



November 18, 2019

Dear Governor Newsom,

In the environmental justice movement, we believe that the people closest to the problems - whether it's dirty gas power plants, oil refineries, fracking wells, and the disasters they cause - are also closest to the solutions. Our experiences have taught us that the only way to move through profound environmental and economic crises we're facing, like the California wildfires and PG&E power shutoffs, is to put the communities most impacted at the center of making decisions about our future.

Today, we are requesting seats at the table as your office determines a blueprint for restructuring PG&E.

We are the California Environmental Justice Alliance and the California Utility Justice Campaign. Our alliances bring together communities that have been unfairly burdened with the impacts of a dirty, dangerous energy system: frontline communities who are exposed to dirty gas-fired power plants that poison our air and bodies, the elderly and medically vulnerable who most depend on reliable electricity, low-income households who can least afford skyrocketing electric bills, and immigrant workers and communities displaced by recent wildfires.

With PG&E in bankruptcy protection, we have an unprecedented opportunity to shape our energy future. Instead of pouring billions into propping up a dangerous, antiquated electrical and gas infrastructure, we must move California toward a safe, reliable, community-owned energy system that reinvests in local communities and is resilient through climate change.

The old centralized electrical system relies on large power plants that burn dirty fossil fuels to generate massive amounts of electricity and carry it across dangerously long distances. This system produces profits for a few at the expense of many. It is inherently dangerous and needs to be redesigned from the ground up to serve and benefit all Californians.

The contours of what a 21st-century energy system should look like are clear—we need a web of decentralized, distributed energy systems that generate, store and distribute clean renewable power locally and regionally. We need to unplug dirty gas power plants that poison our air and bodies. Workers and communities must be able to make meaningful decisions

about our energy systems, not private corporations like PG&E. And we need to start building the 21st-century energy system in frontline communities that have been unfairly burdened by the status quo.

We offer this set of core principles to guide the energy transition so that it benefits all Californians, not just the wealthy few:

- 1. Distributed Power.** Instead of massive power plants and long transmission lines that cut through wildfire-prone areas, California must build a web of new, more resilient energy systems that generate, store and distribute clean renewable power locally and regionally.
- 2. Worker and Community Control.** The only way to create an energy system that works for us, is if it is determined by us. Workers and communities must own and make meaningful decisions about our energy systems, not corporations like PG&E that put profits over safety.
- 3. Clean Renewable Energy for All.** All people deserve to breathe clean air and have healthy environments to live, learn, play, and work. Any restructuring plan must include a managed decline of dangerous gas power plants, and protect low-income Californians from gas rate increases in the process. Instead of burning dirty fossil fuels that poison our air and bodies, we must power our neighborhoods with clean renewable energy.
- 4. Corporate Accountability.** Californians shouldn't have to pay for PG&E's disasters, whether it's through rate increases on customer electric bills or taxpayer-funded cost recovery. Investor-owned utilities need to be accountable for the consequences of their reckless decisions and pay for the damages they caused.
- 5. Frontline Leadership.** Ensure that all utilities, load-serving entities, and utility regulatory bodies include environmental justice leadership in their governance and decision-making bodies. California needs more community control at every level of our energy system with clear protections for people who are most impacted.
- 6. Indigenous Sovereignty and Land Stewardship.** We must respect indigenous sovereignty and follow the lead of local indigenous communities in managing fire and land stewardship.
- 7. Environmental Justice.** Stop putting dirty fossil fuel facilities and operations in low-income communities of color. Start building the 21st-century energy system in frontline communities that have been unfairly burdened by this dirty energy system.
- 8. Equitable Emergency Planning.** Emergency planning must be culturally competent and community-driven in order to be effective. Californians who are underinsured, undocumented, linguistically isolated, medically vulnerable, experiencing homelessness, or otherwise hard to reach must be protected from wildfires and power shutoffs.
- 9. Protect Workers.** During PG&E's wildfires and power shutoffs, the company must compensate workers for lost pay, especially immigrant workers in the agricultural, construction, domestic, and hospitality sectors who are too often forced to choose between working in hazardous conditions or losing employment during disasters, and are excluded from federal unemployment and disaster relief benefits. As we make the energy transition, we must build the new system through good union jobs with family-supporting wages for diverse local communities.
- 10. Invest in Climate Resilience.** PG&E should fund turning our public spaces and community centers into climate resilience hubs with the clean renewable backup power that our communities need to survive their power shutoffs. Instead of extracting wealth from working class and low income communities, energy providers should reinvest their revenues into energy efficiency, local clean energy generation, storage, shared solar cooperatives and microgrids that make our communities more resilient.

We're ready to transform how we power our communities and look forward to working with your office and contributing to the tables you set for solving the PG&E disaster.

Sincerely,



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