

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION



OF THE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COMMISSIONER DARCI L. HOUCK, in attendance

FILED

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ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE CHARLES FERGUSON, presiding

Application of Southern California Gas)	PUBLIC
Company (U904G), San Diego Gas &)	PARTICIPATION
Electric Company (U902), Pacific Gas and)	HEARING
Electric Company (U39G) and Southwest)	
Gas Corporation (U905G) to Establish)	Application
Hydrogen Blending Demonstration Projects)	22-09-006
)	

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT
Orange Cove, California
August 25, 2025
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Reported by: Ashleigh E. Button, CSR No. 14013

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION, STATE OF CALIFORNIA
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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1 ORANGE COVE, CALIFORNIA

2 AUGUST 25, 2025 - 2:04 P.M.

3 * * * * *

4 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE FERGUSON: Let's go on
5 the record.

6 It is August 25, 2025, and we are in the Orange
7 Cove Community Center in Orange Cove, California. We
8 have gathered here today at 2:0 -- I don't see the
9 time -- 2:04 p.m. on this Monday for the purpose of
10 conducting a public participation hearing in California
11 Public Utilities Commission application A.22-09-006.

12 First of all, welcome to everybody. Thank you
13 for coming. As you're going to see in a moment or two,
14 you are going to play an important role in this
15 particular proceeding, and we really appreciate the fact
16 that all of you have come out here for this particular
17 meeting.

18 My name is Charles Ferguson. I am the assigned
19 presiding administrative judge for this particular
20 proceeding.

21 We are very fortunate that the commissioner,
22 who is assigned to this proceeding, to oversee the whole
23 thing -- there are only five commissioners at the Public
24 Utilities Commission, all appointed by the Governor --
25 and Commissioner Darcie Houck is the one who is assigned

1 to this proceeding, but she's in another important
2 meeting down here right now; and she's going to get here
3 as soon as she can.

4 In the meantime, her chief of staff, Victor
5 Smith, has joined us, and he will say a few words to you
6 in just a few minutes.

7 Aside from those people and myself, we also
8 have the Public Advisors Office. You probably, when you
9 came in, met some of them in the front hallway. Those
10 people are part of the Public Utilities Commission, and
11 they are there to assist all of you communicate with all
12 of us in all kinds of different ways.

13 If you picked up the fact sheet that was on the
14 desk in the front -- and if you haven't, pick one up --
15 on the back of it, it has several different alternative
16 ways of communicating with us through the internet or
17 even by actually typing a message into the actual docket
18 sheet on the official records of this particular
19 proceeding.

20 So, it's -- an explanation is on the back of
21 the fact sheet. The Public Advisors Office is there to
22 help you. If you have trouble getting your message
23 across to us, then just contact the Public -- and their
24 phone number is on the back of the sheet as well.
25 Contact them, and they will help walk you through

1 communicating with us.

2 We are very interested in -- in what you have
3 to say. That's why I am kind of harping on getting
4 those fact sheets, because they have all the telephone
5 numbers and all the URLs and everything -- websites and
6 everything else like that that you need to have in order
7 to communicate with us.

8 This particular proceeding is one that includes
9 four gas companies in the State of California -- Pacific
10 Gas and Electric Company, San Diego Gas & Electric
11 Company, Southwest Gas, and one in particular, So --
12 Southern California Gas Company, which we all call
13 SoCalGas, and that is the particular gas company that is
14 the primary topic here in this meeting today.

15 The application is really to get approval from
16 the California Public Utilities Commission for five
17 different test projects.

18 The test projects are testing whether our
19 existing gas system -- the infrastructure, all the
20 pipelines throughout the whole state of California --
21 whether or not they can react favorably to introducing
22 and blending hydrogen in --

23 MS. BROWN: Can you speak a little bit louder
24 into the mic?

25 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. All right. Is that

1 better? Okay.

2 Sorry. The proceeding is -- is aimed at
3 determining whether or not our existing facilities for
4 transmitting natural gas to your residences and
5 businesses can carry a blend of hydrogen and natural
6 gas.

7 Each of the -- each of the experiments are
8 different. The purpose of today's meeting here is
9 primarily to talk about the test project that will be
10 done by SoCalGas right here in Orange Cove, and what we
11 want to do -- those of us who are decision makers, like
12 myself and the commissioner, what we want to do is get
13 your thoughts about this particular project.

14 You can tell us about the other projects if
15 that is what you're here to do today; that's fine, but
16 we are primarily interested in the -- in the SoCalGas
17 test project that is proposed for your city, Orange
18 Cove.

19 And you might say, well, what -- you know, what
20 good is that. Well, here -- here is what I have to do
21 when you tell us what you think. I have to summarize
22 all that in my decision. And besides that, I have to
23 think about what you have to say, and when I do that, as
24 I do often in these proceedings, I come up with my own
25 ideas that have been germinated by what you have told me

1 in one -- one of these public participation hearings, so
2 you've got an important role to play. Work with me.
3 Give me ideas. Give the other decision makers ideas
4 that we will think about, and if -- it may trigger
5 something in us and, actually, becomes a part of the
6 final decision.

7 So, please, we want as many people as possible
8 to speak to us today, and I invite all of you to
9 communicate.

10 Here is how we are going to do it -- run the
11 meeting today. Everyone who comes up here will have
12 basically two minutes to tell me and the others who are
13 here from the Commission, what it is they want to say
14 about this particular project or any of the projects in
15 this proceeding.

16 There are some exceptions in -- in the
17 beginning, SoCalGas is going to present a summary of
18 their particular test project, and I am going to give
19 them several minutes to do that in English. Five or six
20 minutes to do it in English, and then I want them to do
21 it in Spanish for all of those who are mainly Spanish
22 speaking; and so, it'll take about 10 -- 10 or more
23 minutes for SoCalGas to make its presentation.

24 Then if there are other parties here, they'll
25 have to identify themselves, and I will adjust the

1 amount of time that they can have. It may be more than
2 two minutes.

3 If there are any public officials or
4 representatives of government offices, they get to come
5 next; and then after that, the rest of you can make
6 comments.

7 If you would like to do it a simple way, just
8 to go back to the desk in the front hallway and tell
9 them you want to make a statement, and they'll put your
10 name on it, and then it will be transmitting to me; and
11 I can -- I can read it in advance and call you up to the
12 microphone.

13 If you don't want to go back there and tell
14 them that you want to get in line then you can wait
15 until everybody else has spoken, and then raise your
16 hand; and I will call -- anybody who raises their hand
17 to speak, I will call you up to speak. You will have
18 two minutes to tell us what you think.

19 Okay. So, that's how we are going to run this,
20 and we are going to start, as I said, with a
21 presentation from SoCalGas with respect to how they
22 propose to develop a test project here in Orange Cove.

23 So, will the speaker -- will SoCalGas please
24 come to the podium, make sure the microphone is on.
25 Please state your full name and spell your full name for

1 the record, please.

2 MS. OROZCO: Good afternoon. Gina Orozco,
3 G-i-n-a O-r-o-z-c-o.

4 Good afternoon. I am Gina Orozco, Vice
5 President of Gas Transmission and Storage Operations.

6 I am here today representing SoCalGas. I would
7 like to start by thanking the Public Utilities
8 Commission, the administrative law judge Ferguson and
9 Commissioner Houck for giving us the opportunity to
10 share information with the public about our proposed
11 hydrogen blending demonstration project here in the City
12 of Orange Cove.

13 It is important to emphasize that what we are
14 proposing in Orange Cove is a demonstration project and
15 not an experiment. We know from previous research,
16 including CPUC Commission research and demonstrations
17 done in the U.S. and Canada and around the world that
18 small amounts of hydrogen can be safely blended into
19 existing natural gas systems, and we are merely
20 proposing to demonstrate it in an everyday life setting.

21 We have been part of the Orange Cove community
22 for over 90 years, and we have employees that live and
23 work here. So, after receiving an invitation from city
24 officials to consider this area for a hydrogen-related
25 project, we met with public officials and community

1 members and subsequently performed a thorough technical
2 analysis that confirmed Orange Cove was an ideal
3 location for the hydrogen blending demonstration.

4 We propose to use electricity from solar panels
5 onsite to generate clean, renewable hydrogen and blend
6 small amounts, starting at 0.1 percent and eventually up
7 to five percent into the existing natural gas system in
8 the City of Orange Cove to fuel homes and businesses as
9 shown on our maps.

10 This is one of five proposed hydrogen blending
11 demonstration projects that are proposed across the
12 state by several utilities. The practice of blending
13 hydrogen with natural gas to fuel homes and businesses
14 is not new. It's been used -- around for decades and
15 has been safely used in other communities in the U.S.
16 and worldwide.

17 For example, on the island of Oahu, Hawaii Gas
18 has been safely using hydrogen on its gas since 1979 --
19 no, excuse me -- since 1974 to serve homes, restaurants
20 and businesses. Their gas contains up to 15 percent
21 hydrogen, which is three times the maximum amount being
22 proposed for the City of Orange Cove and doesn't require
23 any special appliances or equipment different from what
24 is being used in homes here in California.

25 Furthermore, various studies, including those

1 published by UC Riverside and demonstration projects
2 around the world have shown that blending up to five
3 percent does not impact safety or operations of common
4 appliances.

5 Hydrogen blending has also been safely and
6 reliably used in many communities around the world in
7 countries such as Australia, Singapore, Canada, the
8 United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands.

9 SoCalGas has worked closely with city leaders
10 in the community to share information about the proposed
11 demonstration and the robust safety measures we would
12 put in place. This engagement includes door-to-door
13 outreach, providing information at community events and
14 briefing stakeholders like the city of Orange Cove Mayor
15 and council, school district, first responders and
16 community-based organizations. The feedback we have
17 received during our engagement has been positive.

18 Some of the safety measures we are proposing
19 include conducting free appliance inspections to confirm
20 home appliances are in safe working order. Conducting
21 regular leak checks of our system before and throughout
22 the demonstration and making any necessary repairs.
23 Installing remote monitors and automatic shutdowns for
24 leak detection and response and working closely with the
25 local fire department and city staff to develop

1 emergency response plans and hydrogen safety procedures.

2 We also intend to work with the city, school
3 district and community leaders to encourage and support
4 residents to participate in our existing customer
5 assistance and energy efficiency programs prior to the
6 start of the demonstration.

7 Based on the -- based on the benefits that
8 accrue to all customers, we are requesting the cost of
9 the demonstration be shared by all SoCalGas ratepayers
10 across our service territory, not just customers in the
11 City of Orange Cove. In doing so, the cost of this
12 demonstration for the average residential customer would
13 be about \$0.13 per month in its first year of operation
14 and about \$0.04 per month in its second year.

15 We believe this is an affordable, prudent
16 project that will help advance California's hydrogen
17 market and the decarbonization efforts.

18 We look forward to continuing to work with the
19 City of Orange Cove and the community on this
20 demonstration through continued engagement and
21 transparency.

22 With me today are members of our project team,
23 who are available to answer questions about the project
24 and our outreach efforts.

25 Thank you for your time, and we will look to

1 advancing together.

2 I would like to now provide my statement in
3 Spanish.

4 (Speaking in Spanish.)

5 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

6 MS. OROZCO: Thank you.

7 ALJ FERGUSON: All right. Now, we are going to
8 have just a few words from the commissioner's chief of
9 staff.

10 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Judge Ferguson.

11 Good afternoon, everyone and thank you for
12 joining us today.

13 I am Victor Smith, acting chief of staff to
14 Commissioner Darcie Houck. She is the assigned
15 commissioner to this proceeding, unfortunately, she was
16 unexpectedly delayed on her way here, but she is on her
17 way and should be here within the hour.

18 I want to ensure everyone who speaks before
19 then that she will review the transcript that our court
20 reporters are fastidiously taking, and I want to thank
21 you on her behalf for coming here and speaking.

22 The purpose of today's hearing is to hear from
23 members of the communities that may be impacted by the
24 proposed hydrogen blending pilot projects. So, we are
25 here today to listen to you, the public, and to elected

1 officials and to everyone who is going to provide
2 comment on these proposed blending demonstration
3 projects.

4 Your input is valuable to the CPUC as we
5 navigate the issues associated with clean energy
6 transition.

7 I will close with thanking the City of Orange
8 Cove for hosting us and thank you to Administrative Law
9 Judge Ferguson for managing this complex proceeding. I
10 also want to thank Energy Division staff for their work
11 in tracking and assessing issues today; and thank you
12 especially to our court reporters and to our Public
13 Advisors Office staff for making sure that today's event
14 runs smoothly.

15 And with that, I will turn it back over to ALJ
16 Ferguson.

17 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

18 Okay. Do we have any representatives of any
19 government offices or agencies who want to make a
20 statement?

21 Okay. Sir, please come up and introduce
22 yourself, give me your full name, spell your full name
23 --

24 SPEAKER VERDUZCO: Okay.

25 ALJ FERGUSON: -- and agency that you're

1 representing.

2 SPEAKER VERDUZCO: Or governmental office,
3 right?

4 ALJ FERGUSON: Pardon me?

5 SPEAKER VERDUZCO: So for Supervisor Buddy
6 Mendez, I just say Supervisor Buddy Mendez?

7 ALJ FERGUSON: You can speak for -- I will give
8 you four minutes, okay?

9 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER VERDUZCO

10 Okay. That works.

11 Good afternoon, Commissioners, my name is
12 Solomon Verduzco, Solomon Verduzco, speaking on behalf
13 of Fresno County Supervisor Buddy Mendez.

14 I am here to express Supervisor Mendez's strong
15 support for the Orange Cove hydrogen blending
16 demonstration project.

17 This project represents an important
18 opportunity for Fresno County to lead in clean energy
19 innovation by blending renewable hydrogen into the
20 existing natural gas system.

21 Orange Cove will host a demonstration that
22 advances California's climate goals while providing
23 global benefits.

24 For residents, it means safe, reliable service
25 with no disruptions to appliances.

1 For the community, it means investment,
2 workforce opportunities and visibility as a clean energy
3 leader. Importantly, it leverages existing
4 infrastructure and protects jobs while testing solutions
5 that can scale statewide.

6 Supervisor Buddy Mendez believes this project
7 is a responsible and forward-looking step toward a more
8 sustainable future.

9 We are proud to support it, and we urge the
10 CPUC to approve the Orange Cove hydrogen blending
11 demonstration.

12 Thank you.

13 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much. I forgot
14 to mention to you that your -- your -- what you said was
15 translated into Spanish while you were speaking.

16 SPEAKER VERDUZCO: Perfect. Thank you.

17 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. Do we have any
18 representatives of any of the parties in the proceeding?

19 I see one hand. Anymore? Oh, way in the back
20 there's another party that is represented. Why don't we
21 start in the front and then in the back? Okay.

22 Come forward. You know the routine. Your
23 name, slowly spell it, tell us who you're representing.

24 And the parties, I think -- let's give them
25 three minutes, too. Okay.

1 SPEAKER ZWEIFLER-KATZ: Okay.

2 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ZWEIFLER-KATZ

3 Thank you, your Honor. Jaime Katz, J-a-m-i-e,
4 Zweifler-Katz, Z-w-e-i-f-l-e-r dash K-a-t-z.

5 I am an attorney for Leadership Counsel for
6 Justice & Accountability. We represent Orange Cove
7 United, a group of Orange Cove residents.

8 SoCalGas is proposing to install equipment to
9 make and store hydrogen at the corner of South and
10 Jacobs across the street from homes and within eyesight
11 of the elementary school and the high school football
12 field.

13 That hydrogen would be blended into gas
14 pipelines throughout the city and burned at every gas
15 appliance in the city. We have worked with residents to
16 better understand the proposed project. Through that
17 process, residents have raised concerns about the
18 project with us.

19 The main concerns fall into three categories:
20 Informed consent, indoor air pollution and the
21 appropriateness of existing residential appliances.

22 First, regarding informed consent. Residents
23 and business would not -- not be able to opt out unless
24 they remove all of their gas appliances. Residents we
25 work with and represent have told us that they do not

1 want hydrogen in their homes, but there is no affordable
2 pathway to opt out and remove their gas appliances.

3 Informed consent requires transparent
4 information, and our understanding share -- our
5 understanding is that information regarding associated
6 risks of hydrogen blending has not been shared by the
7 utility with either city council or the public.

8 That is why SoCalGas admitted in its response
9 to questions from the Commission filed on August 11th
10 that they have not contained -- obtained informed
11 consent from residents.

12 The second concern that residents have
13 presented is in regard to indoor air pollution,
14 specifically NOx. This is associated with Analysis
15 conducted by Professor Alistair Lewis suggests that
16 blending hydrogen into residential gas lines has the
17 potential to double indoor NOx in older homes with older
18 appliances. This is associated with asthma, can
19 aggravate existing cases of asthma and allergies, and
20 link to other health impacts.

21 The third concern that residents have shared is
22 that their appliances are older and not designed to burn
23 hydrogen. Not only can older appliances create more
24 indoor air pollution when they burn hydrogen, but the
25 hydrogen can cause leaks and damage appliances.

1 SoCalGas is not offering to replace or repair appliances
2 either at the outset of the pilot or throughout the
3 pilot if appliances are damaged.

4 Orange Cove is a severely disadvantaged
5 community, and we have heard concerns from residents
6 about how unaffordable it can be to buy new appliances.

7 As the Commission considers whether or not to
8 authorize this pilot, we ask commissioners and staff to
9 keep these concerns in mind even as it considers whether
10 this is a cost-effective use of ratepayer dollars.

11 Studies indicate that California does not need
12 hydrogen blending to achieve its climate goals, and that
13 other technologies and investments are both more
14 effective at achieving those goals and expose the public
15 to fewer risks.

16 For those reasons, we expect the Commission
17 will hear significant concerns from Orange Cove
18 residents at today's hearings.

19 This project is not a done deal. We urge the
20 Commission not to approve this pilot, a dangerous
21 experiment lacking community support.

22 Thank you.

23 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

24 We have a second party, please come forward.
25 And again, keep in mind that whatever you say in English

1 is being translated into Spanish and broadcast to those
2 who have headsets.

3 Okay. You want to identify yourself? Spell
4 your name slowly.

5 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GILBERTSON

6 Sure. I am William Gilbertson, W-i-l-l-i-a-m,
7 and then Gilbertson, G-i-l-b-e-r-t-s-o-n. I am the
8 Utility Workers Union of America Local 142 President. I
9 have about 3,200 members primarily employed at SoCalGas
10 currently.

11 I have, in the past, worked for SoCalGas for
12 approximately 14 years. Six years of it has been the
13 customer service department going to reported leaks,
14 fires, hazards and appliance services inside the homes
15 and making sure that the service from our SoCalGas is
16 safe and reliable.

17 After leaving the customer service department
18 side, I went to the gas utility, gas office distribution
19 side, and I went over to doing constant leak survey on
20 the lines to verify leakage and repairs then I moved
21 onto performing the role and maintained line
22 certifications to re -- for fresh air breathing and
23 repairs, digging up gas lines and making sure that the
24 old lines were being replaced with new ones safely for
25 continuous service to our -- our -- to the residents of

1 Orange Cove and everybody surrounding us in the SoCalGas
2 territory.

3 After that, I was elected to my current role as
4 the president of the Utility Workers Union.

5 Our members are highly trained. We go through
6 constant monthly trainings at SoCalGas' headquarters,
7 and we also have modules that we go through to maintain
8 our -- our certification. They're very strict modules,
9 very strict training. It is a condition of employment
10 for safety. So, if we are not safe in our job, we don't
11 have a job.

12 So, in doing so, putting hydrogen into the
13 ground here and supporting this safe, reliable
14 transition to a blend of hydrogen, we will continue to
15 have strong utility worker jobs out there for us and my
16 members.

17 We do constant leak repairs, constant survey to
18 verify everything is -- is up to date and that nobody is
19 left in a hazardous atmosphere.

20 Thank you.

21 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

22 All right. Now, I have a list of names that
23 have -- or people who would like to speak, and I am
24 going to call two names at a time. So, the second
25 person, get ready. You will be up at the podium in a

1 matter of a couple of minutes.

2 The first name I have on here is Samuel
3 Escobar.

4 SPEAKER ESCOBAR: I am here but I won't speak.

5 ALJ FERGUSON: You don't want to speak?

6 SPEAKER ESCOBAR: No.

7 ALJ FERGUSON: All right. I think we already
8 had this one, Mr. Gilbertson, that was you who just
9 spoke.

10 All right. The next name is Javier Pacheco,
11 and I understand you want to speak in both English and
12 Spanish.

13 SPEAKER PACHECO: Yes.

14 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. How long -- is two
15 minutes enough for you to do the English version?

16 SPEAKER PACHECO: Should be enough.

17 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. I will give you an equal
18 amount of time in Spanish.

19 SPEAKER PACHECO: Thank you.

20 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PACHECO

21 My name is Javier Pacheco, J-a-v-i-e-r; last
22 name Pacheco, P-a-c-h-e-c-o. I am the Senior Business
23 Development Manager for Noritz America, and I wanted to
24 have -- thank you for the opportunity to speak.

25 First off, I want to briefly talk about Noritz

1 as a whole global company that is headquartered out of
2 Kobe, Japan and has over seven years of manufacturing
3 tankless water heaters, focused on the most advanced
4 technology in the world especially in the U.S.

5 But Noritz's number one priority is, and has
6 always been, safety. We pride in having the most
7 efficient and sustainable water heater technology in the
8 U.S. while having the highest warranty in the industry.

9 We're happy to share with the Orange Cove
10 community that our technology is hydrogen compatible up
11 to 25 percent, which is certified by UL. We manufacture
12 both residential and commercial tankless and, in fact,
13 we -- if everyone -- if anyone is interested, we do
14 provide more information in both English and Spanish.

15 (Speaking in Spanish.)

16 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

17 All right. The next two speakers will be Juan
18 Bedolla and David Clark, and he will be followed by
19 David Clark.

20 So, Mr. Clark, you get ready to come up next.

21 Spell it -- tell us your name and spell it
22 slowly.

23 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BEDOLLA

24 Juan Bedolla. First name J-u-a-n. Last name
25 B-e-d-o-l-l-a.

1 I represent Reedley College. We have
2 instruction overseeing STEM areas of science,
3 technology, engineering and math. This partnership
4 between Orange Cove and Southern Cal Gas will provide
5 great opportunities for our students to give them
6 firsthand experience in understanding development,
7 design and maintenance at this new facility that will
8 allow the bending of natural gas and hydrogen energy.

9 So, Reedley College looks forward to the
10 partnership and hopefully do internships for our
11 students in understanding this and hopefully giving them
12 career opportunities in the future.

13 Thank you.

14 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

15 Mr. Clark, you're next. Spell your full name
16 and I am just going to ask you: Are you a resident of
17 Orange Cove or are you speaking on behalf of a business?

18 SPEAKER CLARK: The college.

19 ALJ FERGUSON: The college? Okay.

20 SPEAKER CLARK: Yes.

21 ALJ FERGUSON: Go right ahead.

22 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER CLARK

23 David Clark, D-a-v-i-d C-l-a-r-k. Yes, Juan
24 and I are colleagues. We both teach at the college.
25 Juan is in the STEM area. I represent the career tech

1 education field, and we are really excited about the
2 technology of bringing clean energy into the valley
3 here. And specifically, our faculty are excited about
4 programs in pipeline welding construction.

5 Our automotive program that we have alternative
6 energy, where we want to expand to expand to hydrogen
7 powered vehicles; and most specifically, we have a heavy
8 truck program that would love to expand to hydrogen
9 powered vehicles also.

10 Most recently, we were involved in a similar
11 project with Tesla. Tesla and Pepsi. Pepsi bought 50
12 trucks in southeast Fresno, and on our advisory
13 committee, as part of that grant, we did find out how
14 many trucking companies in the valley were converting to
15 electric power, and we were surprised that a majority of
16 them were actually pursuing hydrogen powered vehicles on
17 the heavy trucks and for -- for lots of reasons.

18 But hydrogen is something that is new in the
19 valley here, and we are excited about the opportunities
20 that it will bring to the college and the instructional
21 programs that we have in our area.

22 Thank you.

23 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

24 Okay. Next we have Lilly Rocha, and after her
25 Solomon Verduzco.

1 (Reporter clarification.)

2 ALJ FERGUSON: Oh.

3 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ROCHA

4 Good afternoon, your Honor, and members of the
5 CPUC. My name is Lilly Rocha, and that is L-i-l-l-y,
6 last name R-o-c-h-a.

7 I represent the Latino Restaurant Association.
8 I am also a nearby resident of Three Rivers, so I spend
9 a lot of time up here.

10 The Latino Restaurant Association is a national
11 organization with members all over the country,
12 including -- out to have the 1,400 members we represent,
13 about 80 percent are here in California with members
14 also in the area of Orange Cove. We have members here.

15 I wanted to address the fact that it's projects
16 like these that allow positive progress and -- for
17 alternative and better types of energy just for the
18 planet overall. As far as our members, it represents a
19 choice.

20 I am going to give you an example of how
21 regulations -- other regulations are sometimes put upon
22 our members, and I speak about the big -- the ongoing
23 energy versus -- gas versus electrical and, of course,
24 you know, we all have the -- the planet's best in mind
25 when we are trying to conduct everything that we do;

1 however, the implementation of said plans sometimes are
2 not thought out and not at all implemented well; for
3 example, lots of times, electrical -- you know,
4 everything needs to be electric -- everything needs to
5 be electrical, but then they are not thought out where
6 are we going to have folks who can fix those problems
7 when there's issues?

8 I personally have put on the chef's coat
9 myself. I have gone down, and I've cooked with
10 induction heating, which is what is promoted by
11 electric, which is great. Absolutely, you know, there's
12 -- there's -- there's so many positives about that;
13 however, when I have visited members who have went
14 through the cost of converting to electrical -- and
15 we're talking about regulations that have almost
16 bankrupted our members. Then we have issues with the
17 equipment. There's not enough technicians. There has
18 -- it hasn't been thought out thoroughly.

19 So, I went and cooked myself with induction
20 heating and, let me tell you, you know, it is -- there's
21 a lot of positives, but then there's a lot of negatives.

22 I remember going to a hotel big banquet that we
23 were having and everything was backed up; and so, I went
24 back there and said, "Hey, what is going on here?"
25 There was only one working, I guess, range there, and

1 the guy -- I was saying, "Well, what is going on here
2 and how long has that been going on?" Well, it's been
3 going on for months, because there's no one who knows
4 how to fix these things out here, and I have heard that
5 from many members.

6 So, projects like these, I feel, are very, very
7 positive, and we are very for it because of fact that
8 these are cost -- you know, cost savings for our
9 members. We represent owners that, you know, cannot
10 afford to go and change all of their equipment all of a
11 sudden and then have, you know, continued problems once
12 the equipment has changed, and we see this a lot.

13 We ask the CPUC to approve this program, and I
14 feel like our members feel that this is a positive for
15 everyone including small businesses.

16 Thank you, sir.

17 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you.

18 All right. I think Mr. Verduzco has already
19 spoken.

20 All right. And the next person would be
21 Danielle Parra, and after her Miguel Ruelas -- Ruelas.
22 Danielle Parra and Miguel Ruelas.

23 So, please speak your name and spell it slowly
24 into the -- for the reporter, and then you've got two
25 minutes.

1 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PARRA

2 Danielle Parra, D-a-n-i-e-l-l-e. Parra,
3 P-a-r-r-a.

4 Good afternoon. My name is Danielle Parra, and
5 I serve as board president of the State Center Community
6 College District, representing four colleges, three
7 centers, and over 57,000 students across those counties.

8 I am here today to voice my strong support for
9 the proposed hydrogen blending demonstration project in
10 Orange Cove.

11 This project is an exciting opportunity to
12 bring innovation directly into a small rural community.
13 It'll show how clean, renewable hydrogen can be added to
14 our existing energy systems in a safe and reliable way
15 while keeping services affordable for families and
16 businesses.

17 Most importantly, it puts Orange Cove on the
18 map as part of California's clean energy future rather
19 than leaving rural communities behind. But beyond the
20 technology, this project represents opportunity.

21 Orange Cove and the surrounding communities in
22 rural southeast Fresno County often see innovation pass
23 by them. This demonstration brings a cure, creating a
24 training, research and workforce pathways for our
25 residents.

1 For the students at Reedley College in
2 particular, the project offers a chance to engage
3 directly in hands-on learning tied to the evolving clean
4 energy workforce. These are precisely the types of
5 opportunities that inspire students, open doors to
6 careers in energy technology and ensure that rural
7 communities are not left out of California's clean tech
8 future.

9 By supporting the project, the Commission is
10 not only advancing the state's climate goals, it is
11 helping to prepare the next generation of skilled
12 workers who will carry those goals forward.

13 On behalf of the State Center Community College
14 District, and I encourage you to approve this
15 demonstration and to allow Orange Cove to be a leader in
16 building a cleaner, more resilient energy future.

17 Thank you.

18 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. Mr. Ruelas?

19 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER RUELAS

20 All right. Good afternoon. My name is Miguel
21 Ruelas. That is spelling M-i-g-u-e-l R-u-e-l-a-s.

22 I represent a company called H2B2. H2B2 is a
23 global company that specializes in renewable hydrogen
24 production. Specifically, I have been working on a
25 project that is ongoing right now that is completed. It

1 is called SoHyCal. It is located in Fresno County just
2 outside of Kerman.

3 This is an active renewable hydrogen production
4 facility. This is happening now. This is the first in
5 California, and it's still the -- if you're calling it
6 on a green scale -- the greenest hydrogen production
7 produced in the whole United States.

8 Why I'm here today to promote this project is
9 because there's many different projects all over the
10 world happening because there's a large race to become
11 the hydrogen leaders of the world.

12 This is happening. Hydrogen is the future.
13 We've seen it for energy, for transportation and in the
14 application that we're seeing today in today's project.
15 So, really, what's happening is involving the Central
16 Valley.

17

18 H2B2 has focused on California, knowing that
19 California is going to be moving forward in hydrogen
20 formidability in other sectors, and specifically
21 selected the Central Valley to help bridge that gap.

22 There's over 50 stations -- hydrogen refueling
23 stations in California that are being used for hydrogen
24 cars that are active today. There is only one in all
25 the -- in all the Central Valley. That is in Coalinga.

1 That is down about 50 percent of the time.

2 What does that mean? When have an option in
3 front of us to drive a hydrogen car or electric car, we
4 don't really have an opportunity to select that hydrogen
5 car because there's only one station.

6 Often, we have seen it throughout history in
7 the Central Valley, we are left behind in innovative
8 technology, and this is an opportunity to not just catch
9 up, but to lead this event.

10 What does that mean for the people of Central
11 Valley? Cleaner air, cleaner technology and job growth.
12 The plant that we have right now, we know that we
13 couldn't find anybody that could run an electrolyzer
14 using the technology that we are using, so upskilling
15 had to happen, and we've proven that that is possible.

16 We -- we have hired locals from the surrounding
17 area, taught them and have run the plant troubleshooting
18 all on their own.

19 So, the opportunities here in the Central
20 Valley are going to be that much greater with job
21 growth. Our engineers are teaching programs.
22 Everything that is tied with this.

23 So, I -- I highly encourage this. This is
24 proven technology. I would kind of stay away from the
25 verbiage of calling it an experiment. It's happened

1 everywhere. It's been happening all over the world. We
2 just need to catch up.

3 Thank you.

4 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you.

5 All right. Next is Luis Martin Del Campo and
6 following him Billy Donald(sic).

7 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MARTIN DEL CAMPO

8 My name is Luis Martin Del Campo, L-u-i-s
9 M-a-r-t-i-n D-e-l C-a-m-p-o.

10 I work for a company called Caltrol with sales,
11 engineering, and service offices all over Southern
12 California.

13 At Caltrol, we represent Emerson, a global
14 industrial automation company, that has been
15 manufacturing ballast measure devices and control
16 reliability systems for about 100 years in the prudent
17 service of natural gas and hydrogen.

18 These systems are designed and built with
19 proven, state-of-the-art technology that enable their
20 safe and reliable operation.

21 Demonstration facilities like the one on
22 display at the SoCalGas Hydrogen Innovation Center in
23 Downey showcase what is possible in utilizing these
24 high-accuracy gas and hydrogen advanced control systems
25 and flaming gas detections.

1 These systems support realtime health
2 monitoring with automatic shutoffs helping to ensure the
3 risk remains extremely low.

4 This round the clock monitoring ensures the
5 accuracy of blend ratios, pipeline pressure, leak
6 detection, as well as triggering immediate shutdowns
7 when needed. Not only does this technology help to
8 ensure safe and reliable hydrogen blending, but it also
9 creates jobs in the local communities.

10 If California moves forward with blending
11 projects, most companies like Caltrol are going to need
12 to hire engineering and service technicians in order to
13 support these types of systems locally, so that means
14 jobs for local communities.

15 So, with that said, we strongly support the
16 hydrogen blending project for SoCalGas, and we see it as
17 an incredible opportunity in reducing emissions while
18 using the existing infrastructure in order to create
19 also good, high-paying jobs for the local communities.

20 Thank you.

21 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

22 All right. Next is Billy Donald(sic).

23 SPEAKER DAHL: I will make it.

24 ALJ FERGUSON: While you're walking up there,
25 tell us if you're a resident of Orange Cove.

1 SPEAKER DAHL: Pardon me?

2 ALJ FERGUSON: Are you a resident of Orange
3 Cove?

4 SPEAKER DAHL: Yes, I am.

5 ALJ FERGUSON: Good, okay. Go ahead and state
6 your name and spell it slowly.

7 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER DAHL

8 Billy Dahl, B-i-l-l-y, D-a-h-l.

9 The one thing that concerning the pros about
10 the system of what -- one of the things that I have
11 brought up and read on the computer and stuff like that,
12 it's -- it's not really a fuel of the future. It sounds
13 good, but also when you've got a town like Orange Cove,
14 which was built in the 1903s or whatever, I might be
15 wrong, but you've got gas lines that are as old as this
16 city, and hydrogen can cause these pipes to go brittle
17 and cause leaks at the joints; and it's a highly
18 combustible fuel. It's probably -- when you get it down
19 to the -- on the ignition rates, it's actually lower
20 than gasoline, but it's a tenacious explosive, and it's
21 actually been used as a rocket fuel. So, we get an idea
22 of just how powerful this stuff is.

23 And the thing that concerns me is the safety
24 and here in -- and I understand -- you're right, by
25 listening to the news and stuff like that, California's

1 going to eliminate probably -- who knows how long it
2 would take to eliminate natural gas anyway. They're
3 going to want us to go to electric.

4 And another thing that I found out is it takes,
5 you know, fossil fuel or it takes electricity to produce
6 hydrogen. How is that going to save us? You know, it's
7 just things -- those things kind of concern me. Mainly
8 the safety. And also, if it's going to benefit the
9 whole city, should this not go before a vote of all of
10 the city residents? That is the big concern.

11 This gets shoved at us like it's a
12 dictatorship, and I don't think that is what we want;
13 and Orange Cove is a very small farming community. I
14 don't like the idea of being Guinea pigs, you know, or
15 -- or a laboratory rat for some experiment. It -- it
16 needs to be proven safe, and I -- I just -- what I have
17 seen, read and heard, it's not.

18 So, thank you guys for your time.

19 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much. Okay.

20 Next is Clint Olivier and Alma Figueroa.

21 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER OLIVIER

22 Good afternoon, and thanks for the opportunity
23 to comment and thank you for coming to the Central
24 Valley, Orange Cove.

25 My name is Clint Olivier, and I am here on

1 behalf of the Central Valley Business Federation or
2 BizFed for short.

3 We're a grassroots alliance of more than
4 75,000 -- excuse me -- 75 organizations representing
5 30,000 employees, employers and 400,000 employees and
6 their families in Fresno County and across the Central
7 Valley, including many right here in Fresno County.

8 Our mission is simple but powerful. To unite
9 the voice of business, drive smart innovation, and make
10 sure our region thrives economically while we pursue
11 California's ambitious climate goals; and that's why
12 this project is so important, isn't it?

13 The Orange Cove hydrogen blending demonstration
14 isn't just another pilot program. It's a safe,
15 responsible and vital step forward in proving that clean
16 hydrogen can be seamlessly integrated into our existing
17 energy systems. It's an example of innovation in
18 action.

19 This project puts safety first. Hydrogen
20 blending has already been studied and tested
21 extensively, and this demonstration will take place
22 under rigorous oversight with constant monitoring to
23 ensure that families and businesses are never at risk.

24 Nothing moves forward unless safety is
25 guaranteed. It protects jobs and investments by using

1 existing pipelines, infrastructure and workforce instead
2 of forcing costly new systems. It delivers proof of
3 concept that families and businesses can keep using
4 their appliances without expensive retrofits. No
5 disruption, just progress.

6 It drives new economic opportunity by signaling
7 to clean tech companies and investors that the Central
8 Valley is open for innovation, open for workforce
9 development and ready to lead.

10 It directly aligns with California's 2045
11 net-zero goals but it does so the right way through
12 voluntary market-based solutions rather than
13 heavy-handed mandates.

14 Let's be clear. The business community needs
15 projects like this, especially here in the Central
16 Valley. We need to show that California and the Valley
17 can reduce emissions and grow the economy at the same
18 time, and we can only do that if people trust that the
19 technology is safe, reliable and affordable; and Orange
20 Cove will prove exactly that.

21 In conclusion, BizFed's members strongly urge
22 you: Approve this demonstration. Approve it for the
23 families who will benefit, for the businesses that will
24 grow responsibly, and for the future of California's and
25 the Central Valley's clean energy economy.

1 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

2 Next Alma Figueroa.

3 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER FIGUEROA

4 Good afternoon.

5 ALJ FERGUSON: Can you reach that microphone?

6 SPEAKER FIGUEROA: Good afternoon, everyone.

7 My name is Alma Figueroa, and I am a resident of Orange
8 Cove for about 40 years.

9 Speaking on behalf of myself, my family and the
10 vast majority of the Orange Cove residents. We strongly
11 oppose the hydrogen blending experiment. Human beings
12 should not be used as Guinea P pigs to fill the pockets
13 of corporations.

14 The experiment is dangerous, immoral and,
15 frankly, it's criminal. There was no outreach to the
16 make people aware of the experiment. This was a
17 strategy and intentional. No one that I have spoken to
18 knows about the experiment. I know they call it
19 demonstration, but let's call it how it is. It's an
20 experiment where much less known about the impact in our
21 community.

22 This experiment is going to put us at risk.
23 Hydrogen leaks into the atmosphere. The homes in Orange
24 Cove are older with corroded pipes and poor ventilation,
25 and there is a high risk in our lungs.

1 The infrastructure is not capable of handling
2 hydrogen. The city is exposing itself to countless
3 lawsuits including class action litigation. Bankruptcy
4 would be certainty for Orange Cove.

5 I know I only have two minutes, so I am going
6 to cut it short, but let's do the cons.

7 We are going to have health problems including
8 deaths, financial catastrophe for the residents and
9 financial disaster for the city. There is a huge risk,
10 very little upside, and it's a lose-lose.

11 I am a cancer survivor and asthmatic, and by
12 allowing the experiment, you are signing my death
13 warrant. I am not alone. The people of Orange Cove do
14 not want to be Guinea pigs. We cannot afford this as
15 residents. We cannot afford this as a city; and most
16 importantly, we do not want our safety compromised.

17 I hope the city reconsiders their stance and,
18 instead, do what is fiscally smart, safe and what's
19 moral.

20 Thank you.

21 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much. All right.
22 Next is Joan Buller, if I am pronouncing that correctly,
23 and Mohamed Hussin.

24 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER CONNOR BULLER

25 Hello, my name is Joan Connor Buller, J-o-a-n

1 C-o-n-n-o-r B-u-l-l-e-r.

2 I have been a resident of Orange Cove for
3 72 years. I have been struck, because I have been
4 listening to the different people speaking and different
5 groups represented. The majority of people who are
6 speaking today are not residents of Orange Cove, which
7 is a concern.

8 I have some concerns that have not been
9 addressed that I would love to see somebody provide
10 answers for that have never given us an opportunity to
11 ask questions such as, I under -- if I understand it
12 correctly, this is a test project for three years.

13 What happens at the end of the three years?
14 The regular inspections that one of the speakers
15 referred to, how often is regular inspections? What
16 happens to those inspections at the end of the three
17 years?

18 There was some information -- or somebody
19 referred to the fire department. Are they being given
20 extra funding? Extra equipment? Extra training to deal
21 with the hydrogen fire and a hydrogen explosion?

22 All of these are what ifs, but they are very
23 real what ifs. What happens -- in the State of
24 California currently, we have a lot of homeowners'
25 insurance leaving our state. What is going to happen to

1 the homeowners' insurance policies of residents here in
2 Orange Cove with the heightened risk of this company
3 coming in? I haven't heard that addressed.

4 We are constantly being impact -- facing
5 increased water fees here because of the so-called
6 drought conditions. What impact is that going to have
7 on our water supply for the City of Orange Cove and our
8 wells?

9 What impact is this going to have on our ageing
10 sewer system? Like I said, I have been a resident here
11 for 72 years. I have no memory of any recent upgrading
12 of gas lines in the City of Orange Cove. I would like
13 for somebody to tell me when was the last time our city
14 was retrofitted with new natural gas lines.

15 So, to put hydrogen H2 blend in old, old gas
16 lines, and we are supposed to feel comfortable with
17 that? I don't.

18 I would also -- somebody referred to the shared
19 expenses -- nominal shared expenses for the first year,
20 for the second year. What happens to those shared
21 expenses? Just a cursory research, you know, when I was
22 trying to educate myself -- I am a retired educator. I
23 was trying to educate myself on H2 blend.

24 One, Southern California Gas is not even shy
25 about being up front and saying this is their business

1 model. They are going to H2 blends to maintain their
2 business structure and to appease their investors.

3 So, what -- and it's very typical that H2 blend
4 facilities easily double the consumer fees on up to
5 quadrupling consumer fees, so is that what we have to
6 look forward to as a resident here within three years
7 that our gas fees are going to quadruple, if not double?

8 I am very concerned with the health impact. We
9 do have a lot of students, a lot of children in this
10 community with lung issues, with asthma. I see it all
11 the time at the schools when I'm there. It's a growing
12 concern.

13 And blue hydrogen, one of the alpha gases is
14 methane if I am understanding it correctly. Both of
15 those have real negative health impacts on our children,
16 and I am real concerned, so these are just a few --
17 these are not all, but these are just a few of real
18 concerns that I have along with retrofitting.

19 I don't know if you've toured the town. This
20 is a town that has a lot of needs. A lot of needs, and
21 yet we are expecting the families, on top of their daily
22 survival needs, to retrofit their appliances, to
23 retrofit and trust that the appliances that they are
24 going to be handed are going to be a quality that will
25 last the time? That they will be an ongoing, long

1 well-used appliances?

2 I appreciated what the person had to say who
3 was going to be trained. We have a really difficult
4 time getting repairmen who are knowledgeable and
5 repairing current equipment.

6 Where are these repairmen going to come from
7 who know how to repair hydrogen appliances?

8 So, those are my concerns, and I appreciate
9 your time.

10 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. Thank you very much. You
11 have raised some very important questions, and I am
12 going to do something here that we did up in Truckee for
13 the -- one of the other projects just last week.

14 I want to ask any representative of SoCalGas to
15 come up and explain who Ms. Buller can get in touch
16 with, both in the back of the room if it's possible
17 right -- today to talk about the questions that she's
18 raised; or if not today, who can she get in touch with
19 later? So, would one of the SoCalGas representatives
20 come forward and take the -- come up to the podium --

21 MR. WAYMIRE: Sure.

22 ALJ FERGUSON: -- and introduce yourself to her
23 and everybody else, because if others have questions,
24 they are going to ask you, okay?

25 Give them your name, and spell your name,

1 again, for the record.

2 MR. WAYMIRE: Hi, my name is Blaine Waymire,
3 B-l-a-i-n-e, last name Waymire, W-a-y-m-i-r-e.

4 I am the project manager for the project, so I
5 would be happy to answer your questions, and in the
6 back, we have Miguel Ruelas, who is also in our Regional
7 Public Affairs, and I am sure he would be happy to talk
8 to you as well.

9 I have a business card I can grab for you.

10 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. So, Ms. Buller, thank you
11 very much. You asked very pertinent questions for this
12 proceeding, so thank you.

13 SPEAKER CONNOR BULLER: Thank you.

14 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. Next Mohamed Hussin.

15 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER HUSSIN

16 Good afternoon, my name is Mohamed Hussin,
17 M-o-h-a-m-e-d H-u-s-s-i-n.

18 I represent Fresno County Economic Development
19 Corporation. We're a non-profit public/private
20 partnership. I am also a resident of Orange Grove. I
21 am graduate from Orange Grove High School. My kids go
22 to the elementary school here.

23 So, as a representative of an organization
24 invested in economic growth and workforce development in
25 Fresno County, we believe this project could lead to

1 realizing hydrogen as an affordable and sustainable
2 source of energy.

3 Right now, hydrogen energy is not. It's
4 expensive. It's not used at scale. SoCalGas blending
5 project, if eventually this pilot becomes a real thing
6 and energy is blended in SoCalGas' operation used at
7 that scale, it could remove a huge barrier to hydrogen
8 as a source of energy.

9 This could open up a huge market for hydrogen
10 and open that door into other sectors and other markets,
11 and the Central Valley could potentially become a hub
12 and producer of energy -- or hydrogen.

13 As a resident of this city, my house is here.
14 I live here with my kids. I see this as an investment
15 in our future. Sure, it's a short-term pilot project,
16 but this could eventually yield something more
17 sustainable, something that is integrated with the
18 infrastructure system. And Central Valley residents
19 are -- have suffered the most, perhaps, from air
20 pollution; and we as residents here are the biggest fans
21 of clean energy as a resource, and we need as much
22 energy as possible. And it's not just electrification
23 or, you know, solar, wind -- hydrogen, too. We need to
24 diversify our sources of energy, and that's the future.
25 It's really an investment into our future.

1 If every community says, "Not in my backyard,"
2 we are not going to move forward. I live here. This is
3 my backyard. I say yes, and SoCalGas has really
4 demonstrated a level of diligence and a level of safety
5 -- approach to safety, and they have my confidence
6 because of that.

7 So, as a representative of the economic
8 development organization interested in economic growth
9 at Fresno County, and also as a resident of Orange Cove,
10 I strongly encourage the Public Utilities Commission to
11 approve this project.

12 Thank you.

13 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Hussin.
14 All right. Next is Dora Westerlund and after
15 her is David Preciado.

16 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER WESTERLUND

17 Good afternoon, Commissioner, your Honor. My
18 name is Dora Westerlund, and I am the CEO of the Fresno
19 Area Hispanic Foundation, D-o-r-a W-e-s-t-e-r-l-u-n-d.

20 Like I said, I'm the President and CEO of a
21 nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting
22 individuals and small businesses in underserved
23 communities and providing primarily residents in the
24 Latino community.

25 Over the last two years, SoCalGas has

1 demonstrated exceptional community outreach efforts.
2 They have engaged residents through various methods
3 including partnerships with nonprofits, information
4 booths in community events, door-to-door education in
5 close collaboration with city leadership always ensuring
6 that the information reaches people effectively in both
7 English and Spanish.

8 The proposed hydrogen blending project in
9 Orange Cove reflects a forward-thinking and responsible
10 approach to sustainable energy. By blending hydrogen
11 with natural gas, this initiative represents a
12 meaningful step forward toward decarbonization and
13 showcases a strong commitment to a future cleaner
14 energy.

15 Beyond environmental benefits, these efforts
16 also build stronger community relationships through
17 transparency and genuine engagement.

18 This project has the potential for Orange Cove
19 to lead throughout California, establishing a new
20 statewide hydrogen blending standard.

21 We believe this project will bring benefits not
22 only to Orange Cove but for many other communities
23 striving for a cleaner, fairer and more prosperous
24 future.

25 Thank you very much for your time and your

1 attention, and the important service you provide to our
2 communities.

3 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you.

4 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PRECIADO

5 Hello. I am David Preciado, D-a-v-i-d
6 P-r-e-c-i-a-d-o, Confía Foundation. I will do it in
7 Spanish.

8 (Speaking in Spanish.)

9 ALJ FERGUSON: Are you going to do this in
10 English as well?

11 SPEAKER PRECIADO: I did it on Spanish, you
12 want me to --

13 ALJ FERGUSON: I want you to do it in English,
14 too.

15 SPEAKER PRECIADO: I will do my best.

16 Okay, for us, we have been helping more than 20
17 rural cities, many families and small business, but now
18 we can see that Orange Cove is going in the right way to
19 have a cleaner future. And also, this project
20 represents, like, innovation project because that
21 together, gas and the hydrogen because it opens a new
22 path to have a example of city in the whole state of
23 California. At the same time to make different -- to do
24 better type of energy.

25 This kind of initiative is used only not on

1 agri -- or crop -- environmental, it's also because make
2 connections with the community, with the transparency
3 and also for education, workforce and families in Orange
4 Cove.

5 As a representative of the Confía Foundation,
6 we really can say that in this rural city and all the
7 families that are -- need assistance, we can see that
8 SoCalGas has been working door-by-door with different
9 families and different houses bringing the information
10 in Spanish and English.

11 So, we are very convinced that Orange Cove
12 could be, like, a reference and inspiration for another
13 cities in the state of California.

14 Thank you very much.

15 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you.

16 Next I think is Ronald Martin, and after him
17 Estela Juarez.

18 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MARTIN

19 I'm Ronald Martin, PhD, R-o-n-a-l-d, J. Martin,
20 PhD.

21 I am here to speak against this project. It's
22 not a good idea. There's not much displacement with
23 methane. It starts at 1 percent and then it goes up to
24 15 percent. So, five/sixths of the gas will still be
25 straight methane that's going to burn and release carbon

1 dioxide. And even though hydrogen is not itself a
2 greenhouse gas, and it doesn't release carbon dioxide
3 when it's burned, it -- it's a very small volume and it
4 leaks very easily.

5 Can we get the existing infrastructure to
6 handle hydrogen, which is very likely to leak. From
7 creating the hydrogen, to shipping the hydrogen, and
8 then in the household; and when hydrogen is released
9 into the atmosphere, it destroys the hydroxyl radicals,
10 and these are called the detergent of the atmosphere,
11 and they are what break down methane, which is the most
12 serious greenhouse gas. And if hydrogen is getting out
13 and breaking down these hydroxyl radicals, the methane
14 will stay up there warming the planet for an additional
15 year. It's 80 times more planet warming than carbon
16 dioxide.

17 So, we don't need to bridge fuel to shift away
18 from fossil fuels. We need to shift away to an
19 all-electric economy, and the \$64 million that will be
20 spent on this blending project or the \$200 million for
21 the various projects around California could better be
22 spent subsidizing new all-electric hot water heaters and
23 electric stoves.

24 Also, hydrogen creates a hydroxyl pyrrole
25 radical, which converts water into something that

1 creates ozone, which is itself a greenhouse gas. So, we
2 don't want this hydrogen leaking, which it will.

3 The global warming potential has recently been
4 increased, and if we've got leaking hydrogen from
5 systems that are engineered to prevent leaks of methane,
6 it'll be just as bad as if we burn straight methane.

7 Hydrogen is not good for households.

8 Maybe it's useful for big projects like steel
9 making, but because it look leaks so easily, it's not a
10 good way to avoid climate change.

11 And what about this project? Is it going to
12 use green hydrogen or blue hydrogen or gray hydrogen?
13 If you use gray hydrogen, there will be no climate
14 advantage at all because that is simply taking the
15 hydrogen off of the methane atom and releasing the
16 carbon, which becomes carbon dioxide.

17 Now, if it's blue hydrogen, then there's an
18 attempt to sequester this carbon dioxide that its
19 created, but is this going to be done carefully?

20 The storage and shipping and sequestration of
21 carbon dioxide also involves pipelines to get it where
22 it's going to be sequestered. It could leak. This has
23 to be taken into account and considered if this is
24 really any kind of important step to moving away from
25 climate change.

1 Even green hydrogen has problems because green
2 is not going to produce right where it's used. It has
3 to go through pipelines, and it will -- when it's
4 released, it'll destroy the hydroxyl radicals and create
5 the hyperoxide radicals.

6 ALJ FERGUSON: Mr. Martin, your time is up. I
7 want to ask you a quick question.

8 SPEAKER MARTIN: Okay.

9 ALJ FERGUSON: It's a suggestion really.

10 If you have scientific papers that you have
11 based your comments on, I highly recommend to you to get
12 back in touch with the Commission in any of the ways
13 that we indicate on the back of the fact sheet and give
14 us the citations to the scientific papers that form the
15 basis of your statement here.

16 SPEAKER MARTIN: Okay.

17 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay.

18 SPEAKER MARTIN: Well, I just wanted to add
19 that burning hydrogen also creates nitrous oxides, which
20 is a pollutant, and we don't want that in our homes, so
21 there's another reason not to do the project.

22 ALJ FERGUSON: Again, I -- we are very
23 interested in comments like this. But to move forward,
24 you're not under oath. You're not be cross-examined by
25 any witnesses, but you might want to bring to our

1 attention a scientific article that you are basing your
2 comments on.

3 If so, please do so.

4 SPEAKER MARTIN: Okay. I will go back to the
5 website and see how I can get that to you.

6 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. Just take the fact sheet
7 that is out in the entry hallway there --

8 SPEAKER MARTIN: Okay.

9 ALJ FERGUSON: -- and it tells you on the back
10 of it exactly the multiple ways that you can get in
11 touch with us.

12 SPEAKER MARTIN: Okay.

13 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. Thank you.

14 Estela Juarez.

15 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER JUAREZ

16 Hello, my name is Estela Juarez. It's spelled
17 E-s-t-e-l-l-a, Juarez is spelled J-a-u-r-e-z.

18 I would like to start off with this: I -- I am
19 a resident of Orange Cove, and if I get a little
20 emotional, I am sorry.

21 I am here today to raise concerns of how Orange
22 -- SoCalGas and the city of Orange Cove have gone
23 through this process of wanting to create such a
24 pilot -- which, if we look up the definition of a pilot,
25 it means experiment -- an experiment program in Orange

1 Cove.

2 When -- when I asked proper questions to the
3 city council members regarding to information of this
4 pilot, I was met with resistance, hesitation and even,
5 "That is not true."

6 Since then, I have not gotten any answers from
7 the people that you would think are here for the best
8 interest of the citizens and residents of Orange Cove.

9 I decided to be a responsible resident and look
10 up information and ask elsewhere such as my home
11 insurance. I called Allstate and I asked them where is
12 there such a policy that I can purchase, so that it
13 could cover such -- for instance, if there is any damage
14 to my house due to this.

15 The home insurance representative answered me
16 and said that they did not understand what I was talking
17 about. There is no such policy or anything that covers
18 my home in regards to this hydrogen plant or a hydrogen
19 gas leak in -- sorry.

20 I told her little information that I knew of
21 this project, and it's very vague even on SoCalGas' web
22 page, and I even ended the conversation with a simple,
23 "Thank you for your time."

24 I even went to a local Lowe's and here is where
25 I inquired if there is any appliances that supports such

1 hydrogen gas mix. The gentleman who I -- who worked in
2 the appliance section told me that only had two options,
3 gas or electric.

4 He even managed to correct me and told me I
5 must have misunderstood the person who was selling me
6 this product, and I said no. I could not have
7 misunderstand. I even showed him and his answer was
8 "hmm."

9 I looked to see if anywhere else in the city of
10 Orange Cove, if there is any information for residents
11 to read on. Nowhere. Nowhere whatsoever.

12 I've been to SoCal's booth, in which they
13 highlight it very well as such a grand project to come
14 to Orange Cove. But in their conversations, they don't
15 tell you both sides. They don't tell you the positives
16 nor the negatives.

17 As a concerned resident of Orange Cove who
18 works, I can only imagine someone who doesn't have the
19 financial means to be able to opt out of such a program.

20 In the conversations with residents of Orange
21 Cove when handing -- passing outs flyers -- something
22 SoCalGas has not done, even though they like to lie --
23 many cannot leave their homes due to preexisting health
24 conditions, in fact, they invited us in.

25 One thing that I would like to mention is

1 something at that no business here can do. They cannot
2 take what an Orange Cove is. Everybody I spoke to; they
3 asked me who was I the daughter of? Everybody knew my
4 aunts. They have now passed away. They already knew my
5 dad and they -- and I hope you do good for our city.

6 All of these people do not know Orange Cove.
7 None of them live here. None of them are Orange Covians
8 who have been here their whole lives. I am the proud
9 Orange Covian and I will not let businesses, companies,
10 who have such an aberration for something so great, who
11 will not preach this for their own towns or cities for
12 this to be created at.

13 That's all I have to say.

14 Thank you.

15 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. Well, wait a minute
16 before you go away.

17 I think you've raised some very good questions,
18 particularly about the insurance; and so, I think I am
19 going to recommend the same thing. I want you to get
20 together with -- who was it from -- okay. Get together
21 with SoCalGas representatives what are here. They will
22 at least put you in touch with someone in their company
23 who can answer questions like that. Probably it's going
24 to be a lawyer who has studied issues about insurance.

25 SPEAKER JUAREZ: Correct.

1 ALJ FERGUSON: With respect to this pilot
2 project. I represented utilities for 40 years as a
3 lawyer, and I know how they think, and they cover a lot
4 of these issues. They think about these things. But
5 what you need to do is you need to sit down and have a
6 good conversation with them, and I want to help
7 facilitate that by having you connect with them here.

8 SPEAKER JUAREZ: Is there anybody else that I
9 can speak to that are not these gentlemen?

10 ALJ FERGUSON: Well, they -- they may -- well,
11 I suspect that they are going to recommend other people
12 in the SoCalGas --

13 SPEAKER JUAREZ: Okay.

14 ALJ FERGUSON: -- company. While they're --
15 they're not -- they didn't come prepared to answer
16 questions here. This is a -- I'm a little surprised.

17 SPEAKER JUAREZ: Yes, they -- it is surprising
18 especially since they have booths that have always
19 answered questions, so you'd think they would be ready
20 and prepared, right?

21 ALJ FERGUSON: Well, they are prepared --
22 they're prepared to do what they're supposed to do here
23 in this particular meeting, and they have done that
24 already. Okay. But now these are extra issues that
25 people bring up, and it happens all the time in these

1 sorts of meetings --

2 SPEAKER JUAREZ: Yes.

3 ALJ FERGUSON: -- and I do the same thing all
4 the time. I want you to meet with one of their people
5 who can talk to you because that person is knowledgeable
6 about the issues that are really bothering you.

7 The one that seems to be most important is the
8 insurance issue.

9 SPEAKER JUAREZ: The insurances, and there's
10 plenty more.

11 ALJ FERGUSON: Well, yes, there were a lot of
12 issues, I -- believe me, I know how many issues.

13 I -- I have generated a lot of the issues that
14 are in this case --

15 SPEAKER JUAREZ: Uh-huh, yes.

16 ALJ FERGUSON: -- so, I understand that, but I
17 think that's an important one that you've raised, and
18 you really should have a serious conversation with them;
19 and it may take a week or two or a month for them to
20 find somebody in the company that really knows what
21 they're talking about when it comes to insurance for the
22 homeowners and the customers of SoCalGas for what --
23 what you're going to do.

24 SPEAKER JUAREZ: Okay.

25 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay?

1 SPEAKER JUAREZ: Yes, sir.

2 ALJ FERGUSON: He is waiting for you in the
3 back.

4 SPEAKER JUAREZ: I will just take his card.

5 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you.

6 All right. Next is Erika Gutierrez.

7 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GUTIERREZ

8 My name is Erika Gutierrez, and I am here for
9 today's meeting because it is important for me and my --

10 ALJ FERGUSON: Wait a minute.

11 SPEAKER GUTIERREZ: -- and my family. Oh,
12 sorry.

13 ALJ FERGUSON: I'm going to ask you, can you
14 spell your name?

15 SPEAKER GUTIERREZ: Sorry, I forgot about that.

16 My name is spelled E-r-i-k-a, G-u-t-i-e, double r-e-z.

17 I have already introduced myself, and I -- as I
18 said, this is really important for me and my family.

19 I have been a resident of Orange Cove all of my
20 life, and I have many concerns regarding the hydrogen
21 project that is expected to take place here in my
22 hometown.

23 What worries me and scares me is the location
24 that has been chosen for this project, which is near
25 multiple school sites. There are three local schools

1 that surround the chosen location for this project. Who
2 is going to guarantee that this new project is safe for
3 our children and is going to be if the -- if the schools
4 are this close to the project.

5 Another concern is an explosion. All homes in
6 Orange Cove are too old to be placed as an experiment
7 compared to the home where the hydrogen pilot was tested
8 in a town named Downey.

9 I did -- I did ask about the gas, and how --
10 how they did that project. It was new. It's not old
11 like these homes, as I mentioned. And -- and all this
12 gas in the gas system, all this is new. It will -- it
13 would be new for the city. It's not updated, I believe,
14 because it's going to be new, and the system is going to
15 be compared to the old pipe system, which is -- which
16 has been installed in Orange Cove in 1945, historically.

17 The gas company will only do maintenance for a
18 couple of years. That is what I heard, and I don't
19 think U.S. residents will be able to afford -- continue
20 to maintain this type of gas after the gas company only
21 gave us two years of guaranteeing maintaining service.

22 So, if there is damage in our home regarding
23 the hydrogen projects, the Southern California Gas
24 Company is not going to pay for repairs.

25 We have the option not to have gas service, but

1 then our electricity service would go up significantly
2 as well on having to replace old gas devices with
3 electrical devices, and that is just another experience
4 on top of everything else.

5 We are a poor town that relies on cheaper
6 options like gas to maintain the livelihood. We can't
7 afford to pay out-of-pocket for repairs that are out of
8 our control if they're damaged by the hydrogen project.

9 In my opinion, it is questionable why the
10 SoCalGas company did not inform the residents about the
11 project. The only time they were present in there were
12 in -- in city events and giving candy to children on
13 Halloween event and that is showing that children --
14 I -- yes, I was not there, but I -- I have been with my
15 friends, and they all tell me, "Oh, we got this from
16 SoCalGas gas." Why are they doing that? To convince us
17 residents that they are here for us, which, I believe,
18 they're just testing us -- testing this project; and
19 it's going to be risky for us residents.

20 Thank you.

21 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. I am going to suggest
22 that you also speak to SoCalGas.

23 SPEAKER GUTIERREZ: Okay.

24 ALJ FERGUSON: I don't know what their plan is
25 in terms of how they're going to fix people's

1 appliances. Maybe before they start putting hydrogen in
2 -- in and blending in the natural gas, whether they plan
3 to do that or whether they are going to wait and see
4 what happens.

5 But they do tell us that they have plans for
6 this kind of an issue, and what you need to do is -- at
7 least initially, get some sense of what their plan is.
8 I don't have it. I don't want to speak on behalf of
9 them.

10 SPEAKER GUTIERREZ: Another thing, how about if
11 there is a fire? How are the children going to escape
12 from the school sites if they are not prepared for this?
13 This is new for all of us in this --

14 ALJ FERGUSON: Right.

15 SPEAKER GUTIERREZ: -- city. So, there has to
16 be a plan for sure.

17 ALJ FERGUSON: Well, you -- you have to find --
18 you have to sit down and talk with -- because this --
19 you know, this is an early stage of this whole process,
20 and I don't have any information from them that I can
21 rely onto relay to you. But it -- if you sit down with
22 them and talk to them, they may well be able to explain
23 exactly what they are going to do --

24 SPEAKER GUTIERREZ: Okay.

25 ALJ FERGUSON: -- with a house like yours, with

1 appliances like yours and whether it will cost you any
2 money for them to do what they've planned to do; and
3 if -- if it does cost you money, a rough estimate of
4 what it might -- might cost.

5 All that is kind of information that eventually
6 I will hear. Eventually, there will be a trial, so to
7 speak. We call it an evidentiary hearing at the Public
8 Utilities Commission, but they'll have their lawyers and
9 their witnesses and there were be a lot of other lawyers
10 and other witnesses who are on the opposite side --
11 opposite of SoCalGas, and they will all come and we will
12 have a long trial over issues like this.

13 But I don't have any answers right now at all,
14 either my own or what they are planning on doing, but no
15 doubt, they have plans in mind; and if you --
16 oftentimes, if you just sit down and talk to the right
17 people, you'll get some kind of comfort, but at least
18 you'll know what it is that they're planning on doing,
19 if anything.

20 SPEAKER GUTIERREZ: Thank you. Just my concern
21 is the risk -- the high risk we have here in Orange Cove
22 being chosen, and I disagree with Orange Cove being
23 chosen. I would prefer another county where there's --
24 there's -- you know, just maybe an old house to
25 experiment on before trying it on us.

1 Thank you.

2 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. All right.

3 That takes care of all the people who signed
4 up, so I always offer and encourage the rest of you, who
5 haven't spoken, to come on up. You don't have to have
6 signed up in the -- in the hallway to speak. You can
7 speak right now, if you'd like to.

8 So, let me ask this, does anybody else want to
9 come up here and say anything at all?

10 (No response.)

11 ALJ FERGUSON: No? Everybody bashful? Is that
12 it?

13 (No response.)

14 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. All right. Seeing no
15 hands, then let's go off the record, please, and that
16 will concludes this public participation hearing for
17 this afternoon.

18 (At the hour of 3:43 p.m., this matter having
19 been continued to 6:00 p.m., the Commission
20 then adjourned.)

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1 EVENING SESSION - 6:06 P.M.

2 * * * * *

3 ALJ FERGUSON: It is 6:06 p.m. on
4 August 25, 2025, and we are convened in the community
5 center for the City of Orange Cove for purposes of a
6 public participation hearing in California Public
7 Utilities Commission proceeding A.22-09-006.

8 My name is Charles Ferguson, and I am the
9 assigned administrative law judge for this particular
10 proceeding. You're very lucky, those of you who came
11 this evening, because we have the commissioner,
12 Commissioner Darcie Houck, who is the assigned
13 commissioner. There are only five commissioners at the
14 Public Utilities Commission. Each one of them appointed
15 by the Governor and Commissioner Houck is going to
16 address you as soon as I get finished with these
17 housekeeping details, and we are very fortunate to have
18 her here with us this evening.

19 We are also very lucky to have this many of you
20 come out this evening for this particular meeting.

21 What we want to do is we want to get from you
22 information that we, the decision makers -- myself, the
23 commissioner, her four colleagues on the Commission and
24 any other decision maker who works on the particular
25 proceeding, we want your thoughts and feelings about the

1 particular application that has been filed in this
2 proceeding. And what that is is four gas company --
3 Pacific Gas and Electric Company, SoCalGas, San Diego
4 Gas & Electric and Southwest Gas have filed a joint
5 application in which the four of them have proposed five
6 pilot projects to test how our current transmission and
7 distribution pipes that exist in the State of California
8 can handle a blending mixture of hydrogen and natural
9 gas.

10 If these tests show that we can handle that
11 then we very much at the Commission would like to reduce
12 the greenhouse gases that the state emits by
13 substituting hydrogen for some amount of hy -- of
14 natural gas that you typically and historically have
15 received in your homes and offices.

16 The way we are going to do this is that we will
17 have a presentation initially from the commissioner.
18 She's going to speak to you, and then we will have
19 SoCalGas explain their pilot project to you. It'll be
20 explained in both English and Spanish, and then if there
21 are any representatives of any government agencies or
22 offices, they will have an opportunity to speak to you;
23 and then if there are any parties of -- other parties of
24 this proceeding other than the four applicants, they
25 have the opportunity to speak to you as well, and then

1 the floor will be opened for all of you to give us your
2 thoughts.

3 These thoughts are very valuable to us. We
4 read through all of the transcripts that is going to be
5 made today. We think about what you have to say. It
6 germinates ideas in our brains, and some idea that you
7 may have expressed, or feeling that you may have
8 expressed here in one of these meetings, it may end up
9 being a very important part of the final decision in
10 this -- in this proceeding.

11 So, I want to encourage all of you, whether you
12 signed up already or not, to think about giving us a
13 two-minute version of whatever it is that you feel about
14 or think about this particular proceeding and -- and the
15 project that is being proposed for your city.

16 Okay. And with that, I am going to turn the
17 microphone over to the commissioner to address you, and
18 then we will get going with your presentations.

19 COMMISSIONER HOUCK: Thank you, Judge Ferguson.
20 Thank you, I want to appreciate everyone that has shown
21 up this evening, as Judge Ferguson said, the meeting
22 here is to hear from you, so I am going to keep my
23 comments short because we want to understand how you
24 feel about the project.

25 Any comments or question that you have, as

1 Judge Ferguson indicated, the applicant is here and will
2 provide information about their proposal, and they will
3 also be available in the back for questions.

4 And again, the information you provide today is
5 important to us. We do read the transcripts. We do
6 consider the comments that are made. We ask questions.
7 We may come back to the applicant and other parties in
8 the proceeding with additional questions based on what
9 we hear today; and as economic regulators, we are
10 looking at, you know, how much this project is going to
11 cost, and we also look at wanting to make sure it's a
12 safe project. We don't want to approve anything that
13 isn't safe.

14 So, those things are -- are really primary
15 concerns that -- that we are looking at, and we really
16 appreciate so many folks coming out to participate in
17 tonight's event. This was important.

18 I, unfortunately, was not able to be here for
19 the afternoon's event. There is a transcript. I will
20 be reviewing that here this evening.

21 I am looking forward to hearing from everyone.
22 I want to thank our staff, our Public Advisors Office,
23 who is out front, for coordinating and setting up the
24 meeting today. If you have questions about the
25 proceeding, how to participate, how to file written

1 comments or any procedural matters, they're available to
2 help anyone that wants to provide further participation
3 or input.

4 I want to thank our court reporter Ashleigh
5 Button for being here. Everything that is said this
6 evening is being taken down and transcribed. It will be
7 in a written transcript available to me, to the judge,
8 to those that work in my office, and my active chief of
9 staff, Victor Smith is here today, and he is also taking
10 notes and listening; and the other commissioners that
11 are not assigned to the proceeding but will ultimately
12 be voting on the decision will also have this transcript
13 able to them to review.

14 And so, again, I want to thank everyone for
15 being here this evening. Your comments are very
16 important.

17 And with that, I want to turn it back over to
18 judge Ferguson, so we can get to the main event of
19 tonight, which is to hear from all of you.

20 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you, Commissioner.

21 Before we get started, I want to just point out
22 that you should pick up a copy of our fact sheet for
23 this particular proceeding and this particular pilot
24 project. It's out on the desk out in the lobby, and the
25 important part of it so far as I am concerned is the

1 back, which tells you many alternative ways of
2 communicating with us; and they all are just as good so
3 far as we are concerned.

4 So, if you want -- don't want to speak in
5 public here, you can send a message to us. You can
6 actually write it out and put it in the formal docket
7 sheet of this proceeding, and I will read it and the
8 commissioner will read it and lots of other people will
9 read it, and it will be used. So, if -- if it's not
10 something that you want to do right here live, you have
11 a chance to go home and do it in private on -- on your
12 computer.

13 All right. With that, we are going to start
14 with a presentation from the applicant SoCalGas.

15 Ms. Orozco, is that correct?

16 MS. OROZCO: Yes, that's correct.

17 ALJ FERGUSON: Would you come forward, and
18 let's state your name for the record and spell your --
19 spell it just like the last time; and we will do the
20 same thing. I will give you roughly five, six minutes
21 in English.

22 MS. OROZCO: Good evening. I am Gina Orozco,
23 G-i-n-a, O-r-o-z-c-o.

24 Good evening, my name is Gina Orozco, Vice
25 President of Gas Transmission and Storage Operations. I

1 am here today representing SoCalGas.

2 I would like to start by thanking the Public
3 Utilities Commission and Administrative Law Judge
4 Ferguson and Commissioner Houck for giving us the
5 opportunity to share information with the public about
6 our proposed hydrogen blending demonstration project
7 here in the City of Orange Cove.

8 It is important to emphasize that what we are
9 proposing in Orange Cove is a demonstration project and
10 not an experiment. We know from previous research,
11 including CPUC Commission research and demonstrations
12 done in the U.S., Canada and around the world that small
13 amounts of hydrogen can be safely blended into existing
14 natural gas systems without any impact, and we are just
15 proposing to demonstrate it in everyday life settings.

16 We want to make clear that if customers'
17 appliances here in Orange Cove work with natural gas
18 today, they will continue to work with the small amount
19 of hydrogen that would be blended into the system.

20 From a customers' perspective, there will be no
21 difference in how they cook their food, heat their home
22 and water or dry their clothes.

23 We have been part of the Orange Cove community
24 for over 90 years, and we have employees that live and
25 work here.

1 So, after receiving an invitation from the city
2 officials to consider this area for a hydrogen-related
3 project, we met with public officials and community
4 members and subsequently performed a thorough technical
5 analysis that confirmed Orange Cove was an ideal
6 location for the H blending demonstration.

7 We propose to use electricity from solar panels
8 onsite to generate clean, renewable hydrogen and blend
9 small amounts starting at .01 percent and eventually up
10 to five percent in the existing natural gas system in
11 the city of Orange Cove to fuel homes and businesses as
12 shown on our map.

13 The practice of blending hydrogen with natural
14 gas to fuel homes and businesses is not new. It's been
15 around for decades and has been safe to use other
16 communities in the U.S. and worldwide.

17 For example, on the island of Oahu, Hawaii Gas
18 has been safely using hydrogen in its gas since 1974 to
19 serve homes, restaurants and businesses. Their gas
20 contains up to 15 percent hydrogen, which is three times
21 the maximum amount being proposed for the City of Orange
22 Cove.

23 And the people of Oahu are using the same kind
24 of appliances that are being used every day here in
25 Orange Cove without any special modifications required.

1 Furthermore, there is studies including those
2 published by UC Riverside and the demonstrations
3 projects around the world have shown that blending up to
4 five percent does not impact safety or operations of
5 common appliances.

6 Hydrogen blending has also been safely and
7 reliably used in many communities around the world in
8 counties such as Australia, Singapore, Canada, the
9 United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands. SoCalGas
10 has worked closely with city leaders in the community to
11 share information about the proposed demonstration can
12 and the robust safety measures we would put in place.

13 This engagement includes door-to-door outreach,
14 providing information at community events and briefing
15 stakeholders like the City of Orange Cove, mayor and
16 council, school district, first responders and
17 community-based organizations.

18 The feedback we received during our engagement
19 has been positive. We would encourage everyone here
20 today to visit the booth in back of the auditorium to
21 talk about the project or visit SoCalGas.com/H2blending
22 for more information both in English and Spanish.

23 Some of the safety measures we are proposing
24 include conducting free appliance inspections to confirm
25 home appliances are in safe, working order. Conducting

1 regular leak checks of our system before and throughout
2 the demonstration and making any necessary repairs.
3 Installing remote monitors and automatic shutdowns for
4 leak detection and response and working closely with the
5 local fire department and city staff to develop a rare
6 emergency response plans and hydrogen safety procedures.

7 To address any issues with appliances, we
8 intend to work with the city, school district and
9 community leaders to encourage and support residents to
10 participate in our existing customers assistance and
11 energy efficiency programs prior to the start of the
12 demonstration.

13 Based on the benefits that accrue to all
14 customers, we are requesting the cost of the
15 demonstration be shared by all SoCalGas gas ratepayers
16 across our service territory not just customers in the
17 City of Orange Cove.

18 In doing so, the cost of this demonstration for
19 average residential customers would be about \$0.13 per
20 month in its first year of operation and about \$0.04 per
21 month in the second year.

22 We believe this is an affordable, proven
23 project that will help advance California's hydrogen
24 market and decarbonization efforts.

25 We look forward to continuing to work with the

1 City of Orange Cove and the community on this
2 demonstration for continued engagement and transparency.

3 With me today are members of our project team
4 who are available to answer questions about the project
5 and our outreach efforts.

6 Thank you for your time, and we look forward to
7 advancing together.

8 I will now provide my statement in Spanish.

9 (Speaking in Spanish.)

10 SPEAKER OROZCO: Thank you.

11 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

12 All right. Next, I want to see if there's
13 anybody who is representing a government agency or comes
14 from a government office who came to make a statement.

15 We have two of you. I think we will begin with
16 you. So, please come -- come forward, introduce
17 yourself, spell your name, tell us what agency you're
18 representing and then you can have -- I will give you
19 three minutes to make your statement.

20 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GUERRA

21 Diana, D-i-a-n-a, Guerra G-u-e-r-r-a, Silva
22 S-i-l-v-a, and I have a high honor of being mayor for
23 this city.

24 Good afternoon. Thank you for being -- coming
25 out. I want to welcome you to our community. Thank you

1 for taking time to listen from our hardworking
2 community.

3 Two years ago, we invited Southern California
4 Gas to visit Orange Cove for the opportunity to be
5 selected as one of the five locations for the hydrogen
6 blending demonstration project. Council and I had the
7 opportunity to visit the hydrogen blending home in
8 Downey and got to ask many questions and learn more
9 about the project.

10 Council voted unanimously in support of this
11 project, and we have worked hand-in-hand since then with
12 California gas(sic).

13 In the two years California gas has held
14 informational booths at our community events like the
15 Fourth of July. I -- I saw them. I was at the Fourth
16 of July celebration, Thanksgiving Dinner, Christmas toy
17 giveaway, and they also hosted a community town hall;
18 and they knocked on over 2,000 doors to inform, educate
19 and correct any misinformation that has been spread --
20 that has been spread that hydrogen is poisonous.

21 This has been a partnership. We continue to
22 support this project and look forward to your approval.

23 And furthermore, I would like to just make a
24 statement on how this can improve our students in
25 regards to being informed about this project, and I see

1 it as a very positive. I was a school educator for 38
2 years, and I am 110 percent behind this project because
3 that's -- because it'll give the students at the high
4 school the opportunity to see hand in hand, you know,
5 what Southern California Gas has to offer.

6 Also, I see this as an opportunity for also
7 them to be become -- become partnership with California
8 gas and, hopefully, to become part of their team and the
9 other energy providers that are out there being in
10 whatever -- whatever -- whatever -- I am sorry -- in
11 whatever decision that they have about the further --
12 furthering of their education.

13 I hope this brings a lot of promise to those
14 students. I love my community. I love my students.
15 They are bright and our school -- high school is one of
16 the most efficiently performing high schools in
17 California. And this is Orange Cove. It's a small
18 community, hard-working community. It is an immigrant
19 community, and I would like to say, once again, I know
20 this is going to make a difference in their educational
21 studies.

22 Furthermore, I know that this is going to
23 provide a lot of benefit for our business community. I
24 know that in Downey that they have up to 3,000 visitors
25 a day, and I know that they can contribute to their

1 business community; and I also hope to see that here in
2 Orange Cove.

3 We need a stronger tax base, and I really
4 believe that this is going to be helping us. I know
5 it's an 18-month project, but I hope that this makes a
6 difference. And I thank you and welcome you to Orange
7 Cove.

8 Now, I am going to do it in Spanish.

9 (Speaking in Spanish.)

10 SPEAKER GUERRA SILVA: I would also like to
11 state that SoCalGas -- if you have any questions in
12 regards to the process that they -- that they have
13 information back there that is free, and I thank
14 Southern California Gas for giving me -- us -- for
15 bringing this -- this project to this City of Orange
16 Cove that they want to bring. It's not brought yet, but
17 they want to bring.

18 And I thank you and welcome you to Orange Cove.

19 ALJ FERGUSON: Madam Mayor, thank you for
20 taking time out of your busy schedule to come here this
21 evening. We certainly appreciate it at the Commission.

22 Thank you very much for that.

23 I think there's another government agency that
24 is going to be represented or office. State your name,
25 spell your name and then tell us what agency or -- or

1 office you're representing.

2 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER SANTOS

3 Good evening, everyone. David Santos,
4 D-a-v-i-d, S-a-n-t-o-s with Senator Anna Caballero's
5 Office. A- double n-a, C-a-b-a-l-l-e-r-o. Senator out
6 of District 14.

7 The proposed hydrogen blending project that is
8 being discussed today has the potential to support
9 California's statewide efforts for hydrogen mitigation
10 and improve air quality goals.

11 In addition to this, the project will also
12 bring a myriad of benefits to the residents of Orange
13 Cove communities in Senate District 14.

14 The project will provide practical insights for
15 the delivery of green hydrogen and natural gas, and in
16 doing so, help inform the future development of hydrogen
17 blending to ensure California reaches its green energy
18 target goals by the established timeline.

19 The safety, reliability and affordability of
20 the project have been emphasized in previous
21 participation efforts hosted by the City of Orange Cove
22 and SoCalGas.

23 Today's public participation hearing is timely
24 as there have been some misinformation efforts -- or
25 some misinformation regarding the proposed project

1 regarding its impact and benefits.

2 Hydrogen blending is no less dangerous than
3 other flammable fuels and can provide safety benefits
4 when compared to other fuels like gasoline. Orange Cove
5 will stand as a hub of innovation and an example of
6 future development and implementation of hydrogen
7 blending.

8 My office is at your avail for any necessary
9 support during the hydrogen blending demonstration
10 project in the City of Orange Cove.

11 Please utilize us as a resource. I do look
12 forward to working with Mayor Silva, City Council and
13 SoCalGas to ensure a seamless process.

14 Thank you for your time, and I hope you enjoy
15 the rest of your day.

16 Thank you.

17 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. We appreciate you
18 coming this evening as well.

19 All right. One last time, are there any other
20 government offices or agencies that are -- okay.

21 Please come forward and tell us your name,
22 spell -- spell your name for the record and tell us what
23 agency.

24 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER DEL BOSQUE

25 My name is Jacob Del Bosque, Jacob is J-a-c-o-b

1 D-e-l space B-o-s-q-u-e.

2 I'm a city council member here, lifetime
3 resident of Orange Cove. I just wanted to give my say
4 so here as well. I wrote down a little speech. I'm not
5 very good at it, so I'm going to speak from my heart a
6 little bit.

7 Yeah, when I was newly elected, I had a bunch
8 of -- you know, I was bombarded by questions actually on
9 this project. I had no idea what it was about, so we
10 kind of dug in. You know, we dug in, did some research
11 and some stuff, you know, talked to SoCalGas and other
12 people. Talked with the fire department chief, kind of
13 just went through it all and found out -- like, there's
14 a lot of positives to this stuff, you know?

15 So safety, right? Like, our community is the
16 most important thing to me. Everybody that knows me
17 understands how much I care about the city, this
18 community, my people -- all my family's here, so, like,
19 if it wasn't safe, I -- I don't think I would have tried
20 to support this at all, but I did enough research to
21 say, hey, we are going to be okay with this project, you
22 know.

23 Forgive me, I am a little nervous up here. I'm
24 not a public speaker and stuff. Yeah, I mean, you know,
25 we did our due diligence, you know. It's -- it's about

1 being better, about being, you know, like -- you know,
2 if you can partner, like -- like, clean -- clean energy,
3 like, using technology that, you know, is new to us and
4 we just kind of move forward and stuff and, you know,
5 I -- I just wanted to say that, you know.

6 Thank you, guys, for lettings the public speak
7 and thank you guys for letting us speak, and -- but of
8 all the research that I have done, I am just really,
9 like, supportive of this project.

10 That's -- that's all I got to say.

11 Thank you.

12 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

13 All right. Any -- last time. Any other
14 government agencies or offices that are being
15 represented here today?

16 All right. Next are parties to the proceeding.
17 How many representatives of parties to the proceeding
18 itself? All right. We got one, two. Let's start up
19 here, closest to the podium.

20 Same thing, please state your name and the
21 party that you're representing.

22 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ZWEIFLER-KATZ

23 Thank you -- thank you so much.

24 My name is Jamie Kat -- Zweifler-Katz.

25 J-a-m-i-e, Z-w-e-i-f-l-e-r dash K-a-t-z.

1 I'm an attorney with the Leadership Counsel for
2 Justice and Accountability. We represent Orange Cove
3 United, a group of Orange Cove residents whose purpose
4 is to advocate for the overall health and wellbeing of
5 their community including energy policy and programs and
6 investments that protect public health, help prevent
7 climate change and reduce the risk of harm to residents.

8 SoCalGas is proposing to install equipment to
9 make and store hydrogen at their corner of South and
10 Jacobs across the street from homes and within eyesight
11 of the elementary school and the high school football
12 field. That hydrogen would be blended into gas
13 pipelines throughout the city and burn in every gas
14 appliance in the city.

15 We have worked with residents to better
16 understand the proposed project. Through that process,
17 residents have raised concern about the project. The
18 main concerns fall into three categories: Informed
19 consent, indoor air pollution and the appropriateness of
20 existing residential appliances.

21 First in regard to the informed consent.
22 Residents and businesses would not be able to opt out
23 unless they remove all of their gas appliances. The
24 residents we work with and represent have told us they
25 do not want hydrogen in their homes, but there is no

affordable pathway to opt out by removing all these
appliances.

11 The second concern that residents have shared
12 with us is in regard to indoor air pollution,
13 specifically NOx.

14 Analysis conducted by Professor Alastair Lewis
15 suggests that blending hydrogen into residential gas has
16 the potential to double indoor NOx in older homes and
17 their appliances. NOx is a dangerous indoor air
18 contaminant that can cause asthma, can aggravate
19 existing cases of asthma, and can contribute to a
20 variety of health impacts.

21 The third concern that residents have raised is
22 that their appliances are older and not designed to burn
23 hydrogen, and this can cause leaks and other damage to
24 their appliances.

25 SoCalGas is not offering a new program to

1 replace or repair appliances either at the outset of the
2 pilot or throughout the pilot if they were damaged.
3 What they offer only applies in limited circumstances.

4 Orange Cove is a severely disadvantaged
5 community and residents can't afford to replace these
6 appliances or fix them if they are damaged.

7 As the Commission considers whether to
8 authorize this pilot, we ask that commissioners and
9 staff to keep these concerns in mind even as it
10 considers whether this is a cost-effective use of
11 ratepayer dollars.

12 Studies indicate that California does not need
13 hydrogen blending to achieve its climate goals, and that
14 other technologies and investments are both more
15 effective at achieving those goals and expose the public
16 to fewer risks.

17 For these reasons, we expect the Commission to
18 hear significant concerns from Orange Cove residents at
19 tonight's hearing.

20 This project is not a done deal. We urge the
21 Commission not to approve this pilot, a dangerous
22 experiment lacking community support.

23 Thank you.

24 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you.

25 Counsel, I just want to point out, if you refer

1 to any kind of scientific studies, I encourage you to
2 think about how you're going to get it into evidence at
3 some point in time if you're going to be an active
4 party.

5 All right. Are there other parties --
6 representatives here? I think there's one more, wasn't
7 there? No? Nobody else representing a party?

8 (No response.)

9 ALJ FERGUSON: I see no hands. Okay.

10 So, what we are going to do is start off -- I
11 will call two names at a time so that you know that the
12 second name will now that they're -- they have to get
13 ready to come up to the podium.

14 We are going to start with Diana Guerra Silva.

15 SPEAKER GUERRA SILVA: No, I already spoke.

16 ALJ FERGUSON: Oh, you already spoke, I'm
17 sorry. David Santos.

18 SPEAKER SANTOS: I already spoke.

19 ALJ FERGUSON: He already spoke, I'm sorry.
20 I'm batting a thousand here.

21 Clint Olivier. Go ahead and spell your name
22 and --

23 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER OLIVIER

24 It's C-l-i-n-t, O-l-i-v-i-e-r.

25 ALJ FERGUSON: And you are representing an

1 organization or you're a resident?

2 SPEAKER OLIVIER: The Business Federation of
3 the Central Valley. Thank you.

4 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay.

5 SPEAKER OLIVIER: All right. Thank you, Judge.
6 Thank you, Commissioner, for coming to Orange Cove and
7 the Central Valley and bringing your staff. My name is
8 Clint Olivier. I am here on behalf of the Central
9 Valley Business Federation or BizFed, for short.

10 We're a grassroots alliance of more than 75
11 organizations based here in the Central Valley
12 representing 30,000 employers, 400,000 employees and
13 their families in Fresno County and across the Central
14 Valley including many right here in Fresno County.

15 Our mission is simple, but powerful. To unite
16 the voice of business, drive smart innovation and make
17 sure our region thrives economically while we pursue
18 California's ambitious climate goals.

19 That's why this project is so important to our
20 members, our board of directors. The Orange Cove
21 hydrogen blending demonstration isn't just another pilot
22 program, it's a safe, responsible and vital step forward
23 in proving that clean hydrogen can be seamlessly
24 integrated into our existing energy systems. This is
25 innovation in action.

1 This project puts safety first. Hydrogen
2 blending has already been studied and tested
3 extensively, and this demonstration will take place
4 under very rigorous oversight with constant monitoring
5 to ensure that families and businesses alike are never
6 at risk.

7 Nothing moves forward unless safety can be
8 guaranteed. It protects jobs and investments by using
9 existing pipelines, existing infrastructure and
10 workforce instead of forcing costly new systems.

11 It delivers proof of concept that families and
12 businesses can keep using their appliances without
13 having to do an expensive retrofit. No disruption, just
14 progress.

15 It drives a new economic opportunity by
16 signaling to clean tech companies and investors that the
17 Central Valley, an area with areas of high concentrated
18 poverty, is open for innovation, open for workforce
19 development and ready to lead.

20 It directly aligns with California's 2020 --
21 excuse me -- 2045 net-zero goals but does so the right
22 way through voluntary market-based partnerships rather
23 than heavy-handed mandates from Sacramento.

24 Let's be clear. The business community needs
25 projects like this in a place like this. We need to

1 show that California and the Central Valley can reduce
2 emissions and grow our economies at the same time; and
3 we can only do that if people trust. After serious
4 investigation, they will learn that the technology is
5 safe, reliable and affordable.

6 Orange Cove, this project will prove exactly
7 that. BizFed's members strongly urge you to approve
8 this demonstration and approve it for the families who
9 will benefit, for the businesses that will glow, and for
10 the future of California and the Central Valley's clean
11 energy economy.

12 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

13 All right. Next we have Javier Pacheco. If I
14 understand correctly, you want to do this in both
15 English and Spanish?

16 SPEAKER PACHECO: Yes, your Honor.

17 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay let's start with English.

18 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PACHECO

19 I am Javier Pacheco, J-a-v-i-e-r; last name
20 Pacheco, P-a-c-h-e-c-o, and I am the Senior Business
21 Development Manager from Nortiz America, which I am
22 representing.

23 Noritz America, which has been manufacturing
24 tankless water heaters for over 70 years out of Kobe,
25 Japan, it's -- it's focused on manufacturing the most

1 advanced water heater technology in the world but,
2 especially, in the U.S.

3 Our number one focus is and will always be
4 safety. We pride ourselves in having the most efficient
5 and sustainable water heater while having the highest
6 warranty in the industry.

7 We are happy to share with the Orange Cove
8 community that our technology is compatible with up to
9 25 percent hydrogen blends, which is certified by UL.

10 We manufacture both residential and commercial
11 tankless water heaters and offer more de -- and we also
12 offer more details in our literature, in fact, that we
13 are offering in both English and Spanish.

14 (Speaking in Spanish.)

15 SPEAKER PACHECO: Thank you.

16 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

17 All right. Next we have Miguel Ruelas. And
18 Corinne Gibson should get ready, she's next.

19 Mr. Ruelas, same thing, tell us your name, and
20 spell it for the record.

21 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER RUELAS

22 Good evening, my name is Miguel Ruelas spelled
23 M-i-g-u-e-l R-u-e-l-a-s.

24 So I, represent H2B2. H2B2 is a renewable
25 hydrogen producer. We have an active hydrogen

1 production plant, through electrolysis, here in the
2 Fresno count -- in the County of Fresno. This is the
3 first of its kind. The first true renewable hydrogen
4 production facility in California, and still to this
5 day, the greenest or low carbon intensity score hydrogen
6 produced in California; and venture to say, in the
7 United States.

8 I want to talk a little bit more about hydrogen
9 production, its safety and the different parts -- or
10 different applications in the market.

11 Hydrogen production, through electrolysis,
12 which is similar to what SoCalGas is promoting -- or
13 going to do in this project. It's renewable hydrogen.
14 So, it's a separation of water molecules, capturing
15 hydrogen, and either releasing clean oxygen into the
16 atmosphere or capturing it. I'm not sure how they're
17 going to do it, but there's typically two applications
18 you can use.

19 There's a lot of different safety measures that
20 are required for this. You have to get this approved by
21 the fire marshals, which we have done so. We've
22 understood that process, and the same application
23 applies to anybody that's looking to produce.

24 Hydrogen production is not new. Hydrogen
25 through electrolysis is not new. It's just a matter of

1 doing it, and we want renewable hydrogen as opposed to
2 different, I guess, colors you can call it, which is
3 gray, or steam methane reforming, which is carbon
4 captured hydrogen production.

5 So, this is the relatively new. It's new to
6 the community. It's starting to become a bigger
7 buzzword hydrogen, because of this application and the
8 way it's being used; and that kind of leads me to the
9 different sectors, right? We have this application,
10 which is hydrogen blended pipelines. We are currently
11 using it for mobility.

12 So, different cities, you know, the City of
13 Fresno and different counties, like, Santa Cruz, San
14 Mateo, they've all purchased and made forward efforts
15 toward hydrogen substance for mobility, right? So,
16 these are all different sectors that are moving forward,
17 right, and this project is going to be helping push that
18 renewable energy, that renewable hydrogen and that
19 renewable fuel forward.

20 And what that means for us in the Central
21 Valley is we don't get left behind as we've often done
22 traditionally in California. As new technologies arise,
23 Central Valley is always last. It's always the Bay
24 Area, Southern California, which is LA, San Diego, and
25 then the Central Valley comes last.

1 This is our opportunity to not -- not just grow
2 but lead and begin that (indecipherable).

3 I guess, I will leave it off with that. Thank
4 you for your time. If anybody has further questions,
5 let me know.

6 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

7 Okay. I see that I spoke too soon. Ms. Gibson
8 is not going to speak not but Corina Loera. Are you
9 here? Okay. And next is going to be Alexi Roldan.

10 Can you spell your name for the record, please?

11 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER LOERA

12 Hi, good evening. My name is Carina Loera,
13 C-a-r-i-n-a, L-o-e-r-a.

14 ALJ FERGUSON: Are you a citizen of Orange --

15 SPEAKER LOERA: Yes, I am speaking as a citizen
16 of Orange Cove.

17 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay.

18 SPEAKER LOERA: So, I was born and raised in
19 the City of Orange Cove. My entire family resides in
20 this community, and I am fortunate enough to still call
21 Orange Cove my hometown and place of residence.

22 I am here as a resident of Orange Cove, but
23 SoCalGas has been my place of employment for the past
24 13 years.

25 My current role is team lead for the customer

1 service field department. In the company, our core
2 value is safety. One of the main duties in my
3 department is when residents report a gas odor, my team
4 responds, investigates, identifies the issue and
5 addresses the customer's concerns.

6 My previous and current roles have given me a
7 firsthand understanding of how critical safety is for
8 the public, customers, employees -- basically everyone.

9 Although, my opinion may seem biased because of
10 my position at SoCalGas, I view my experience as an
11 employee and as a resident of Orange Cove as an asset
12 and proof of my confidence in the benefits of this
13 project.

14 I am first and foremost here to support the
15 proposed hydrogen demonstration project as a resident of
16 Orange Cove and homeowner who feels pride and hope for a
17 better future for my family and my community.

18 Thank you.

19 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you.

20 All right. Next, we have Alexi Roldan.

21 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ROLDAN

22 Hi, my name is Alexi Roldan. It's spelled
23 A-l-e-x-i, R-o-l-d-a-n. I am a citizen of Orange Cove.
24 I have lived here my whole life, 27 years.

25 When I first heard that SoCalGas was doing a

1 hydrogen blend in Orange Cove, I looked it up expecting
2 positive feedback but quickly realized how dangerous and
3 harmful this project can be.

4 I was left confused on how they decided to use
5 Orange Cove for this project. We have old homes,
6 outdated pipelines and water heaters. Not strategic for
7 a project like this.

8

9 But we were also not their first choice. They
10 went to major cities in California, universities that
11 also denied this project.

12 A good example is the City of Los Angeles and
13 the University of Irvine. They have more tech and more
14 experienced personnel to study and analyze projects like
15 this before making their decisions.

16 These universities and major cities realized
17 how dangerous this project can be and harmful to the
18 community, so they shut down the project.

19 So, what did they do next? They came to Orange
20 Cove, the lowest ranked city in California. Home of the
21 smallest community feedback. It's starting to look to
22 me -- to seem to me that this is just for the benefit on
23 the PPM portion of this project with the previous
24 attempts in the larger city being canceled.

25 The Orange Cove community is full of workers

1 who cannot make time for city meetings sadly. This
2 meeting was also scheduled at a school pick-up time,
3 which makes it more inconvenient for the community to
4 attend.

5 It also seems to me like they are voicing their
6 project through companies that don't play a role here in
7 Orange Cove. Also, there are lots of danger and
8 negatives that come with this project. I am not hearing
9 us talk about this in the meeting.

10 I have seen multiple speakers here earlier
11 today, explaining why it's convenient and beneficial for
12 their businesses that are not even located in Orange
13 Cove.

14 This is a public participation meeting, but we
15 should also see it as a community meeting where the
16 community decides together. We as a community should
17 make these decisions on gas in our city. It plays a
18 huge role on the safety, health and finances.

19 These major cities with more tech and more
20 experience at universities had personnel analyze it and
21 they -- and decided no on hydrogen blending, so why
22 should we?

23 Thank you.

24 ALJ FERGUSON: Next, we have Jimmy Antuna and
25 Jerry Buckley. Get ready the Mr. Buckley.

1 Mr. Antuna.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ANTUNA

3 Name, Jimmy Antuna, spelled J-i-m-m-y. Last
4 name A-n-t-u-n-a, and I am a resident here in Orange
5 Cove.

6 I have a lot of concerns. I really don't know
7 a lot about this blending, but I am noticing that you
8 have a lot of different companies here that are pretty
9 interested. Is it monetary that they are interested in?

10 As a resident, I am more worried about our
11 safety, our health and hopefully these gentlemen back
12 here can explain it better to me.

13 I read that some of the risks would be -- if
14 there was a leak, of course, lung damage, being if it
15 leaked in the homes.

16 I also read that hydrogen leaks easily into the
17 atmosphere, and that it is more explosive than natural
18 gas when it is exposed to the air.

19 Here we are a small economically distressed
20 town. They want us to project as a test that it is safe
21 and effective to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions yet
22 Colorado and Oregon rejected this hydrogen blending
23 efforts.

24 Going back to us being a small town. We are
25 low income. This is a project that is going to increase

1 our bills. I understand that the council and the
2 government here want this. One of the benefits would be
3 them to get the solar panels and retain it afterwards
4 for the town. I understand that is a great thing but,
5 again, my concern goes back to the safety of the public
6 and to understand more about this.

7 I read that researchers from the Argentina
8 National Atomic Energy said that high pressure has
9 something to do with dissolving steel. Again, I don't
10 know, does it? Does it not? But these are my concerns.

11 I read that a spons -- a paper sponsored by the
12 tank -- the Think Tank Energy Innovation said that
13 researchers said blending hydrogen into gas lines has a
14 marginal climate benefit while introducing, again, high
15 risk at the same time.

16 I have also read a lot of money was awarded to
17 PG&E for this project. I read that Cooper, a climate
18 activist, called the monetary awards pre-lobbying. Kind
19 of like I what I just saw earlier. People talking
20 positively for it that have to do with companies.

21 My last comment is what -- what guarantee we,
22 the citizens, of Orange Cove have if there's damages to
23 our pipes, to our appliances or to our health? What
24 will PG&E do for us?

25 Thank you.

1 ALJ FERGUSON: Mr. Buckley.

2 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BUCKLEY

3 Good evening. Thank you for hosting these
4 hearings. I think hearing the public speak on an issue
5 they support is always a great thing to see because it's
6 democracy in action.

7 I had the honor of being the 20th President of
8 Reedley College. I served not only Orange Cove, I
9 served Parlier and a number of other local communities
10 here in the Central Valley.

11 I am here to speak in favor of this project
12 because, according to the research that I have
13 conducted, in terms of personal readings and
14 conversations, I believe we have already heard this
15 evening that blending hydrogen and natural gas is not
16 new. It's certainly been in use since the 1970s in
17 Hawaii. It's in use all around the world.

18 The point is, the body of data shows there's
19 really not a great risk but rather what I would like to
20 point out is this is meant to add to the body of
21 information that has been collected and, basically,
22 prove that we can make further gains in producing
23 hydrogen, developing transmission lines, storage
24 facilities and helping move away from petrol chemicals,
25 which we know affect our climate.

1 If anybody has gone to the altitude here in the
2 Sierras over the past 20 years, you can see that the
3 greatest effect of climate change is at approximately
4 15- to 17,000 feet. The warming is evident there.

5 So, my point as a recreational enthusiast as
6 well as a resident of the Central Valley, I think this
7 is an important project to continue to add to the
8 scientific data, to prove this is possible with no risk
9 to the population.

10 Our college, on the other hand, is all about
11 education, economic development and making certain that
12 our programs are current with the needs of the valley
13 and the citizens and those businesses that basically
14 employ those citizens.

15 So, I would simply like to point out that
16 Reedley College, as an institute of higher education, is
17 interested in wherever this goes because we certainly
18 see the benefits of developing new pipe welding
19 techniques, developing the support technologies that go
20 along with this project that help make this a longer
21 term success for this valley economically.

22 Thank you.

23 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. Our next speaker is
24 Alma Figueroa and after she speaks Gloria Mejorado will
25 be next.

1 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER FIGUEROA

2 Good afternoon, my name is Alma Figueroa,
3 A-l-m-a, F-i-g-u-e-r-o-a, resident of Orange Cove. I
4 want to thank Judge Ferguson for the opportunity to
5 speak again.

6 I want to emphasize that I oppose the hydrogen
7 blending experiment. Orange Cove residents should not
8 be used as Guinea pigs to fill the pockets of
9 corporations. That experiment is dangerous, immoral,
10 and frankly, it's criminal.

11 Orange Cove historically has been a passive
12 farm-working community with little to no education and
13 that's why I feel we were targeted. No one thought we
14 would push back.

15 Try this in affluent places like Malibu,
16 Silicon Valley or even Sacramento. The experiment would
17 fail before it begins. Go back to how the project
18 started. It was initiated by the former, maligned city,
19 manager Daniel Parra. He doesn't even live in Orange
20 Cove, but the issue is for another day. I voice my
21 concern to him and he dismissally(sic) responded, "It's
22 a done deal."

23 I know now that he was simply trying to bully
24 me because what he said, obviously, it was a lie. I
25 also asked Mr. Parra if the experiment was such a good

1 idea, why not do it in Fowler where he actually lived
2 and was Mayor? He replied, "They refused Fowler and
3 Sacramento selected us. Orange Cove will be placed on
4 the map. It will be recognized."

5 Well, I do want Orange Cove to be recognized
6 but not as a statistic.

7 Let's review the cons. We will have health
8 problems, financial catastrophe for the residents and a
9 financial disaster to the city.

10 In conclusion, as you can see, the people of
11 Orange Cove do not want to be guinea pigs. We cannot
12 afford this as residents, we cannot afford this as a
13 city, and most importantly, we do not want our safety
14 compromised.

15 Again, I hope the city and the Public Utility
16 Commission of the State of California reconsiders their
17 stance and instead do what's fiscally smart, safe and
18 what's moral.

19 Thank you for your time.

20 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. Thank you very much. I
21 just want to make one thing clear: The Commission
22 itself has taken no position as yet. It takes a long
23 time for us to actually get all the evidence gathered
24 together and make our decision, so I want you to
25 understand that even though you are picking up fact

1 sheets from us, the fact sheets represent our
2 understanding of what SoCalGas wants to do here. That's
3 all. It's not a ruling. It's not a decision. This is
4 just a sheet that represents what we understand SoCalGas
5 is proposing.

6 So, we've got a long way to go. Hopefully, you
7 follow the proceeding through the rest of this year and
8 into next year, and then you'll -- you'll see our final
9 position sometime early next year hopefully.

10 All right. Next, we have -- I think it's Nancy
11 Villegas; is that right?

12 SPEAKER MEJORADO: Gloria.

13 ALJ FERGUSON: Oh, I'm sorry, I skipped over
14 Gloria Mejorado, and then Nancy Villegas would be next.

15 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MEJORADO

16 Good evening. My name is Gloria Mejorado,
17 M-e-j-o-r-a-d-o.

18 I am a long-time resident of Orange Cove, 50
19 plus years. One thing I noticed about my community is
20 that they don't like changes. So, this project scares
21 them. I myself was not sure about this project, but
22 after researching and asking others what they thought
23 hydrogen blending, four thought it was a good idea, one
24 person said they would like more information. After
25 talking to them, they explained to me that the busses in

1 Fresno, some ran off of hydrogen gas already. Some
2 Walmart distribution centers also used the hydrogen
3 blending gas.

4 To the residents that attended tonight's
5 meeting, now is your time to speak your opinion, and
6 whatever conclusion is made tonight and if it brings
7 positivity to our community, let's give it a chance.
8 That's just my opinion.

9 We have population of about almost 10,000. I
10 look at the crowd, and there's only, like, about 50, 75
11 people, so if the community really wanted to speak on
12 this, they should have showed up tonight.

13 Thank you.

14 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. Next we have Nancy
15 Villegas.

16 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER VILLEGRAS

17 My name is Nancy Villegas, N-a-n-c-y,
18 V-i-l-l-e-g-a-s. I have lived in Orange Cove for
19 43 years and raised seven kids here.

20 I am here today, because I care deeply about
21 the safety of my family, my neighbors and especially our
22 children in schools.

23 While I understand the need to explore clean
24 energy solutions, I have serious concerns about using
25 Orange Cove as a test site for hydrogen blending.

1 Our community was not asked their consent
2 before this project got proposed and many of us feel
3 like we are being treated as an experiment.

4 Hydrogen is not the same as natural gas. It
5 leaks more easily, it burn differently, and most of the
6 appliances in our homes, schools and businesses were
7 never designed to use it. Even if the blend is only
8 five percent, the risks are real, especially for
9 multiple families and children.

10 I also question the fairness of spending nearly
11 50 million on the project for very small carbon
12 reduction when that money can help Orange Cove directly
13 with safer and more effective solutions like home
14 weatherization, solar or electrical appliances that
15 lower bills and reduce emissions.

16 I ask the CPUC to put community safety and
17 quality first. Please do not approve this project
18 without full transparency, true community consent and
19 clear proof that our families and children will not face
20 these risks.

21 Thank you for listening and thank you for i
22 giving the people of Orange Cove a voice in this
23 decision.

24 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much. Next we
25 have Elida Juarez, and she will be followed by Frank

1 Martinez.

2 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER JUAREZ

3 Good evening. My name is Elida Juarez,
4 E-l-i-d-a J-u-a-r-e-z. I am an Orange Cove resident,
5 and I am here to say after hearing what everyone has to
6 say today, why are the majority are not from Orange
7 Cove? I feel like our businesses are really not from
8 Orange Cove.

9 Another thing, there's not been information
10 provided by both SoCal -- SoCalGas and especially not
11 from the City of Orange Cove. Even though they say that
12 they have signatures, they are not enough. We were not
13 present when there were signatures, and we were not told
14 when they were having all these meetings two years ago.

15 (Speaking in Spanish)

16 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. Next is Frank
17 Martinez.

18 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MARTINEZ

19 Yeah, my name is Frank, F-r-a-n-k. Martinez,
20 M-a-r-t-i-n-e-z.

21 I am the former vice mayor for the City of
22 Orange Cove for 27 years, and I am here to state that I
23 am against this project.

24 One is cause when I was in the council, our
25 priority was to bring housing, this center right here,

1 high school, and -- and anything that is beautification
2 in Orange Cove, so that we can attract businesses.

3 We were not a pilot community. We were a
4 community that wanted to thrive and build ourselves into
5 a beautiful community. City council should be focusing
6 in those areas and not be a pilot community.

7 Out of the 482 cities in California, we're the
8 number two, Irvine and Orange Cove, as pilots. Why? I
9 don't know.

10 Other cities where -- where the manager --
11 previous manager was from never took it to Fowler.
12 Fresno, big cities.

13 Downey is -- they have one house over there,
14 one house, and -- and they're doing a pilot. One house.
15 Why are they doing it in Orange Cove? Why involve the
16 whole City of Orange Cove?

17 The downfall of this hydrogen is that it will
18 deteriorate your appliances, and if anybody wants to
19 look at Google, look it up, your appliances, which is
20 your air conditioner, water heater, stove -- anything
21 that uses natural gas will be deteriorated in time.

22 So, we have to learn to see those things and
23 study. We are a low-income community. We cannot afford
24 appliances, not after five, seven years from now. I
25 hope the city council now, once they approve this

1 project, they can commit to our citizens of Orange Cove
2 that they will pay for the appliances if they go bad
3 after so many years, and is that is what I am here for
4 against it; and I believe the city council should be
5 focusing on beautification of businesses for Orange Cove
6 and not a pilot project.

7 Thank you.

8 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you, Mr. Martinez.

9 Okay, next we have William Gilbertson, and he
10 will be followed by Ava Martinez.

11 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GILBERTSON

12 Hello, I am the William Gilbertson,
13 W-i-l-l-i-a-m. Last name Gilbertson,
14 G-i-l-b-e-r-t-s-o-n.

15 I am a Utility Worker Union of America
16 president speaking supporting this pilot. Primarily
17 represent 3,200 plus workers that work at SoCalGas. I
18 myself have worked at SoCalGas for 14 years. 10 years
19 of it was at the site basin, which served Orange Cove.
20 I did eight years of customers service work, which
21 started from reading, inspecting and installing meters
22 as well as servicing and repairing appliances.
23 Eventually I moved onto the gas distribution side into
24 the gas distribution side, and I have been there for six
25 years.

1 I worked my way up to being crew leader and
2 foreman. I have done surveying for leaks, making
3 repairs underground and aboveground. I also install new
4 lines.

5 My members are highly trained and maintain many
6 certifications as they relate to safety and service, and
7 we are recognized nationwide for our -- our training.

8 Public safety is our number one priority for
9 all our members and the public, and it also a condition
10 of employment for SoCalGas.

11 Thank you.

12 ALJ FERGUSON: thank you very much. Next is
13 Ava Martinez.

14 (Reporter clarification.)

15 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. Wait just a minute before
16 we -- so we can continue. Okay. We are going to --
17 okay. Why don't -- why don't -- would you explain to
18 her that she should go slowly, so you can translate and
19 take breaks so you can translate?

20 THE INTERPRETER: Yes.

21 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MARTINEZ

22 A-v, as in Victor-a. Martinez,
23 M-a-r-t-i-n-e-z.

24 Good evening, everyone. I am the resident of
25 Orange Cove. I have my concerns for my family and the

1 citizens of Orange Cove.

2 There is a lot of misinformation, and a lot --
3 a lot of people are not informed for this project.

4 The people present here tonight, they say that
5 this is a -- a good project, but the thought that we
6 have is that they -- they assure us that this a safe and
7 secure project. But the information that we have from
8 Google is that this is very risky and very flammable.

9 The question here to all the representatives of
10 the different agencies, they have their arguments but
11 what is important is that the people that live here in
12 area. Orange Cove it's an old city. Pipes, streets,
13 all of the city, it's very old.

14 What worries me is that the people that are
15 here and not the people that are supposed to be here.
16 80 percent of the population of Orange County -- Orange
17 Cove are not here and that is what worries me.

18 I would like to see this project in San
19 Francisco, Sacramento and Los Angeles, but not in Orange
20 Cove.

21 That's it.

22 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

23 Alexa Francia.

24 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER FRANCIA

25 Good evening. My name is Alexa Francia,

1 A-l-e-x-a F-r-a-n-c-i-a. I have been a resident in
2 Orange Cove for 21 years.

3 I've been hearing in the presentation, the
4 keyword in this whole thing is that want to use us,
5 Orange Cove, as a demonstration. No other city in
6 California has ever tried this.

7 While using hydrogen fuel cells offers a clean,
8 emission-free solution for vehicles demonstrated by the
9 use of Orange Cove, it is important to remember that
10 burning hydrogen for heating or cooking can produce
11 nitrogen oxide, a pollution known to cause respiratory
12 issues as noted by the Centers of Disease Control.

13 Will the City or SoCalGas be financially
14 responsible for the damages to the properties, for
15 explosions or for health incidents?

16 I do not support this plan, and I believe it'll
17 negatively affect our community.

18 Thank you.

19 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. Eudia Morales?

20 Eudia Morales? I will skip her, I guess.

21 Next is Estela Juarez. Is Estela Juarez here?

22 (No response.)

23 ALJ FERGUSON: They're outside? Yeah, we will
24 come back. All right. Let's try Dejna Casa.

25 This will need a translation.

1 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER CASA

2 D-e-j-n-a C-a-s-a. I do not agree with this
3 project basically because of health reasons.

4 I am a resident of this country, and I got my
5 family, and I have my kids; and I worry about my kids.

6 I do have a family in this city, and I do not
7 agree with this project.

8 That's it. Thank you.

9 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. Is Eudia Morales
10 here? Eudia Morales?

11 (No response.)

12 ALJ FERGUSON: Estela Juarez? Okay. Well, I
13 will go forward then.

14 Belinda Rosas. Let me try one more time.
15 Belinda Rosas?

16 (No response.)

17 ALJ FERGUSON: All right. Celia Tirado. Oh,
18 there she is.

19 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER TIRADO

20 Celia Tirado. C-e-l-i-a, T-i-r-a-d-o.

21 Okay. I do not agree with this project. There
22 are a lot of controversies going on.

23 I was here during the first meeting that took
24 place in this place, and we were told that Orange Cove
25 was -- was going to be a recognized city because of

1 hydrogen, but the question that I have: How is it going
2 to be recognized, this city, to the cost of our
3 healthy(sic) or what?

4 We were told in the first meeting that they
5 were going to mix hydrogen with natural gas, and they
6 also use water, and none of this is going to be for
7 free.

8 As you can see, if everyone in this city were
9 here tonight, they wouldn't -- they wouldn't agree with
10 this because the cost is going to mean that we are going
11 to be -- we are going to be in danger.

12 And also the place where they are going to put
13 this plant is not -- it is not secure. When I was here
14 for the first meeting, I asked them about the location
15 of this -- of this plant, and they said that it was
16 going to be in a different location. The place where
17 they want to put it, let's hope that it doesn't happen.
18 It is near everyone in this city.

19 That's why I asked how many miles this facility
20 is going to be from the city because of the danger.
21 Because everyone in this city is in danger. It's like a
22 bomb.

23 Why -- why they try to -- to have this project
24 in Irvine, and they didn't accept it? Here, there's a
25 lot of us. We work here. Then we had -- there's a lot

1 of people that have cancer already. People with
2 allergies. People with asthma. I have -- my
3 grandchildren are -- are -- they have this sickness. I
4 don't want that for my family or for anyone around the
5 city.

6 There have that -- there are a lot of
7 conversation among the people. When I was here the
8 first time, they said that they were -- they were going
9 to mix all these elements, and there was not -- there
10 was going to be no -- no flammable, and then I said to
11 them, well, if it's not dangerous then gas -- we can
12 smell gas, and if we can smell gas, why it cannot be
13 dangerous? According to them, if they mix it, it's not
14 going to have any odor. And then they have another
15 meeting in the park, and I spoke to the same person,
16 with Miguel Ramirez, and he told me that -- that the gas
17 was going to have an aroma even if they mix it. But the
18 problem is that it's dangerous for the entire community.

19 Now, they say that the company -- that the gas
20 company, they are going to check all the devices. They
21 are going to check inside, just in case if something
22 happened. Many years, they said on paper that says that
23 the only check the lines that are under the house; and
24 if -- if the -- if we want them to check the inside of
25 the houses, we have to sign a paper that -- that says

1 that we don't have to pay.

2 There's going to have to be an agreement,
3 because there's a lot of controversies. And a lot of
4 people, we do not understand the vocabulary that you use
5 because you are highly educated and we the people here,
6 we don't know as much English as you and don't
7 understand some of the words.

8 We need to have something that everyone
9 understands and to have something that we can have the
10 freedom and they don't -- they don't -- they don't
11 silence us.

12 And I believe that this also began with
13 Mr. Parra, but he's not even here tonight.

14 SPEAKER TIRADO (In English): No, he's not at
15 the city anymore.

16 THE INTERPRETER: He's not in the city anymore.

17 SPEAKER TIRADO (In English): So, that's all I
18 have to say. Thank you to everybody. I don't want to
19 speak in English, because I will -- my English is not
20 perfect, but I can understand.

21 Thank you.

22 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much.

23 SPEAKER TIRADO: Thank you so much.

24 ALJ FERGUSON: I do want to add, and please
25 translate this as soon as I finish, I do want to remind

1 all of you that there are several representatives of
2 SoCalGas, and questions like were just raised, you can
3 ask, you can meet with them afterwards in the back of
4 the room and they will see if they can arrange to get
5 your -- get your questions answered either tonight or in
6 a few days or a week or so by getting some -- someone
7 from their company to meet with you.

8 I know you have a lot of questions. We have a
9 lot of questions.

10 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: But I -- I think that --

11 ALJ FERGUSON: It's your turn to -- it's your
12 turn to ask the questions of them now. I will ask the
13 questions of them when they have to come before me.

14 I think -- okay. What -- would one of the
15 representatives of SoCalGas assure us that you've got
16 someone in the back right now who will be able to speak
17 in Spanish? I don't know. Do you have -- yeah, Blaine
18 -- Blaine Waymire, can you -- are you -- are you fluent
19 in Spanish, Blaine?

20 MR. WAYMIRE: I am not, but that would be
21 Miguel. Miguel is fluent.

22 MR. RAMIREZ: (Speaking in Spanish.)

23 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. All right. Thank you.

24 All right. The next speaker on the list is
25 Silvia Inostroz.

1 Silvia, do you need a translator?

2 SPEAKER INOSTROZ: No.

3 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay.

4 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER INOSTROZ

5 Thank you for being here tonight. My name is
6 Silvia Inostroz, S-i-l-v-i-a. Inostroz,
7 I-n-o-s-t-r-o-z.

8 As we've all heard, the -- all we have heard is
9 the good things that this project is going to bring, and
10 we haven't really heard the consequences or the risks
11 that this has.

12 We have all Googled. We have all researched
13 and I oppose this, because it is a risk to the
14 community, to my family, to my children.

15 This is next to my children's school, and I
16 live and work here. Well, I live here, and then I work
17 from home, so I live and work here, and I am a -- we
18 have heard, again, how good this -- this is for the
19 community, what the town is going to benefit from, but
20 the residents? We are the ones that are going to suffer
21 the consequences.

22 Our voices are not heard. Our votes don't
23 count. Our city leaders, they don't take us into
24 consideration. They do what they wish: and that is why
25 the few that are here -- the residents, we are here

1 voicing that we oppose this because the majority are
2 Spanish speakers. They don't have social media. They
3 are not here, maybe because of fear of what's going on,
4 you know, the raids. We don't know why they're not
5 here, but majority are Spanish speaking. They -- that's
6 the reason why they're not here.

7 You can look at the population and, again, when
8 you approach someone from SoCal to ask about this, all
9 you hear is the pros. How the city is going to benefit
10 from it. But you don't hear the cons and that is lack
11 of transparency. How are we going to accept something
12 if we don't have both sides from them of what the good
13 and the bad, not just the good? Everyone that spoke in
14 favor of has monetary interest in this.

15 So, thank you for your time. Our lives are
16 pretty much in your hands. Our town is pretty much --
17 you know, the future of our town lies in your decision,
18 and we hope that you truly do listen to our concerns,
19 because it comes from the residents that actually live
20 here; and they are going to suffer the consequences of
21 whatever the decision is, and that's why I am here
22 tonight.

23 Thank you.

24 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. And let me just add,
25 to assure all of you, that we will hear, at the

1 Commission, when the time comes, both sides of this
2 issue. There will be plenty of representatives who are
3 speaking on your behalf, and some of them are here.
4 There was a lawyer here earlier. He will be speaking on
5 your behalf.

6 So, we will hear both sides and make a decision
7 after hearing both sides equally, okay.

8 All right. Let see. Next is Veronica Moralez.
9 Is Veronica Moralez here?

10 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MORALEZ

11 V, as in Victor, -e-r-o-n-i-c-a, M-o-r-a-l-e-z.

12 Good evening. This project that our -- that is
13 coming to the community, I worry about that.

14 The leaders of this community, they have been
15 telling us to gather together to have a meeting like
16 this to know -- to know about this project. The reason
17 and the benefit that the project has.

18 Our community has the -- has the -- the water
19 pipes -- the pipes, the pipes are -- the pipes are
20 already too old, and the houses are as well. They're
21 too old. And as I -- as I understand the hydrogen
22 doesn't have an odor, and it worries me that people that
23 are sick, it's going to affect them more, people in our
24 city, and I am against that.

25 That's it. Thank you very much.

1 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. Next, I am going to
2 give two names, Leticia Mendoza and Angelica Martinez.

3 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MENDOZA

4 Good evening. Thank you for coming to hear us
5 out. L-e-t-i-c-i-a M-e-n-d-o-z-a, and I was honestly
6 just on the fence, because I wasn't sure what to expect,
7 but just like many others --

8 ALJ FERGUSON: Just a second. Are you a
9 resident of Orange Cove?

10 SPEAKER MENDOZA: Yes, I am. I am a resident
11 of 55 years, and just like many of the residents that
12 spoke before me, I was not aware of other meetings. I
13 don't know how it is that they were sent out, or how it
14 is that they tried to communicate with us; and maybe
15 that's my fault, but I know that I was not aware. This
16 is the first meeting that I was aware of, so that's why
17 I am in attendance.

18 And maybe for the those that aren't here
19 tonight, maybe it's because of the past, and I have
20 heard so many people say this, it doesn't matter what we
21 do. They are going to do what they want to do, and a
22 lot of the times also -- I was really here to just see
23 what this project was, and I was hoping to hear more of
24 the, I guess, pros and cons; and the majority of the
25 pros are from people that do not live here. They do not

1 live in this community. So, honestly, I don't see how
2 they can have a say if you don't live here. If it's so
3 good, then put it in your backyard.

4 And as far as some of the cons, I just looked
5 it up -- somebody mentioned Google -- and some of those
6 mentioned that it's a very harmful air pollutant that
7 leads to asthma, dementia and other respiratory disease
8 and it's highly explosive.

9 So, my say is, like, some people have said
10 before me, is that I believe you're going to make the
11 decision, but if you've heard the applauses, and I want
12 city council to be an able to hear them, they should
13 have included us at the beginning.

14 But for the applauses for the cons, they
15 applaud very loudly. So, listen to what the people are
16 trying to tell you. If they don't want it, then you
17 should have included us in the beginning; and so, that
18 maybe we could have made, you know -- we're all -- okay,
19 are we going to have --

20 (Applause.)

21 SPEAKER MENDOZA: Are we going to -- are we
22 going to be reimbursed? Is there going to be
23 reimbursement just in case? Do we have those funds
24 somewhere just in case our appliances give out?

25 We needed to be very -- I don't know. I can't

1 think of the word right now, but we needed to be very
2 truthful. And at this point, honestly, I hate to tell
3 you, the people of Orange Cove, I believe the decision
4 was already made. I think the only thing is formality.

5 We are going through formality, but then, you
6 know, hopefully, I can change somebody's mind and, say,
7 you know what? We messed up. We should have included
8 the people of Orange Cove at the beginning, and then we
9 could have made us a -- made a decision.

10 Because with all due respect, we are the boss.

11 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yes.

12 SPEAKER MENDOZA: We voted you in.

13 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yeah.

14 (Applause.)

15 SPEAKER MENDOZA: And we trusted you to make
16 the right decision. And if it's not healthy, we need --
17 and don't get me wrong, we need money. I know the City
18 of Orange Cove needs money, but I do not want money on
19 the back of my child or any of the other families that
20 are here.

21 Thank you.

22 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much. I just
23 want to say that we're -- we are here to hear both
24 sides, and we will -- we will hear all of this again in
25 a very formal setting, like a trial, and we will make

1 our decision based on the record that is made there, so.

2 We hear you. You're not being overlooked at
3 all.

4 Okay. Your name, and how do -- how do you
5 spell the name?

6 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MARTINEZ

7 My name is Angelica Martinez, A-n-g-e-l-i-c-a.
8 Martinez, M-a-r-t-i-n-e-z.

9 I would like to express my opinion both in
10 English and Spanish. First in English.

11 My name is Angelica Martinez, and I have been a
12 resident of Orange Cove since 1991. It is in this small
13 agricultural town where I attended primary school, where
14 after graduating from Fresno State University, I chose
15 to come back and serve my community as an intervention
16 teacher.

17 I am a homeowner and a mother of two boys. Our
18 small town may lack bright lights and attractions found
19 in bigger cities, but I am proud. I am a proud resident
20 who sees great potential for my community, its residents
21 and especially its future generations.

22 I understand that a project of such magnitude
23 can be intimidating, and we may all have valid questions
24 regarding this project and how it can affect our
25 community's environment, health and residents. But I

1 absolutely support and hope that the Orange Cove
2 hydrogen blending demonstration project can become a
3 reality for our small town.

4 You will probably hear a variety of reasons
5 opposing this project such as comparing us to a guinea
6 pig, but I would like to counter this argument -- this
7 valid argument with the fact that we would not be a
8 guinea pig, but instead we become a pioneer town or
9 city. We would be the first to implement such an
10 environmental investment strategy, such an innovative
11 project, in the mainland of the United States of
12 America.

13 I am aware that the gradual blending of
14 hydrogen is not new or an untested project since it is
15 currently in existence and functioning in the islands of
16 Hawaii. I also support this project because our small
17 town deserves the national recognition and attention for
18 its willingness to implement such an innovative project
19 and give opportunities for expanding our knowledge and
20 participation of new tech knowledge.

21 Most of all, it is for the love of my family
22 and my community that I support this project.

23 I have attended multiple outreach meetings done
24 by SoCalGas and also the first meeting done by the
25 opposition, and I appreciate their concerns with the

1 information available, and I do recommend visiting the
2 website for SoCalGas where many of my concerns have been
3 answered.

4 I would also encourage everyone to
5 investigate -- Google how the project is being effective
6 in the state of Hawaii. We -- we can use them as an
7 example for what is expected in our community, and we
8 will understand and we will see how positive it is
9 become -- how positive of a project it is become for
10 them.

11 I hope that you will take my opinion as the
12 homeowner and resident of Orange Cove for more than 30
13 years into account in making your decision.

14 Thank you for your time and your opportunity.

15 (Speaking in Spanish.)

16 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. All right. Next we
17 have Isabelle Garcio. Isabelle Garcio?

18 (No response.)

19 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. After that, we have
20 Claudia Anglulo.

21 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ANGLULO

22 My name is Claudia Angulo, C-l-a-u-d-i-a.
23 Anglulo, A-n-g-l-u-l-o.

24 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to
25 speak tonight. I am going to refer to the main points

1 that -- that -- that they have spoken tonight. Earlier
2 she said they do it in Singapore, Australia, Canada and
3 the United Kingdom and they already have the hydrogen.
4 None of this is compared to -- it's a big city and none
5 of these cities are compared to Orange Cove.

6 Those cities -- these are big cities that have
7 different lives and different economies and -- and we
8 cannot compare those cities with Orange Cove.

9 They also mention a point that is stick in my
10 head that this project is going to be financed by the --
11 by the people that is going to -- that is going to be
12 paying for this.

13 This is very unknown -- this way is very
14 unknown to us, and it's not fair that it is to be paid
15 by us. At the end of the day, the ones that are going
16 to be beneficiary is the company and not the resident of
17 this city.

18 They also mentioned that in order to produce
19 hydrogen, they are going to have solar panels. To
20 produce hydrogen is -- electricity is not only needed,
21 but also water, and that's a vital -- that's a vital
22 thing that we need to consider.

23 And it's not -- I don't think it's fair that we
24 use this -- that element for this plant that we don't
25 know if it's going to work or not. That do have a major

1 risk and this creates -- we have more than a minor risk
2 because it's going to be very flammable -- more
3 flammable than natural gas.

4 And also, the location that is already -- well,
5 they are going to -- where they are going to install
6 this -- this -- this project, it's going to be very
7 close to -- to -- to school enters, and we know that the
8 United States, in the school, they have -- things they
9 have -- they have an event, what happened if something
10 that like happened in -- in -- in one of the schools
11 around Orange Cove.

12 Knowing that the whole population could be at
13 risk especially the child -- the children.

14 If they say that this project is very important
15 for our students, why is it to be so close to the school
16 centers? It's going to be less than one mile -- it's
17 going to be located less than one mile from the -- near
18 the schools.

19 I want say -- I want to say why this project
20 hasn't been implemented in other cities of the country?
21 They mentioned that it's the home and the -- that tests
22 this -- this -- this distribution of, perhaps, this
23 project. This house is -- is -- it was built less than
24 two years ago. Sure, it has all the resources to have
25 this type of project. So, the difference of the

1 buildings of this -- 90 percent of the building of this
2 city.

3 Also, the person that mentioned this from the
4 -- from the gas says -- says that 90 percent --
5 90 percent -- 90 percent -- 90 percent -- no 90 years of
6 relationship with the city. And in those years, how
7 many times they have changed those -- those pipes that
8 transport the -- that?

9 I can answer that. Investigating and public
10 data, it had -- they have never changed the -- those
11 pipes.

12 If they -- if they -- if this -- this project
13 is so cheap, are they prepared to change these pipes?
14 I -- I don't think so.

15 I do not -- I don't agree that they -- I don't
16 agree with this project. I don't agree that they're
17 going to -- that they -- that they want to have it in
18 this town.

19 Please have in consideration everything that I
20 said and what everyone that is here said also.

21 Thank you.

22 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you for that.

23 All right. Next -- next we have Angie
24 Elizondo.

25 ///

1 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ELIZONDO

2 Good evening. My name is Angie, A-n-g-i-e,
3 Elizondo, E-l-i-z-o-n-d-o.

4 ALJ FERGUSON: Are you a resident?

5 SPEAKER ELIZONDO: I am a homeowner in Orange
6 Cove, which my immediate family resides in.

7 I am concerned about the hydrogen project will
8 affect our community, especially safety, air quality and
9 the cost to residents.

10 We need transparency and protection so our
11 families are safe and our voices are heard in this
12 decision.

13 Thank you.

14 (Speaking in Spanish.)

15 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. Next, we have
16 Manuella Campos De Gaselaso. Manuella?

17 (No response.)

18 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. Then next we have
19 Heliveth Mancilla. Spell your name slowly.

20 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MANCILLA

21 Hi, my name is Heliveth Mancilla,
22 H-e-l-i-v-e-t-h. Mancilla, M-a-n-c-i, double -l-a.

23 I am here today to oppose of this.

24 ALJ FERGUSON: Are you a resident?

25 SPEAKER MANCILLA: I am a resident. I have

1 been here for almost 30 years. I have 11 children here.
2 They go to every school here. I want to say that me and
3 my family and my children came down here, because we
4 heard last minute of all of this. We didn't know what
5 was going on, but I mean, we are not educated to
6 understand everything but we do understand that this is
7 something dangerous.

8 And we want to oppose of it because -- not
9 because we are scared of change. Not because, you know,
10 we don't want something are for Orange Cove. It's just
11 that why can't we get something that is going to benefit
12 everybody and not something that is going to be
13 hazardous for us?

14 So, I just want to say that I oppose of this on
15 behalf of me, my family, my children that attend school
16 here. They are scared. We heard it on Facebook, and I
17 am sure there's a lot of people that are no not here, a
18 lot of Mexicans, you know, working people that don't
19 know English that don't communicate with -- you know, or
20 communicate through Facebook or has even got a, like, a
21 pamphlet saying this is what is happening; this is what
22 is going on.

23 So, I don't -- like, if they were to know
24 what's going on and how dangerous this is, they would be
25 here today, but they're not. And I take it upon myself

1 to let everybody know, so they -- I mean, for next time
2 -- or if there is going to be another meeting because I
3 think it's not fair that everybody isn't here to
4 understand what is happening, and even us that are not
5 educated enough to, you know, come up here and say big
6 words and, you know, talk about things.

7 We know that we are being used. This is
8 something that has -- is only going to happen here,
9 hasn't happened anywhere else. This is an experiment
10 that you are trying to, you know, bring to Orange Cove
11 that has been denied in other places where you guys will
12 take anywhere else but here.

13 We are not scared of change. We are scared
14 that we might blow up. We are not smart, you know,
15 talking people but I know that that sounds, like,
16 dangerous, and we don't want to be recognized for
17 blowing up the city with whatever you guys are bringing
18 here.

19 And I mean that is all I got to say. I oppose
20 of it. My children oppose of it. My family does, too,
21 and if you guys are going to do this again, I myself
22 will go and talk to a lot of the other residents and
23 have them come down here, too, and listen to what you
24 guys have to say.

25 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much. And let me

1 remind you, as we've said several times tonight, if you
2 get the fact sheet, you can easily get your neighbors to
3 write in and put their views into the actual docket
4 sheet for this proceeding, and I will read all of that.
5 The commissioner will read all of that.

6 So, if you think that people just don't know
7 about these meeting and don't know how to get
8 information to us, then just take home a copy of this
9 and show them, let them read what they have to do in
10 order to get their thoughts into the record of this
11 proceeding.

12 All right. Next -- next person is Alan Duenas.

13 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER DUENAS

14 Good evening to you, Mr. Judge and everyone
15 attending this meeting today.

16 My name is Alan Duenas, A-l-a-n, D-u-e-n-a-s,
17 and I attend Orange Cove High School as a senior; and I
18 am here today to talk about my opposition to the
19 SoCalGas project of hydrogen blending.

20 Although this project has benefits to this
21 town -- for example, it would reduce carbon dioxide
22 emissions, and it will lower fluid emissions, and it
23 will also improve thermo efficiency of boilers and
24 turbines. Hydrogen enhanced gas combustion improves
25 energy efficiency in power plants and residential needs.

1 Hydrogen burns faster than methane resulting in
2 a cleaner and more efficient combustion process and
3 integrating hydrogen into natural gas can enhance energy
4 efficiency by reducing -- sorry -- reducing dependency
5 on fossil fuels.

6 While hydrogen distribution offers numerous
7 benefits, it also presents challenges. For example,
8 hydrogen can cause pipelines to crack and degrade.
9 Natural gas transmission pipelines in the U.S. are
10 made of steel and when hydrogen comes into contact with
11 steel, it fuses into (indecipherable) to the alloy and
12 combines with carbon to form methane, which then creates
13 cracks in the metal. Not only that, but an increase in
14 hydrogen concentration and gas pressure further worsens
15 the adverse effects of hydrogen on steel. And, as an
16 indirect greenhouse gas, hydrogen leaks to 35 times
17 climate -- climate warmth than CO₂ during the first 20
18 years in the atmosphere. Not only that, hydrogen burns
19 hotter, faster, and ignites more easily than natural
20 gas, but blending hydrogen to natural gas that is
21 flowing into homes will lead to an increase of
22 residential explosions. Burning hydrogen, and
23 especially hydrogen with natural gas, will then produce
24 higher levels of nitrogen oxide, a major air pollutant
25 that triggers asthma and COPD, potentially causing new

1 asthma cases, according to the University of California
2 at Riverside.

3 Hydrogen blending impact study was commissioned
4 by the CPUC in compliance with Senate Bill 1369, and as
5 part of the CPUC's ongoing renewable gas domain. The
6 rulemaking examines expanding renewable hydrogen by
7 establishing standards and interconnection protocols for
8 injecting renewable hydrogen into natural gas pipelines.

9

10 This study assesses the operational and safety
11 concerns associated with injecting hydrogen into the
12 existing natural gas pipeline systems at various
13 percentages to help California can establish standards
14 and interconnection protocols for possibly injecting
15 renewable hydrogen into the natural gas pipeline; and
16 studies show that hydrogen blends of up to 5 percent in
17 natural gas are generally safe; however, blending more
18 hydrogen in gas pipelines overall can result in a
19 greater chance of pipeline leaks and embrittlement of
20 steel pipelines. Like hydrogen blends -- like, if more
21 than 20 percent of hydrogen is blended, it presents a
22 higher likelihood of embrittlement of pre-made and
23 plastic pipes, which can increase the risk of gas
24 emissions outside the pipeline.

25 Finally, hydrogen burns with an invisible flame

1 making it difficult to protect the community and
2 increasing the risk of accidental fires and explosions;
3 and although I understand why SoCalGas wants to add
4 hydrogen to our gas pipelines to make our world and us
5 healthier, it is not what people want, and it can also
6 lead to people getting unhealthier than healthy.

7 My question is, instead of experimenting with
8 this project in this town, why not experiment in a lab
9 or even run a test that could see what other dangers
10 hydrogen blending can do?

11 Thank you for your time.

12 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. Next we have
13 Francisco Gonzalez.

14 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GONZALEZ

15 Good evening. My name is Francisco Gonzalez,
16 and I am a resident of Orange Cove, and I am a senior in
17 Orange Cove High School. Thank you for giving me the
18 opportunity to speak against this project not just as a
19 concerned resident, but as someone who deeply cares
20 about the health, safety and future of our town.

21 I am here to say one thing clearly. We should
22 say no to the -- to the hydrogen blending project. At
23 first, it might sound like a good idea to mix hydrogen
24 and natural gas to reduce emissions, but the reality is
25 much riskier. Hydrogen is a very small and light

1 molecule, which means it can leak through piping,
2 valves, and fittings much more easily than natural gas.
3 Even the tiniest leaks can build up quickly in the air,
4 and since hydrogen is highly flammable, this creates a
5 serious danger of fires or even explosions.

6 Unlike natural gas, hydrogen fumes are nearly
7 invisible, making it harder to detect when something has
8 gone wrong. That means workers, families and whole
9 communities could be at greater risk without realizing.

10 So, while hydrogen may have a role in the clean
11 energy building an inventory of gas supply opens on
12 industry, safe -- safety concerns, not because we are
13 against energy, but because this is not the right way to
14 do it and not the place to test it.

15 let's start with the basics. This pilot
16 project would mix hydrogen into our gas, something that
17 has never been doing in real communities like ours in
18 California. The gas company says it's only a small
19 amount, just five percent, but here is what they are not
20 saying: Hydrogen burns hotter, and when it does, it
21 produces more nitrous oxide. The same thing that makes
22 asthma worse and increases the risk of lung disease.

23 We already live in the most polluted area of
24 our state, our kids and elders. We don't need more air
25 pollution in our homes or in our communities.

1 Now, let's talk about fairness. Why Orange
2 Cove? Why a small working-class largely that, you know,
3 has -- where many people already struggle with high
4 medical bills or poor infrastructure? And this project
5 is being tested on us, not in any other big cities. But
6 here is a fact, it's not an environmental justice, but
7 they are using our town as an experiment with real
8 consequences and without the resources to respond if
9 something goes wrong.

10 We're told it's for the environment, but how
11 much difference would it really make? Let me tell you,
12 25 percent of hydrogen by volume only replaces about 0.6
13 of energy in natural gas. That's almost nothing in
14 terms of reducing emissions, but we're expected to carry
15 the full risk and for what? To help gas companies delay
16 real solutions like fully electrifying our homes, giving
17 us access to coupons, clean electric stoves, and safer
18 and healthier technology that actually works and lowers
19 our bills over time.

20 If they really cared about Orange Cove, they
21 would be helping us modernize our homes, not just a
22 risky experiment on us.

23 To my neighbors, we are not against change. We
24 are not against, we are not against energy, but we are
25 against being left out of the conversation against being

1 exposed to health risks and against being treated as
2 less than any other community in California.

3 Let's demand a real plan. One that protects
4 our health, investments and our home that we preach our
5 voice. Let's stand together and say no to this project.
6 No to being an experiment. Yes to the real solutions
7 that put Orange Cove first.

8 Thank you.

9 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you. Next we have
10 Jeanette Roldan and Walter Roldan right after her.

11 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ROLDAN

12 Thank you. good evening, my name is Jeanette
13 Roldan, and I am a proud -- I am proud to call Orange
14 Cove my home.

15 ALJ FERGUSON: Wait, wait. Let's spell your
16 name.

17 SPEAKER ROLDAN: J-e-a-n-e-t-t-e and Roldan is
18 R-o-l-d-a-n.

19 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay. And you're a resident of
20 Orange Cove?

21 SPEAKER ROLDAN: Yes, I am a resident of Orange
22 Cove.

23 Sorry. Good evening, my name is Jeanette
24 Roldan, and I am proud to call Orange Cove my home. I
25 am here today to speak against the proposed hydrogen

1 blending project in our community.

2 Orange Cove already suffers pollution caused by
3 agriculture. It affects our air, water and our health
4 every single day. We should not have to carry the
5 burden of yet another source of pollution and risk.

6 This project brings serious health and safety
7 concerns. Hydrogen is more explosive and leaks more
8 easily than natural gas. When it is burned indoors, it
9 produces nitrogen oxide and worsens asthma and other
10 respiratory illnesses. Our families should not be asked
11 to live with those dangers.

12 And also, little to no environmental benefits.
13 Blending just one to five percent hydrogen into natural
14 gas would not make a real difference in reducing
15 greenhouse gas. Experts have already said that it is
16 not the path to true clean energy.

17 There is also the question of fairness. Orange
18 Cove is a small working class, mostly Latino community.
19 Wealthier cities like Irvine said no to projects like
20 this. Yet here we are being asked to accept it. This
21 is not fair. We have already seen what happens when
22 utilities put profit over people.

23 PG&E equipment caused the deadly Camp Fire in
24 2018. SoCal has its own history of maintenance, of
25 leaks and poor planning. These communities have not

1 earned our trust. I mean, these companies have not
2 earned our trust.

3 And while SoCal says our bills will not go up
4 right away, we know projects like this often lead to
5 increase -- to rate increase. Many families here
6 already struggle to get by. We should not be forced to
7 pay more for an experiment that doesn't even help the
8 environment in a meaningful way.

9 For all these reasons, I respectfully ask the
10 CPUC to reject this project. Our community deserves
11 safety and preventive energy solutions and our families
12 are not -- we are not test dummies.

13 You guys chose a low-income community for a
14 reason. A community where a majority of us don't even
15 have high school diplomas or degrees. The number of
16 degrees is so low. And on top of it, a moment when our
17 communities are being attacked. Many of our residents
18 are undocumented. Have you guys thought about that?
19 And so many of you guys that sit here and say why
20 weren't they here? Maybe they are scared, or maybe
21 nobody went to their door and actually informed them of
22 what was going on.

23 And, Madame Mayor, you said -- well, she's not
24 here. I don't see her -- said that they went and spoke
25 with 200 people in our community. A lot of the members

1 of our community are Spanish speakers. I have witnessed
2 with my own family members when some of these
3 individuals would go knocking on their door and somehow
4 work the Spanish to where it works for their favor. And
5 because my family member, at that point, didn't know
6 that or weren't as educated, were taken advance of.

7 So, really think about it and think about who
8 you're attacking, because we are a small community but
9 we are not quiet, and a lot more could be done for our
10 community to help our people, not destroy it.

11 And that's it.

12 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you for that, and I am
13 going to offer one of my suggestions, and that is if you
14 have those who want to stay away from here for various
15 reasons, they can simply write into the CPUC and put
16 their thoughts on the docket sheet, which is
17 commissioner and I read very closely.

18 So, it's just a suggestion, and we -- but we
19 have thought about what you -- the issue you raised as
20 to why there are a lot of people not here, and our
21 answer to that is we made a separate way possible for
22 them to do it. So, take the fact sheet and look on the
23 back of it, and I will tell you how it is that they can
24 write and -- and share their thoughts with us.

25 From the privacy of their own homes or wherever

1 they may be.

2 All right. Next one is Wualter Roldan.

3 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ROLDAN

4 Hi, good evening. My name is Wualter Roldan
5 spelled W-u-a-l-t-e-r. Roldan is spelled R-o-l-d-a-n.

6 I am going to wing it with my question just
7 because I didn't receive a lot of information as a
8 resident from the city going on with this. I mean, I'm
9 like a reader, newspaper, watch the news kind of guy. I
10 am not much for social media. I am not much for a lot
11 of the newer technology. We used to have a newspaper,
12 though. Orange Cove and Mountain Times, which we don't
13 have anymore.

14 So, just looking at your guys' sheet, I
15 couldn't understand why it is the fact you guys can't
16 provide more detailed information? That is my question
17 is why isn't more detailed information available in the
18 community, like, you know, specific facts.

19 I read this, and I don't necessarily see a lot
20 of solid fact-based, you know, facts. I mean, they're
21 -- they're kind of vague, in my opinion, just looking at
22 it.

23 On one of them, I don't know, it says, "The
24 U.S. currently produces about 10 million metric tons of
25 hydrogen each year," but it doesn't -- no information or

1 anything, so my question is, why isn't it mentioned
2 about how much of that hydrogen is or isn't, in the
3 existing marketplace, sustainable if that's goal in the
4 long run?

5 On top to that, I didn't see anything -- I did
6 see support where it says that -- yes, I understand that
7 gas companies have employees in Orange Cove, I'm aware,
8 but I also am wondering whether if it was mentioned if
9 there is or isn't going to be an increase in job
10 reliability for those people here, considering this
11 project is coming in with a lot of promises.

12 And on top of that, I mean, just looking at it,
13 it doesn't clearly explain where the funding is exactly
14 going to come from, so I am going to go ahead and assume
15 that it's going to come out of the bills, which is
16 eventually going to come out of us. So, we are going to
17 be footing the bill for this.

18 My question is, why isn't more detailed
19 information on the paper we were given even at the
20 meeting today? And, you know, I myself would like to
21 see if I can find more.

22 In the short time, what I have learned of this,
23 I mean, the only thing I really saw was a very brief
24 article written. An article in the Fresno Bee, but not
25 really detailed. So, I would say why haven't they been

1 more active out in the entire community instead of just
2 pouring it out wherever we hope it might get received?

3 And I have one more question. Let me see where
4 it is. I mean, my last question would be just if you
5 guys could possibly provide more information on the
6 sustainability of hydrogen, in general.

7 I can speak from experience myself. I work in
8 manufacturing. I am an alumni from Reedley College and
9 Fresno City College. I worked in the trade for a long
10 time. I was definitely, like a -- I mean, we didn't
11 have a chemistry club or nothing, but I was pretty --
12 kind of good at that stuff back then.

13 There was a point in time when we had a project
14 where we would have to create hydrogen using the -- sort
15 of -- what we were given in class; and one thing I do
16 remember is that it required a lot of water for us to be
17 able to even do that, just to be able to consider
18 producing a small balloon of hydrogen compared to the
19 five gallons of water that we used to have to, you know,
20 dilute that, right? And that's what I am asking is, if
21 possible, why isn't there more information explaining
22 the details of that sustainability and how renewable the
23 hydrogen is and is not?

24 And that's me -- that's really all I have.

25 Thank you.

1 ALJ FERGUSON: All right. Thank you very much.
2 And just one suggestion in response to your -- your
3 comments, there is an enormous amount in our files that
4 are accessible to the entire public; and it's on the
5 back of the -- of the fact sheet. You can access the
6 docket, and in the docket, you would not believe how
7 many thousands of pages of scientific facts one way or
8 the other are already there.

9 SPEAKER ROLDAN: And I will look into it.

10 ALJ FERGUSON: They can't -- people are not
11 going to print all that out and deliver it to everybody.
12 It's on the internet. It's on our website. Just go
13 look at it.

14 SPEAKER ROLDAN: Okay. And my response to that
15 would be is there any kind of way that we can, like I
16 said, make that information a little more accessible to
17 the whole of the community? And if you guys can't,
18 there's nothing wrong with that. You know, it's on the
19 average Joe to go to the library and get on the computer
20 and figure it out.

21 ALJ FERGUSON: Okay.

22 SPEAKER ROLDAN: Thank you.

23 ALJ FERGUSON: I heard you. All right.

24 Estela Juarez, please?

25 ///

1 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER JUAREZ

2 My name Estela Juarez. It's spelled
3 E-s-t-e-l-a, Juarez, J-u-a-r-e-z. Thank you, Judge
4 Ferguson for allowing me to speak again.

5 I wanted to add a -- I wanted to add a comment
6 to what I previously said earlier. In order to opt out
7 of the pilot program, which as you can see by a map
8 presented by SoCal, is gas -- hydrogen gas that would
9 run through all of our town. In order to us to opt out
10 of it, it would be every single resident's job and
11 responsibility to call SoCal to disconnect the gas line,
12 in which then would cause each resident to purchase
13 electric appliances.

14 Orange Cove was named in 24 Wall Street Analyst
15 in 2020 as one of the poorest towns in California and in
16 the nation. I did my research.

17 As you can see, many Orange Cove residents will
18 not be able to afford such appliances. They range from
19 500 to 1,500. Again, I did my research.

20 Also, I would like to add, I believe in
21 accountability. I have screen shots of the Orange Cove
22 City web page. In our city's calendar, there is no
23 listing about such experiment to come to the city. As
24 you can see here.

25 Not even in the public notices that date back

1 to 2023, where supposedly city council meetings, or any
2 meetings were held. Again, it's right here.

3 Not even the special events announcement.

4 Again, it is right here.

5 Our town meetings are to educate us. There has
6 been no such thing to provide the public with education.
7 And I would like to highlight as well; our citizens are
8 a large undocumented community. A lot of them live in
9 fear. Even submitting such assignment anonymously is
10 concerning to them.

11 So, I ask you to listen to the people who are
12 here today. Listen to us as our city has not listened
13 to us.

14 Thank you.

15 ALJ FERGUSON: We have two more. Teresa
16 Ramirez.

17 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER RAMIREZ

18 Hi, my name is Teresa Ramirez, T-e-r-e-s-a.
19 Ramirez, R-a-m-i-r-e-z.

20 I have been a resident here for 43 of my
21 44 years of life. I think, after -- because I didn't
22 hear about this prior to this, except, I think, maybe
23 twice on Facebook. That's where my information came
24 from, and this is years ago when it was being talked
25 about, but there was never, like, this is set in stone,

1 right? And I came here to understand what it is, and
2 that's not really what I got.

3 I am guessing this is just for us to voice our
4 concerns, but I don't know what we are voicing on, if we
5 don't have a full understanding of it, and maybe others
6 do, who have attended these meetings, and I have not. I
7 -- I know the mayor said, oh, at the Fourth of the July
8 celebration. I watched it from my house. At the toy
9 giveaway, I don't get free gifts. So, I don't where all
10 of this happened, and I don't -- I admit, I don't intend
11 to come to a community meeting. I work. I am tired
12 when I get home.

13 So, as for information valuable to us, I think
14 it would be helpful. Maybe it's not your job and it
15 falls back on the city of Orange Cove -- or the town of
16 Orange Cove, so I think step it up a little bit. We
17 would appreciate that, so that we can understand what is
18 going on. Let us be involved in the decision making.
19 Don't just make decisions, and then inform us because
20 that type of --

21 (Applause.)

22 SPEAKER RAMIREZ: -- and it might not be that.
23 I could be completely wrong, but that is what it feels
24 like. There's an exact answer to every one of these
25 questions. Transparency. We need it, right. That's

1 what we want. We want to know. We want to be involved.
2 The health risks. I think we want to know about that,
3 too. We want to know the actual health risks.

4 I already have children with asthma. Walking
5 through the field right here, we moved here a year ago,
6 my son got Valley Fever. He has never had issues like
7 that. That is just ag stuff, and now you are putting in
8 something else that we have to deal with? I don't even
9 understand it without being told. And, yes, I encourage
10 all to do our research. The City, they're not telling
11 us everything.

12 So, we need to get on and Google, and then that
13 is all we got, right, Google, ChatGPT, what else do we
14 have? It would be nice if it was provided to us. Yes,
15 we have meetings then, on this day -- and at a
16 reasonable time when we call all attend because most of
17 us work. I know they are saying like, oh, we are a poor
18 town, but we work. We go to school. Our children go to
19 the school. We are tired but we will make time for
20 this, so give us the time. Give us a time, a date, a
21 place to be at where it's cool and comfortable, and --
22 and let -- let us uh talk, listen to us and then make
23 decisions. I think that is all we're asking for.

24 Thank you.

25 ALJ FERGUSON: Thank you very much. And next

1 Federico Inostroz.

2 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER INOSTROZ

3 Citizen of Orange Cove, Federico,

4 F-e-d-e-r-i-c-o, Inostroz, I-n-o-s-t-r-o-z. Just a few
5 of my questions. I have to be prepared for something
6 like that. A previous speaker mentioned promoting his
7 business with tankless water heaters. He mentioned UL
8 rating. Our gas appliances and gas systems are not UL
9 rated for hydrogen. You wouldn't pour gasoline into a
10 trash bag or a milk jug because it's not rated for it,
11 so why would you put hydrogen into an appliance because
12 they're not rated for natural gas and -- that are rated
13 for natural gas and not hydrogen? I would get in
14 trouble at work if I did that, adding chemicals to a
15 container that is not rated for it.

16 Two comparisons of -- with other gasses.

17 Propane, really. You can run natural gas and propane
18 requires ports to be changed because BTU content is
19 affected, just like hydrogen.

20 Welding torches, they run oxygen separately.
21 They can run propane as well. You can run them on
22 hoses, and long term, they degrade the hoses. Hoses
23 need to be changed; tips need to be changed in order to
24 run a different gas. Things that we can't -- won't be
25 able to do for our own appliances.

1 Gas -- gas has 10 percent ethanol. It works.

2 It works. We run it in our vehicles all the time. It
3 degrades our gasses. Small engines get ruined because
4 it dries up the gaskets. So, yes, hydrogen may
5 work in the long run, but it will have effects because
6 it's not -- our stuff is not rated for hydrogen.

7 So, yeah, we can't afford to be making changes
8 like and won't be able to make changes like that. The
9 gas company says it'll fix things, but they will fix
10 things from the meter out. From the meter in, it's our
11 responsibility. We have to pay for those -- any damages
12 that occur to our equipment.

13 And at the end of the day, pros and cons set
14 aside, it's our homes and we just don't want it.

15 Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER HOUCK: I think we have one more
17 speaker. I don't have the name with me -- oh, come on
18 up. Make sure to state your name and spell it.

19 STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MORALES

20 Hello, my name is Monica Morales, M-o-n-i-c-a,
21 M-o-r-a-l-e-s.

22 I have been a resident of Orange Cove for over
23 30 years, and I am opposing the SoCalGas hydrogen
24 blending pilot project.

25 I know the mayor was here and supports this

1 project, and the way leadership works is that they
2 should know what -- what the town -- what the town that
3 they represent wants. This is the -- but this is not
4 the case here. Even in her speech, she did mention the
5 support of the community. Just that informational
6 booths were provided, and it is hearings like these that
7 matter where you get to hear directly from the public,
8 from people who actually live here and have families
9 here.

10 So, I have counted at least 13 people behind
11 me -- well, actually it's 10 now, because three had to
12 leave, because they work in the fields. They wake up at
13 4:00 in the morning, so they had to go. They oppose
14 this project as well, and they did not sign up to talk.

15 There are people like my friends, my neighbors
16 and my parents. Just because they are not here, they
17 are not going to talk today, does not mean that they
18 don't care what is happening in their community. Some
19 of these people, like many -- many of the other Orange
20 Cove residents are not culturally brought up to speak in
21 these hearings, so I am here for them and I am also here
22 for me and for the community; and I have been listening
23 to what people who support this project are saying and
24 it's going to -- that it's going to put Orange Cove in
25 the map, and that it's going to provide lots of

1 different opportunities, but this project is for
2 something that isn't even attributable to the community,
3 but to the company.

4 As a low-income, underresourced, immigrant
5 community, we already face multiple disparities trying
6 to make changes that actual benefit us.

7 This project is not one of them.

8 This kind of project is not a representation of
9 something that the community came together to do.

10 Thank you for your time, and the community and
11 I are looking to you for a decision that would protect
12 us from going through the pilot project that we did not
13 consent to.

14 Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER HOUCK: So, I want to close by
16 thanking everyone who came out tonight. We recognize
17 that you have jobs, you have families, you work hard.
18 You have kids in school and taking four hours out of
19 your evening to be here is a lot; and it shows that this
20 is an important issue to the community and all of you;
21 and we really appreciate being able to hear from
22 everyone. All of the concerns, all of the issues you
23 bring regarding safety, regarding both economic
24 development and what this means to the community as a
25 whole.

1 We are going to go back and read the
2 transcript. We are going to follow up through the
3 proceedings with the parties, with SoCalGas. I -- I do
4 intend to ask you what kind of engagement you've done
5 with the community, and if it's warranted to -- to
6 maybe, come out and have an information session with
7 them, so we will be asking you more information, so just
8 to let you know that.

9 And, again, just really appreciate the comments
10 and recognize that whatever decision the Commission
11 makes, it's going to affect you and you're the ones that
12 are going to be living with it, so we want to make sure
13 that we understand what the project is, how it affects
14 you and make the right decision and listen to
15 everybody's position on it.

16 So, thank you, and I am going to hand it back
17 to Judge Ferguson.

18 ALJ FERGUSON: I add my thanks to everybody as
19 well. This has been very productive and active group of
20 people, so thank you very much for all the ideas that
21 were expressed, all the feelings that were expressed and
22 -- and all of the questions that you raised. They will
23 help us a lot as we read through this transcript and
24 move forward with the whole proceeding.

25 So, it's now 8:48 p.m., and the record will

1 close.

2 Thank you.

3 (At the hour of 8:48 p.m., this matter having
4 been continued to 2:00 p.m., August 26, 2025,
5 in Lodi, California, the Commission then
6 adjourned.)

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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATION OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDING

7 I, ASHLEIGH BUTTON, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER
8 NO. 14013, IN AND FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DO
9 HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE PAGES OF THIS TRANSCRIPT
10 PREPARED BY ME COMPRIZE A FULL, TRUE, AND CORRECT
11 TRANSCRIPT OF THE TESTIMONY AND PROCEEDINGS HELD IN
12 THIS MATTER ON AUGUST 25, 2025.

13 I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE
14 EVENTS OF THE MATTER OR THE OUTCOME OF THE PROCEEDING.

15 EXECUTED THIS SEPTEMBER 02, 2025.


ASHLEIGH BUTTON
CSR NO. 14013

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