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BEFORE THE
ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION
REGULAR OPEN MEETING
PUBLIC UTILITY
Wednesday, February 1, 2017
Chicago, Illinois

Met, pursuant to notice, at 10:30 A.M.,
at 160 North La Salle Street, Chicago, Illinois.

- PRESENT:
- BRIEN J. SHEAHAN, Chairman
 - SADZI MARTHA OLIVA, Acting Commissioner
 - SHERINA E. MAYE EDWARDS, Commissioner
 - MIGUEL DEL VALLE, Commissioner
 - JOHN R. ROSALES, Commissioner

SULLIVAN REPORTING COMPANY, by
PATRICIA WESLEY
CSR NO. 084-002170

1 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Good morning. Are we ready to
2 proceed in Springfield?

3 MR. MATRISCH: Yes, we are, Chairman.

4 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Pursuant to the Open Meetings
5 Act, I call the February 1, 2017 Regular Open
6 Meeting to order.

7 Commissioners del Valle, Edwards,
8 Rosales, and Oliva are present. We have a quorum.

9 We have 17 requests to speak this
10 morning. My understanding is that we may have one
11 or two people who are interested in speaking but did
12 not fill out the proper paperwork.

13 Generally, we require a 24-hour notice
14 and pre-approval for public comments. If you want
15 to speak and haven't signed up, Wei Chen has forms
16 here. Just fill out the form and we will introduce
17 you at the end of the speakers' list.

18 As a reminder, each speaker will have
19 three minutes. By rules, the Illinois Commerce
20 Commission has a 30-minute limit on public comments
21 which we will waive unless there's an objection.

22 I would ask, out of respect for

1 everyone else who wants to speak, that you honor the
2 three-minute limit. We will let you know when you
3 have three minutes. Wei Chen will have some cards
4 which he will hold up for three minutes, two
5 minutes, one minute, and stop. We do have a
6 Spanish-speaking employee of the ICC who's available
7 to translate, if necessary.

8 Please be aware that while the
9 Commission affords the public an opportunity to
10 comment, we cannot respond to your comments, nor can
11 we legally rely on them in our deliberations.

12 Our first speaker is Abraham Scarr.
13 There's a little green light. Make sure you speak
14 about three or four inches into the microphone.

15 PRESENTATION

16 BY

17 MR. SCARR:

18 Good morning.

19 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Good morning.

20 MR. SCARR: Chairman Sheahan, Members of the
21 Commission, thank you for the opportunity to provide
22 public comment this morning. I have also provided

1 written comments on the docket. I am here to speak
2 about the first Order for the Peoples Gas System
3 Modernization Program.

4 My name is Abraham Scarr. I am the
5 Director of the Illinois Public Interest Research
6 Group for Illinois. We are a statewide assistance
7 funded, non-partisan public and advocacy
8 organization, and I am here today to urge the
9 Commission not to approve the proposed Order in the
10 System Modernization Program.

11 The proposed order would allow Peoples
12 Gas to continue the process of SMP without
13 appropriate prioritization of public safety or
14 affordability.

15 Given the terrible track record of
16 SMP, we think it's incumbent on the Commission to
17 work on the program. Public safety should be
18 prioritized in the completion of the SMP. I think
19 that's obviously what everybody agrees on, but how
20 it's done is at issue.

21 Multiple parties of the case have
22 demonstrated the inadequacies of the neighborhood

1 approach and provide viable alternatives. The fact
2 that leaks have increased over the time of the
3 program is evidence that the prioritization taking
4 place right now is not effective at identifying the
5 most at risk pipes, and, so, again, I encourage the
6 Commission to direct Peoples to better prioritize
7 public safety in completion of the program.

8 The ever-expanding estimates for the
9 cost of an SMP is alarming and is, of course, one of
10 the reasons why the Commission initiated the
11 investigation in the first place.

12 Peoples' ratepayers already pay the
13 highest gas rates in the state and for many people
14 affordability is already at issue. A lot of the
15 programs continue as it would place an undue burden
16 of affordability on hundreds of thousands of
17 ratepayers in Chicago and constitute a failure of
18 the Commission to ensure least cost service.

19 So I encourage the Commission to use
20 its authority, which it does have, to set spending
21 parameters on the program and not fund as the
22 proposed Order does on dealing with that issue

1 later.

2 So, again, I urge the Commission to
3 not approve the proposed Order and to direct Peoples
4 to do more to ensure both safety and affordability
5 in completion of the program.

6 Thank you again for the opportunity to
7 provide comments today.

8 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you, sir.

9 Our next speaker is Anthony Hunter.

10 Good morning, Mr. Hunter.

11 MR. HUNTER: Good morning.

12 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: You have three minutes. Wei
13 Chen has some cards that call the time. Thank you.

14 PRESENTATION

15 BY

16 MR. HUNTER:

17 Good morning, Commissioners. My name
18 is Anthony Hunter. I have lived in Chicago all of
19 my life, and today I'm here to speak on behalf of
20 the Cook County Workers Benefit Council, a delegate
21 body that represents the needs and interests of
22 service workers and federal low-paid workers in Cook

1 County.

2 I'm here to tell you that giving
3 Peoples Gas three more years of rate increases would
4 do more harm than good. In fact, it would do us,
5 the ratepayers, all the harm and the only good that
6 would come out of it will be to a very few people,
7 the shareholders of the WEC Energy Group.

8 Tens of thousands of families are now
9 living without heat because they have been shutoff
10 by Peoples Gas. That number keeps on growing.

11 When the Cook County Workers Benefit
12 Council first brought up our demands to this body in
13 2010, the number of families in Chicago without heat
14 was 56,000. Now it's 77,000.

15 ICC, look at what you are doing.
16 Thanks to your irresponsible actions, more and more
17 people are having to choose between their basic
18 needs, such as heating -- heating their homes and
19 putting food on the table. This is unacceptable,
20 because everyone has the right to have heat without
21 going hungry. Other families are forced to use
22 space heaters, which are both ineffective and

1 dangerous. Some people have to pay for the
2 profiteering rates with their lives.

3 I have been one of the many victims of
4 profiteering policies of Peoples Gas. When I was
5 younger, my family lived without heat for an entire
6 winter. Several members of my family were working,
7 but they didn't make enough money to afford the
8 rising gas bills, then to come back home was even
9 harder because of the fees Peoples Gas charges. It
10 was especially hard on me as a kid because I didn't
11 understand why we were all living in the cold.

12 Now I understand why we were suffering
13 because of the ICC allowing Peoples Gas to profit
14 off of our misery. Many, many other people --
15 members of the Cook County Workers Benefit Council
16 have been through the same hardship --

17 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: One minute, sir.

18 MR. HUNTER: -- meanwhile, shareholders of
19 Peoples Gas, then Integrys, now known as WEC Energy
20 Group, enjoy healthy dividend yields.

21 In 2015 Peoples Gas parent company,
22 WEC Energy Group, paid their shareholders

1 \$455 million in dividends. That is unacceptable
2 while there are families suffering without heat.

3 For you to allow Peoples Gas to charge
4 us, the ratepayers, for replacing gas mains is
5 ridiculous. It's the expense of the company.

6 The Illinois Public Utilities Act of
7 2001 said that utility regulations, in quotes, "to
8 ensure the rates for utility services are affordable
9 and, therefore, to preserve the availability to such
10 services to all." That is your mandate.

11 I want to give you again the demands
12 of the Cook County Workers Benefit Council. We
13 demand you reject all profiteering rate increases.
14 Direct Peoples Gas to --

15 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Your time is up.

16 THE AUDIENCE: Let him speak. Let him speak.
17 Keep going.

18 MR. HUNTER: -- Peoples Gas to repair all high
19 leaking gas mains at their expense, direct Peoples
20 Gas to reconnect service for all those who were
21 terminated with inability to pay, and direct Peoples
22 Gas to roll back the rates then to a level that

1 working people can afford. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you, sir.

3 (Applause.)

4 Next speaker is Meliana Martinez.

5 (No response.)

6 Meliana Martinez.

7 (No response.)

8 We will move on to Joe Kamberos.

9 Good morning, sir.

10 MR. KAMBEROS: Good morning, Commissioners.

11 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: You have three minutes.

12 PRESENTATION

13 BY

14 MR. KAMBEROS:

15 My name is Joe. I study physics at
16 Loyola and I work as an energy analyst where I help
17 people make their buildings more energy efficient.

18 My education at Loyola has helped me
19 understand the grave threat of climate change and
20 the immensity of the task we have as a society to
21 confront their causes.

22 Through my work as an energy analyst,

1 I have been able to help building owners become more
2 energy efficient with their heating, which has
3 helped many building owners keep their gas costs
4 affordable.

5 After hearing about the many gas main
6 leaks throughout the city and Peoples Gas request
7 for rate increases, I'm here to tell you I am
8 horrified.

9 Chicago recently published a report on
10 benchmarking the city where it tout the decrease in
11 greenhouse gas emissions from energy efficiency
12 improvements in residential homes, an impressive
13 achievement until you consider that all the gas main
14 leaks in the city negates all those steps forward
15 because it's like many of the gas main replacement
16 programs was to replace high-risk leaking gas mains.
17 Peoples Gas only fixes leaks neighborhood by
18 neighborhood instead of first addressing the most
19 severe gas leaks.

20 How can we face this global crisis
21 when the state does not regulate the gas utilities
22 so that it can take the necessary steps to address

1 the problem? Instead, this company receives
2 corporate welfare through these rate increases while
3 people suffer from methane leaks throughout the
4 city.

5 I could weatherize every building in
6 the city but that won't protect either the people or
7 the environment or keep costs down significantly
8 unless Peoples Gas fix the leaky gas mains.

9 I understand the need for a safe,
10 reliable, modern heating system in the city.
11 Without it, people would not have the steaming hot
12 water or hot air that delivers their heat.

13 Under the 20/30 sustainable
14 development goals that our nation adopted in 2015,
15 this country committed the goal set to deliver safe,
16 affordable, modern, and reliable heat to all.

17 We already have a modern heating
18 system, and I see that the state already has a law
19 on the books that would fulfill that national goal,
20 the Public Utility Act of 2001, which requires the
21 state to effectively regulate the utilities to
22 ensure that they are affordable and available to

1 all.

2 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: One minute.

3 MR. KAMBEROS: However, when the ICC grants
4 Peoples Gas a rate increase year after year, more
5 and more people are unable to access safe heating
6 and so go without or use unsafe heat, like wood or
7 kerosene, which can also harm the environment.

8 Working people have to work longer and
9 longer hours just so that they can afford to have
10 heat for their families and children, the very thing
11 that ICC is in charge of keeping affordable.

12 People should not be forced to choose
13 between a warm house or a meal on the table because
14 their heating bills are unaffordable.

15 What I don't understand is how a
16 little over a year ago the ICC was alarmed by the
17 cost of poor management of Peoples Gas' Gas
18 Modernization Program yet has allowed this Gas Main
19 Replacement Program to continue without substantive
20 change. Under Peoples' new management, WEC Energy
21 Group costs remain just as high as under the old
22 management.

1 According to Crane's Chicago Business,
2 through a lot of months of installing pipes in 2016,
3 Peoples paid an average 3.25 million per mile of
4 pipe while under Integrys they average 3.2
5 million --

6 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Your time is up, sir. Out of
7 respect for the more than 20 people we have after
8 you --

9 THE AUDIENCE: We have time. Let him speak.

10 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: -- I ask you to wrap things
11 up, please. Please. Out of respect for the other
12 people who want to speak, please wrap it up.

13 MR. KAMBEROS: Thank you. Very quickly.

14 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Please.

15 MR. KAMBEROS: So, as I was saying, while
16 Integrys they have 3.2 million per mile of pipe,
17 there was no change in cost efficiency; furthermore,
18 other gas utilities are replacing aging pipes more
19 cost-efficiently while identifying and addressing
20 the most severe gas leaks using new methane leak
21 technologies.

22 According to Crane's Chicago Business,

1 Philadelphia Gas Works, which operates in an urban
2 setting like Peoples Gas, has spent about 1.5
3 million per mile to do the same job as Peoples Gas
4 while it cost Peoples 2.5 million per mile. It's
5 outrageous.

6 So Peoples Gas is doing a poor job of
7 not directly fixing severe gas leaks in the city
8 while they do so at much higher costs than other
9 cities, while rejecting the use of methane leak
10 technology to identify the most severe leaks in the
11 city, because they're looking to reap larger and
12 larger revenue and profit at the expense of
13 consumers, all the people in this room.

14 So my demand is simple. Deny Peoples
15 Gas the rate increase they have asked for and don't
16 give them more ratepayer money to do the job they're
17 suppose to do. Do your jobs and ensure access to
18 affordable, reliable, and safe heating for all.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you, sir.

21 (Applause.)

22 Kenia Gomez.

1 (No response.)

2 Ruth Koval.

3 A VOICE: Kenia is here.

4 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Good morning. You have three
5 minutes.

6 PRESENTATION

7 BY

8 MS. GOMEZ:

9 I am Kenia Gomez and I've lived life
10 from experience and I have lived here for 12 years
11 -- no, six years of my life, and never once have I
12 not worried about the bills and about how we are
13 going to make it through.

14 I'm currently in college and I'm
15 thankful that my grades were so good that I got a
16 scholarship, but that hasn't paid for everything,
17 but it does not help the fact that my mom is worried
18 about the bills and, I'm sorry, but my life it
19 sucks, okay, and I can't stand it.

20 This is my last semester. I'm 18 and
21 I'm graduating with my Associates a year early,
22 because I graduated at the age of 16 from high

1 school, and I have to go to university now, but I
2 don't have options because I'm scared that my
3 tuition will come out on my family.

4 My sister she had scholarships and
5 everything, but because we couldn't pay, she had to
6 drop out, and I don't want to burden my family, and
7 if you keep increasing it, I don't know what we are
8 going to do.

9 I'm trying to make it. I'm trying to
10 be a good citizen here. I'm trying to go to college
11 and stay out of the streets, not fall into the gangs
12 and the violence, because I never had to work.

13 I used to live in Little Village. I'm
14 exposed to all that, and it's not fair. Just
15 because you guys think we should give money to the
16 companies that -- I have seen my family suffer and I
17 won't be able to go to college, and just because I
18 just can't find a decent job, I'm trying my best.

19 I know I'm wasting your time. You
20 know, you don't think -- I see you guys looking
21 someplace else. You know, it just hurts. I'm
22 sorry.

1 survive, unable to find jobs, or jobs that pay
2 enough to allow them to pay the bills, leaving the
3 water shut off, not being able to buy food or pay
4 the gas bill.

5 Everyone is outraged over the
6 shootings and killings in the city and justifiably
7 so. The solutions that are always raised are
8 confiscate all the guns, put all the drug dealers in
9 jail, but one doesn't hear so much about how the
10 problems people face by not being able to make a
11 living and paying the bills contribute to this
12 raising murder rate.

13 Imagine how much stress is caused by
14 not being able to afford the necessities of life.
15 That alone can lead to death, but if one is under a
16 great deal of stress and someone says or does
17 something quite defensive, probably easier to shoot
18 first and maybe regret it later or maybe not, maybe
19 some people feel they don't have that much to lose.

20 So how does this relate to the price
21 of gas? Even if people are not driven to murder,
22 living through a Chicago cold snow without heat can

1 lead to illness and even death or if one has to
2 choose between buying food or paying the gas bill,
3 what's the best choice?

4 Is this a choice any of us would
5 inflict on our families? And, if not, why not lower
6 the rates so others don't have to make this choice.

7 I know you are all aware that the
8 Illinois General Assembly passed a resolution in
9 2001 stating that the rates for utility service be
10 affordable and, therefore, preserve the availability
11 of such services to all citizens; all, not some, not
12 many, but all.

13 I'm reminded of that saying "God grant
14 me the serenity to accept the things I cannot
15 change, the power to change those I can, and the
16 wisdom to know the difference."

17 As an individual, I don't have the
18 power to change this, but I know that a united
19 people can, and I know you do have the power. You
20 do have the power. Use it as the Cook County
21 Workers Benefit Council has demanded you do and
22 fulfill the Public Utilities Act of 2001.

1 Thank you for your giving me this
2 opportunity.

3 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you.

4 Angela Cervantes.

5 MS. CERVANTES: Buenos dias.

6 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Good morning.

7 MS. CERVANTES: (Speaking in Spanish).

8 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: We have a young lady who can
9 translate for you, okay? If you speak very slowly a
10 sentence at a time, she'll translate it to us.

11 Could you give her the microphone.

12 (Microphone tendered to
13 speaker.)

14 VANESSA GRACIA,
15 translated the Spanish language into the English
16 language, and the English language into the
17 Spanish language as follows:

18 PRESENTATION

19 BY

20 MS. CERVANTES:

21 My name is Angela Cervantes and I'm
22 here because I want to talk about the cases that I

1 have seen through the church that I volunteer.

2 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Please feel free to cut her
3 off so you can at times explain.

4 THE INTERPRETER: So she sees people going to the
5 church to ask for resources so they can pay for
6 their bills and they're extremely high for them.

7 Many of the resources that they're
8 asking for social security numbers and many don't
9 have one, and she thinks that it's sad that they
10 can't provide help for them with that.

11 Some of us don't have children, but
12 those who do are really suffering and are barely
13 eating. I think that for everyone there should be
14 resources for all of them, especially to help.
15 That's it. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 Nathan Price.

19 MR. PRICE: Hello. How are you all doing.

20 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Good morning, sir. You have
21 three minutes.

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PRESENTATION

BY

MR. PRICE:

My name is Nathan Price. My family has been living in Englewood for over 20 years, and the cost of survival is constantly rising. Low-income workers are really feeling the pinch the hardest. The average families are feeling the pinch of rising costs and, if nothing changes, families like mine will face harder struggles to get food, to stay in our homes, and stay warm.

I'm speaking from my own experience here in Illinois where I've been struggling to get by. I work retail, and through a temp agency, and a factory and never made more than \$11 an hour and never full time. My wages were flat. My income was barely more than \$1100 a month, but the price of housing and utilities kept raising beyond what I could afford. That's why I had to move in with my relatives.

The parent company of Peoples Gas paid out \$455 million in dividends to stockholders in

1 2015 at the cost of hundreds of thousands of
2 disconnection notices that they sent to families too
3 poor to pay the bill.

4 Most families in my neighborhood are
5 struggling to find decent paying jobs and are losing
6 their homes because of property tax increases,
7 increases in rent, and the cost of food and
8 utilities.

9 Everyone I talk to agrees that the
10 cost of rising utilities is making us choose between
11 food, and health care, and disconnection. For some,
12 it's already too late. Many homes in my
13 neighborhood are abandoned as people have been
14 pushed out by rising costs, unable to afford rent
15 and their gas bill.

16 I have to have heat and I have to have
17 food and shelter. I have family members, who are
18 small landlords, have an obligation to their
19 tenants, often seniors on fixed incomes --

20 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Two minutes.

21 MR. PRICE: -- to maintain a liveable housing.

22 Citizens need to eat and they also

1 need health care and heat. My family is struggling
2 to keep our homes heated and food on the table and
3 their senior citizen tenants comfortable.

4 It's not fair that we feel this pinch
5 every single winter and live in constant fear of not
6 having heated homes and food while the ICC allows
7 Peoples Gas to gain more and more profits.

8 I demand that the rates be rolled back
9 to a rate that working people, not just the wealthy,
10 can afford. The ICC has a mandate to ensure we can
11 all afford safe heat in our homes. Protect the
12 people, not the profiteering of Peoples Gas. Reject
13 the Peoples Gas rate increase and tell them to do
14 what my aunt does, fix their property at their own
15 expense. Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you, sir.

17 (Applause.)

18 Bamboo Solzman.

19 MS. SOLZMAN: Good morning.

20 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Good morning, ma'am. You have
21 three minutes.

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PRESENTATION

BY

MS. SOLZMAN:

My name is Bamboo Solzman. I'm a retired respiratory therapist. I spent 16 years at La Rabida Children's Hospital working with children with chronic illnesses. Most of them came from the poorest areas of Chicagoland where the rates of asthma are highest.

Asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema are all affected by the weather. Cold air triggers the symptoms. Safe, reliable heating service is necessary for all families, and especially the poor who suffer most from these illnesses.

Welcome, Commissioner Oliva. I read that you were a judge for the Department of Children and Family Services, so you know, and I hope you have told the other members of the Commission, that the policy of DCFS is if a DCFS worker comes to a house without heat, that is grounds for removing any children from the home.

Instead of tearing families apart, the

1 Commission should direct the gas companies to turn
2 the heat on in compliance with the Public Utilities
3 Act of 2001 which says you are to regulate utilities
4 so they are affordable and available to all.

5 As long as the ICC allows utility
6 companies like Peoples Gas to raise rates to the
7 point where poor and vulnerable families cannot
8 afford to keep the heat on, the ICC --

9 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: One minute here.

10 MS. SOLZMAN: -- the ICC is complicit in breaking
11 apart families and punishing people for their
12 poverty. I am enraged.

13 Since I last spoke to this body in
14 2010, the ICC has made no movement toward protecting
15 the health and lives of the most vulnerable people.

16 In 2009 the ICC allowed 56,000 Chicago
17 households to lose heating service. In 2015, over
18 75,000 Chicago households lost service because they
19 could not afford to pay the higher rates.

20 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Wrap it up, ma'am.

21 THE AUDIENCE: Let her speak.

22 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Wrap it up. Out of respect

1 for all of the other people who want to speak, if
2 you could wrap it up, please.

3 THE AUDIENCE: Let her speak.

4 MS. SOLZMAN: That's a nearly 55 percent increase
5 in households without safe heat. You can change the
6 position of the ICC to protect the people. I demand
7 that you step up and stop Peoples Gas from raising
8 their rates yet again.

9 I agree with the demand from the Cook
10 County Workers Benefit Council. Do what they say.
11 Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Rosazlia Grillier.

15 MS. GRILLIER: Rosazlia Grillier.

16 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Please. Good morning, ma'am.

17 MS. GRILLIER: Good morning. How are you.

18 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Well, thank you. You have
19 three minutes.

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PRESENTATION

BY

MS. GRILLIER:

Okay. Good morning again. My name is Rosazlia Grillier. I am one of the chairs of an organization called Power-Pac Parents Organized to Win, Educate, Renew-Policy Action Council, which is a subsidiary of COFI, Community Organizing and Family Issues, and I'm here today to represent countless families across the state that are members and leaders within our organization.

I had a speech written out, but I think that it's been very well articulated from the folks that you have heard already, and COFI is about partnerships and solutions, so I won't sit here and demand anything from you, but what I will say to you is this story goes on and on by countless other people across this city and this state, the really dire position that it is putting families in.

So I beseech you to take some action, do some investigating, do something that will help move us to a place that we can come together to make

1 things work well for families in Illinois in terms
2 of utilities and these astronomical gas prices.

3 I have got a horror story of my own,
4 and our organization has gotten thousands of them
5 from families that we have been submitting to you
6 and other entities.

7 So please investigate this issue and
8 do what is right so that all children can thrive and
9 survive. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 Yesenia Maldonado.

13 MR. MARANIA (phonetic): Good morning.

14 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Good morning.

15 MR. MARANIA: Yesenia Maldonaldo isn't here. May
16 I read her very brief report?

17 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Sure. What's your name?

18 MR. MARANIA: My name is Olion Marania
19 (phonetic), so I will read her message here. It is
20 actually the letter of Yesenia Maldonado.

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PRESENTATION

BY

MS. MALDONADO:

My name is Yesenia Maldonado. I have asked Olion (sic) to present my statement to you as I cannot be here today.

I am a working mother. I work in a retail clothing shop. My husband works in a factory, 12-hour shift in a separate facility. It is very hard work and we have to pay -- we have bills to pay our home, to pay the food, clothes, and school supplies for our daughter.

My family needs my paycheck because my husband's job doesn't pay enough, but sometimes I can't work, just like I can't be here today, because I was injured on the job. I have chronic debilitating pain, because the work injuries hasn't been treated appropriately, but I cannot afford the therapy.

On top of our low wages, our family was robbed and those who were suppose to protect us did not. My husband had 5,000 hours of

1 overtime stolen from us from his previous employer.
2 It was wage theft, but the state did not stop them
3 and the loss ourselves still very hard. Attorney
4 only gets paid out of the money amount provided.
5 You cannot afford to fight your case out.

6 If the state had set up laws that
7 work, my husband, and employer, and the hundreds of
8 other companies that commit wage theft would not
9 have gotten away with this theft and we would have
10 had a little bit more money, but we are short by
11 5,000 and we cannot afford to go with it.

12 If our gas bills double, if the rates
13 go up again, what else will we have to do without
14 food? Will we lose our homes? How many of us must
15 suffer so that a few may have millions?

16 I demand that the ICC reject all
17 further rate increases and roll the rates back to
18 something we can all afford.

19 I demand that the Commissioners tell
20 Peoples Gas to pay their gas mains at their expense,
21 not ours. Companies like Peoples Gas have already
22 taken enough from families like mine. The state

1 most show that it will act in the interest of the
2 persons to fulfill the Public Utility Act of 2001.
3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 Timuel Black.

7 PRESENTATION

8 BY

9 MR. BLACK:

10 Thank you very much. I will not claim
11 to be an expert on the figures as the previous
12 speakers have been. My name Timuel Black and I was
13 98-years old December the 7th, and I have lived most
14 of that time in Chicago. I came when I was eight
15 months old, and I have seen the dispirit changes in
16 terms of living opportunities for various people.

17 Those who have been shut out mostly
18 have been lower income people, primarily African
19 Americans and Mexican Americans, shut out because
20 they do not have access not only to income but the
21 resources that are available to more fortunate
22 people, and Peoples Gas is one of those resources.

1 It is, indeed, embarrassing to those
2 people when their power is eliminated and disrupted
3 because the prices of gas have risen to the extent
4 they can no longer afford it, and the children in
5 those homes -- and I know because I taught school
6 for many years -- the children of those homes being
7 embarrassed and angry because they cannot have a
8 house where they can turn on the gas heat or turn on
9 the stove. They are embarrassed and, therefore,
10 they go to the streets. They go to the streets
11 primarily to try and get the resources that will
12 bring them back in a more even fashion with their
13 neighbors or those who are far away.

14 I feel an obligation to the younger
15 generation, since I came from those younger
16 generations once upon a time, that they share in the
17 call for equality of opportunity and resources in
18 this country that we say all people, not all men,
19 but all people are created equal and, as we watch
20 the disparity, as we watch the disparity, it's easy
21 to see why foreign nations and others can point to
22 the United States as not being a place where

1 equality is available.

2 (Telephone ringing.)

3 I wish I could have more time to speak
4 more in detail, but I hear my wife calling on the
5 telephone.

6 (laughter.)

7 Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Alejandro Herrle here?
10 Alejandro?

11 PRESENTATION

12 BY

13 MR. HERRLE:

14 Hi. My name is Alejandro Herrle. I'm
15 a university student at Loyola University in
16 Chicago. I'm also here because Midwest Workers did
17 ask me to speak.

18 This issue affects not only the
19 poorest in our community, as so many people have
20 said, it affects my generation as well. It's no
21 surprise that the rise of college tuition has gone
22 up considerably in many years, and more and more

1 young people, more and more millennials, are faced
2 with over burden -- enormous amounts of debt
3 already.

4 This does not help my generation
5 prosper. This does not help the City of Chicago
6 grow, to be a strong economic power house in the
7 Midwest. This only encourages corporate profits for
8 a very few.

9 Taking away money from those who have
10 little does not help grow the economy, does not help
11 encourage commerce. It encourages that a very few
12 number of people benefit, and that is not what this
13 Commission is for. That is not what government
14 should stand for.

15 We live in a representative democracy
16 where everyone's voice should be heard, and I'm here
17 today because I want my voice to be heard.

18 I don't even live in the City of
19 Chicago most of the time. I only go to school here,
20 but I would love to live here, but I'm afraid I
21 can't. I won't be able to find work that I will be
22 able to afford my basic necessities.

1 If the cost of gas goes up, this will
2 drive away talent. People who might want to live
3 and work in the City of Chicago if they find out
4 that gas rates have gone up how many times in the
5 last year, this is not good for the city, and that's
6 all I have to say. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 Sheila West.

10 MS. WEST: Good morning, everyone.

11 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Good morning.

12 PRESENTATION

13 BY

14 MS. WEST:

15 I will try to make this brief.

16 Hello. My name is Sheila West, and I stay with my
17 brother Richard and I take care of him. He's on
18 disability. His rent was \$760, but it rose to \$780,
19 because the City of Chicago went up on the water.
20 The landlord passed down the price hike to us. I
21 don't have an income because I'm caring for my
22 brother.

1 When companies like Peoples Gas have a
2 rate increase, it makes it very difficult for
3 landlords and building management companies to keep
4 their rents affordable. Any utility increases drive
5 rent increases.

6 Please reject Peoples Gas' rate
7 increase and uphold the Illinois Public Utilities
8 Act of 2001 which makes it easier for people like my
9 brother Richard to pay his rent and pay for his
10 out-of-pocket medical expenses.

11 I would say this. I also spoke in
12 2010 and since that time I have warned the four of
13 you Commissioners, not you, that people will leave,
14 and the census concludes that people have left the
15 City of Chicago and, since that time, more people
16 have left the City of Chicago, and, if I recall
17 right, maybe I'm wrong, we still do not have a
18 working budget in the State of Illinois.

19 This is a dire situation. We
20 simply -- no offense to Peoples Gas -- can't afford
21 it. Thank you, everyone.

22 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you.

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(Applause.)

Edward Alpert.

PRESENTATION

BY

MR. ALPERT:

Good morning. My name is Edward Alpert and I'm here as a volunteer for Midwest Workers, and I guess I come from a little different perspective. I was raised on the south side of Chicago. I lived downtown Chicago for many years and I now live in the northern suburbs.

Very bluntly, I have been able to live a very privileged life. I've never wanted for anything. My family did very well, and I've done very well in my career. So when the heating bill comes or the electric bill comes, I have the resources to pay those bills and not think twice about it, and probably -- and I'm not ashamed to admit it, but sometimes I've taken it for granted that that's just how everybody is, that they're able to afford to pay these bills, but in the last few years, since I've volunteered for Midwest Workers,

1 social service agencies in Chicago, I have come to
2 understand that everybody has not had the same
3 privileges as I have had and that, in fact, they
4 struggle day-to-day to meet their needs.

5 So I am here simply to say thank you
6 for your time. Thank you for your consideration. I
7 have gotten to know so many of the beautiful people
8 in this room. They are, indeed, beautiful in their
9 own way, and I hope you will really let them live a
10 life of comfort, too, and not worry day-to-day about
11 their bills and make sure that the rates roll back
12 and that the heat is not turned off. Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you.

15 Brian Herrle.

16 PRESENTATION

17 BY

18 MR. HERRLE:

19 Good morning, Commissioners. My name
20 is Brian Herrle, and I'm a Cook County resident and
21 I appear today as a concerned citizen.

22 I have an elderly father who's 90. I

1 have a son who you just heard from, so I think I see
2 the perspective of multi-generations.

3 Others here have already spoken well
4 about the basic hardship of these rate increases,
5 especially on those who are unemployed, temporarily
6 unemployed, low-wage workers, seniors on fixed
7 incomes.

8 One additional observation I would
9 like to make is people are willing to make
10 sacrifices. They are willing to turn down the
11 thermostat. They are willing to try to conserve and
12 save money, but in a system where the rates and
13 charges to consumers are decoupled from consumption,
14 that doesn't really necessarily work, so you have to
15 understand the frustration, at times futility, of
16 those who, notwithstanding their own efforts, cannot
17 reduce these charges that are levied on them. And
18 once you fall over that cliff, once you're
19 disconnected, then you are really caught, because
20 then you have got the reconnect fees and all sorts
21 of things that come along with being in that
22 precarious situation.

1 So really not just take into account
2 the impact of these proposed rate increases but how
3 the billing structure, which has bring implemented,
4 disproportionally impacts those who, otherwise,
5 really cannot help the charges that are levied on
6 them despite their own efforts to the contrary.

7 And if there are rollover minutes, I
8 bequeath them to someone else. Thank you very much.

9 (Applause.)

10 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Raul Green.

11 MR. GREEN: Good morning.

12 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Good morning.

13 PRESENTATION

14 BY

15 MR. GREEN:

16 My name is Raul Green. I'm a Chicago
17 native. Why do we go through this over and over?
18 This rate hike is nothing more than one thing for
19 yourselves and nobody else. Lives are more
20 important than dead Presidents in your pockets and
21 wallets.

22 Please do your job. Make it half and

1 half for everybody, not for only the rich folk but
2 also low-income neighborhoods, too. People with
3 illnesses are not equipped for this cold fall winter
4 season, also need in the summer, too.

5 Please stop giving the money to
6 corporations. It should go to jobs and to houses as
7 well as medical care, too.

8 We all need it for our kids, as well
9 as for our senior citizens. You know what you got
10 to do. I might as well stop wasting my time, but
11 I'm running out of things to say. Please, do your
12 duty and let people live their lives. Thank you
13 very much.

14 (Applause.)

15 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Our final speaker is Clint
16 Krislov.

17 PRESENTATION

18 BY

19 MR. KRISLOV:

20 Thank you. It's Clint Krisler. I
21 wish to speak only regarding the Case No. 14-0301,
22 which is Underwood vs. SBC Illinois Bell. There is

1 a full case filing on this, but what I want to
2 emphasize is this is a case in which Illinois Bell
3 intentionally violated the administrative
4 regulations that would have given them the right to
5 charge a late charge during the 2002 to 2010 period.
6 They do not dispute that they do this intentionally.
7 They considered it. They knew that they were in
8 violation.

9 The ICC staff told them they were in
10 violation and, yet, they went ahead and failed to
11 date stamp so that it could be postmarked audit
12 their bills, which deprived them under 735.16(a),
13 deprived them of the right to charge late charges
14 during that period.

15 They received, and they don't dispute
16 this, because it is from them, a total of \$121
17 million in late charges during that period that they
18 were not entitled to, and it's not a mere oversight.

19 We thought when we brought it to their
20 attention that it was a mere oversight, but the
21 discovery showed that they -- I always like to read
22 my name in E-mails -- that the phone company had

1 with the ICC internally, they knew that they were
2 violating the administrative regulations which would
3 have entitled them to charge late charges during the
4 period.

5 The reason that they did it was to
6 avoid spending a 23-one-thousandth-of-a-cent that it
7 would have cost them to have an ink jet that they
8 previously had at that position in the bill
9 processing as the envelopes go by at a thousand
10 per minute. It was just to save that
11 23-one-thousandth-of-a-cent that they intentionally
12 omitted the date stamp (sic) so that the people
13 could not audit their own bills.

14 You may -- whatever you do on other
15 matters, this is a matter in which there was
16 intentional wrongdoing. It's not oversight. It's
17 not inconvenient. It's just they thought about it
18 and they talked about it. The record you will see
19 in the file record is there. It shows they knew
20 about it, and they intentionally sent the bills out
21 without the audited date stamp (sic) just to save a
22 pittance.

1 We think that if you send a message,
2 the message you are going to send either by adopting
3 the administrative law judge's dismissal -- the
4 message you are actually going to send is either
5 that a utility is obligated to follow the law --

6 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Ten seconds more.

7 MR. KRISLOV: -- or that they can intentionally
8 flaunt the law, collect the revenues, and figure
9 that nobody may ever catch them, and if they do,
10 this Commission will overlook it.

11 You should not do that. You should
12 send a message that regulated utilities must comply
13 with the law.

14 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you, sir.

15 (Applause.)

16 We will be moving into our regular
17 agenda. There are edits to the January 11, 2017
18 Regular Open Meeting Minutes.

19 Are there any objections to approving
20 the Minutes as amended?

21 (No response.)

22 Hearing none, the Minutes are

1 approved.

2 Moving on to our Public Utilities
3 Agenda, there are minutes to our January 11th
4 meeting. There are edits to those Minutes.

5 Are there any objections to approving
6 the Minutes as edited?

7 (No response.)

8 Hearing none, the Minutes are
9 approved.

10 Electric Agenda Item E-1 concerns
11 ComEd's filing to address the use of data.

12 Are there any objections to not
13 suspending the filing?

14 (No response.)

15 Hearing none, the filing is not
16 suspended.

17 Item E-2 concerns the IPA's petition
18 for approval of its 2017 Procurement Plan.

19 Are there any objections to approving
20 the proposed Order denying the Motion for
21 Clarification and granting the Petition to
22 Intervene?

1 (No response.)

2 Hearing none, the Order is approved.

3 Item E-3 concerns a consumer complaint
4 against ComEd.

5 Are there any objections to granting
6 the Joint Motion to Dismiss?

7 (No response.)

8 Hearing none, the motion is granted.

9 Item E-4 concerns ENGIE Resources'
10 Application for a Certificate of Service Authority.

11 Are there any objections to granting
12 the Motion to Withdraw?

13 (No response.)

14 Hearing none, the motion is granted.

15 Items E-5 and 6 concern Joint
16 Petitions for Approval of Commercial Customer
17 Releases.

18 Are there any objections to
19 considering these items together and approving the
20 proposed Order?

21 (No response.)

22 Hearing none, the Orders are approved.

1 Moving on to our Gas Agenda, Item G-1
2 concerns Nicor's filing to submit a new tariff.

3 Are there any objections to not
4 suspending the filing?

5 (No response.)

6 Hearing none, the filing is not
7 suspended.

8 Items G-2 and 3 concern Applications
9 for Certificates of Service Authority.

10 Are there any objections to
11 considering these items together and approving the
12 proposed Orders granting the certificates?

13 (No response.)

14 Hearing none, the Orders are approved.

15 Under Telecommunications, Item T-1
16 concerns the Commission's own motion to cancel the
17 certificate issued to Dial Com Systems.

18 Are there any objections to approving
19 the proposed Order canceling the certificate?

20 (No response.)

21 Hearing none, the Order is approved.

22 Items E-2 and 3 concern Amendments to

1 Part 737 and 773 of the Illinois Administrative
2 Code.

3 Are there any objections to
4 considering these items together -- excuse me -- and
5 approving the proposed Order initiating rule-making
6 proceedings and authorizing the First Notice
7 Periods?

8 (No response.)

9 Hearing none, the Orders are approved.

10 Item T-4 concerns the Petition for
11 Declaratory Ruling.

12 Are there any objections to approving
13 the proposed Order dismissing the petition?

14 (No response.)

15 COMMISSIONER del VALLE: Mr. Chairman, I would
16 like to abstain.

17 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Why don't we just have a vote.

18 All those in favor of approving the
19 proposed Order, say aye. Aye.

20 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: Aye.

21 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: Aye.

22 ACTING COMMISSIONER OLIVA: Aye.

1 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Nay?

2 COMMISSIONER del VALLE: Abstain.

3 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Four ayes approved and
4 Commissioner del Valle is abstaining.

5 Items T-5 and 6 concern an Application
6 for a Certificate of Service Authority.

7 Are there any objections to
8 considering these items together and approving the
9 proposed Orders granting the certificates?

10 (No response.)

11 Hearing none, the Orders are approved.

12 Item T-7 concerns a citation against
13 Master Call Communication's failure to maintain
14 managerial resources and abilities.

15 Are there any objections to granting
16 the Motion to Dismiss?

17 (No response.)

18 Hearing none, the motion is granted.

19 Items T-8 through 12 concern Petitions
20 for Confidential Treatment of Annual Reports.

21 Are there any objections to
22 considering these items together and approving the

1 proposed Orders granting the petitions?

2 (No response.)

3 Hearing none, the Orders are approved.

4 Items T-13 through 15 concern
5 Applications for Pro Forma Changes including
6 corporate conversion to a LLC.

7 Are there any objections to
8 considering these items together and approving the
9 proposed Orders approving the applications?

10 (No response.)

11 Hearing none, the Orders are
12 approved.

13 Moving on to the Water Agenda, Item
14 W-1 concerns IAWC's Application for a Certificate of
15 Public Convenience and Necessity.

16 Are there any objections to approving
17 the proposed Order granting the certificate?

18 (No response.)

19 Hearing none, the Order is approved.

20 Under Petitions for Rehearing, Item
21 PR-1 concerns three Applications for Rehearing on
22 IAWC's rate increases.

1 Is there a motion to deny the AG,
2 IIWC, FEA, and CUB's Applications for Rehearing?

3 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: So moved.

4 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Is there a second?

5 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: Seconded.

6 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Any discussion?

7 (No response.)

8 All those in favor of denying the
9 application, say aye. Aye.

10 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: Aye.

11 ACTONG COMMISSIONER OLIVA: Aye.

12 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: Aye.

13 Opposed, say nay.

14 COMMISSIONER del VALLE: Nay.

15 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: The vote is 4 to 1. The ayes
16 have it. The applications are denied.

17 Is there a motion to grant IIWC and
18 FEA's Application for Rehearing?

19 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: So moved.

20 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Is there a second?

21 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: Seconded.

22 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Is there any discussion?

1 (No response.)

2 All those in favor of granting the
3 Application for Rehearing, say aye.

4 (Chorus of ayes.)

5 Opposed, say nay.

6 (No response.)

7 The ayes have it and the application
8 is granted.

9 We have three other items of Other
10 Business, the first two of which involve litigation
11 before the FERC in Docket Nos. EL16-49 and
12 ER17-284. These items involve potential litigation
13 and we will enter into closed session for the
14 discussion.

15 Is there a motion to move into closed
16 session?

17 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: So moved.

18 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Is there a second?

19 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: Seconded.

20 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: All those in favor, say aye.

21 (Chorus of ayes.)

22 The ayes have it and we will move into

1 closed session, so we'll invite our public guests to
2 exit the room.

3 (A brief pause.)

4 (Whereupon, closed session
5 commenced from Page 56
6 to Page 66.)

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1 (Open session commenced
2 as follows:)

3 We are back into open session. We are
4 dealing with items under Old Business.

5 Are there any objections to approving
6 the comments as amended, the comments that -- the
7 draft comments we have?

8 We had a section added to support the
9 Attorney General's position on ripeness with
10 respect to ensuring that our position does not
11 infringe on the state's progress be included.

12 Are there any objections to adopting
13 the comments on FERC Docket No. EL16-49?

14 (No response.)

15 Hearing none, the comments are
16 approved.

17 The second item we have under FERC
18 Docket ER17-284, we are going to hold the MISO
19 comments.

20 The final item of Other Business is
21 the Commission resolution concerning alignment of
22 RTO Interconnect policies with the Illinois RPS.

1 Is there a motion to adopt the
2 resolution?

3 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: So moved.

4 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Is there a second?

5 COMMISSIONER SADZI MARTHA OLIVA: Seconded.

6 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Commissioner del Valle has
7 comments.

8 COMMISSIONER del VALLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 I support the state's recent action to
10 advance green energy in the spirit of this
11 resolution; therefore, I will support the resolution
12 making sure that the consumers get access to the
13 benefits of green energy produced in neighboring
14 states is truly important, and it is similarly
15 important that we do what we can to reduce barriers
16 and costs for green energy located in Illinois.

17 I have heard too many stories of
18 barriers and roadblocks that distributed generation
19 and utility scale storage providers have experienced
20 in Illinois in the form of high interconnection
21 costs and little transparency in the interconnection
22 process with the utilities.

1 I want to take this moment then to
2 also encourage our electric utilities, Ameren and
3 ComEd, to evaluate the processes for distributed
4 generation and utility scale storage
5 interconnections in their service territories,
6 ensuring that these resources can go online closer
7 to home and we can as a state move forward.

8 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you, Commissioner. I
9 want to agree with those comments and just state for
10 the record that we should do all in our power to
11 help to facilitate the new policy that was just
12 enacted, particularly with respect to the rules.

13 Judge Kimbrel -- I'm sorry. We had a
14 motion, a second, some discussion.

15 All those in favor of adopting the
16 resolution, say aye.

17 (Chorus of ayes.)

18 Opposed, say nay.

19 (No response.)

20 The ayes have it and the resolution is
21 adopted.

22 Judge Kimbrel asked for some

1 clarification regarding E-2, and, for the record,
2 the Commission by unanimous consent denied the
3 motion for clarification and granted the petition
4 to intervene.

5 Judge Kimbrel, do you have any other
6 matters to bring before the Commission this morning?

7 JUDGE KIMBREL: Nothing further,
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Commissioners, do any of you
10 have any other business to bring before the
11 Commission this morning?

12 (No response.)

13 Hearing none then, without objection,
14 the meeting stands adjourned. Thank you.

15 (Whereupon, the above matter
16 was adjourned.)

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