSR

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