

1 PLACE: Mecklenburg County Courthouse
2 Charlotte, North Carolina
3 DATE: Wednesday, July 10, 2019
4 TIME: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
5 DOCKET NO: G-9, Sub 743
6 BEFORE: Commissioner ToNola D. Brown-Bland, Presiding
7 Chair Charlotte A. Mitchell
8 Commissioner Lyons Gray
9 Commissioner Daniel G. Clodfelter

10
11 **IN THE MATTER OF:**

12 Application of Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc.,
13 for an Adjustment of Rates, Charges, and Tariffs
14 Applicable to Service in North Carolina, Continuation
15 of its IMR Mechanism, Adoption of an EDIT Rider,
16 and Other Relief
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15 **FOR THE USING AND CONSUMING PUBLIC AND THE**
16 **STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA AND ITS CITIZENS IN**
17 **THIS MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST:**

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NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

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19 No exhibits of record.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Good evening.

Let's come to order and go on the record. I am Commissioner ToNola D. Brown-Bland, the Presiding Commissioner for this hearing. And with me this evening are Chair Charlotte A. Mitchell; Commissioners Lyons Gray and Daniel G. Clodfelter.

I now call for hearing Docket Number G-9, Sub 743, In the Matter of an Application of Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc., hereafter Piedmont or Company, for an Adjustment of Rates, Charges and Tariffs Applicable to Service in North Carolina, Continuation of Its IMR Mechanism, Adoption of Its EDIT Rider, and Other Relief, Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute § 62-133 and Commission Rule R1-17.

On April 1, 2019, Piedmont filed an Application with the Commission requesting that the Commission approve, among other requested items, its proposed increase in and revisions to its rates and charges for natural gas service in North Carolina, continuation of its Integrity Management Rider, hereafter IMR mechanism, implementation of a deferral accounting mechanism for certain distribution

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1 Integrity Management Program expenses incurred in
2 compliance with the federal safety regulations, and
3 adoption of an Excess Deferred Income Tax Rider
4 mechanism to facilitate return to customers of
5 deferrals in excess deferred income taxes associated
6 with reductions in the state and federal tax rates
7 occurring after the Company's last general rate case.

8 Overall, across all customer classes, the
9 Company seeks a 9 percent increase in annual total
10 revenues to recover its costs. The Company states the
11 increase is necessary primarily due to substantial
12 capital investment in its system since its last rate
13 case in 2013. According to the Company, this
14 investment was made to accommodate system growth and
15 to comply with federal safety requirements.

16 Filed with the Application were the
17 testimony of Frank Yoho, Victor Gaglio, Jack Sullivan,
18 Bruce Barkley, Pia Powers, Kally Couzens, Robert
19 Hevert, Daniel Yardley, Dane Watson, and Paul Normand.

20 Carolina Utility Customers Association,
21 Inc., Fayetteville Public Works Commission,
22 Nucor-Steele Hertford, a Division of Nucor
23 Corporation, and Carolina Industrial Group for Fair
24 Utility Rates IV filed Petitions to Intervene in this

1 docket, which were granted by the Commission.

2 The intervention and participation of the
3 Public Staff is recognized pursuant to State Statute
4 and Commission Rule.

5 On April 22, 2019, the Commission issued an
6 Order Establishing General Rate Case and Suspending
7 the Proposed Rates.

8 On May 16, 2019, the Commission issued an
9 Order Scheduling Investigation and Hearings,
10 Establishing Intervention and Testimony Due Dates and
11 Discover Guidelines, and Requiring Public Notice. The
12 Order scheduled hearings to receive the testimony from
13 public witnesses for this date and time in Charlotte,
14 yesterday, July 9th in High Point, and Wednesday,
15 July 17, 2019, in Wilmington. After the public
16 hearings, the hearing will resume in Raleigh on
17 Monday, August 19, 2019 at 2:00 p.m., and will
18 continue as required for the testimony and cross
19 examination of the expert witnesses for Piedmont, the
20 Public Staff and other intervenors.

21 On June 10, 2019, the Attorney General for
22 the State of North Carolina filed a Notice of
23 Intervention. The intervention and participation of
24 the Attorney General is recognized pursuant to North

1 Carolina General Statute § 62-20.

2 In compliance with the State Government
3 Ethics Act, I remind members of the Commission of our
4 duty to avoid conflicts of interest, and inquire at
5 this time as to whether any Commissioner has any known
6 conflict of interest with respect to the docket?

7 (No response)

8 The record will reflect that no conflicts
9 were identified.

10 I'll now call for appearances of counsel,
11 beginning with the Company.

12 MR. JEFFRIES: Thank you, Madam Chairman.
13 My name is Jim Jeffries. I'm with the Law Firm of
14 McGuireWoods. I'm here on behalf of Piedmont Natural
15 Gas. With me at counsel table is Mr. Brian Heslin
16 who's the Deputy General Counsel of Duke Energy. And,
17 if I may, I'd also like to introduce a few
18 representatives of Piedmont that are here tonight that
19 are available to address any customer concerns outside
20 of the context of the hearing. First -- and I'll ask
21 you to stand as I call your name.

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: All right.
23 Ladies and gentlemen, pay attention in case you need
24 to talk or communicate with these folks at breaks or

1 after the hearing. They've come to be able to be
2 available to answer any questions you might have of
3 them.

4 MR. JEFFRIES: First is Mr. Bruce Barkley
5 who is Vice President of Regulatory and Community
6 Relations for Piedmont. Next is Ms. Cathy Pritchard
7 who's the Manager of Consumer Affairs for Piedmont.
8 And, finally, Ms. Jennifer Sharpe who's the
9 Communications Consultant for Piedmont.

10 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: She's behind you
11 back there.

12 Thank you, Mr. Jeffries.

13 MS. JOST: Good evening. My name is Megan
14 Jost. I'm with the Public Staff of the Utilities
15 Commission. I have Neha Patel with me here this
16 evening. She's sitting in the back. We represent the
17 Using and Consuming Public.

18 MS. TOWNSEND: Teresa Townsend with the
19 Attorney General's Office. We represent the Using and
20 Consuming Public and the State and its Citizens in
21 this interest -- matter of public interest. Thank
22 you.

23 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you.
24 Before we get started are there any preliminary

1 matters we need to address?

2 MR. JEFFRIES: Not that I'm aware of.

3 MS. JOST: Not from us.

4 MS. TOWNSEND: No.

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Before we go
6 further and hear from those of you who wish to give
7 testimony, I'll just go over a few things about the
8 proceeding tonight. As you heard in my opening
9 statement, this proceeding began when the Company
10 filed its Application for a rate increase. And in
11 response to that, the Commission scheduled this
12 hearing in two parts - one for the public hearing to
13 hear from you primarily as the customers of the
14 Company, and we want to hear from you and anything
15 that you might have to tell us about what you think
16 about the Application, about how it will impact you,
17 about the service you receive from the Company, or
18 whether you need some assistance from the Company.
19 Many times, issues and problems do get resolved here
20 when you're able to speak directly with
21 representatives of the Company. You may also speak
22 with the attorney and the person that she --
23 Ms. Patel -- that she introduced who come here; they
24 represent the Using and Consuming Public and they'll

1 be here to answer any questions that they can answer
2 tonight. That takes care of the public hearing
3 portion, the first portion.

4 The second portion that the Commission set
5 is what we typically refer to as the evidentiary
6 hearing, even though that's a bit of a misnomer, but
7 at that hearing the experts, the expert witnesses come
8 to give testimony and they are usually accountants,
9 engineers, economists, or other specialists of the
10 Company, and that the Public Staff bring forward to
11 us. And, also, the intervenors are also free to bring
12 experts and have them introduce testimony as well.

13 The Public Staff represents the Using and
14 Consuming Public and their function is independent of
15 the Commission. A lot of people confuse that and
16 think they are one and the same as the Commission.
17 They are not. They work on your behalf under the
18 direction of an executive director who does not answer
19 to us or the Commission. And I just want you to know
20 at the front that it's the Public Staff that
21 investigates the Application, goes behind what the
22 Company alleges, checks to see if the Company has
23 spent the money on the assets that they claim they
24 have and that those assets are being used on your

1 behalf. The Public Staff reviews the books, the
2 records, and they visit the facilities to make sure
3 that the investment is really there.

4 And now about these proceedings - the
5 proceedings, the public hearings, are not in the
6 nature of a town hall or a protest meeting. They are
7 a court proceeding and they offer an opportunity for
8 you to come forward and provide evidence under oath.
9 The court reporter will take your testimony verbatim
10 and will, from there, make a written transcript of it
11 which will be publicly available.

12 The Commissioners who are sitting over here
13 to my right, and the attorneys who are here who
14 introduced themselves will have an opportunity to ask
15 the witnesses questions about the testimony that is
16 provided. If they do ask you a question, the purpose
17 is usually not to challenge you at a proceeding like
18 this so much as to clarify what you say for the record
19 so that we may all ensure that we have accurately
20 understood. Like court proceedings, you are not able
21 to ask the Commission questions just like you don't
22 see witnesses asking judges in court proceedings
23 questions. It's our time to hear from you as the
24 witnesses in the case. Also, on -- I'll just add with

1 respect to that, we're not being rude, we're happy to
2 greet you if you come up at the break or if you happen
3 to run into us or see us, but we're not -- it is not
4 appropriate for us to discuss with you anything about
5 the case off the record. So I just ask you not to put
6 us in that position. We're not trying to be rude, but
7 it's the law that we try to follow, and it says we're
8 not suppose to talk about the case except on the
9 record.

10 And, lastly, order must be maintained in
11 these proceedings, so it's not appropriate to cause a
12 delay by clapping or booing during the proceedings.
13 I'll ask you to remain quiet and allow the court
14 reporter the full opportunity to hear and get the
15 record accurate. With that said, I also ask you to
16 observe a time restraint. We have a time clock here
17 and the allotted time per witness is three minutes.
18 When you see the clock is running down to one minute,
19 I would ask that you make a move towards being able to
20 summarize and wrap up your statement and, if I ask you
21 to wrap it up, please do so in a quick sentence or
22 two.

23 And, finally, the very last thing is this
24 case is not about the siting of any pipeline. Some of

1 you may be aware of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline
2 proceedings, this case has nothing to do about that.
3 This Commission has no role in whether that pipeline
4 will be approved or disapproved. We have no say in
5 it. And so that we may talk about the things that are
6 relevant to this case, I'll ask that you limit what
7 you have to say about that, although, I won't restrict
8 you if there's something burning that you want to get
9 off your chest. We are here to listen and we came
10 here from Raleigh to do that. So we appreciate you
11 coming out and we do want to hear from you.

12 With that said, Ms. Jost, have you
13 identified witnesses?

14 (Commissioner Clodfelter addresses
15 the Presiding Commissioner.)

16 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Yes. I'm being
17 reminded, and I think Ms. Jost may have reminded you
18 as well, but if any of you provided or have written
19 statements, if you're not able to complete what you
20 have to say in a three-minute time, or you just want
21 your statement to be a part of the evidentiary record,
22 you have the opportunity to have that introduced as an
23 exhibit to the testimony here tonight, and Ms. Jost
24 will facilitate helping you to have that happen, so

1 just bear that in mind.

2 Ms. Jost, have you identified public
3 witnesses who wish to speak to us tonight?

4 MS. JOST: I have. We have 14.

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: All right. You
6 may call the first.

7 MS. JOST: I will call the first name and I
8 will also call the next two names on the list that way
9 you'll know that your time is coming up.

10 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I never got that list.

11 MS. JOST: All right. Ms. Patel has another
12 list that you can sign if you'd like to speak. If
13 there's anybody else who would like to speak and has
14 not signed up, please make sure that you get your name
15 on that list.

16 So the first witness is Steve Copulsky. And
17 after Mr. Copulsky we'll have Nancy Carter and
18 Margaret Peeples.

19 STEVE COPULSKY;
20 having been duly sworn,
21 testified as follows:

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Jost.

23 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

24 Q Can you please state your name and spell your

1 last name for the record?

2 A It's Steve Copulsky. It's spelled
3 C-O-P-U-L-S-K-Y.

4 Q And what is your address, Mr. Copulsky?

5 A 6614 Lynn Avenue in Charlotte, North Carolina.

6 Q Are you a customer of Piedmont?

7 A Yes, I am.

8 Q And do you have a statement which you would like
9 to present to the Commission?

10 A Yes, I do.

11 Q Please proceed.

12 A Thank you. And thank you to the Utilities
13 Commission for giving the citizens an opportunity
14 to speak tonight.

15 My name is Steve Copulsky. I've
16 lived in North Carolina for 40 years and I am a
17 long time leader in the Sierra Club. I'm here
18 tonight to ask the Utilities Commission to deny a
19 rate increase for Piedmont Natural Gas. Duke
20 Energy and its subsidiary, Piedmont Natural Gas,
21 are committed to a business plan that focuses on
22 the expansion of fracked gas and that will
23 continue to cause climate change and worsen
24 our climate crisis. They're asking for a rate

1 increase to expand their use of fracked gas.
2 They ignore the environmental and the economic
3 benefits of clean renewable solar and wind power.
4 They make false claims about supporting renewable
5 energy by including a small amount of renewables
6 to window dress their fossil fuel energy plan.

7 For the members of the Utilities
8 Commission, here's my question to you, what is
9 the legacy that you want to leave for the time
10 that you serve on the Commission? Ten years or
11 20 years from now, do you want to tell your
12 children or grandchildren you did all you could
13 to avert the climate crisis? Or will you be
14 saying to them, well, there was pressure to
15 compromise, we had to keep the powers to be
16 happy? I wish I could have done more. Well, you
17 can do more. You can say no. We can't have
18 business as usual when Duke and Piedmont ask for
19 an excessive rate increase and the Utilities
20 Commission simply lowers their request to a rate
21 increase that Duke and Piedmont undoubtedly
22 expected to get and that makes them happy. It's
23 time for the Utilities Commission to stand up and
24 say no to a rate increase that will commit North

1 Carolina to a long-term energy plan focused on
2 fracked gas, a plan that will continue to worsen
3 our climate crisis. Please help North Carolina
4 move away from fracked gas and open the
5 opportunity to embrace clean, renewable energy
6 and fight climate change. Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you,
8 Mr. Copulsky. Just a minute before you step down.
9 Are there any questions, Ms. Jost?

10 MS. JOST: No questions.

11 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Any questions
12 from --

13 MR. JEFFRIES: No questions from the
14 Company.

15 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Questions from
16 the Commission?

17 (Shakes heads no)

18 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you,
19 Mr. Copulsky.

20 (The witness is excused)

21 MS. JOST: Nancy Carter. And after
22 Ms. Carter we will have Margaret Peeples and Ridge
23 Graham.

24 NANCY CARTER;

1 having been duly sworn,

2 testified as follows:

3 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Jost has some
4 questions for you.

5 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

6 Q Please state your name and address for the
7 record.

8 A Nancy Carter, 1401 Cavendish Court, Charlotte,
9 North Carolina.

10 Q Are you a customer of Piedmont?

11 A I am.

12 Q And do you have a statement that you would like
13 to present to the Commission?

14 A I do.

15 Q Please proceed.

16 A Thank you very much. I am Nancy Carter. I'm an
17 elected official. I serve on the Soil and Water
18 Conservation District Board. I have served on
19 national, international, state and local boards
20 concerned with the environment as well as the
21 arts, politics, et cetera.

22 Tonight, I'm here because I'm a
23 new grandmother. I feel a very distinct
24 responsibility about what we pass along to the

1 future of our generations that come after us.

2 I've also sworn 17 times in the
3 last 20 years to protect the Constitution of the
4 United States and North Carolina. I feel the
5 responsibility in those swearings, I'm under oath
6 right now, I have been sworn to protect the
7 country, the State, and the population. And I
8 think it's absolutely incumbent upon us to
9 protect the environment, because without the
10 environment, and a clean and healthy state, we
11 would have no population, we would have no
12 functioning society, or no government.

13 I am very concerned about the rate
14 increase that is being proposed because I think
15 these funds are being used to promote the use of
16 fracked gas and this is not clean energy which we
17 need for protecting our own climate here. It is
18 absolutely crucial that we look into investing in
19 clean energy. That is the point that I wish
20 to make. Charlotte has committed to the
21 Sustainable Energy Action Plan. I was part of
22 that group that studied externally for the city
23 council. As a former city council member, I was
24 very pleased to serve on that. And if you serve

1 on the SEAP, please raise your hand in the
2 audience.

3 (Several audience members raised hands)

4 There we are. We have very
5 distinguished panels, not myself, they were very
6 active and very knowledgeable. The county is
7 considering the same environmental statement. We
8 need to move forward to protect our environment
9 and not invest in an energy that produces carbon.
10 It's absolutely crucial that we take
11 responsibility for that.

12 Lastly, I'm a stockholder. We've
13 lived here for 42 years. My husband is a retired
14 physician. And we do hold stock in Duke and
15 Piedmont Natural Gas. I think that the investors
16 need to take the risk and the expenditures that's
17 committed by the energy companies. I look at the
18 pipeline and look at the fatal coal ash, et
19 cetera, and see that we need to take
20 responsibility for these things.

21 So looking at people that I have
22 known, friends like Bill Lee, Bill Coley, and
23 Ruth Shaw, we need to look forward to the future
24 in a responsible way, looking at clean energy as

1 the most important thing that we can pass on to
2 our future generations.

3 Thank you for your consideration
4 and thank you so much for allowing me to speak
5 tonight.

6 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you, Ms.
7 Carter. Ms. Jost, any questions for Ms. Carter?

8 MS. JOST: No questions.

9 MR. JEFFRIES: Piedmont has no questions of
10 Ms. Carter.

11 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Commissioners,
12 any questions?

13 (Shakes heads no)

14 Thank you.

15 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

16 (The witness is excused)

17 MS. JOST: Next, we have Margaret Peeples.
18 And after Ms. Peeples we will have Ridge Graham and
19 Luis Rodriguez.

20 MS. PEEPLES: I prefer not to swear.

21 MARGARET PEEPLES;

22 having been duly affirmed,

23 testified as follows:

24 THE WITNESS: My name is Margaret Peeples.

1 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Just a moment,
2 Ms. Peeples.

3 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

4 Q Please do state your name and address for the
5 record.

6 A My name is Margaret Peeples. My address is 838
7 Heather Lane in Charlotte 28209.

8 Q Thank you. Are you a customer of Piedmont?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And do you have a statement that you'd like to
11 present to the Commission?

12 A Yes, and I gave you copies. Piedmont Natural Gas
13 is part of Duke Energy. Natural gas is natural,
14 but Piedmont/Duke's greed is not natural, it's
15 pathological. Replacing our protective
16 atmosphere with a suffocating blanket of too much
17 CO2 and methane. Is it natural to expect our
18 grandchildren to spend their lives inside because
19 it will be too hot to go outside and their
20 asthmas will worsen each year? No. Grandparents
21 want their grandchildren to be able to breathe
22 and to walk outside.

23 Methane leakage from pipelines,
24 fracking chemicals leaking in the soil, fracking

1 causing more earthquakes, and LNG storage
2 buildings rise neatly over us with explosive
3 target potential. These are not wanted, not
4 needed. What is needed is wind and solar energy,
5 safe for our atmosphere and bringing safe jobs.

6 More profits to reward
7 Piedmont/Duke for bringing more climate
8 catastrophe to our state, our nation and our
9 planet. Unreasonable, unnatural, not wanted, not
10 needed, no way, keep it in the ground. Thank
11 you.

12 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Jost.

13 MS. JOST: I don't have any questions, but I
14 would like to mark this as Peeples Exhibit 1.

15 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Peeples, let
16 me ask you, did you read verbatim from the statement
17 that you provided to Ms. Jost?

18 THE WITNESS: Pretty much. I made one
19 correction on all of the copies.

20 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: I was asking
21 because if you got everything you wanted to say in
22 your testimony then there would not be a need to add
23 the exhibit unless you just want us to. It's going to
24 be taken down verbatim by the court reporter. So are

1 you good?

2 A Yes. I want this to be what was submitted?

3 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: So we're just
4 going to go with your statement and not attach --

5 A Right.

6 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: All right.

7 Mr. Jeffries, do you have any questions?

8 MR. JEFFRIES: No questions.

9 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Commissioners,
10 any questions from you?

11 (Shakes heads no)

12 Thank you, Ms. Peeples.

13 A Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you for
15 coming out.

16 (The witness is excused)

17 MS. JOST: Ridge Graham. After Mr. Graham,
18 Luis Rodriguez and Jerome Wagner.

19 RIDGE GRAHAM;

20 having been duly sworn,

21 testified as follows:

22 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

23 Q Please state your name and address for the
24 record.

1 A Ridge Graham, and 589 West King Street, Boone,
2 North Carolina.

3 Q And are you a customer of Piedmont?

4 A I'm not. I'm here representing members of
5 Appalachian Voices who are Piedmont energy --
6 (WHEREUPON, the Court Reporter
7 requested the witness to speak
8 up.)

9 A Yes -- of Piedmont Gas customers.

10 Q Do you have a statement that you would like to
11 present to the Commission?

12 A I do.

13 Q Please proceed.

14 A So one of the things that I wanted to draw
15 attention to was the requested increase on the
16 return of equity, from 5.36, the current rate, to
17 10.6 percent, is almost a 100 percent increase.
18 This is not justified by Piedmont's calculations,
19 and it's an unfair economic burden to place
20 on consumers. It does not provide better or
21 cheaper service.

22 From there, we'd also like to draw
23 attention to the line item 10 on the Supplemental
24 G-1 filing, which is plant in service for

1 projected additions through June 30 of 2019,
2 which is about \$285 million, and roughly equal to
3 the price tag of the projected or liquefied
4 natural gas storage facility in Maxton, North
5 Carolina, as indicated by the *Charlotte Business*
6 *Journal*. I don't have that for sure, eDocuments,
7 they were public facing and weren't very clear.
8 But I just wanted to say that this facility is
9 unneeded to meet the demand for natural gas for
10 the foreseeable future as determined by the
11 Commission's own IRP projections. Piedmont
12 customers have plenty of access to natural gas
13 during the winter as provided by existing
14 Piedmont distribution lines. They're supplied by
15 the Transco-Williams pipeline. This facility is
16 not yet completed and would not be finished in
17 the next few years. The precedent set by the
18 Commission when Duke Energy sought to recover
19 costs for coal ash cleanup that had not yet been
20 incurred were rejected until those -- until they
21 had actually incurred them.

22 And I humbly ask that the
23 Commission follow suit in that precedent and not
24 provide a blank check for Piedmont to build an

1 expensive and unnecessary facility using money
2 from their customer's pockets.

3 And I also ask the Commission to
4 question the need of this facility in a similar
5 fashion to Virginia State Corporation Commission,
6 determining if the Roanoke Gas Company's request
7 that they will need gas infrastructure was
8 unnecessary and not grant compensation in the
9 form of more of their customers money. Thank
10 you.

11 MS. JOST: No questions.

12 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Mr. Jeffries, do
13 you have questions or follow-up for this witness?

14 MR. JEFFRIES: Just one question.

15 CROSS EXAMINATION BY MR. JEFFRIES:

16 Q Are you aware that there are no LNG costs in this
17 proceeding? There are no costs sought to be
18 recovered in this proceeding?

19 A I am not aware of that. I was just -- was trying
20 to guess based off of what was written, the costs
21 that were stated, and I went through the
22 testimonies trying to find what it was for and I
23 couldn't find an actual delineation of this cost.

24 MR. JEFFRIES: Thank you. That's all the

1 questions.

2 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Are there any
3 questions from the Commission? Commissioner
4 Clodfelter.

5 EXAMINATION BY COMMISSIONER CLODFELTER:

6 Q Mr. Graham, I didn't catch where you live?

7 A In Boone, North Carolina.

8 Q In where?

9 A Boone, North Carolina.

10 Q Okay. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Any other
12 questions?

13 (No response)

14 All right. Mr. Graham, thank you. You may
15 step down.

16 (The witness is excused)

17 MS. JOST: Luis Rodriguez. And after
18 Mr. Rodriguez is Jerome Wagner and Rodney Sadler.

19 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I'm going to affirm.

20 LUIS RODRIGUEZ;
21 having been duly affirmed,
22 testified as follows:

23 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

24 Q Please state your name and address for the

1 record.

2 A My name is Luis Rodriguez and my address is 7200
3 Barcliff Drive, Charlotte, North Carolina 28212.

4 Q Thank you. Are you a Piedmont customer?

5 A I am not.

6 Q And do you have a statement that you would like
7 to present to the Commission?

8 A Yes, I do.

9 Q Please proceed.

10 A Thank you for coming all the way out here. I am
11 Luis Rodriguez and I am an organizer with the
12 Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign. I'm also here
13 speaking for the Dirty Fuels Campaign.

14 I would ask that the Commission
15 deny the request by Piedmont Gas for this rate
16 increase. According to PNG's own financials
17 recorded by Markets Insider, PNG saw a 3.39
18 percent balanced increased from 2016 and 2017 --

19 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Mr. Rodriguez,
20 slow up just a little bit so she can get it.

21 A Sorry.

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER CLODFELTER: You need to slow
24 down a little bit.

1 A That 3.39 percent balanced increase from 2016 to
2 2017, a 9.52 percent increase from 2017 to 2018,
3 these are not increases that regular folks on
4 main street get to see in their wallets.

5 At a time when renewable energy
6 prices are coming down, Duke is determined to
7 squeeze every dime of hazardous fossil fuels like
8 fracked gas at the financial and health risks to
9 families and individuals just trying to get by.
10 The infrastructure needed to feed fracked gas is
11 dangerous and unnecessary, carrying highly toxic,
12 highly combustible liquids directly through
13 low-income communities and across waterways.

14 Fracked gas contributes to heat
15 waves, droughts, wildfires, and super storms.
16 New Orleans is currently flooding. I hate it on
17 account of more than one hurricane that hasn't
18 even made landfall yet. Climate change is a
19 reality. And here in Charlotte, this rate
20 increase will be worse for low-income families,
21 for elders and those with disabilities living on
22 fixed incomes This money grab is unnecessary and
23 any benefit is vastly outweighed by the harm it
24 will do to the public.

1 I ask that you consider the
2 people, the actual families and individuals who
3 will be affected by this most grievously, and
4 that you keep that in mind when you make your
5 decision. Thank you very much.

6 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you,
7 Mr. Rodriguez. Is there -- are there any questions?

8 MS. JOST: No.

9 MR. JEFFRIES: No.

10 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: You may step
11 down.

12 (The witness is excused)

13 MS. JOST: Jerome Wagner.

14 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Jerome is delayed
15 downstairs.

16 MS. JOST: Pardon me.

17 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Jerome has been delayed
18 downstairs.

19 MS. JOST: Okay. We will come back to him.
20 Rodney Sadler. After Mr. Sadler we'll have Sally
21 Kneidel.

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Will you place
23 your left hand on the Bible and raise your right, or
24 would you rather affirm?

1 THE WITNESS: I'll just affirm.

2 RODNEY SADLER;

3 having been duly affirmed,

4 testified as follows:

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Jost.

6 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

7 Q Please state your name and address for the
8 record.

9 A My name is Rev. Dr. Rodney Sadler. I live at
10 5902 Marshbank Lane in Charlotte, North Carolina.

11 Q Are you a customer of Piedmont?

12 A I am a customer of Piedmont Natural Gas.

13 Q Do you have a statement that you'd like to
14 present to the Commission?

15 A Yes, I would like to.

16 Q Please proceed.

17 A Thank you very much. First of all, I'd like to
18 say I'm grateful for the work of the Utilities
19 Commission for the fact that you help to govern
20 our regulated monopolies of energy in our state.
21 Thank you for the work that you do, and I think
22 it's necessary work.

23 Also, let me say I am grateful to
24 Piedmont Natural Gas and to Duke Energy because I

1 think they provide necessary service for us all
2 and I'm a beneficiary and I would be remiss not
3 to say that.

4 I think that this rate hike is a
5 concern for me because I am a minster. I'm
6 called by Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 to be a
7 steward of all the resources of the earth, and
8 that means that we have to be good stewards of
9 those resources. When I think about a rate
10 increase, right now, my primary concern is that
11 it's going to negatively impact the lives of poor
12 citizens of the State of North Carolina. People
13 can ill-afford to deal with such a rate increase.
14 One of my concerns is that these are also the
15 people that are often most dramatically impacted
16 by the effects of climate change often brought on
17 by poor energy policies across our state.

18 I'm also concerned that there's
19 not been great transparency. Why is it that we
20 need to have this rate increase at this point and
21 time? Where will the money go? And how will
22 this be a benefit to all of us in the State of
23 North Carolina?

24 My greater fear is that this is

1 going to go into an increase in fossil fuel
2 infrastructure. Precisely what we don't need
3 right now. An increase in fossil fuel
4 infrastructure means that over the next 25 to 30
5 years this will be depreciated and it means that
6 less likely we move towards clean renewable
7 energy sources, that which we need. I would be
8 in favor of a rate increase that was supporting
9 clean renewable energy sources, things like wind
10 and things like solar energy. I think that's
11 where we need to put our money. And until we can
12 see something that demonstrates clearly that
13 we're going to move in this direction, I will
14 stand opposed to a rate increase.

15 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you. Are
16 there any questions?

17 MS. JOST: No.

18 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Mr. Jeffries.

19 MR. JEFFRIES: No questions, Madam Chair.

20 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Commissioners?

21 (Shakes heads no)

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you,
23 Reverend Sadler. Thank you.

24 (The witness is excused)

1 MS. JOST: Sally Kneidel. Next will be Tina
2 Katsanos and --

3 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Leo Amon. I was going
4 with her.

5 MS. JOST: You didn't indicate that you
6 wanted to speak.

7 MR. AMON: Oh, I was talking.

8 MS. JOST: Oh, okay.

9 MR. AMON: I'm sorry.

10 MS. JOST: That's okay. Ms. Kneidel.

11 MS. KNEIDEL: I'm taping up pictures of my
12 grandkids.

13 SALLY KNEIDEL;
14 having been duly sworn,
15 testified as follows:

16 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

17 Q Please state your name and address for the
18 record.

19 A Sally Kneidel. My address is 424 Bertonley
20 Avenue in Charlotte.

21 Q Are you a customer of Piedmont?

22 A Yes, I am.

23 Q And do you have a statement that you'd like to
24 present to the Commission?

1 A I do. Thank y'all for taking public comments. I
2 appreciate that. I'm a long-time resident of
3 Charlotte, my whole life. I'm a biologist. I
4 came here tonight because I am opposed to
5 Piedmont Natural Gas -- I'm opposed to a rate
6 hike for Piedmont Natural Gas. I'm against it
7 because we are in a climate emergency. I know
8 that as a biologist and I know that as just a
9 person who reads the newspaper. The rate hike is
10 for Piedmont but Piedmont is owned by Duke
11 Energy, which is ranked as one of the worst major
12 corporations in the world on climate policy. I
13 read that two days ago. Duke is far too
14 committed to fossil fuels. They rank just above
15 the Cove Brothers which were dead last in
16 ranking.

17 I'm worried about my young
18 grandchildren whose pictures I've put here, two
19 and five-years-old. I want them to have a full
20 life. I want that more than anything. I want
21 them to have a livable world. But if we keep
22 using fossil fuels we will see catastrophic
23 changes within the lifetime of my grandchildren,
24 not we might, but we will. Most of us here will

1 have the good fortune to die of old age, but our
2 grandchildren may die of climate change. There's
3 a good chance of that and that terrifies me.

4 The Utilities Commission has the
5 power to make a difference and yet appears to
6 consistently take care of Duke and not the
7 public. Duke Energy must be controlled. Duke is
8 not a benevolent organization in spite of what
9 their brainwashing commercial says. Duke is a
10 corporation and like all corporations it's profit
11 driven. In addition to that, Duke has a huge
12 advantage as a corporation. Our state has
13 granted it monopoly status. With no competition,
14 Duke has no incentive to keep rates down or to
15 make choices for the public good, and so they
16 don't.

17 The job of the NC Utilities
18 Commission is to reign them in and they must do
19 so. The NCUC must reject this rate hike request,
20 and Piedmont Natural Gas rate hike request to
21 finance fossil fuel infrastructure. I'm begging
22 you to do that. I'm asking you also to do what
23 you can to encourage Duke to invest in renewable
24 energy instead, for our survival. Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Any questions for
2 this witness?

3 MS. JOST: No.

4 MR. JEFFRIES: No.

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: You may step
6 down. Thank you for coming out.

7 (The witness is excused)

8 MS. JOST: Tina Katsanos and Leo Amon.

9 MS. KATSANOS: May he speak separately?

10 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Yes, he may.

11 MS. JOST: Tina Katsanos.

12 FOTINA KATSANOS;

13 having been duly sworn,

14 testified as follows:

15 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

16 Q Please state your name and address for the
17 record.

18 A Tina Katsanos. I actually want to give you my
19 legal name. Fotini, F-O-T-I-N-I, Katsanos
20 K-A-T-S-A-N-O-S.

21 Q And your address?

22 A 13524 Carleen Way Drive.

23 Q And are you a Piedmont customer?

24 A I am.

1 Q Would you like to --

2 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Is that in
3 Charlotte?

4 A Yes, Charlotte 28213.

5 BY MS. JOST:

6 Q Would you like to provide a statement to the
7 Commission?

8 A Yes, I would.

9 Q Please proceed.

10 A I am a native Charlottean. I'm opposed to this
11 rate hike. I'm here to offer testimony to you as
12 a single, working mother. I have an
13 eight-year-old who will speak after me. It is a
14 challenge raising him on a single income. I wish
15 I could tell you that I live just
16 pay-check-to-pay-check but I don't because
17 sometimes I live credit-card-to-credit-card. And
18 the thing that is so surreal is that we live in a
19 world right now where some people fair a lot
20 worse than me. When the CEO of Duke Energy,
21 which we know is Piedmont Natural Gas, nets
22 somewhere around \$21.4 million in compensation in
23 2017, at that point -- I just don't even know
24 what to say about that.

1 I had other things prepared to
2 speak -- to say to you tonight, but I'm not,
3 because everybody has already said it.

4 Climate change is happening, it's
5 happening now, and it's coming a lot quicker than
6 the science predicted. How can I continue to
7 fund through this rate hike this type of dirty
8 fossil fuel infrastructure when we're running out
9 of time? How do I as a mother sleep at night
10 knowing that my son could very well not have a
11 future or, if he does have a future, it is not a
12 future that he is going to enjoy. And my son is
13 everyone's son and everyone's child is my child.
14 And I am begging you to do the right thing, put
15 Piedmont Natural Gas, a subsidiary of Duke
16 Energy, in its place. If they want a -- a rate
17 hike for fossil fuels, okay, I will take out
18 another line of credit to help fund that, but
19 that's not what they're doing. What they're
20 doing is wrong. And as parents, and as sons and
21 daughters, as part of a big family of people in
22 Charlotte, and Mecklenburg County, across the
23 state, we have got to take care of each other,
24 and I'm asking our Commissioners here tonight to

1 do that. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Do you have
3 questions for this witness?

4 MS. JOST: No.

5 MR. JEFFRIES: No.

6 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you.

7 (The witness is excused)

8 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Do you have the
9 young man's name?

10 MR. AMON: Leo Amon, A-M-O-N.

11 LEO AMON;

12 having been duly sworn,

13 testified as follows:

14 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND:

15 Q Would you state your name? You can take your
16 hand down now. Thank you. Would you state your
17 name for the court reporter? Make sure she can
18 hear you.

19 A Leo.

20 Q And your last name.

21 A Amon.

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: He spelled it for
23 you before.

24 Q And can you tell us your address?

1 A Uh --

2 Q Was that previous witness your mom?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And you live with her?

5 A Yeah.

6 Q Tell us what you want us to know.

7 A Well, I'm -- hi, my name is Leo and I am -- I --

8 Q Take your time. Take your time.

9 A I'm here tonight to discuss how I would like
10 Piedmont Natural Gas, also known as Duke Energy,
11 because they have pretty much taken (sic) over
12 them and just make it into a full-profit thing,
13 but they were a full-profit thing so it doesn't
14 make any difference. And I'm still upset with
15 how this works and how I -- how --

16 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: You're doing
17 fine. Take your time.

18 A It's just -- it's just absurd how I -- I just
19 want to live a bright future. And really it's
20 just -- everyone there is just kind of stopping
21 me really. And I'm honestly -- it's just -- it's
22 just -- I'm really honestly pretty much awake at
23 literally every night. I am awake every night,
24 literally, just thinking of how -- like I'm

1 getting more anxiety than I already have. It's
2 just -- it's just -- it's unexplainable how
3 difficult it is to just actually get a good
4 night's sleep. And I just -- really -- all I
5 really want is a bright future and a good night's
6 sleep every night.

7 So it's like -- it's just --
8 honestly I think it's unacceptable. It's
9 unacceptable how they get the right to just have
10 so much money just to spend their willy nilly
11 habits on and not -- and it's just -- it's just
12 unexplainable. It's just way, way unexplainable
13 that I can think of. It just makes me just
14 wonder why is my life ever a thing if this is
15 what's going to happen. The future is literally
16 just Piedmont Natural Gas, Duke Energy, just
17 taking over the world and stuff. I don't know,
18 it's just -- ugh!

19 Q Have you told us everything you want to?

20 A I think that's about it. That's honestly about
21 it.

22 Q All right. Thank you for that. Now, tell me
23 this, are you in school?

24 A Yes.

1 Q And what school do you go to?

2 A I am going to Pinewood Elementary (spelling
3 uncertain).

4 Q And what grade are you in?

5 A Third.

6 Q All right. And I believe we heard you are
7 eight-years-old?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Any questions for
11 this witness?

12 MS. JOST: No.

13 MR. JEFFRIES: (Shakes head no).

14 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you for
15 stepping up and speaking out tonight.

16 (The witness is excused)

17 MS. JOST: Next we have Mac, Reverend Mac
18 Legerton. And I understand that two witnesses have
19 seeded their time to him; that is Amy Brooks and
20 Nathan Hunt.

21 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: All right.

22 MR. LEGERTON: I would like to affirm.

23 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: All right.

24 MAC LEGERTON;

1 having been duly affirmed,

2 testified as follows:

3 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Jost, the
4 witness is sworn in.

5 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

6 Q Please state your name and address for the
7 record.

8 A It's Reverend Mac Legerton. I wanted to make
9 sure the Commissioners moved over so I can see
10 them. My address is Post Office Box 9 in
11 Pembroke, North Carolina.

12 Q Are you a customer of Piedmont?

13 A No, but my community is.

14 Q And is there a statement that you would like to
15 present to the Commission?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Please proceed.

18 A I'm Reverend Mac Legerton from Pembroke, North
19 Carolina, in Robeson County, and I've worked on
20 environmental protection and promotion for 35
21 years in our state as a part of my community
22 ministry. One of the words to describe how PNG
23 is explaining purpose and reason --

24 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Reverend

1 Legerton, if you'll step back just a little bit so it
2 won't distort.

3 A Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: That's good.

5 A One of the words to describe how PNG is
6 explaining the purpose and reasons for the
7 proposed rate hike is cryptic. What actually
8 will be covered by this rate hike? What specific
9 systems growth will it cover? What specific
10 safety upgrades? And what specific
11 infrastructure investment? And what is the
12 unnamed new plant referred to in this proposal?
13 This unnamed plant is listed on line item 10 in
14 G-1 Supplemental filing on page 13 and it
15 references quote, a plant in service for
16 projected additions through June 30 in 2019,
17 unquote. This unnamed plant in service has a
18 listed price tag of \$285 million, but it remains
19 unnamed. Interesting enough, even though our
20 friend at PNG has acknowledged this earlier, this
21 price tag is similar to the estimated cost of a
22 planned LNG plant in Robeson County.

23 With all the money that PNC (sic)
24 and Duke Energy have available, and a contract

1 with the best professionals to prepare this
2 request for submission, why is it so cryptic,
3 secretive and obscure in relation to the specific
4 costs to be covered by the proposed rate hike?

5 Transco officials have submitted
6 documentation to both FERC and the State of South
7 Carolina that they can provide all of the gas
8 needed for both North and South Carolina for the
9 foreseeable future. Ratepayers do not need, in
10 North Carolina, to pay for any new natural gas
11 plant, any new investments in natural gas
12 infrastructure, and certainly no new specific
13 plant at a cost of \$285 million. If PNC (sic)
14 would like to -- PNG would like to build this,
15 they can certainly do that with their own monies,
16 any of these without the support of ratepayers in
17 North Carolina.

18 So what is actually to be covered
19 by this rate hike? It's not just a question of
20 the LNG facility in Robeson county. Does it
21 include the monies from before a pipeline is
22 needed to possibly reach this proposed facility?
23 And even more importantly, does it include the
24 monies for the PNG pipeline number 434 that was

1 recently constructed in Robeson County that runs
2 for many miles between the Duke Energy Haywood
3 facility and the alleged ACP terminus in
4 Pembroke? And what else may or does this
5 requested rate hike actually cover?

6 While it is -- it's been stated
7 that this hearing was not about the Atlantic
8 Coast Pipeline, the Utilities Commission does
9 need to know that the pipeline that's
10 constructed, Number 434, will be a stranded
11 access -- asset that was unnecessary to construct
12 if the ACP is not constructed. Duke Energy/PNG
13 has an existing -- I'm not talking about the ACP,
14 I'm talking about pipeline number 434 that has an
15 existing --

16 (WHEREUPON, the Court Reporter
17 requested the witness to back away
18 from the microphone, due to
19 distortion.)

20 A Oh, I'm sorry. I get a little preaching excited.

21 (Laughter)

22 I'm here in an educated role so
23 I'll try to temper that. So this existing
24 pipeline runs from Hamlet to Wilmington, the

1 existing one. Y'all have to realize how many
2 pipelines are being planned, and they already
3 exist in Robeson County. So there's an existing
4 pipeline that runs from Hamlet to Wilmington, and
5 this runs parallel to the new pipeline 434, and
6 it could also carry gas anywhere it needs to be
7 carried in Robeson County without pipeline 434.

8 Now, prior to constructing pipe
9 434, some of us were paying attention, PNG stated
10 on its website that it was going to request a
11 rate hike for this very pipeline. Pipeline 434
12 was specifically constructed to connect both the
13 Duke Energy Hamlet Energy Center to the terminus
14 of the ACP. It ends at the alleged terminus of
15 the ACP, in Pembroke where I live, and is sitting
16 there empty waiting for the ACP to arrive. No
17 rate hike should be permitted for PNG pipeline
18 434. If it is included, that may well prove to
19 be a Duke Energy/PNG stranded asset if the ACP is
20 not constructed. So Transco can provide all the
21 gas we need for anything we need. We do not need
22 to invest any further in any natural gas
23 projects. Everyday, renewable energies are
24 becoming cheaper and more reliable than fossil

1 fuels.

2 Under North Carolina's Public
3 Utilities Act, North Carolina requires energy to
4 come at the least cost, which is achievable. For
5 many decades, Duke used this argument to support
6 coal being expanded. And we still are the number
7 one state that produces and uses -- and uses coal
8 in the country. Now, PNG and Duke Energy want to
9 make this one of the biggest states that expands
10 natural gas. So natural gas is no longer the
11 least cost which is achievable. For example, it
12 was just announced this week that Los Angeles
13 Board of Water Commissioners are expected to
14 approve a contract for solar and battery storage
15 that will be half the estimated cost of power of
16 any new natural gas plant.

17 There are also many database and
18 data driven studies that now document the
19 renewables. And battery storage are now cheaper
20 than the cost of any new fossil fuel
21 infrastructure in the United States, and this
22 cost is going down every year. That's why Duke
23 Energy wanted to get its bill passed -- I don't
24 know what happened today in the House -- so that

1 they could be protected from the competition of
2 renewables. It's a very sad situation.

3 Also, under Policy 10(c), North
4 Carolina is to encourage private investment and
5 renewable energy and energy efficiency. This is
6 part of our North Carolina Statute. Providing
7 this requested rate increase would encourage Duke
8 Energy and Piedmont Natural Gas to invest further
9 into fossil fuel energy and move the State
10 further away from producing non-carbon renewable
11 and efficient energy.

12 Within the next 30 years -- how
13 much time do I have? I had nine minutes
14 altogether.

15 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: You actually have
16 three more minutes beyond --

17 A Oh great. Okay. I'm sticking to my statement as
18 close as possible. Thank you.

19 (Laughter)

20 So further gas will also make us
21 dependent on this gas for up to 30 years. And in
22 30 years a lot of these fossil fuels are going to
23 have to be nationally and internationally
24 outlawed. We all know that. So it's like an

1 elephant that's ready to die and it screams at
2 the end right before it dies. The natural gas
3 industry and the fossil fuel industry in the
4 state are screaming to get as much -- to squeeze
5 as much out of the public and as much out of our
6 state as possible, knowing that they are dying in
7 distress. We need to stop it and put an
8 incentive to move this as quickly as possible
9 toward renewable energies -- non-carbon renewable
10 energies. Even the Governor's Executive Order,
11 with all the natural gases now planned by PNG and
12 Duke Energy, we can never reduce carbon in this
13 state. It's impossible.

14 Okay. Policy 10(d) also states
15 that North Carolina -- are you going to reset
16 that for me so I know when --

17 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: She's working on
18 it.

19 A So 10(d) also says that North Carolina utilities
20 are to provide improved air quality and other
21 benefits to energy consumers and citizens of this
22 state. That, also, is incentive for us not to
23 expand any more natural gas extraction and
24 combustion. And with the two plants that y'all

1 have already seen for Duke Energy and PNG, one of
2 the two plants calls for putting 75 percent of
3 all of their resources into natural gas. 75
4 percent.

5 Overall, allowing this rate
6 increase to fund any new natural gas investments,
7 or plants, or infrastructure support, or what
8 else? Any safety upgrades? And safety upgrades,
9 we can negotiate on that one.

10 (Laughter)

11 We all want this stuff to be safe,
12 but not systems growth. No systems growth. No
13 insignificant infrastructure investment and
14 certainly no new plants.

15 Okay. Now, where do I live? I
16 live in Robeson County. There have been six
17 natural gas projects planned by PNG and Duke
18 Energy in Robeson County and they're all
19 connected. They're connected to existing gas
20 infrastructure as well an existing pipeline and
21 compressor. All of these eight natural gas
22 projects are within an 8-mile radius of each
23 other, in the heart of this glorious Native
24 American community, east of the Mississippi

1 River. All of them! No one article about it.
2 No talk about it. Because our local officials,
3 all they see is a little bit of tax base coming
4 out of it. No jobs. No jobs, folks. Twelve
5 jobs for this place we can't even mention in here
6 tonight. That's all.

7 Our county is the poorest county
8 in our state. One of the poorest in our nation.
9 And all this natural gas -- natural gas is gonna
10 make it one of the most aquiferous (spelled
11 phonetically) places to live in North Carolina in
12 relation to potential environmental and health
13 degradation and harm. We already have the lowest
14 health and wellness indicators in the State. And
15 you want to put up to six new natural gas
16 projects in an 8-mile radius in the middle of the
17 Native American community. And then Maxton is
18 40 percent poverty and majority is African
19 American.

20 Here's my final statement: If it
21 were intentionally designed, there would no
22 better model of environmental injustice than all
23 the fossil fuel projects planned by PNG and Duke
24 Energy in our most racially diverse, poor or

1 rural county in this state. Tragically none of
2 these extensive and expansive fossil fuel
3 projects are needed to meet the energy needs of
4 the State of North Carolina. That's my
5 statement. Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you,
7 Reverend Legerton.

8 (Clapping)

9 A I've been living with this -- oh, my time is up.

10 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Are there
11 questions for this witness?

12 MS. JOST: No.

13 A I've got to breathe now.

14 MR. JEFFRIES: No.

15 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Any questions by
16 the Commissioners?

17 (Shakes heads no)

18 I appreciate you coming out --

19 A Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: -- again and
21 following these proceedings. Thank you very much.

22 (The witness is excused)

23 MS. JOST: The next witness is Michael
24 Merinstein, followed by David Rosen and Kendall Hale.

1 MICHAEL MERINSTEIN;
2 having been duly sworn,
3 testified as follows:

4 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

5 Q Please state your name and address for the
6 record.

7 A My name is Michael Merinstein, 8411 Dunsinane
8 Drive, Charlotte.

9 Q Thank you. And are you a Piedmont customer?

10 A Yes, I am.

11 Q Do you have a statement that you would like to
12 present to the Commission?

13 A I do. Thank you.

14 Q Please proceed.

15 A Good evening. As I stated, my name is Michael
16 Merinstein. I am one of the many new Charlotte
17 residents and, as you all know many, many more
18 are on the way. That is the future in a very
19 future-minded place. I'm up from south Florida,
20 and I have come to love Charlotte in the one year
21 that I've been here. It is why I am so very sad
22 to see a very old political dynamic at play here.
23 I am saddened at the prospect of higher energy
24 bills, but I'm outraged at the idea of

1 subsidizing the destruction of the way of life
2 here in Charlotte that I, along with my
3 neighbors, are forced to travel further down the
4 path of fossil fuels and greater investment. It
5 is good -- it is good money after bad. It is
6 investment in the way that has come and gone. It
7 is a way in which the true costs aren't measured
8 and won't appear in the spreadsheets that Duke
9 Energy certainly can produce by the minute.
10 Because the costs are the externalities, the
11 changes in our life, the additional drop in the
12 bucket that is climate change, and our role in
13 it.

14 It's really quite a deal, that we
15 get to pay more and in return we get to subsidize
16 Duke's chemical addiction another 30 years into
17 the future. I would not pay willingly to buy a
18 pack of cigarettes for a child and I certainly
19 wouldn't buy a 30-year supply of them.

20 I will not smile when I have to
21 pay this price, but I will speak now and say what
22 we support is fair and reasonable rates that are
23 investing entirely, or nearly entirely, in
24 renewables. It is now time and well within our

1 means to change the path, because the bottom line
2 is not the continual enrichment of Duke or
3 Piedmont. It is the investment in Charlotte. It
4 is the investment in the future. It is the
5 investment of every lady that wants to garden on
6 the weekends, every kid that wants to play ball
7 out in the yard. It is the ability, it is
8 investment in our health and our future. So go
9 ahead and surprise me. Table the hike. Take
10 pause now. Choose a future not drenched in
11 filthy fossil fuels. Choose a future. Embrace
12 progress the way Charlotte has shown me that it
13 can. Choose to be the Charlotte that I have come
14 to know and love over the course of the last
15 year. Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you. Any
17 questions?

18 MS. JOST: No.

19 MR. JEFFRIES: No.

20 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you for
21 coming out, Mr. Merinstein.

22 (The witness is excused)

23 MS. JOST: David Rosen. And then we'll have
24 Kendall Hale and Steve Norris.

1 DAVID ROSEN;
2 having been duly sworn,
3 testified as follows:

4 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

5 Q Please state your name and address for the
6 record.

7 A David Rosen, 3134 Hiram Street.

8 Q Is that in Charlotte?

9 A In Charlotte.

10 Q Are you a Piedmont customer?

11 A Yes, although you won't find my name on the bill.
12 My housemate pays the bill and I pay him.

13 Q Do you have a statement that you'd like to
14 provide to the Commission?

15 A I guess I do.

16 Q Please proceed.

17 A Hi. My name is David. I was an environmental
18 engineering student at Duke University. I'm
19 24-years-old. And I got into environmental
20 engineering because I thought that through
21 science I might be able to help people live a
22 safer life.

23 My grandmother immigrated to this
24 country directly before the Holocaust and ended

1 up in Camp Valley, Louisiana, talking about how
2 the people that she knew there ended up moving
3 out when they could through flight in order to
4 escape toxins. There was always something in me
5 that wanted to try to help out even before I
6 really understood what climate change was.

7 But I guess my main thought here
8 is that even if these rate increases are to help
9 us make this infrastructure safer, and you can't
10 make this world safer through infrastructure
11 alone, you have to do it through politics as
12 well. You have to do it in a situation where we
13 are actually creating the infrastructure that we
14 need to succeed as a world. When I was a
15 fresh -- freshman year of college I went to El
16 Salvador, to La Estancia, San José el Nuevo, in
17 order to try to help this tiny hamlet where the
18 water came out of their river -- it had pink
19 mountains taller than me, taller than a
20 basketball hoop -- of foam that smelled worse
21 than the hog farms that I also ended up working
22 on later in eastern North Carolina. Trying to
23 use science to fix that ended up being a darn lot
24 harder than just mixing the concrete, putting

1 down the pipe and piping in water from a full
2 mile and a half away from their spring that they
3 used to go to by hand, buckets over their head.
4 Because once you hurt something with chemicals
5 and fecal matter, and once you hurt the ground
6 with fracking, you can't really -- it's harder to
7 go back. You can say that about the Huntersville
8 LNG plant, too, that Piedmont has, how there is
9 still PCP in the ground above NC2L levels. And
10 then we want -- the thing is we didn't do that.
11 We actually once came with a plan to go and
12 filter out this water that was brown and
13 disgusting; weren't able to do it well; wanted to
14 come back the next year; the gang violence is too
15 bad and we never did.

16 To this day that village still has
17 water that they can't drink. I still keep in
18 contact with the engineer working out there and
19 they're still bringing water tanks and having
20 ladies that are older than my grandmother go up
21 to the creek, up the mountain, keep going to the
22 spring and coming back down.

23 After college -- actually, sorry,
24 I didn't prepare this. During college, I

1 actually worked on membrane dysplasia technology.
2 Even if we're working on this now, we still don't
3 actually have the technology to -- that will help
4 us take the chemicals out of fracked water, out
5 of tap water, and we still have issues in the
6 ground. And Huntersville and pretty much
7 anywhere where there is fossil fuel technology,
8 we still have a high risk that we would just not
9 have. If we used politics we would not have it.

10 Finally, last year, I was in
11 Palestine working on getting fresh drinking water
12 and solar panels in the West Bank in Area C
13 because there were areas where people hadn't had
14 fresh water since before 1967, and places where
15 even to this day they didn't have refrigeration
16 for medicine.

17 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Mr. Rosen, if you
18 could start wrapping up.

19 A We do always want technology, it didn't stop it
20 in the villages that I was working in. And I've
21 been back here for a year, nearly every single
22 solar panel that I've put in has been
23 confiscated, nearly every single water system has
24 been shot by the Army. It's harder to fix things

1 with technology than it is by changing the
2 politics, by changing what infrastructure we put
3 in place. And there is an article in nature that
4 said we already have too much fossil fuel
5 infrastructure and we're bound to hit 1.5 degrees
6 Celsius or less of warming. And I wouldn't even
7 want to put on any more safety features into our
8 natural gas, I'd rather just change the politics.

9 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: All right.

10 A I'm sorry.

11 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Are there are
12 questions for Mr. Rosen?

13 MS. JOST: No.

14 MR. JEFFRIES: (Shakes head no).

15 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: No questions.
16 Thank you, Mr. Rosen.

17 (The witness is excused)

18 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Before we go
19 ahead, we're going to take a break, and we'll break
20 until 8:30, and come back on the record at 8:30 and
21 finish up.

22 (A recess was taken at 8:15 p.m.,
23 until 8:30 p.m.)

24 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: We'll come back

1 on the record. Everyone, take your place, please.

2 All right. Ms. Jost.

3 MS. JOST: Our next speaker is Kendall Hale.

4 After Ms. Hale, we have Steve Norris and then

5 Constance Williams.

6 KENDALL HALE;

7 having been duly sworn,

8 testified as follows:

9 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Jost.

10 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

11 Q Please state your name and address for the
12 record.

13 A Kendall Hale.

14 Q And your address.

15 A 372 Sharon Road in Fairview, North Carolina.

16 Q Are you a Piedmont customer?

17 A No, I'm not.

18 Q Do you have a statement that you'd like to
19 present to the Commission?

20 A I would.

21 Q Please proceed.

22 A I don't usually wear money tied onto my clothes
23 but I was part of a skit and I was CEO Lynn Good.
24 So I wanted to communicate that she makes a lot

1 of money to promote dirty energy into a climate
2 crisis situation that exists here and around the
3 world.

4 I want energy choice. And I want
5 affordable clean power. And I want, along with
6 most people, an end to Duke monopoly control over
7 North Carolina.

8 I have spoken before this
9 Commission for many, many years. I think it's
10 going on over 10. And a part of me just didn't
11 even want to bother coming in here anymore
12 because I've heard exquisite testimony about a
13 truth that we all know is real. Climate change
14 is real. It's not a hoax. It's a product of
15 fake news and I believe the only reason the
16 people in this country are not out like the
17 people in Hong Kong is because they are still
18 being greenwashed and brainwashed and they think
19 that this is not really and truly an emergency.

20 When I see the people in Hong Kong
21 ready to risk their lives because they don't want
22 to be extradited to a communist country for some
23 kind of a crime that they know that they'll
24 probably be either put to death for or spend

1 their lives in jail. I wonder how long will it
2 take people in this state and the people in this
3 country to realize that we are being extradited
4 moment-by-moment by Duke Energy and the other
5 corporate fossil fuel companies and all their
6 henchmen and henchwomen in the political system.
7 We are being extradited into the flames of hell.
8 And that's about the only way that I can describe
9 about the way that I feel about the extent of
10 damage that is being done every day.

11 And I feel privileged that I live
12 in -- actually in Asheville and not in eastern
13 North Carolina, because at least in Asheville
14 where there are mountains the water runs down.
15 We do have flooding, but in the Piedmont and in
16 the path of where the ACP, the Atlantic Coast
17 Pipeline, is going and all those coastal cities,
18 it is at the point where, you know, they can't
19 really escape it. I mean, like when the
20 conditions of increased floods and the worsening
21 hurricanes hit them, I mean, I can only feel so
22 sad for the people that are right here that have
23 already testified because I know what they're
24 going through and it makes me sick. And I get so

1 tired of writing those bills every month to Duke
2 Energy. I just don't know what to do. I feel
3 ill. I sometimes feel like sending my medical
4 bills to Duke Energy, to tell you the truth,
5 because it's gotten to me. I know that Duke
6 uses -- I don't want a rate hike. I don't.

7 I'm not poor. I'm not pretending
8 that I don't have some money and some resources,
9 but I know a lot of people who don't. And I
10 don't think it's morally comprehensible. It's
11 incomprehensible to take people's money through
12 lies, lie-after-lie-after-lie about how this
13 money is necessary to keep us safe, because it's
14 not keeping us safe. It may feel as if it is --

15 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Hale, if you
16 can start to wrap it up, please.

17 A Yeah, I will. But solar and wind are actually
18 cheaper than dirty energy. And the billions that
19 Duke spends is not necessary. The executives
20 actually abuse their power. They use the
21 campaign money, they create influence with
22 climate deniers.

23 I know from reading papers and I
24 know from just paying attention for years that

1 80 percent of the public right now are ready for
2 an energy choice. They want clean, affordable
3 energy. And it's a shame that Duke can use its
4 money to influence people like Mr. Dan Blue, who
5 is the Senate minority leader, who takes this
6 money and --

7 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Hale --

8 A -- and presses for legislation --

9 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Hale, you
10 need to wrap it up.

11 A -- worth billions of dollars to go raise -- to
12 raise this -- take the right hikes (sic) -- hikes
13 and money and go along and take people's land
14 through eminent domain simply to put in more
15 fracked gas.

16 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Jost, do you
17 have questions for this witness?

18 MS. JOST: I do not.

19 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Commissioners?

20 A One future. One choice. One planet. One voice.

21 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you. And
22 you may step down.

23 (The witness is excused)

24 MS. JOST: Steve Norris, will be followed by

1 Constance Williams and Steve Rundle.

2 MR. NORRIS: Can I remain standing?

3 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: You certainly
4 may.

5 MR. NORRIS: Thank you.

6 STEVEN NORRIS;
7 having been duly sworn,
8 testified as follows:

9 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

10 Q Please state your name and address for the
11 record.

12 A My name is Dr. Steven Norris. I live at 372
13 Sharon Road in Fairview, North Carolina.

14 Q Thank you. Are you a Piedmont customer?

15 A I am not a Piedmont customer.

16 Q Do you have a statement that you'd like to
17 present to the Commission?

18 A I do, yes.

19 Q Please proceed.

20 A And thank you, Commissioners, for hearing this
21 testimony which I think is as important as
22 anything going on in the State of North Carolina
23 or in the United States right now. We are in a
24 crisis as people have -- various people have

1 mentioned, and you have an opportunity to do
2 something about it.

3 I think we know -- I think the
4 subtext of what is going on tonight is that
5 everybody knows, and nobody knows what this rate
6 hike is really for. Some of us tried to read it.
7 I have I PhD and I couldn't understand it.
8 Something is wrong there if somebody with a PhD
9 cannot understand it. Other people here have
10 commented that it was cryptic. Now, whether it
11 was written intentionally cryptic or whether it
12 was written in some language we don't understand,
13 I don't know, but we all know what this money
14 will pay for and what it's not going to pay for.
15 We know it is going to pay for climate change.
16 We know it is going to pay to exaggerate, amplify
17 this climate emergency which we are facing. The
18 boy who was here, the eight-year-old boy here
19 tonight, he yelled loud and clear the emperor has
20 no clothes on. We all know that story, right?
21 The emperor has no -- the emperor says I've got
22 the most beautiful set of clothes in the world.
23 I'm going to march down the street of the capitol
24 and everybody is going to applaud. And everybody

1 applauds. (Claps) And the eight-year-old boy
2 says the emperor has no clothes on. What's going
3 on here. That's the message that I hear people
4 saying here tonight. The emperor has no clothes
5 on.

6 This money is going to be paid --
7 to be paid not for the use of the people of North
8 Carolina, not for the good of the people of North
9 Carolina, but for the profits of Duke and
10 Piedmont.

11 Now, it is the responsibility of
12 the Utilities Commission, and I don't have the
13 exact wording, but to promote and protect the
14 well-being of the people of the North Carolina.
15 The Constitution of North Carolina says that all
16 political power is vested in and derived from the
17 people, all governmental right originates from
18 the people is founded upon their will only and is
19 instituted solely, solely, solely for the good of
20 the people of North Carolina. Not for Duke. Not
21 for Piedmont. Not for Lynn Good. And not for
22 McGuireWoods. It is for the people of North
23 Carolina. That's the people who have been
24 testifying here tonight. You have not heard one

1 voice here support the rate hike proposal. You
2 have heard not one voice say oh climate change is
3 a good thing.

4 I have one other thing to say. If
5 you're looking for something to hang your hat on,
6 there is one -- one of the most powerful
7 regulators of fossil fuels in this country sits
8 in Washington, D.C., at the Federal Energy
9 Regulatory Commission. I'm sure you're all
10 familiar with the Fed -- with FERC. FERC, in
11 general, has not done a good job. They have
12 turned down two fossil fuel projects in the last
13 30 years. So FERC, generally, is an agency which
14 has been captured by the fossil fuel industry,
15 but there is one Commissioner, his name is
16 Richard Glick. He was appointed. And for people
17 who don't know about the Commission, this guy was
18 appointed by the President --

19 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Dr. Norris, your
20 time is up so let's --

21 A Let me just say one thing because I think this is
22 really important.

23 He was appointed by the President
24 and he was confirmed by the Senate just like a

1 cabinet officer, Richard Glick has written
2 eloquently that FERC must, must, must consider
3 climate change in its permitting. Can I take 10
4 seconds to quote him?

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ten seconds.

6 A Okay. The extent of the threat posed by climate
7 change is no reason to act as if that threat does
8 not exist or pretend that it is not relevant to
9 the public interest. Instead, that threat is a
10 compelling reason for the Commission, for FERC,
11 to take seriously its obligation to protect the
12 public interest and conduct a meaningful
13 case-by-case evaluation of the whole thing. That
14 is what you should be doing, too.

15 We who are here tonight, we who
16 have testified here before, do not see that this
17 Commission is doing it. We would love to see
18 that happen. It would give us faith in our
19 government again. Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: We appreciate
21 your testimony, Dr. Glick (sic). Any questions?

22 MR. JEFFRIES: I actually have one question
23 for Dr. Norris.

24 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Dr. Glick (sic).

1 MR. JEFFRIES: What's your PhD in, sir?

2 DR. NORRIS: My PhD is in government.

3 MR. JEFFRIES: Thank you.

4 DR. NORRIS: Yes, sir.

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you.

6 (The witness is excused)

7 Ms. Jost.

8 MS. JOST: Constance Williams. Next will be
9 Steve Rundle.

10 CONSTANCE WILLIAMS;
11 having been duly sworn,
12 testified as follows:

13 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

14 Q Please state your name and address for the
15 record.

16 A My first name is Constance and my last name is
17 Williams. My address 10831 Derryrush Drive,
18 Charlotte, North Carolina 28213.

19 Q Would you pull the mic up a little closer?

20 A Thank you.

21 Q And are you a Piedmont customer?

22 A Yes.

23 Q And is there a statement that you would like to
24 present to the Commission?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Please go ahead and proceed.

3 A Well, my first statement is to you. By asking me
4 if I'm a Piedmont customer, it brought up a
5 question, where else would I get my gas from?
6 And that's something I will pursue if there is an
7 option.

8 But my main reason for being here
9 tonight is to let people know that people who
10 live on a fixed income, whether it be social
11 security, what-have-you, pensions, what-have-you,
12 they can ill-afford the increase. So that's why
13 I'm dead set against the increase, unless you can
14 offset a program that would be income-based and
15 help people who come under an income threshold.
16 Because, quite frankly, everyone is going to get
17 older and not be able to work in the work force
18 for many reasons. So I would love to see the
19 State of North Carolina do something about that
20 simply because thousands of people are moving
21 here every day and they're all going to probably
22 end up with Duke or -- you know, the partner
23 because they're all one and the same from what I
24 understand tonight.

1 So, in addition, though, I wonder
2 about that coal ash situation, if really the
3 increase is not going toward that
4 surreptitiously. I really do. Because I'm not
5 sure I can see the books, and even if I did see
6 them I don't have an accountant degree so I
7 wouldn't know how if the money is really going to
8 go to clean up the coal ash, or where it's coming
9 from, because I know the executives are not going
10 to reduce their salary any time soon. So I'm
11 against the pipeline, fossil fuel, the fracking,
12 et cetera.

13 But there's something else I did
14 want to say. I got a letter in the mail that
15 asked me if I wanted to take out insurance for a
16 gas line that was for my property to the street
17 or -- I don't even remember what the distance
18 was, but I was responsible for a gas line. So I
19 got nervous and I took out the insurance. And I
20 realized even the little \$10 or \$20 a month I
21 couldn't afford, because when you're on a fixed
22 income that wrecks into your budget. So I'd like
23 to know why Duke can't be responsible for its own
24 gas line, or actually Piedmont, be responsible

1 for its own gas line. Why does the customer have
2 to pay insurance to make sure the gas line
3 doesn't rupture, unless it's their mistake and
4 they go digging on their property. So I'd like
5 to see that in some sort of publication, because
6 I really am nervous that if something does happen
7 to my gas line and I had to cough up the money,
8 that that would be it.

9 But one anecdotal thing that I do
10 plan on doing is reducing my house size down to a
11 tiny home, which is not a bad thing. You know,
12 I've seen that there's a community here in North
13 Carolina with tiny homes and I think I'm going to
14 end up being someone who lives in one so that I
15 can afford the Duke bill.

16 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: All right.

17 Ms. Williams, your time is up.

18 A And so --

19 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Will you wrap it
20 up?

21 A Well, that's it then.

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Hold on just a
23 minute.

24 A Oh, I have more time?

1 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: No. Let's check
2 and see if anyone has questions. Does anyone have
3 questions?

4 MR. JEFFRIES: I don't have a question
5 but --

6 A I doubt it. Oh, well --

7 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Just a minute.
8 Let him ask --

9 MR. JEFFRIES: What I was going to offer,
10 ma'am, is that I think we might be able to clarify the
11 situation on the gas line insurance --

12 A Oh, sure.

13 MR. JEFFRIES: -- that you're talking about.

14 A I mean, I canceled --

15 MR. JEFFRIES: We'll be happy to --

16 A -- my plan.

17 MR. JEFFRIES: I mean, that's fine. But
18 we're --

19 A But I --

20 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Just a second.
21 The court reporter can't take you talking over each
22 other.

23 MR. JEFFRIES: We're here and happy to talk
24 to you about it.

1 A I would prefer a publication about it so that I'm
2 not the only person who understands the severity
3 of not having that coverage, because that does
4 make me very nervous.

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: We really
6 appreciate your coming out and we would encourage you
7 to take advantage of speaking to the people here
8 tonight just so you can better understand.

9 (The witness is excused)

10 MR. RUNDLE: Good evening.

11 STEVE RUNDLE;
12 having been duly sworn,
13 testified as follows:

14 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Ms. Jost.

15 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

16 Q Please state your name and address for the
17 record.

18 A My name is Steve Rundle. I live at 4331 Eagle
19 Lake Drive, here in Charlotte. And I'm the
20 environmental community chair for the
21 Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP here in town.

22 Q Are you a Piedmont customer?

23 A I was for many years but I am not currently.

24 Q Do you have a statement that you would like to

1 present to the Commission?

2 A I do.

3 Q Please proceed.

4 A So I just want to first thank you all because
5 we're on the home stretch here of a very long
6 evening and we really look to you all to pay
7 attention to what's being said here tonight.
8 We've had many concerns about the underpinning of
9 why this rate hike is being asked for and many
10 doubts about the LNG facility and the rights of
11 the native population on those lands. But what I
12 would echo back to is Constance, Constance's
13 point of she lives on a fixed income. And this
14 is what we absolutely find in the communities of
15 color that we serve here in Charlotte. People
16 are -- people are very energy burdened that pay
17 an incredible percentage of their income of -- to
18 pay -- you know, to pay for gas, electricity, et
19 cetera. And -- and even a -- you know, a
20 10 percent rate hike is not affordable for these
21 folks because they're not -- you know, their cost
22 of living increases never track with what we find
23 ourselves here in front of you testifying on,
24 which are frequently double digit proposed

1 increases from Duke Energy, and here we have
2 something approaching a double digit increase
3 from Piedmont.

4 So -- so we really look to you all
5 to understand that many in the community cannot
6 afford this, that there are concerns in the --
7 real concerns in the community about the
8 justification for this increase. And, again, you
9 all have stepped up to literally do the right
10 thing and find that balance in what is the
11 appropriate rate level for a Duke increase, and
12 we look to you to do that again here tonight.
13 Thank you for your patience tonight.

14 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Any questions?

15 MS. JOST: No.

16 MR. JEFFRIES: No.

17 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Mr. Rundle, you
18 and several other witnesses tonight have indicated
19 some concern about not understanding what the money is
20 used for or what's happened or that kind of thing, and
21 I just want to repeat that the Public Staff represents
22 the using and consuming public. As a part of this
23 proceeding they do a lot of what we call discovery,
24 which means there's back and forth questions, they ask

1 for tons of documents, they go in, and all of those
2 won't be part of our record, but it then forms the
3 Public Staff's opinion and recommendation, which in
4 this docket unless they ask for an extension of time,
5 should be due on July 19th. When that happens you can
6 all go and read and see what they file on our website,
7 and people here, our staff here will be happy to
8 direct you how to find that. But I just wanted -- for
9 those who remain to realize that somebody is digging
10 into it. It's not going into --

11 A Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: -- a complete
13 black hole.

14 A We really look to the Commissioners to dig into
15 it and look out for our best interest, so thank
16 you.

17 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: All right. Thank
18 you. You may step down.

19 (The witness is excused)

20 MS. JOST: Is Jerome Wagner in the room?
21 All right. Mr. Wagner, we'll take you next.

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Mr. Wagner, if
23 you'll place your left hand on the Bible and raise
24 your right.

1 MR. WAGNER: Can I make an alternative --
2 affirmation?

3 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: You would like to
4 affirm? You would like to affirm?

5 MR. WAGNER: Is that okay?

6 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: That's fine.

7 MR. WAGNER: Thank you.

8 JEROME WAGNER;
9 having been duly affirmed,
10 testified as follows:

11 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. JOST:

12 Q Please state your name and address for the
13 record.

14 A My name is Jerome Wagner. I reside at 110 Summer
15 Lake Drive southwest, in Concord, North Carolina.

16 Q And are you a Piedmont customer?

17 A No, not at this time.

18 Q Would you like to give a statement to the
19 Commission?

20 A Yes, I'll make a brief statement.

21 Q Please proceed.

22 A Thank you. Thank you very much for this
23 opportunity. I missed many of the comments that
24 were made already so -- and I didn't prepare

1 anything in writing, so I'll make very brief
2 comments.

3 First of all, I'll echo and
4 amplify anything that was said in opposition to
5 the requested rate hike. I act as a climate
6 activist and I'm well aware of the concerns
7 surrounding that, natural gas which is methane.
8 Chief among those being -- well -- chief among
9 those being that any investments we make at this
10 time are likely to be in continued operation for
11 30 years if not longer. And that in my
12 estimation, and I believe the estimation of many
13 scientists and policymakers, that is simply the
14 highway to hell.

15 I'll speak then to one other
16 question that I've come up with so far related to
17 the information that's available publicly. There
18 was a certain table identified as Item G-1 Item
19 4, something like that, it was one piece of the
20 docket which was a multi-page tabulation of
21 increases and decreases. My sense was that it
22 represented the -- some of the detail behind this
23 particular request. Now, my simple mathematics
24 came up to a total of half a billion dollars of

1 price increase which was represented in that
2 tabulation against two hundred million or so of
3 price decreases for a net of something like
4 \$350,000,000 of increases. Now that is at odds
5 obviously with the statement that was put forth
6 in the announcement of this particular hearing,
7 which was identified something like \$85 million
8 of a prospective increase. So I will just state
9 it from the simplest standpoint of public
10 transparency, availability of pertinent
11 information for public investigation or conscious
12 deliberation, and so forth, and input into the
13 officials, it's not clear whether -- you know,
14 which number, in fact, is appropriate. And I
15 would just say that out of that five
16 hundred million of prospective increase, we feel
17 that two hundred and eighty million or so is
18 related to the LNG facility in Maxton, North
19 Carolina, which I will assert will be an improper
20 and immoral investment at this time. I will
21 conclude there. Thank you very much.

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Are there any
23 questions for this witness?

24 MR. JEFFRIES: No.

1 MS. JOST: No.

2 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you,
3 Mr. Wagner.

4 A Thank you very much.

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: We appreciate it.

6 (The witness is excused)

7 MS. JOST: That is the last name that I have
8 signed up to speak.

9 COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: All right. Well,
10 we have come to an end, and we appreciate every one
11 coming out and staying with us and bearing with us to
12 the end. As I mentioned earlier, the expert witness
13 portion of this proceeding will take place at
14 2:00 p.m. in Raleigh, August 19th, open to the public.
15 You may follow all of the proceedings including the
16 filing of Public Staff testimony recommendations on
17 our website www.ncuc.net. Use the docket search
18 function and enter the number G-9 Sub 743. With that,
19 I appreciate every one's cooperation and assistance
20 tonight. May you have a safe trip home. And we'll be
21 adjourned.

22 (The hearing was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.)
23
24

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, KIM T. MITCHELL, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that
the Proceedings in the above-captioned matter were
taken before me, that I did report in stenographic
shorthand the Proceedings set forth herein, and the
foregoing pages are a true and correct transcription
to the best of my ability.

Kim T. Mitchell

Kim T. Mitchell
Court Reporter