

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COMMISSIONER MATTHEW BAKER, in attendance

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE GARRETT TOY, presiding

Joint Application of Southwest Gas Corporation (U905G), Alpine Natural Gas Operating Company No. 1, LLC (U909G), Bear Valley Electric Service, Inc. (U913E), Liberty Utilities (CalPeco Electric) LLC (U933E), PacifiCorp (U901E), West Coast Gas Company Inc. (U910G) for Approval of Energy Savings Assistance and California Alternate Rates for Energy Programs and Budgets Bridge Funding for Program Year 2027.)	PREHEARING
)	CONFERENCE
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)	26-01-021
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REPORTERS' TRANSCRIPT
Virtual Proceeding
March 24, 2026
Pages 1 - 18
Volume 1

Reported by: Doris Huaman, CSR No. 10538
Eoanna Kostapapas, CSR No. 13242



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VIRTUAL PROCEEDING

MARCH 24, 2026 - 10:03 A.M.

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ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE TOY: We'll be on the record.

The Commission will come to order. Good morning, everyone. It is 10:03 a.m. on March 24th, 2026. This is the time and place for the virtual prehearing conference for Application 26-01-021 by Southwest Gas Corporation, Alpine Natural Gas Operating Company No. 1, Bear Valley Electric Service, Liberty Utilities, operating as CalPeco Electric, PacifiCorp and West Coast Gas Company for Approval of 2027 California Alternate Rates for Energy and Energy Savings Assistance Program Activities and Costs.

My name is Garrett Toy. I'm the administrative law judge assigned to this proceeding. The assigned commissioner is Matthew Baker. I will be inviting the commissioner to make opening comments shortly. The purpose of a prehearing conference is to discuss the category, scope and schedule of the proceeding. As such, my agenda for today is to first go over the service list and discuss the categorization of this proceeding followed by the scope of issues and potential phasing and then discuss the need for hearings and the

1 schedule for the remainder of the proceeding.

2 Nothing will be decided today, and any final
3 determinations will be made in the scoping memo issued
4 by Commissioner Baker.

5 A reminder for everyone to please speak slowly
6 and clearly for the benefit of our court reporters and
7 to not interrupt or speak over one another.

8 At this time, I'd like to invite Commissioner
9 Baker to make his opening comments.

10 COMMISSIONER BAKER: Thank you, Judge Toy and
11 to everyone attending today's prehearing conference.
12 This proceeding will re -- will review the small
13 multijurisdictional electric and gas utilities' proposed
14 income-qualified programs for 2027.

15 One of my top priorities as a commissioner is
16 to ensure that lower-income customers who live in the
17 hotter parts of the state, where many of the small
18 utilities also operate, have adequate opportunity to
19 avail themselves of bill relief. People living in these
20 areas often use a lot electricity to cool their homes
21 and as a result face some of the highest bills in the
22 country.

23 Last week's heatwave in March underscored the
24 importance of access to affordable essential cooling in
25 an increasingly warmer world. Lower-income customers in

1 these parts of the state are often forced to choose
2 between foregoing air-conditioning and other basic
3 necessities. So even though the programs we're
4 considering in this application are smaller than the
5 peer programs administered by the large investor-owned
6 utilities, they play an important role in addressing our
7 affordability crisis.

8 And to support the programs and the customers
9 who depend on them, I'm committing to -- I'm committed
10 to moving this process -- this proceeding along quickly.
11 It is important to reach a timely decision to avoid any
12 disruptions to the programs in the 2027 bridge year and
13 so that we can turn our attention to the full cycle --
14 cycle applications when they come later this year. So
15 I'm looking forward to hearing from all of the parties.

16 With that, I'd like to turn it back to you,
17 Judge Toy, and thank you for giving me this opportunity
18 to speak.

19 ALJ TOY: Thank you, Commissioner.

20 The first order of business is to take
21 appearances from the parties and attendants via Webex
22 followed by taking any motions for party status, if
23 there are any. And I'll repeat myself. Does -- anybody
24 in the attendees' list that would like to participate
25 right now, please raise your virtual hand so we can get

1 you moved up into the panelist section so that you may
2 speak.

3 When I first call on each party, please spell
4 out your full name the first time you speak, and then
5 give your last name before speaking every time
6 thereafter.

7 I'll turn first to Southwest Gas Corporation,
8 which I will now refer to as Southwest Gas. Do I have
9 Stephanie Smith in attendance?

10 MS. SMITH: Good morning. Stephanie Smith on
11 behalf of Southwest Gas, S-t-e-p-h-a-n-i-e S-m-i-t-h.

12 ALJ TOY: Thank you. And are you the
13 representation for Southwest Gas in this matter?

14 MS. SMITH: Yes, I'm one of the attorneys.

15 ALJ TOY: Okay. Thank you. And is there
16 anyone else that will be participating for Southwest Gas
17 today?

18 MS. SMITH: There will be no one else
19 participating actively.

20 ALJ TOY: Okay. Thank you.

21 MS. SMITH: Thank you.

22 ALJ TOY: Turning to Alpine Natural Gas
23 Operating Company No. 1, LLC, which I will now refer to
24 as Alpine, do I have anybody in attendance?

25 (No response.)

1 ALJ TOY: Okay. Moving on now. Turning to
2 Bear Valley Electric Service, Incorporated, which I
3 now -- will now refer to as Bear Valley, do I have Fred
4 Yanney in attendance?

5 MR. YANNEY: Yes, your Honor and Commissioner.
6 Good morning. My name is Fred Yanney, F-r-e-d
7 Y-a-n-n-e-y. And I'm counsel for Bear Valley Electric
8 Service.

9 ALJ TOY: And are you the person upon whom
10 service should be issued in this proceeding?

11 MR. YANNEY: Yes.

12 ALJ TOY: Okay. And no other participants
13 today?

14 MR. YANNEY: None that will be participating.
15 I believe they are monitoring it.

16 ALJ TOY: Okay. Thank you.

17 Turning to Liberty Utilities, or CalPeco
18 Electric, which I will now refer to as Liberty, do I
19 have Tracy Luu-Varnes in attendance?

20 MS. LUU-VARNES: Good morning, your Honor.
21 Tracy Luu-Varnes, T-r-a-c-y. Last name L-u-u-V, as in
22 Victor, a-r-n-e-s.

23 ALJ TOY: Thank you. And are you Liberty's
24 representation in this matter?

25 MS. LUU-VARNES: Yes, your Honor. We also have

1 another representative from Liberty on the call.

2 ALJ TOY: Okay. Will the other representative
3 please identify yourself.

4 MS. O'DOHERTY: This is Elly O'Doherty
5 representing Liberty Utilities. My name is spelled
6 E-l-l-y O'D-o-h-e-r-t-y.

7 ALJ TOY: Thank you. On behalf of West Coast
8 Gas Company Incorporated, which I will now refer to as
9 West Coast, do I have anybody in attendance?

10 MS. MORRIS: Good morning. Yes. My name is
11 Cynthia Morris, and I represent West Coast Gas. That is
12 C-y-n-t-h-i-a M-o-r-r-i-s.

13 ALJ TOY: Thank you. And are you -- will you
14 be representing West Coast in this matter?

15 MS. MORRIS: Yes, I will.

16 ALJ TOY: And is there anyone else here on
17 behalf of West Coast today?

18 MS. MORRIS: No, there is not.

19 ALJ TOY: Thank you. On behalf of PacifiCorp,
20 doing business as Pacific Power, which I will now refer
21 to as PacifiCorp, do I have Joseph Dallas in attendance?

22 MR. DALLAS: Yes. Joseph Dallas is here, and
23 I'll introduce myself. Joe Dallas. I'm an attorney for
24 PacifiCorp. My name is spelled J-o-e D-a-l-l-a-s. I'll
25 be the speaker for PacifiCorp today. And as far as

1 service goes, PacifiCorp would request that service be
2 given upon me and also californiadockets@pacificorp.com.
3 So "California" and the "docket" is with an S
4 @pacificorp.com.

5 ALJ TOY: Okay. Traditionally, we've only put
6 one party for -- or one person as a party
7 representative. You can add that email as information
8 only, and they should also receive service of anything
9 in this proceeding.

10 MR. DALLAS: Oh. Fantastic. That works.
11 Thank you so much.

12 ALJ TOY: Thank you.

13 And is there anyone else on behalf of
14 PacifiCorp today?

15 MR. DALLAS: Not today.

16 ALJ TOY: Thank you.

17 Okay. Checking again. Do I have anybody for
18 Alpine?

19 (No response.)

20 ALJ TOY: If there's anybody in the attendees
21 who wishes to participate on behalf of Alpine, please
22 raise your virtual hand now.

23 (No response.)

24 ALJ TOY: Okay. Seeing nobody, we're going to
25 move on. The next order of business is to develop the

1 service list. The applicants are automatically added to
2 the service list.

3 Is there anyone else on the line wishing to
4 become a party to this proceeding?

5 (No response.)

6 ALJ TOY: If anybody is in attendees that would
7 like to become a party, please also raise your virtual
8 hand now.

9 (No response.)

10 ALJ TOY: Okay. Seeing nobody, the service
11 list is complete.

12 It is the practice of the Commission to
13 designate one party representative on the service list
14 to communicate on behalf of the party. Others wishing
15 to follow the proceeding may add themselves as
16 information only on the service list. As you may know,
17 the Commission encourages electronic service and
18 requires all documents served electronically to go to
19 everyone on the list. That includes those who are
20 listed as information only.

21 As this is a virtual prehearing conference, I
22 remind everyone to speak slowly and clearly for the
23 benefit of the court reporter. Let's not interrupt or
24 speak over one another. I will provide opportunities
25 for the parties to speak on all of the issues, and I

1 request that parties not speak until I call on them.

2 If anyone would like an expedited transcript of
3 today's status conference, I believe reporting already
4 should have notified you, but please email
5 reporting@cpuc.ca.gov.

6 The application proposed categorizing this
7 proceeding as ratesetting. Resolution ALJ-176-3577 also
8 preliminarily categorized this proceeding as
9 ratesetting. No parties objected to the proposed
10 category. Accordingly, I agree that the ratesetting
11 categorization is appropriate for this case and will be
12 recommending that to Commissioner Baker.

13 With the ratesetting categorization, ex parte
14 communications with commissioners and their advisors are
15 permitted with restrictions and reporting requirements
16 pursuant to Article 8 of the Commission's Rules of
17 Practice and Procedure.

18 Any party wishing to communicate with me should
19 limit their communications to procedural matters only
20 and do so via email cc'ing the entire service list.

21 We're going to go ahead now and move on to the
22 scope of issues in this proceeding. I have before me
23 the application, and I'm going to read off my three
24 proposed issues in this proceeding:

25 So issue No. 1, do the utilities' applications

1 requesting approval of income-qualified programs and
2 budgets for bridge year 2027 advance the ongoing goals,
3 principles and guidance adopted in Decisions 21-10-023,
4 18-08-020 and other relevant directives in prior
5 Commission decisions and rulings and applicable
6 statutes;

7 And if anybody at any point needs me to repeat
8 something, please just let me know. Please, yeah, let
9 me know. Otherwise I'll move on to issue 2.

10 Are the utilities' proposed 2027
11 income-qualified programs and activities reasonable and
12 should they be adopted? Similarly, are any parties'
13 proposed changes to the utilities' programs reasonable;

14 Issue 3, are the utilities' requested budgets
15 to implement the proposed programs including any
16 studies, evaluations and reporting activities and costs
17 and rate recovery requests reasonable and should they be
18 adopted?

19 Any comments on those issues starting with
20 Southwest Gas?

21 MS. SMITH: Thank you, your Honor. We do not
22 have any direct comments. Prior to the hearing, with
23 your permission, we had conferred amongst ourselves and
24 were hoping to designate Mr. Fred Yanney to also address
25 some issues when your Honor believes the time is

1 correct.

2 ALJ TOY: Okay. Sorry. My sound cut out.
3 Could you repeat the first half of what you said. I
4 heard you were going to designate Mr. Yanney to give us
5 some comments, but...

6 MS. SMITH: Apologies. We did not have any
7 direct comments and response currently to the proposed
8 issues but agree that those are the three simple points.

9 ALJ TOY: Okay. Okay. Thank you.

10 Moving on to Bear Valley, any comments on those
11 issues?

12 MR. YANNEY: No, your Honor. Bear Valley
13 accepts the issues as identified by your Honor.

14 ALJ TOY: Thank you.

15 Liberty.

16 MS. LUU-VARNES: Good morning, your Honor.

17 Tracy Luu-Varnes on behalf of Liberty.

18 Liberty has no comments on the scope of issues
19 as identified.

20 ALJ TOY: Thank you.

21 West Coast.

22 MS. MORRIS: Good morning. This is Cynthia
23 with West Coast Gas.

24 And West Coast Gas does not have any issues
25 with the scope -- scoping issues.

1 ALJ TOY: Thank you.

2 PacifiCorp.

3 MR. DALLAS: Yeah. PacifiCorp has no -- no
4 issues with the three iss -- with the three scope of
5 issues raised.

6 ALJ TOY: Thank you.

7 And I don't think we have a representative for
8 Alpine still.

9 So Mr. Yanney, would you like to, I guess,
10 present the consolidated comments that you all had.

11 MR. YANNEY: Yes, your Honor. Thank you. Just
12 to emphasize again I'm only counsel for Bear Valley
13 Electric Service. But the Joint Applicants met before
14 this prehearing conference and ask that I share with
15 your Honor and Commissioner Baker the following comments
16 and recommendations.

17 First of all, I note that as of this morning I
18 checked and there were no protests that had been filed
19 to date in this proceeding. Accordingly, the Joint
20 Applicants believe that there is no need for intervenor
21 testimony, rebuttal testimony or evidentiary hearings.
22 Your Honor has already addressed the scope of issues,
23 and I believe each of the Joint Applicants have
24 responded.

25 Regarding opening and reply briefs, the Joint

1 Applicants waive their rights unless your Honor requests
2 or requires us to so submit those, and we request that
3 there -- that the PD be based upon statements in the
4 application and that no written testimony be required to
5 be filed by the Joint Applicants.

6 And although the Joint Applicants put in the
7 application that they were requesting the issuance of a
8 PD by August 30th, given the preceding circumstances, we
9 would request respectfully that a PD be issued prior to
10 that and as soon as possible. And I think that reflects
11 Commissioner Baker's views and desires to move this
12 along expeditiously.

13 And with that, I -- those are all I have on
14 behalf of the Joint Applicants but just remind your
15 Honor that I only represent Bear Valley. Thank you.]

16 ALJ TOY: Okay. Thank you.

17 If anybody else wants to make any other
18 comments on scope of issues before I move on, please
19 raise your hand; otherwise, we'll move on to schedule
20 and need for hearings.

21 (No response.)

22 ALJ TOY: Okay. Moving on now to the
23 proceeding schedule and need for evidentiary hearing.
24 The application does not precede the need for
25 evidentiary hearing, and there were no protests, as

1 noted, by Mr. Yanney's comments. Accordingly, I will
2 recommend, Commissioner Baker, at this time that the
3 scoping memo not include evidentiary hearings.

4 I had a proposed scope based on the possibility
5 of evidentiary hearings. There currently being no
6 parties, no protests, no responses, I'm inclined to
7 agree to move this proceeding as quickly as possible. I
8 will consult with Commissioner Baker regarding the need
9 for opening or reply briefs, but I think we should be
10 able to move this proceeding on pretty quickly otherwise
11 and hopefully get a PD done much earlier than the August
12 30th that was proposed in the application.

13 I don't know if anybody had any further
14 comments on schedule beyond the statement Mr. Yanney
15 gave. If so, please raise your hand now.

16 (No response.)

17 ALJ TOY: Okay. Not seeing anything. I will
18 move on. I will discuss all of this with Commissioner
19 Baker. We will then issue a scoping memo for this
20 proceeding. That's it for today. I want to conclude by
21 thanking all for your participation.

22 Going off the record for a second.

23 (Off the record.)

24 ALJ TOY: Back on the record. There being
25 nothing further, we are adjourned and off the record.

1 Thanks, everyone.

2 (At the hour of 10:24 a.m., this matter
3 having been concluded, the Commission then
4 adjourned.)

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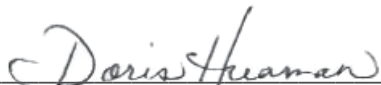
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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATION OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDING
I, DORIS HUAMAN, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER
NO. 10538, IN AND FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DO
HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE PAGES OF THIS TRANSCRIPT
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TRANSCRIPT OF THE TESTIMONY AND PROCEEDINGS HELD IN
THIS MATTER ON MARCH 24, 2026.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE
EVENTS OF THE MATTER OR THE OUTCOME OF THE PROCEEDING.

EXECUTED THIS MAY 19, 2026.



DORIS HUAMAN
CSR NO. 10538

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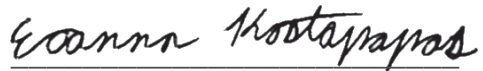
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EOANNA KOSTAPAPAS
CSR NO. 13242

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