BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

OF THE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COMMISSIONER KAREN DOUGLAS, in attendance

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE DAVID VAN DYKEN, presiding

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Application of Bear Valley Electric Service, Inc. (U913E) for Authority to, Among Other Things, Increase Rates and Charges, and Authorized Revenues, for Electric Service Effective January 1, 2027.	))))))	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HEARING Application 26-01-022

REPORTERS' TRANSCRIPT

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BIG BEAR LAKE, CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 27, 2026 - 2:01 P.M.

* * * * *

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE VAN DYKEN: The Commission will come to order. Today is Tuesday, October the 27th, 2026. This is the time and place for the public participation hearing on Rulemaking 26-01-022.

This is the California Public Utilities Commission, or CPUC, as we refer to ourselves, rulemaking that will consider Bear Valley Electric Service's application requesting authorization to increase rates and implement additional programs and improvements.

My name is David R. Van Dyken. I am the assigned administrative law judge, or ALJ, that is assigned to this proceeding. I did want participants to be aware that I do speak with a stutter, so when I encounter a verbal block, it may take me just a second to get past it.

The assigned commissioner in this proceeding is Karen Douglas. She is here today via phone, so she is currently phoning in and will be making a statement a little while into this hearing.

This is one of three public participation

hearings that the Commission is holding in this matter. The first one was a virtual hearing that took place on October the 13th; and today, we are holding two in-person hearings. The one right now is the 2:00 o'clock hearing. We will also be holding one at the same spot at 6:00 o'clock this evening.

Public engagement is critical to the CPUC, and we will be paying careful attention to the comments that you provide here today. Your comments will help us to better understand how Bear Valley's service is provided and how you, as customers, are impacted. This, in turn, will -- will help us, the CPUC, to make a more informed decision toward Bear Valley's requests in its application.

Also, we have two court reporters over here to my right who are transcribing everything that is said here today. That will be put into a written transcript and filed on the docket, which is public. So therefore, as we all speak, we need to be sure to speak slowly and clearly so that the reporter is able to capture everything that's said.

If you are an elected official, we would appreciate if you would provide that information to the public advisor over here on my left, and also when you begin to speak.

Today's -- the venue for today's public hearing is being provided by the City of Big Bear Lake at the city council chambers, and I very much want to thank the City of Big Bear Lake for allowing us to use this facility here today.

So next I want to go -- just briefly go over what the role of the -- of the CPUC is here, what my role is as the judge, and then I'll -- I'll give you a brief background of what Bear Valley is requesting in its application. After that, we will hear from Commissioner Douglas; and then, of course, we want to hear from -- from you.

So the CPUC is the State agency that regulates privately owned utilities that provide essential services, such as electricity, gas, or water. As the administrative law judge in this proceeding, I manage the proceeding to evaluate all of the documentation and information received, including your input, and also with the assistance from staff from the CPUC's Energy Division, which does the bulk of our analytical work in this.

There are five commissioners at the CPUC, including Commissioner Douglas, who is currently listening in; and each of the five commissioners are appointed by the governor and then confirmed by the

senate.

These five commissioners will be the people who will make the final decision in Bear Valley's request to increase rates in this case. They may decide whether or not to adopt the proposed decision written by me, or if they choose, they may decide to adopt a different decision based on the evidence that we receive in this proceeding; and we expect a decision to be issued in early 2027.

In this case, the CPUC will determine how much Bear Valley may earn on their rates that will be included in customer bills for its electric service.

There are two other interested parties in this proceeding. The first one is the California Public Advocates Office, and the other one is Snow Summit. As parties, these groups each participate as an advocate for the interests of Bear Valley's customers.

After receiving all of the -- all of the interested parties' final recommendations and comments from the public, as well as the analysis from the CPUC's Energy Division staff, as I mentioned before, I will write a final proposal for the commissioners to consider.

Let's see here. So in this general rate case, the Commission takes a thorough look at the utility's

forecast of operations for a year that is -- that we refer to as the test year, which in this case is 2027, plus the next three years.

The Commission will analyze things such as the impacts from rate increases, capital additions such as construction projects, operating expenses, legal and regulatory requirements, and various other administrative costs that Bear Valley has to do, such as employee benefits, taxes, and everything else that is needed for Bear Valley to provide safe and reliable service. We also do have some fact sheets on both sides of the room here with some more information.

So now I want to briefly go over to what Bear Valley is actually requesting in its application. So the bulk of Bear Valley's customers are residential. There are also a small amount of business and industrial and public customers as well.

Large industrial customers include -- include two ski resorts owned by Snow Summit. There's also a large local wastewater facility and a pilot electric vehicle program. These are the largest customers that Bear Valley has.

Let's see here. Bear Valley's application seeks, among other things, to increase its rates, its energy supply charges, and authority to implement

additional programs and improvements, and approval for an appropriate rate of return.

So what that means is -- a rate of return refers to the profit that a regulated utility is allowed to earn, so that's something that we look at in this case, as -- as well as a private company that provides a regulated service, what is -- what level of profit are they allowed to earn.

In this case, Bear Valley is requesting rate increases of 14.25 percent in 2027, 5.24 percent in 2028, 4.74 percent in 2029, and 7.66 percent in 2030, totaling an increase of 31.89 percent in 2030 from current rates.

Bear Valley's last rate application was filed in 2023, with a decision that was issued in January of 2025. That decision resulted in a rate increase of 30.3 percent between 2022 and 2026.

Bear Valley, in its application, says that a significant portion of the rate increase request is due to the ongoing wildfire threat and wildfire mitigation measures that are being implemented by Bear Valley, and Bear Valley also says that these measures are largely being mandated by the State legislature and by the CPUC.

So with that, I want to give Commissioner Douglas an opportunity to provide her remarks.

Are you there, Commissioner Douglas?

(No response.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: If you're speaking, you are on mute, Commissioner.

(No response.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Commissioner Douglas, are you there?

(No response.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Okay. Since we don't hear her, I do have the statement that she was going to give, so give me just a moment to bring that up and I will read her statement for you -- or for her.

Okay. All right. So this is the statement from Commissioner Karen Douglas. She says "Good afternoon, everyone," and she wants to thank everyone who is -- who is working on this proceeding and thank everyone for their attendance here today.

"This meeting continues the virtual public hearing that took place on October 13th. I am the commissioner assigned to this proceeding. We will be reviewing Bear Valley Electric Service's test year 2027 general rate case, or GRC.

"As before, I want to start by thanking everyone for taking time out of their busy day to participate in today's hearing, and especially the

members of the public who are here to share their perspectives. These hearings are an important way for the Commission to hear directly from individuals and communities who are impacted by the results of this proceeding.

"Your comments give us valuable insights into your concerns and priorities, and that goes a long way in helping us make informed and balanced decisions as we get deeper into the proceeding and the evidence that is presented.

"For this general rate case, we will be determining the total amount of revenue that Bear Valley is authorized to collect over various utility costs from 2027 through 2030, as well as the allocation of those costs. I want to reiterate right now across California, we are looking at a number of priorities that present challenges as we seek to oversee utilities that provide affordable, safe, reliable, and clean energy service.

"These priorities include infrastructure maintenance and upgrades, and mitigation work against the continued threat of catastrophic wildfires, among many other things. All this work can cost money. At the same time, I am well aware of the affordability challenges that these priorities can place on ratepayers.

"We have to look carefully at the importance of the work that needs to be done while also considering its impact on customers and their ability to afford their utility bills. To that end, we will be scrutinizing the necessity of Bear Valley's request for funding authorization and taking action, where appropriate, to contain costs and minimize rate increases.

"With that said, I want to say once again that I appreciate the opportunity to hear directly from you today. Your comments are important to helping us understand the priorities and concerns of the community as we consider this application.

"I want to thank the many people who worked to make today's hearing possible, including Judge Van Dyken, the Public Advisor's Office, our court reporters, and our staff. Thank you."

So, again, that was the statement from Commissioner Karen Douglas, who is on her way and may have been cut off from her cell service.

Okay. Next we turn to the public, you guys. So I'm going to go over some ground rules that will help the public comment period run smoothly.

As I mentioned already, the purpose of today's hearing is for the CPUC to hear directly from

Bear Valley Electric Service's customers and members of the public about their electric service, rates, concerns, and anything else that may help the CPUC make a decision in Bear Valley's general rate case. Any member of the public, including anyone who attended another public hearing, are invited to speak.

As a reminder to those who wish to speak, if you have not already done so, please sign up at the Public Advisor's table over here at my left. And you see Jaime's hand here waving.

It is also important to note that -- that we will be -- sorry. It is also important to note that we will not be answering specific questions about today's -- or about the proceeding at the hearing today. We want to listen to your comments.]

Based on the number of commenters, I may place a three-minute time limit per speaker. This will help to ensure we're able to get to all speakers in a timely manner. I may adjust this time for speakers that have -- that have a disability that makes speech difficult.

For this two o'clock PPH, I also want to mention that we will have a hard stop at 4:30, as we have a six o'clock hearing scheduled, and we need to give our -- our staff time to check into their hotels

and -- and have dinner.

Also, as a reminder, our court reporters are here on my right transcribing everything that is said here today. This is a difficult job, so when it is your time to speak, we ask that you speak slowly and clearly so that the court reporter can capture everything that you said. Also, when you first speak, please provide your -- your name, and spell your name for the court reporter. Also, it will be helpful, just for our records, if you could say the city or town where you reside or -- or operate a business. And if you are a public official, we would appreciate if you could state your title and position, in addition to your name.

Be aware that to ensure that we have an accurate record, it may be necessary for the court reporter or me to ask a speaker to repeat themselves, if something is not understandable.

After this public hearing is over, the court reporters will provide a written transcript which -- which will be -- which will be provided to myself, the five commissioners, as well as the docket, which is available to the public.

It is also important to mention that this is not the time to ask about -- questions about your individual bills or service. If you do have questions

about your individual bills or service, you may contact Bear Valley's customer services reps, Jennifer Rohan or Chance Onder. Their information is on the screen above me here. They can be reached at 909-649-7570; again, that's if you have questions or issues about your individual service. Let's see. And so this -- this information is also available at the Public Advisor's table.

If you do not wish to speak at today's hearing, but -- but if you still want to make a comment, you may submit a written comment at any time on the docket card by going to the web address, which is also on the screen above me. That address is apps.cpuc.ca.org/C/A2601022. This website, in addition to the screen above me, is also on the facts sheet at the Public Advisor's table, and I will also repeat this web address at the end of the hearing today.

All right. Just a moment, please. Okay.

Okay. It's time to hear from members of the public. The first person I have on our list is Charles Hicks.

Please come up to the podium, and state your name for the court reporter, please.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER HICKS

Thank you very much. My name is Charles Hicks.

I'm a city council member here in Big Bear Lake. I'm not speaking on behalf of the council today; I'm speaking on behalf of myself, as a resident.

I've had an opportunity to take a look at both the rate increase and the amount that BVES is requesting. The 30 percent increase is excessive. When you look at the current rates that we pay, we pay approximately $223 per month per resident in this valley, and that's based on 500-kilowatt use per month, While, on average, in San Bernardino County, we're looking at approximately 190 to $193. We're paying substantially more than anyone else in this county for our electrical service.

And I find it interesting in that if this is approved, the current rate is approved by the PUC, we are looking at an increase of over 60 percent in the last ten years for this utility. Again, that is excessive. We're looking at residents at the end of this rate period, over this increase period, to have their rates go up to approximately 289 to $300 a month. Most people in this valley are older and retired, and cannot afford these kinds of rates.

And we look at -- in addition to that, we look at the costs that would be imposed on our businesses, our small businesses in the valley. You can see that

this would also have a substantial negative impact on their ability to be profitable and remain in business.

As a resident, I find it really amazing that BVES has the audacity to come in and ask for this kind of an increase. If only -- and I believe you said in 2023 they asked for 30 percent, and then I believe received that 30 percent, and again turn around and ask for an additional 31 percent does not make any sense. I understand that BVES is a for-profit corporation, and as such, it has a right to make a profit; but, I don't think that or believe that that profit should be on the backs of the residents here in the valley.

Part of my concern is while BVES has done a relatively good job of keeping the power on, we seem to have problems with the power in the valley, and this is, in part, due to SCE's continuous and ongoing and never-ending shut-downs that we have here in the valley, while I won't ascribe that to BVES. They are, in fact, their customer, as well; but, the impact is still the same. There needs to be some way of getting some control over this, and I don't know if it's at the part of BVES looking for other sources to supply electricity to them from either the north side or the south side of this mountain range, but something has to be done on that, as well. We cannot afford to continue to have

these kind of power outages and expect to pay this kind of money to BVES for their services. Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you, much. And if --

(Applause.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: If you have any written statement, if you would like to give it to the court reporters to ensure that they have an accurate copy, that -- that would be great.

All right. Thank you, much. Next person is Thomas Craig. Or I'm -- I'm sorry, Craig Thomas. Sorry.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER THOMAS

Yes. Correct.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Sorry. And please spell your name for the court reporter, please.

SPEAKER THOMAS: C-r-a-i-g T-h-o-m-a-s.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Okay.

SPEAKER THOMAS: And I'm a resident in Big Bear Lake. Thank you for this opportunity to provide my views.

While I support the intent of this application to improve and upgrade Bear Valley Electric's infrastructure, I fully share many of the concerns expressed, including the size of the proposed rate increase on top of a recently-implemented 30 percent

increase, the fact that current rates today charged by Bear Valley Electric are about one-third higher than the statewide average, and nearly two and a half times the national average, and there is widespread dissatisfaction with the customer service at Bear Valley Electric, especially its lack of timely communications during power outages.

Additionally, Bear Valley Electric's estimate of average monthly increases in residential electricity costs under its proposal greatly understates the actual increase in cost to full-time residents. Only a third of the homes in Big Bear Valley are occupied by full-time residents; the other two-thirds are second homes and vacation rentals. They're unoccupied most of the time, and thus, use much less electricity. The average cost increase to full-time residents is, in fact, going to be much higher, twice or more the estimate that's published.

More frequent weather-driven power shutoffs by SoCal Edison have become a critical issue here. We are a resort community. Our economy is centered on tourism. Shutoffs disrupt our tourist grade, they inflict significant costs on our businesses, and these costs are compounded by growing reputational harm as word spreads about the unreliability of our power grid, and tourists

burned by power shutoffs are less likely to return. We need local electricity generating and storage capacities sufficient to ensure continuous service during shutoffs.

So therefore, I urge the Commission to require the following conditions for approving any rate increase: First, Bear Valley Electric must disclose the actual average increases that full-time residents are going to pay under their proposal; second, Bear Valley Electric must improve greatly the timeliness and accuracy of its communications during potential and actual power outages; and finally, it should expeditiously submit to the Commission a plan to build local electricity generating and storage capacity sufficient to provide continuous electric service during power shutoffs or emergencies. Thank you, again, for this opportunity to share my views.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much. And thank you for that, yeah. And again, you know, not that you have to have a written statement, but if you do, if you would like to give it to our court reporters to ensure that they have an accurate transcript, that -- that would be great.

Next person I have on the list is Norman Reinik; and if you can please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER REINIK

My name is Norman Reinik, N-o-r-m-a-n, last name R-e-i-n-i-k. I'm a 56-year resident of Big Bear Lake. I'm the last survivor of the first city council of that city, and was the mayor in 1988.

I don't like rate increases anymore than anybody else, but I understand the need for them, if they are based upon costs incurred by Bear Valley Electric, costs over which they have little or no control; and I don't mind them making a reasonable profit on those costs. As a private company, they need profits to stay in business. But, I get upset when those costs are not reasonable or when they are purposely inflated. I'm referring to four new lines on my electric bill, and everybody's else's bill, supposedly having to do with fire prevention. Those lines constitute 14 percent of my bill, ranging anywhere from 25 to 35 bucks a month, depending on the season.

Some years ago, our inept state legislature, looking to blame someone other than themselves, decided that the electric companies were responsible for most wildfires, a view I do not share. But, the state then ordered power companies to do things to prevent fires, among which was tree trimming; and either the state or you, the PUC, said they could pass the costs of doing

those things onto the ratepayers, and with, I assume, a profit. At that point, it seems that Bear Valley Electric decided to play the cost-plus game; the more it costs, the more profit they make. In line with that, it seems like they either hired the slowest tree trimmer they could find or hired a normal company, and told them to go as slowly as possible. If I had more than three minutes, I could give you many detailed examples of what I'm talking about, but since I don't have that time, I can only say the most glaring example was a tree on the corner of Santa Clara and Fox Farm Roads. It took this company six working days with a huge armada of equipment and personnel, many of whom were standing around watching, to get rid of that tree. Any Big Bear tree trimmer, of which there are many, would have had that tree down and gone in two days, with about one-tenth of the personnel and equipment that Bear Valley's company put out there. Another example was a tree across the street from my house where it took this company trips on two consecutive days to cut one small branch off one tree.

So I'm asking you, the PUC, to put an end to this tree trimming scam and maybe some of the other activities that they claim are necessary for fire prevention, which I know very little about. If you

can't do that, at least take away their profit incentive on those activities, and if there is no profit involved or you can't do anything else, at least order them to hire a new preferably local tree trimmer who knows how to effect -- efficiently remove a tree. Thank you.

(Applause.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

Next on the list is Scott Macneioage. Thank you very much. Please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MACNEIOAGE

My last name is M-a-c-n-e-i-o-a-g-e.

The first three speakers pretty much hit all the points that I have. I'm 70 years old. I'm a resident owner of Big Bear for four years. I lived previously in Mammoth Lakes for 11 years. And when I moved to Big Bear Lake, I was shocked, because that -- right when I bought my place was right when the rate increases that were previously agreed to went -- went into effect. And I was shocked by the difference between my electric bill here and my electric bill in -- in Mammoth Lakes. And Mammoth Lakes has as many problems with wildfires as any mountain resort community has, from lightning and other -- other causes.

I'm also well-schooled in economics, and I'm

old enough to where I understand this idea of a public utility being a pro -- a for-profit organization. I lived through the deregulation process that started in the Reagan era, and I -- I initially supported it, as a Libertarian economist, and thought that it would be helpful to put pressure on governments to find a more efficient way to provide services; but, really, all deregulation's done is created an interface between public and private partnerships, as it's now called, and that interface struggles, as -- as you described in your opening remarks, that it -- that that bureaucratic interface struggles with the idea of what is profit.

Bear Valley Electric is owned by American States Water. It's a wholly-owned subsidiary. American States Water stock skyrocketed in 2015 to its present plateau. You have executives who are purely compensated by stock options, and American States Water's focus is not the public; it's shareholder value. And as with all private corporations, their focus is always on their own concerns internally with their own profit, with their own compensation, with what they can scalp off the -- off the customer.

And so, regard -- the -- the previous three -- the first three speakers all hit on every single complaint that I think everybody in the valley shares:

Service, lack of continuous electrical production, the fact that Bear Valley doesn't produce a single kilowatt of energy itself, but has to seek that -- those kilowatts elsewhere.

I've -- when I first got here, I complained to Bear Valley constantly. I filed several complaints with the Public Utilities Commission, and the response that I got from the Commission was that the -- the complaints were simply archived for future reference. I never got any answer as to how these rate increases were justified, how the service problems were not being addressed.

Again, the previous speaker talked about having some sort of power generation for the valley that doesn't -- you know, that doesn't rely on somebody that doesn't even understand our -- our regional needs, you know, our local needs. So I want to concur with everybody that spoke previously, and reiterate that -- that I -- I suspect that very few people in the valley are happy with Bear Valley Electric and -- and these rate increases. Like I said, I was shocked, because 30 percent rate increase hit as soon as I moved here, and now we'll go look at another 31 percent. And nothing seems to change for the better. Thank you.

(Applause.)]

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

The next person on the list is Jim Eakin.

Please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER EAKIN

Yes. Hi. My name is Jim Eakin, E-a-k-i-n. I am a resident of Big Bear Lake. I also am on the Big Bear Lake planning commission.

I want to talk a little bit about the word "rate." A rate -- this is talked about, you know, in the general rate case when, in fact, it's actually a rate and an assessment. What I mean by "assessment," there are separate programs that really are not basically the day-to-day supply of electricity.

There are capital improvements, mitigation programs. The fellow -- several talked about the tree program. What I would like to see in the bill is that the separate assessments and programs be itemized on the bill and as they are complete, they would be removed such that at the end of this program in 2030, we would go back to only the rate increases based to supplying electricity.

So like I said, this is really more than a rate increase, it's a -- a rate, and it should be also discussed that this is an assessment program.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

The next person I have on the list is Clifton Allen.

Please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ALLEN

The first name is Clifton, C-l-i-f-t-o-n, last name is Allen, A-l-l-e-n.

I support all the comments that have been made to this point. I would like to point something else out, and that is to say that as a pass-through provider, BVES gets all its power from SCE on a couple of lines that come up the hill.

The power shutoffs that we experience are due to SCE cutting off the power. Why? Because they have overhead lines and they have refused to put them underground.

While Bear Valley Electric Service says it doesn't pay dividends to anyone, and I believe them, I don't know about their parent company and whether they issue dividends or not, but I know that SCE does to the tune of 5 to 6 percent per annum.

In most cases, when disaster strikes or stuff hasn't been done, companies that generate profits, that issue dividends or pay their -- pay their -- their executives very well are forced to make changes until

such time as they correct the problems they've created; so I would urge the Commission, which also oversees SCE, to force SCE to take the monies that it makes and put those into capital assessments, if you will, or capital improvements to underground the lines, which is quite simply done, although it costs money, and suspend their dividends for whatever it takes, two years, five years, ten years.

If you look at other examples, Exxon and BP have, both as oil companies and they're providers, therefore, of energy -- have all had to suspend their dividends for periods of five-plus years to overcome the problems that they themselves have created trying to cut corners to maximize their profits, maximize their dividends to shareholders and their share prices.

We're simply asking -- I'm simply asking the same treatment be given or doled out to the public utility providers in the state of California, and you are the Commission that has the power to do that.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

Okay. The next I have on the list is Nancy Sargent.

Please spell your name for the court reporter.

///

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER SARGENT

Yes. It's Nancy Sargent, N-a-n-c-y S-a-r-g-e-n-t.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

SPEAKER SARGENT: So I'm here today to protest allowing Bear Valley Electric Service to give us almost a 32 percent increase over the next four years. It's 31.89 percent.

We just had a 30-percent increase just a couple years ago; and to be honest with you, our service actually hasn't improved. Bear Valley Electric Service has done nothing substantial or of any value to force SoCal Edison to quit shutting our power off.

Everybody keeps talking about an ongoing wildfire threat. Here in the paperwork you've just given us, it states that part of this increase they're asking for is to mitigate the ongoing wildfire threat; and in actuality, there is no real wildfire threat.

I've lived here full time for 31 years in Moonridge; and we've never had a fire, since I've been here, caused by any kind of an electrical wire problem. And I started doing research, and -- and, actually, I discovered that not only has there never been any wildfires caused in the Big Bear Valley from any kind of utility company equipment, also Lucerne Valley, which is

right down the hill where all of this power is being funneled up through -- that's part of what they're saying all the time, is that if the wind is blowing in Lucerne Valley, they've got to cut the juice coming up to keep us from having a wildfire.

If you check the data -- and I actually brought some paperwork to the last city council meeting here in Big Bear Lake. If you check the data, you will see that there -- there's been no wildfires; so this thing of saying that there's an ongoing wildfire -- wildfire threat is just smoke and mirrors because they're trying to come up with an excuse to give us a rate increase.

My family is a family of veterans, and my husband is on supplemental oxygen, and he uses a concentrator, and his concentrator takes 223.2 kilowatt-hours per month. His CPAP machine that he's on takes 21.6 per month, and this is quite expense for our household.

Also, it's extremely nerve-racking when the electric company keeps turning our power off because then either we have to flip to portable tanks or we have to use a small gasoline-powered generator until the gas, you know, quits; and this -- I just believe that it's not fair, what they're doing.

If they're giving a lot of raises to their

executives, that needs to stop until there can be some kind of a reasonable solution; so I'm just asking that you please quit allowing them to keep using the illusion of there being an ongoing wildfire threat because there really isn't an ongoing wildfire threat due to power -- you know, power lines.

Most -- all the fires are mostly caused by humans setting the fires, or from other accidents that cause it.

So that's what I have to say.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

Okay. The next person I have on the list is Ashley Segall.

Hello. And please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER SEGALL

Ashley, A-s-h-l-e-y, Segall, S-e-g-a-l-l.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

SPEAKER SEGALL: I'm a resident of Big Bear City, a small business owner of Big Bear Lake. We've been in business for 13 years. We have a small liquor store. We run some fridges.

The ever-increasing rate increases have really squeezed our small family-run business and my home. Just for example, back in 2021, we were paying $1,200,

approximately, for 4,200 kilowatt usage; and in 2025, we're paying almost $2,100 for the same kilowatt usage, so our rates have over doubled.

Our electricity now is more than our rent. We, as a small business, cannot continue to be in business if they continue to raise our rates at what I feel is unreasonable levels.

Also, the last couple holiday weekends, they chose to shut our power off on a Saturday when we have tourists up here, while we're trying to make money to, essentially, pay our electric bill, so -- you know, sorry I'm not as eloquent as many of these other people were.

I appreciate what they said; and I concur with them that, you know, these rate increases need to stop. They need to make real change and invest in their business with their money as opposed to on the backs of their customers who are already struggling, and that's what I have to say.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much for your comment.

Okay. Next I have Cody Lewis.

Thank you. Please spell your name for the court reporter.

///

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER LEWIS

Good afternoon. My name is Cody Lewis, C-o-d-y L-e-w-i-s.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I live in Big Bear Lake, and I oppose BVES's rate increase. In the last year, my home has experienced 36 power outages. 25 of those outages have been in the last four months. One was today. That's 36 disruptions to a basic service I'm paying for.

Now Bear Valley is asking us to pay even more while requesting an 11.3 percent return on shareholder equity. Its parent company, American States Water, reported over 130 million in profit last year, including nearly $10 million from Bear Valley Electric Service alone.

I understand the utilities have expenses, the infrastructure needs investment, and that wildfire mitigation is essential; but Bear Valley Electric Service is a monopoly. We can't take our service elsewhere when the service is poor. Why should we authorize even greater shareholder returns when customers are experiencing such unreliable service?

We also need greater energy independence in Big Bear. According to Bear Valley Electric Service, approximately 7 percent of our electricity is generated

by customer-owned solar systems.

We live in a community with abundant sunshine. We're the sunniest vacation lake destination in America. Fun fact. Yet Bear Valley Electric Service has made installing specialized home electrical systems, including solar and backup power, very difficult and expensive.

Meanwhile, their own utility-scale solar project failed to obtain County approval and has been removed from this rate case. We should be encouraging local solar generation, battery storage, and other solutions to make our community more resilient and less dependent on outside power.

Most importantly, where's the accountability? Bear Valley Electric Service is asking customers to fund additional infrastructure improvements and investments that will also generate additional returns for its shareholders.

What measurable improvements in reliability will we actually receive? What did we get from investments funded by previous rate increases, and what happens if the promised improvements never materialize?

I've personally experienced poor service from Bear Valley Electric Service, from the excessive number of power outages to four months of delays on a permit

application, even to failure to bill. They're not collecting the money that they're providing service for. If they can't do those fundamental business functions, why should we give them even more money?

I also want to thank the California Public Utilities Commission. I made a complaint about a year ago about Bear Valley Electric Service; and as soon as I made the complaint, I got a call from the electric company and they were able to resolve it, even though they said it was impossible. So thank you California Public Utilities Commission.

Before approving more revenue, the Commission should demand clear explanations for these outages and service failures, financial accountability if those targets aren't met. Spending more money does not automatically mean better service.

I'm asking the Commission to reject this rate increase as proposed, scrutinize the company's profit expectations, and require actual measurable improvements.

Thank you --

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

-- all right. The next person I have on the list is -- is Basker Murugappan. I hope that I said that right. I probably didn't.

Please state and spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER MURUGAPPAN

B-a-s-k-e-r, last name M-u-r-u-g-a-p-p-a-n.

So I represent The Copper Q, which is pretty much the oldest community cafe in Big Bear. It's about 40 years old.

And I'm going to be quite tentative here in what I say because I am also working for a regulator in New Mexico, so technically, I work on the other side of this table normally. So I'm on this side of the table, so I'm going to kind of try to walk through what I think is happening and what I need to do.

So as I understand it, there is a fire reclamation fund that needs to happen, and I get that, so I'm not going to argue anything about that. There's a lot of outages, probably because BV is a small company, and very short resources. We're on a mountaintop, and it's expensive. All right. I get all that.

However, that was an interesting comment you made about ROI, which when I looked up the mother company of BVE, which is American State Water Company, their stock rose from $70 to $95 this year, so yeah, there's an ROI component and there's also a stock

component.

Now let me get down to the engineering part, which is what I am. I tracked all consumption on The Copper Q back in 2024; and fundamentally what's happened here is that it started out -- and it's a cycle, you know. During winters, you get a lot of usage -- sorry. During the summer, you get a lot of usage, and winters, you don't, so you can see the cycle of consumption very clearly.

So in 2024, what really happened was that my electricity bill in 2024, it doesn't change. It's still the same cycle, same peaks, same drops. In 2024, it was 3k for the electricity bill a month; and then it jumped to 3.5; and last month, it jumped to 5.

$5,000 for electricity bill. Same equipment, same cycles, same consumption. Now, to put this in context, this is a gross -- the electricity bill gross right now is about 9 percent of the gross revenue of the entire monthly revenue of The Copper Q. If I go to net revenue, it's 14 -- 14 percent.

That's not sustainable. It's physically not sustainable, so I have to increase prices to my customers. I don't have a choice anymore. It's come to that point.

Now, as I dug in a little bit more, I realized

that, yeah, Sacramento is, I think, what, $0.20 a kilowatt-hour; Los Angeles about $0.29 a kilowatt-hour. We are at $0.43 a kilowatt-hour. That's an insane number.

Okay. So I put back my engineering hat and I said all right, what am I going to do about this? Logically, I have to optimize what I have, so I asked Bear Valley Electric -- I said "Come in here and tell me what I can do to reduce my electricity bills."

And their comment was very interesting. "We don't do that." So they're not going to help me reduce my costs by advising me, but they want to increase the rates. Engineering-wise, that makes no sense.

All right. So I said they're not going to help me; so they said "Hey, we know somebody who can." I did contact them. It's 5k for the consulting service. Makes no sense again.

So I -- I said, okay, I'll go solar. Solar is 35k without batteries. Bear Valley Electric will not buy the kilowatt-hour at 43, they'll buy it at about 10 or 12, meaning I actually lose money here. I'm selling them electricity cheaper than they're selling it back to me. Even that makes no sense.

I said all right. Fine. Then I'll put a battery system in. I'll just go completely off grid.

Yeah, that's another 45,000, so now I'm at $80,000 with a payout of 30 years to go solar. I have no options here.

And the last option is really -- because I work in oil and gas, I said to hell with this, I'm going to put a gas generator and create my own -- I'm going to create my own electricity. And guess what? That actually is making more sense economically. I get a payout in about six years by making my own electricity. From an engineering perspective, this is nuts.

So when I look at all the numbers, I do understand why Bear Valley -- it's a small company, it's buying its gas from SoCalGas, and it's hurting. I won't say "struggling"; but okay, it has to make a ROI. I get it.

But it has given no options. I cannot go solar, I can't go green. Right? I can't reduce the wattage because they're not helping me. So where do we go from here? And I think that's where the discussion needs to occur.

Not that there's a rate hike, it's how can you help the consumer reduce their costs? And if you can't do that, then what service are you giving, because then you become a monopoly.

I have no other option but to go to BVE. I

can't go to Southern California Edison. I can't -- you know, it's not like playing an internet game where I can go to Frontier or I can go to Verizon when they piss me off because they're not giving me service.

I don't have a choice here. So you're putting the customers in Big Bear into a box and saying "You have to pay. This is yours."

So that's all I have, because in truth, I think you need to consider alternatives before you put this rate hike in because I think you're going to put this rate hike in no matter what, but there needs to be an alternative in here, at least for the resident people of Big Bear who live here year-round.

That's all I've got.]

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much. Okay. Next person I have on my list is Cory Scranton. Thank you. Please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER SCRANTON

First name is C-o-r-y; last, S-c-r-a-n-t-o-n.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

SPEAKER SCRANTON: And I just -- I was kind of shocked to -- to look at the numbers that have been going on with -- with the electric company. In 2025, there was a 22 percent increase. And I was shocked. That's equivalent to a 733 percent increase as compared

to the average increase nationwide, which is just under three percent. That, to me, is outrageous. But, now they're coming back '27 through '30 looking at 32 percent. Based on that, you're looking -- for that five-year period is a 54 percent total increase. Year-over-year, that's a 30 -- 366 percent average above the average nationwide increase of just under three percent. So I don't know if you understand or if you -- I had a hard time understanding that. The average increase nationwide through the electric utilities is just under three percent; it's 2.93, or something like that. So that kind of puts it in perspective, when you look at the rest of the country.

So it's -- it's pretty tough on people up here in Big Bear, because we're already behind the eight ball, because we've got the wildland urban interface, which was mentioned. I was a fireman up here for 32 years, and we do have a wildland urban interface. I fought fire all around the valley and the high desert, and we do have a wildland threat. However, the other speaker was talking, mentioned that we hadn't had one in the valley that was major, and we haven't, in -- in recorded history, inside the valley. All the major fires, starting with the Bear Fire in 1970, even before that -- these fires threatened the valley, but the last

one -- big one I was on was the Old Fire back in 2004, I believe, and it was burning up Lake Arrowhead and Cedar Glen and places like that. There is a wildfire threat to Big Bear, and that threat, if the situations and the -- the humidities and the -- and the winds and things like that were the right state, we -- it could take down the whole valley. However, other communities around the world and around our country and in Southern California have threats, also. We have a wildfire threat. We have an earthquake threat. We have a water shortage threat. We have lots of threats. And you can take another community, pick a -- a community somewhere else in the country; they might have earthquake threats, they might have hurricane threats, and things like that, and everybody is on a equal footing, because every community has a threat. And if you use a threat of wildfire to substantiate these incredible increases, then I think, you know, you're -- you're just kind of taking that to the bank, and hoping that the public's going to buy into that.

I also think that -- and it might be a general statement, but citizens of -- of Big Bear -- they don't have an opportunity to augment their -- their own electric service where we can supply our own through generators and solar, et cetera. I spent, for my family

and my home -- my wife has some medical issues -- several thousand dollars for a standby generator, and between the generator and the electricians and everything else, it was upwards to eight to $10,000; and I had to do that because of the situation that we're in here in Big Bear. And so every citizen in Big Bear has to pay maybe a little bit more than citizens in other communities to try to mitigate the threat and the -- and the threatened power outages and the real power outages that have been going on here for -- over the last several years.

And so I just thought I'd bring up a couple of those points, and that's all I have to say. Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right, sir. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Next person I have on the list is Chi Chung, or Chi. Hi there.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER CHUNG

Hi. My name is Chi, C-h-i; last name is Chung, C-h-u-n-g.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

SPEAKER CHUNG: I didn't write anything. I didn't prepare nothing. I'm just speaking from experience.

My family moved here in 2000. We have a business in Big Bear Lake, and I have a home in Big Bear City. First time I opened an account with Bear Valley Electric, like within a few -- few months of taking over the business, we had a huge increase. And nothing was transparent; this is what you have to pay. They asked me if I had any equipment. It was never a clear explanation on why there was a big difference. And then my cousins have a electric car, wanted a second meter, put it in. It took eight months to put it in. Everything was done within two months. Took them six months to put in the meter.

So with all those increase, I feel like they don't even give you service. They don't return calls. They don't, you know, answer emails. All those rate increase is just greed. I believe that with all the -- all those increase, customer service is not going to be the same, still not going to change. The employees I see throughout the years in -- in the office, within a couple years, they leave. They don't get paid enough to stay. And with all this rate increase, the service still is going to be the same. I don't believe that, you know, with a small business how they have to raise prices, just like all the other -- other businessmen have to do. So that's it. Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

(Applause.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Okay. The next person I have on the list is David Lawrence. Thank you, and please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER LAWRENCE

Yes. My name is David Lawrence, D-a-v-i-d L-a-w-r-e-n-c-e.

I'm the general manager for the wastewater facility, one of the largest users in the valley of power, and so obviously, the rate case, as presented, obviously is problematic for our -- our rate -- our rate structure.

In addition, the PUC has proposed to get rid of the net metering program, and zero out solar at the -- at the end of every month. That affects more than 500 residents that have solar up here, and it also affects BBARWA, as we have a huge solar farm at BBARWA to offset some of the costs. So it is very impactful, the rate case and the PUC's proposed proposal back to Bear Valley Electric. So thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

Next person I have on the list is Gayle Wright. Thank you. And please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER WRIGHT

G-a-y-l-e W-r-i-g-h-t.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

SPEAKER WRIGHT: Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

So we have been in our home in Big Bear Lake for just shy of 20 years. And I'm a recent widow. My husband just passed away a few months ago, and so I -- it's important to state that my income has gone down more than -- well, less -- I have less income, by far than half. So we have -- my husband was a building engineer. We do have solar on our house. But, the savings from the solar for electricity is negligent compared to we have a generator; in fact, we have two generators. We have one generator for 14 years, but it gets quite a workout with all these power outages; so we have a second one now, and it's only less than six years old.

But, when the power goes out -- and, of course, you know, we have them often, two times in a week -- I really second what Nancy Sergeant said, and also want to get mainly off of my subject briefly, because I want to have -- focus on the less -- less fortunate up here that cannot afford a generator, or any generator.

So my -- my bill has gone up hundreds of

dollars. When -- when -- a few years ago, we had a 32 -- 37 and a half-hour power outage, and my bill was $900, my gas bill, because my generator runs on natural gas. So three -- two of us, it was -- 300 and some-odd dollars was our usage, but $600 of it was for the generator. And so I had to buy -- I had -- first, I had to get a motherboard three years ago for my heaters, and then this year, I had to get two new heaters. And so when the guy same to install it -- this is so important and vital to say -- I was complaining about how I think I'm going to have to leave the mountain, because I can't afford these gas prices, especially now, and he concurred, and he, you know, agreed with me, and he said, "Well, let me -- I'm going to tell you --" I don't know if you can hear me well -- "multiply this number by 50." He said, "On one technician -- we have 50 up here, different companies." And he said, "Whenever there's a power outage," he said, "I can expect, just one technician, six to eight calls, minimal." And I was just shocked. And he said, "When we have -- we had -- we had October 6th, October 10th, October 17th, and during the first power outage, it usually takes maybe a day, maybe two," and then he -- he gets all these calls. And he went out to the modular homes. These people do not have money for a generator, much less for a new

heater. He has four calls there, and two in Moonridge.

Let me just touch on Moonridge. Upper Moonridge, for whatever reason, has -- seems to have power surges, and he doesn't know why, whenever we have these outages. So he had -- he had to have two people up there, had two calls from them, that he had to replace new heaters. And the people in the modular homes -- they have -- one man had to replace his heater, and it was five to $7000. And he didn't have that money, so he had to finance the heaters. The second call up there had to have a motherboard put in, and that was -- like my tech said, that's 900 to $1200. Again, not expected power outage. And then the other two, which is very important, significant to say, they had two rebootings. Their -- their power went out. And how that works -- he explained it to me. And I'm not an engineer, but my husband was. But, he says that the -- first of all, the Intertherm heaters are very good heaters. These group -- most likely, the -- the modulars there -- almost all of them have these Intertherm. He said there is no -- absolutely no reason that these heaters to go out. They're very good heaters, except for outside interference, aka power outages. So when this happens -- so the -- the -- they have a -- a probe on them. And so what happens, the --

the probe tells the -- the -- excuse me for a second -- the -- the fan to go off immediately, but the burner stays on. It doesn't go off, because it doesn't have the fan to turn -- to cool it down. So the burner stays on, and overheats. And so what that is significant about is that the power can come on, and yet, these people have no heat, because their system has to be rebooted, and that cost is 75 to 150, if it's during regular hours. If it's after hours, which usually it is, ten o'clock at night, middle of the night, this cost goes up to 150 to $300 just to reboot it, when they have time to do this. So he was saying you multiply that by 50. They compare notes. All the technicians up here experience this. And these are people that can't afford it.

And so I -- to sum up, the -- the company -- Bear Valley Electric and SoCal Edison's reliance on what I call specious justifications for these frequent disruptions don't mask the reality of what's going on, and these arbitrary outages are costing severe economic and personal harm to, first of all, the indigent people and people that don't have much money, but the ill that have to go through all these things, and the seniors, like myself -- I'm 78 years old -- and had to buy a new heater, by the way, for $17,000, two new heaters. And

so that's what Moonridge is experiencing, and they have this every time the power outage goes out.

And it's -- I just feel we need to stop these power outages now. And, of course, you don't deserve a raise right now. Thank you very much for your time.

(Applause.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

Next person --

(Inaudible.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Sure. So I -- be -- before we go on to the next person, I just wanted everyone to know that Commissioner Karen Douglas is here.

And Commissioner, I did read your statement that you had. So --

COMMISSIONER DOUGLAS: And I just wanted to say I'm very sorry to be this late, and we did decide to listen to the Zoom as much as we could and drive to get here.

And I want to thank the city for getting that Zoom up, because I was able to -- I couldn't see everybody. You all know how the roads are, and so sometimes you have coverage, and sometimes you don't. But, I actually recognize some people in here from speaking, and -- and have heard a lot of concerns and questions and perspectives, and it's very valuable. I'm

looking forward to hearing more.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right. Thank you very much, Commissioner.

The next speaker I have on my list is Barbara Nitkin. Thank you. Please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER NITKIN

Sure. My name is spelled Barbara, B-a-r-b-a-r-a. My last name is spelled Nitkin, N-i-t-k-i-n.

The last time that I was involved in a public hearing for BVES was in 2019, I believe, when this was up for being divested by the -- well, I'm going to call it a divestiture, but it was moving from a division of the American States to being a subsidiary.

I'm a corporate banker, and I started with that when I was 20 years old. I'm 75. And I was appalled at that hearing that there was so few people here that didn't look at the potential effects it was going to have on this area on an ongoing basis, because it was very apparent at that time that the parent company wanted to reduce their potential liability for fire damage.

Now, I've been through the Butler Peak fire, and then the recent one a couple years ago, a year ago.

Butler Peak I watched from this side of the mountain. Butler Peak is on the Fawnskin side, where I live.

I also get to enjoy looking at a lot of financial information from the City of L.A., because I sit on my neighborhood council there; but, I'm mostly here.

In 2024, the PUC, after they approved BVES becoming a subsidiary so that the liability, if something bad really happens, can vest in BVES, and they can bankrupt completely golden states, which is primarily -- or American States -- a water company, alone. And they have a very strong separate entity to protect them. And they're regarded today as one of the dividend kings of corporate entities that are for sale. They have plus-70 years of paying dividends to their shareholders.

I look around this particular area, and I'm familiar with what goes on with electric companies, et cetera, from having worked on developments throughout most of this United States. We need to get smart. We need to have them give us an audit of what they did with their promises when they were approved by the PUC, because there was a lot of improvements that were promised.

And I now have heavy wire near my house, but

the tree situation I have to negotiate to get trees trimmed. We have a lot of trees that are in the wires in Fawnskin, and getting Bear Valley Electric to do something seriously takes effort, and you have to stand out there and point to the tree limbs that are potential problems. They have no foresight. And these are employees. These were not called in independents. They do not seriously take our issues to heart.

I'm also going to tell you a generator today costs more than $10,000. We have one that's been working for a month, and we've had multiple power outages, and then we now have a microwave that doesn't really work anymore, and it's -- was just repaired a week ago. We also have had a full panel put in because of the generator. And I also have looked at solar, and that is an absolute joke to get any comparative information. And I have solar on my other home down the hill, and that's been on for more than ten years.

And this is just not acceptable. And I've looked at a lot of analytics for area services here, and I have been in the *Grizzly* before, and Dave from BBARWA knows me. Okay? So I look very hard at numbers, because that's my life. And my bill mid-summer was $400, one month. That's ridiculous. Because when I bought my house 20 -- 25 years ago, it hardly ever

passed $100, and that was with my daughter, who was then a schoolteacher living in the house full-time. Okay? So something's wrong here, and you guys need to audit, because the numbers just don't cook right. Thank you.]

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

All right. The next person I have on the list is Todd Weichers.

Please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER WEICHERS

Thank you for your time. It's Todd, T-o-d-d, Weichers, W-e-i-c-h-e-r-s. And don't worry about mispronouncing it. Everybody else does too.

Thank you again for your time to hear all of us. I know I'm going to be beating a dead horse. I've been sitting back there writing notes. I don't have any statistics to refer to; but like everybody else in this room, my rates have continued to increase, as well as the power outages have continued to increase.

We're constantly told "Well, get solar on your home." Well, it's very expensive. If your roof is not new, they make you change out your roof; and the rules have changed so the savings are no longer there.

Whole-house generators are also very expensive. I priced one about six years ago; and at that time, it was $18,000 to install it. I've heard that that is --

has gone up to about $25,000 now.

My understanding is we get a lot of our electricity from the Lucerne Valley side of the valley. I lived in Apple Valley for 26 years -- this is just 13 miles from Lucerne Valley -- and the wind blows in Apple Valley and Lucerne Valley constantly. I used to joke at my work -- people would ask "Wow, does the wind blow here all the time?"

"Yeah, 364 days a year. You just missed yesterday, it was the only day it doesn't blow." And it blows hard. It's not just a breeze. Gusts of 35 to 40 miles an hour are not uncommon.

One of the last two outages we had was a wind event in Lucerne Valley. I know that SCE takes care of those lines, but it seems to me that they just turn off the power sometimes to just turn off the power. There's nothing to burn in Lucerne Valley until you get up to -- to Cactus Flats, and then it's just cactus.

And the wind doesn't blow up this way from there, it blows across the desert to the east. Like I said -- stated, I lived in Apple Valley for 26 years, and not one-time in those 26 years was my power turned off due to a wind event.

These increases that are being proposed affect fixed-income citizens the most because if Bear Valley

Electric increases the rates, other companies, as we've heard, and utilities have to increase their rates to compensate for those costs increase.

The other thing I have an issue with is State regulations have pushed out cheaper alternatives, like for electrical generation, like natural gas, for more expensive production like solar and wind, which has not brought down any of our costs, it has only increased them.

So in conclusion, I wish to state my opposition to any increases without seeing any benefits to the customers of Bear Valley Electric Service.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

Okay. That is all of the people I have on my list. Is there anybody who I missed or is there anybody who's not on the list who would like to speak, by show of hands?

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER SEGALL

Can I add something to --

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Yes, please.

And, again, just please state your name for the court reporter.

SPEAKER SEGALL: Ashley Segall, A-s-h-l-e-y S-e-g-a-l-l.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

SPEAKER SEGALL: I initially came up here because our business cannot sustain these increases.

But we tried to put solar on our house four years ago, and we did, and we installed it right before they changed the metering laws, and Bear Valley Electric dragged their feet so that we are not on net metering.

And I can tell you that solar up here is a complete joke, especially if they do these increases. I essentially get less than a penny -- I think it's like .013 they pay me per kilowatt, and then turn around and charge me $0.32 a kilowatt.

I have 27 panels. I work, I have no kids, and our bill last month was $342, which is crazy for an empty house with 27 solar panels making almost four times the electricity than I'm using; so for you to roll off the net metering for the people that were blessed to still have it, net meter -- solar without net metering is -- is, honestly -- it felt like -- it feels like a scam.

I just wanted to add that because solar is not the solution.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

And I see one other hand raised. Please come up, sir; and please state and spell your name for the

court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER SLOWAY

My name is John Sloway, J-o-h-n S-l-o-w-a-y.

I wasn't going to really say anything at all, but I am here strictly to kind of, sort of, defend solar because -- I can't speak for the commercials because they have to buy their panels, but -- and I'm involved in the solar industry, relatively new, because of the success that I had at my residence by installing solar panels. I did that in March. However, it was a long, hard process getting it approved not only by BVES but also by the City here, constant battles back and forth.

What prompted me to look at solar -- and I have a small three-bedroom, two-bathroom house over on -- by Meadow Park. My December bill was $621. 621. I installed the panels, and my most recent bill -- and you're free to look at them -- was $86.

And I do lease the panels, and some people don't like to do that, but I will tell you right now the leasing of the panels costs me $166 a month, so I'm coming out pretty far ahead on the deal.

And I will be happy to discuss that with anybody here who's interested. But a lot of people are correct, solar is not for everybody. Like they said, if you have an old roof, you've got to put a new roof on;

if you have tree shade, you've got to -- you can't put solar on a house that's completely covered in pine trees and whatever.

I have a home in -- a rental home in Sugar Loaf that had the same problem, so I had to put a whole-house generator in, which did cost me about, three years ago, $18,000, not only because of the generator but because of the installation, and I'm running it on -- on natural gas.

So -- oh, and then the other issue that I really wanted to talk about is this net metering stuff. We got rid of net metering up here in Big Bear in 2018, and I feel that -- I -- I think it's a stupid decision to do it, and I think it makes all kinds of sense to try to reinstate net metering because on my $50 bill, or my $60 bill, I get a credit of about 3 percent back for my -- for my credit for my solar, and so there's really no net metering. It's a small little tidbit that I get back for all the stuff that I did.

So anyway, again, to make the point, I'm not saying solar is for everybody, but it is a good option where it can fit, and that's all I've got to say.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

Anybody else who hasn't spoken who might like

to speak, by -- by show of hands?

Yes, sir?

Please state and spell your name.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BUSH

My name is Ray Bush, R-a-y, Bush, B-u-s-h.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

SPEAKER BUSH: I'm a senior; and as you can see, I'm on oxygen. I do get a rate discount, which is minimal. You can't even find it when you look on your bill.

And one thing I want to note. I only get -- I'm on Social Security, and my increase on Social Security doesn't even come close to what their increase is. I mean, we get the minimal increase in Social Security, and this increase on this bill won't even -- we won't even get enough to cover it and stuff.

And what you get back for a rate discount for people on medical equipment doesn't even give anything; and you make us go every year to get a doctor's approval to get it again, we have to go back to the doctor and ask for it again and again to get a minimal excuse.

And you don't give warnings for us when the power is going out. It goes out in the middle of the night, and we've got a -- luckily, we hear our equipment go off so we can get up and put on the other stuff. You

know, you don't warn us or nothing.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

Okay. Anybody else who hasn't spoken who would like to speak, by show of hands?

Okay. Seeing none, I'm going to go ahead and close out the public comment portion of this hearing. Give me just a moment to find myself here.

Okay. With that, Commissioner Douglas, is there anything else that you would like to say at the end of our hearing today?

COMMISSIONER DOUGLAS: I would just like to say that I very much appreciate everybody taking the time to come and talk to us, and -- and this -- these public participation hearings are our opportunity to come and to listen.

And as I noted earlier, I heard a lot of concerns and I heard a lot of questions and I heard a lot of people speak to concerns about frequent power shutoffs, and I heard questions about why it happens so frequently.

Wildfire costs came up a lot, just the history of costs and rate increases. I heard a number of people step up with statistics and make comparisons to other utilities and other places, a number of small business

owners here, a number of other local, you know, providers for utilities, a lot of residents.

A number of you raised a structural issue of just the fairly large proportion of vacation homes or -- or homes where people do not live year-round. Of course, many people also do live here year-round.

I just heard a couple customer -- a number of people mention customer service or how long does it take to get something built or something installed or connected. A number of people mentioned concerns about whether the improvements from the last rate increase have been implemented and are you seeing the benefits, or asserting that, in your view, you are not.

And what else? I just -- there were a number of other comments as well. I won't attempt to summarize everything, but I did want to reflect back a bit since you have seen me physically for a very small proportion of this hearing.

And I just again want to thank all of you for coming and sharing your views and your perspectives with us. It's very valuable.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right. Thank you, Commissioner Douglas.

Once again, you may also submit written comments on the docket card for this proceeding at any

time by going to the website, which is on the screen here right above me.

That's apps.cpuc.ca.gov/c/a2601022. Again, that's right here on the screen above me.

On behalf of myself and all of the commissioners at the CPUC, I want to thank everyone for your participation here today. We really do appreciate the time that you took out of your day today to participate in this proceedings with us.

I also want to thank everyone who -- who has helped in this hearing here today, including our court reporters and -- and the CPUC's Public Advisor's Office, and especially the City of Big Bear Lake for use of this hearing room.

So that does conclude today's 2:00 p.m. hearing. We will be having another hearing at 6:00 o'clock p.m. today, same -- same place; and, again, anybody is welcome to come and -- and comment.

With that, we are now adjourned and off the record. Thank you.

(At the hour of 3:41 p.m., this matter having been continued to 6:00 p.m., the Commission then adjourned.)]

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EVENING SESSION - 6:00 P.M.

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ALJ VAN DYKEN: We are now on the record. The Commission will come to order.

Today is October 27, 2026 at 6:02 p.m. This is the time and place for the public participate -- public participation hearing on Rulemaking (sic) 26-01-022. This California Public Utilities Commission, or CPUC, as we refer to ourselves -- this rulemaking will consider Bear Valley Electric Service's application requesting authorization to increase its rates and to implement additional programs and improvements.

My name is David Van Dyken. I am the assigned administrative law judge, or ALJ, that is assigned to this proceeding. I want everyone to, too, just be aware that I do speak with a stutter, so when I encounter a verbal block, just wait a second, and I will certainly get past it.

The assigned commissioner, as I've mentioned, is Karen Douglas, who is right here with -- with us today, and we will hear from Commissioner Douglas in just a few minutes.

This is one of three public participation hearings the CPUC is holding in this matter. The first one was a virtual hearing that was held on October 13th,

and we are holding two in-person hearings today in this space. The first one was at two o'clock, and this one here at six o'clock is our third hearing.

Public engagement is critical to the work that we do at the CPUC. We will -- we will be paying careful attention to -- to the comments that you provide here today, and your comments will help us to better understand how Bear Valley's electric service is provided and how you, as customers, are impacted; this, in turn, will help the CPUC to make a more informed decision toward Bear Valley's requests in its application.

Additionally, we have court reporters who are here who are currently transcribing everything that is said, and this will be -- this will appear in a written transcript of our meeting here today. Whence -- once the transcript is ready, it will be filed on the docket for this proceeding, which is public. Therefore, because this is being transcribed, as we all speak we need to be sure to speak slowly and clearly so that our court reporters can be sure to capture everything that is said accurately.

Also, if you are an elected official, we would appreciate if you could provide that information to the Public Advisor, and also when you begin to speak.

Also, I do want to thank the City of Big Bear Lake for providing the city council chambers here today. This is a wonderful venue; so thank you to -- to the city.

With that, I would like to invite Commissioner Douglas to make some remarks.

COMMISSIONER DOUGLAS: Thank you, Judge Van Dyken, and good evening, everybody.

I'd also -- I'd like to start, just briefly, by thanking the judge, the court reporters, the Public Advisor's Office, and our external relations staff for just making this event work in partnership with the City of Big Bear Lake, which is hosting us in this venue.

And most importantly, I want to thank the members of the public who are here to share their perspectives. This evening is for you, and it's for us to hear from you; and so we're very much looking forward to doing that.

This meeting continues the virtual public hearing that took place on October 13th, and the in-person public participation hearing at 2:00 p.m. today. I'm the commissioner assigned to this proceeding where we will be reviewing Bear Valley Electric Service's Test Year 2027 general rate case, or GRC. These hearings are how the Commission -- or one way that

the Commission can hear directly from individuals, from business owners, from communities who are impacted by the results of this proceeding. Your comments give us valuable insights into your concerns and your priorities, and that goes a long way in helping us make informed decisions as we get deeper into the proceeding.

For this general rate case, we will be determining the total amount of revenue that Bear Valley is authorized to collect to cover various utility costs from 2027 through 2030, as well as the allocation of those costs, and as we consider that question, there are a number of priorities statewide that -- statewide and here that we need to be thinking about or considering as we work to oversee the utilities and the critical services that they provide, and we focus on the provision of affordable, safe, reliable, and clean energy service. Some of these priorities will include infrastructure maintenance and upgrades, mitigation work against the threat of catastrophic wildfires, and much much more, and all of this work has a cost. And at the same time, I'm well aware of the affordability challenges on ratepayers today, and so we do have to look carefully at both the importance of the work that needs to be done and the impact on customers and customer affordability; and to that end, we will be

scrutinizing the necessity of Bear Valley's requested funding authorization, and taking action, where appropriate, as we look at ways to also contain costs.

And so, with that, I, again, want to say that I appreciate the opportunity to hear directly from everybody today, and I'll turn this back to you, Judge Van Dyken.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right. Thank you very much, Commissioner Douglas.

So next, I would just kind of like to give everyone an overview of what the CPC is and -- CPUC is and what we do.

So the CPUC is the state agency that regulates privately-owned utilities that provide essential services, such as electricity, gas, or water. Bear Valley is one of those privately-owned utilities that we regulate.

As the administrative law judge in this proceeding, I manage the proceeding to evaluate all of the documentation and information received, including your input, and with the assistance of staff from the CPUC's Energy Division.

There are five commissioners at the CPUC, including Commissioner Douglas, who you have just heard from. Each are appointed by the governor, and then

confirmed by the State Senate. These five commissioners are the ones who will make the final decision in Bear Valley's request. The five commissioners may decide whether to adopt the proposed decision that I propose, or they may instead decide to adopt their own different decision, based on the evidence that comes forward in this proceeding. We anticipate a decision to be issued in early 2027. In this case, the CPUC will determine how much Bear Valley may earn and the rates that will be included in customer bills for electric service.

There are two other interested parties in this proceeding. They are the California Public Advocates Office, and the other is Snow Summit. As parties, each par -- each participate as advocates for the interests of Bear Valley's customers. Let's see here.

In a general rate case such as this one here, the Commission takes a look at a utility's forecast of operations for a year called a Test Year, which in this case is 2027 plus the next three years. The Commission analyzes things, such as impacts for rate increases, capital additions, such as construction projects, operating expenses, legal and regulatory requirements, and various other administrative costs that the -- that the company has, such as the benefits and taxes and everything else that is needed in order for Bear Valley

to provide safe and reliable service. And for more information, we do have some fact sheets on various tables in the room that you can take.

Next item is I just want to give you a brief background of what's actually in Bear Valley's application, what it is that they are requesting in their application.

So in its application, Bear Valley points out that it primarily serves resident -- residential customers, with a small amount of business, industrial, and public customers. The largest industrial customers include the ski resorts, a local wastewater treatment facility, and they also have a pilot electric vehicle program.

Bear Valley's application seeks, among other things, to increase its -- its general rates, energy supply charges, authority to implement additional programs and improvements, and approval of an appropriate rate of return. So what that means is -- a rate of return refers to the profit that a regulated private utility is allowed to earn. So that -- that's a -- a part of this rate case; we determine how much profit the company is allowed to earn.

Bear Valley is requesting rate increases of 14.25 percent in 2027, 5.24 percent in 2028,

4.74 percent in 2029, and 7.66 percent in 2030, totalling a 31.89 percent increase in 2030 from current rates. Bear Valley's last rate application was filed in 2023, with a decision that was issued in January of 2025. That resulted in your rate increase of 30.3 percent between 2022 and 2026. Bear Valley says that a significant portion of the increase request is attributable to the ongoing wildfire threat and wildfire mitigation measures being implemented by Bear Valley, and Bear Valley also says that these measures are largely being mandated by the state legislature and by the CPUC. So that's my brief background as to what the CPUC does and what Bear Valley's requesting in its application.

Before we turn to -- to public comment, I just want to go over a few ground rules here to ensure that things go smoothly.

So as I mentioned already, the purpose of today's meeting is for the CPUC to hear directly from Bear Valley Electric Service's customers and members of the public about their electric service, rates, concerns, and anything else that may help the CPUC make a decision in Bear Valley's general rate case. Any member of the public, including anyone who attended another public hearing, has a right to speak. As a

reminder for those who wish to speak, again, please sign up at the table over here on my left, your right.

It is also important to note that we're not going to -- that we will not be answering specific questions about the application at the hearing today. We are here to listen to your comments and concerns, and those will help us to -- to determine how to make our decision in this case.

Based on the number of commenters, I may place a three-minute -- and I may place a three-minute time limit per speaker, just to be sure that we're able to get through to everyone.

Also, again, as a reminder, the court reporters are transcribing everything that is said in our hearing today. This is a difficult job for them, so when it is your time to speak, we do ask, again, that you speak slowly and clearly so that what they -- they capture is accurate. When you get up to speak, please also give your name, and spell it for the court reporter, and if you like, also the city or town which -- in which you either reside or operate a business. If you are a public official, please state your title and position, in -- in addition your name.

Also, just be aware that to ensure that we do have an accurate record, it mate -- it may be necessary

for the court reporter or myself to ask the speaker to repeat themselves, if something is not understandable. And again, after this public meeting is over, the court reporters will prepare a written transcript to this hearing. The transcript will be provided to me and all five commissioners, and will be available to the public and posted on the docket for this proceeding.

Also, it is important to mention that this is not the time or place to ask questions about your individual bills or service. If you do have a question about your individual bill or service, you may contact Bear Valley's customer service representatives, Jennifer Rohan or Chance Onder, who are currently standing by. Their names and phone numbers are up here on the screen above me, at (909) 866-1658. Again, if you have a question about your individual bill or service, Jennifer Rohan or Chance Onder are the people that you should contact on the -- with the phone number here at the screen above me here. Also, that information is also available at -- at the Public Advisor's table over here.]

One last thing. If you do not wish to speak publicly today, but would still like to comment, you may submit written comments at any time on the docket card by going to the web address also on the screen up here

above me.

The web address is apps.cpuc.ca.gov/c/a2601022, and that website also is available on the fact sheet at the Public Advisor's Office table. And, again, I am -- I will also repeat that web address at the end of the hearing today, but please remember you may submit written comment at any time.

Okay. With all that, it's finally time to hear from you. So I'm going to go down the list here, and the first person I have on the list is Pat Enyart.

And please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ENYART

Yes. Hi. I am Pat Enyart, P-a-t, last name E-n-y-a-r-t. I'm a resident of Sugar Loaf.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right. Thank you.

SPEAKER ENYART: And I'm going to read a letter that I sent to the Public Advisor at CPUC, and then a comment.

"Dear Advisor, I'm writing to seek your assistance in addressing concerns regarding the billing practices of Bear Valley Electric Service in Big Bear Lake, California. I've experienced improper billing on two occasions, and discussions with neighbors have revealed similar issues, suggesting a potentially

widespread problem that merits investigation.

"In the most recent incidents, both properties were unoccupied when the bills unexpectedly increased. During one billing cycle, I was on vacation for 22 days, and my neighbor's cabin was only occupied for one weekend. Despite a 30-percent spike in billing, the charges returned to normal the following month.

"BVES consistently attributes these discrepancies to issues within our homes, advising us to hire electricians to verify their readings. However, the cost of an electrician, at $150 an hour, is prohibitive, and I suspect BVES relies on customers not pursuing further action.

"Additionally, there's an ongoing hearing regarding a 31-percent billing increase by BVES. There was already a 30-percent approved implementation between '22 and '26. This would result in a cumulative 61-percent rise.

"This increase is particularly concerning given the unreliable service we experience, with frequent power outages occurring multiple times a month, often on weekends. As Big Bear is a tourist destination, these outages significantly impact local businesses and residents, leading to business closures, loss of income, and without any compensation. We're not even offered

rebates for purchasing generators like Southern California Edison.

"Furthermore, we'd like the option to choose an alternative provider. I kindly request your assistance in investigating these billing discrepancies and exploring potential solutions to ensure we have reliable electric service for our community.

"Thank you for this attention to the matter. Sincerely, Pat Enyart."

So and my last comment is I'm totally against any kind of increase until BVES can show the citizens what they did with the last 30-percent increase, since we don't even have reliable service now; and if we're forced to buy generators, we should be reimbursed; and we should also be reimbursed for the amount of business that we suffer due to their lack of service.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

One thing I forgot to mention. Not that you need to have a written statement; but if you do, and if it is on paper, our court reporters would appreciate if they had that just to be sure what they write down is totally accurate.

So all right. With that, the next speaker is Chuck Orozco.

Hi there. Please be sure to spell your name for the court reporter, please.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER OROZCO

Sure. My name is Chuck Orozco, C-h-u-c-k O-r-o-z-c-o.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

SPEAKER OROZCO: You're welcome.

I'm a longtime resident of Big Bear and a founder of Big Bear Residents for Electric -- Fair Electric Rates. We have a Facebook page.

I'd like to thank you, David Van Dyken and Commissioner Karen Douglas, for holding this in-person meeting and hearing our voices. It's important to us all.

Let's talk numbers. The CPUC already approved rate increases totaling over 30.3 percent from 2023 through 2026. Now BVES wants another 4.25 percent revenue increase in 2027, with other tiered increases reaching 31.89 percent by 2030. That's over 60 percent increased.

In what world is that fair? Enough is enough. BVES justifies these increases with wildlife prevention -- wildfire prevention, infrastructure upgrades, and reliability. And we support those things, but that doesn't mean BVES deserves a blank check.

They're proposing 1. -- 132.8 million in capital spending, including 108 million for wildlife mitigation. Even the CPUC's independent Public Advocates Office has formally proposed (sic) this application, raising questions about whether these costs and proposed rates are reasonable. Spoiler alert, they're not.

Meanwhile, BVES parent company American States Water just increased shareholder dividends by marking 72 years of dividend increases. 72 years. And BVES wants to increase a return -- authorized return equity from 10 percent to 11.3 percent, but why aren't shareholders being asked to shoulder more of the burden instead of passing it on to small businesses and residents?

And let's talk about those residents. Median household income in Big Bear Lake is approximately $76,000, compared with 99,000 statewide. More than one in five residents are over 65, many living on fixed incomes.

I -- I posted this on the Nextdoor app and received over 69 comments from frustrated local residents. Chelsea Robinson reported an electric bill exceeding $1,000 for her 1100-square-foot home. Christie Wilson Taihey said her family has been living without gas, without -- trying to catch up on her

electric bills, and once her bills reached almost $900 each. Joanne D. said her bill now is equivalent to two bills, and she's shutting everything off.

Think about that. People are -- are going without one essential utility to afford another. Electricity is not just a luxury on the mountain, it's a necessity. We should not have to choose between heating our homes, putting food on the table, and paying our electric bills.

In closing, I am asking this Commission to independently scrutinize these expenses, examine less costly alternatives, reconsider the proposed investor returns, and provide protections for seniors, low-income households, and current residents.

We also need to think seriously about Big Bear's future -- energy future. We should be investing in greater energy independence through solar, wind, and local backup power rather than relying so heavily on electricity brought up the mountain. Maybe we can ask Elon Musk about those chargers. Maybe he can help us.

In the meantime, BVES should lower Tier 1 rates for permanent residents, and the State should expand subsidies and assistance programs to make electricity more affordable. The CARE program simply does not go

far enough. Electricity is a basic necessity, not a luxury, and every resident should be able to afford it.

I urge you to reject these proposed increases and put the people of Big Bear before the shareholder profits and make affordability a priority, not an afterthought.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much for your comments.

Okay. The next person I have on the list is Joe Buerba. I'm sorry if I mispronounced that.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BUERBA

My name is Joe Buerba, spelled B-u-e-r-b-a.

Good evening, Judge Van Dyken and Commissioner Douglas, as well as everyone else in attendance. I'm a Big Bear City resident with a professional background in energy efficiency, HVAC, utility programs, and CPUC-related initiatives.

I support responsible wildlife mitigation and necessary grid modernization. However, Bear Valley Electric is asking customers who already pay exceptionally high electricity rates to fund substantial additional spending.

My concern is whether these investments will produce measurable improvements in reliability,

affordability, and outage resilience, and whether lower-cost customer-side solutions have been fully evaluated.

First, what specific improvements will this spending deliver in system reliability as well as outage frequency, resilience, and restoration times, especially during public safety power shutoffs?

Second, if customers are being asked to finance additional grid infrastructure, why is there not a stronger commitment to customer-side energy efficiency and resilience?

I ask the Commission to require Bear Valley to evaluate meaningful incentives for insulation, weatherization, air sealing, efficient windows, residential batteries, backup power, safely installed standby generators in critical load systems, and qualifying portable balcony and plug-in solar systems. These measures can reduce energy use, manage peak demand, lower bills, and help residents remain safer during these outages.

Bear Valley has also received approval for solar and battery infrastructure. What measurable benefits will these investments provide if Southern California Edison's incoming supply is interrupted?

Finally, Bear Valley has identified potentially

lower-cost conductor insulation technology. Have these alternatives and the savings they could provide customers been fully evaluated and incorporated into this request?

I'm not questioning the importance of wildlife safety. I'm asking whether the proposed strategy properly balances infrastructure hardening with affordability, demand reduction and resilience before approving any substantial rate increase.

I ask the Commission to require transparent performance metrics, rigorous cost-effectiveness analysis, and meaningful consideration of customer incentives and lower-cost alternatives. Every dollar customers are asked to pay should produce a measurable benefit, and Bear Valley should pursue the safest, most affordable, and most resilient solution available.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much for your comment.

The next person I have on the list is Bob Hartunian.

And please spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER HARTUNIAN

Yes. It's Bob Hartunian, spelled

H-a-r-t-u-n-i-a-n.

I'm the senior citizen on fixed income that people talk about. I've been a resident of Fawnskin for about 30 years, paying bills for the utility system consistently.

I don't have a prepared speech, so I'll just speak about what I looked up before I came here. I pulled up my checkbook from two years ago, and my bill was $27.47, which was very reasonable. My latest bill two years later, 65.29. That's a 125 percent increase in two years.

If you average that out, it's a 61- to 62-percent-per-year increase in the rates that I have to pay by check from myself. I think that's extravagant, and I'd like to see that reduced.

I think the fairer system would be to limit the amount that the utility company can increase by the cost-of-living index; and if that's four and a half percent, that should be the limit that they are allowed to charge to the general public.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Okay. The next person I have on the list is Michael Fonda.

Hello.

///

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER FONDA

Yeah, my name is Michael Fonda, M-i-c-h-a-e-l F-o-n-d-a; and I -- Bob here brought up a very good point.

I've lived here in Big Bear City for 57 years, and things have sure changed. It seems the last 10 or 15 years or so, the utilities, including Bear Valley Electric, have just gone after residents.

Every time they need a rate increase, who -- who bears the brunt of it? The people that live here and live here year round. And my -- my suggestion to Bear Valley Electric, one, the short-term rentals have been just a bane to our residential neighborhood with their trash and congestion and parties, or whatever.

Raise their rates exclusively. Also, the big users like Snow Summit, Bear Mountain, raise their rates. But please get off my back. I -- I can -- you know, I'm on a limited income too, and these -- the power outages -- now, that's, of course, a different subject, but the gobbledygook of public service power shutoff -- how can you call shutting off someone's electricity a public service, especially if they have medical devices that require electricity? It just leaves people hung out to dry.

But go after somebody else besides the

residents. You know, the goose can only lay the golden egg for so long, so make -- make your power -- your rate increases -- take them out on somebody else.

That's -- that's my speech. Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right. Thank you much for your comments.

The next person I have on the list is Jill Gatsby.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GATSBY

Hello, your Honor. I'm Jill Gatsby, J-i-l-l G-a-t-s-b-y. Jill Gatsby.

I wish I was as great and rich as the Gatsby guy, but I'm not. I'm also on a fixed income. I've been up here for nine years. When I bought my house at 401 East Barker Boulevard in Big Bear City, California, they had to show me the last six months of their utility bills before we paid for the house.

Bob and Nancy Wallace were paying, during the summer, $75 a month. They were paying $150 a month for electric during the winter. Then I moved in. I moved in and my bill hopped to $350 a month. That's in the summer. In the winter, I pay up to $900 a month; and I spend about three to four days a week with no electricity watching all my food defrost, sitting in the dark, unable to work.

I am an editor. I'm a film editor. I work -- I work from Los Angeles up here. I thought I could. Lost that job because of the electric company up here. I lost my ability to work as an editor because I am not reliable because we never know when I'm going to be cut off of my computer for hours upon end in the middle of the week.

I am asking for an investigation into the mass fraud of this electric company. Last month, in July -- I want to make this clear. In July, I finally -- I unhooked a two-man jacuzzi that's a joke because it's so small there's no way you could get two people in it.

But I unhooked the two-man jacuzzi just to make a point. My -- my electric bill doubled. My bill last month was $744. I'm a single mother with a son who's 20 years old going to college, and I say shame on this company.

This is fraud, and I want to know why there's no investigation into this fraud and why there's not a class action lawsuit against these people who are using us like dirt, and they're trying to make people homeless up here.

And they do have a lot of these poor people who are living -- who couldn't even make it to this meeting because they can't afford to put gas in their car to get

here, and so those people are literally unknown people up in Sugar Loaf who are living with no electricity because they can't afford to pay it.

This is insane. We have a guy who was blown up in Vietnam here. He can't afford -- he -- he fought for our country, and he can't even afford to keep the lights on. This is insane. 744 -- and my friend Theodore Trentman, who does Big Bear TV -- which most people wouldn't even know this was here. I wouldn't even know this was happening, because there's no news source up here, unless he had put it on -- on his free TV thing he has. This is an atrocity.

So the other thing I want to say again -- and this is according to Theodore. So I believe what this guy says; and he's saying that if you do not stand up here today and go sign up over there, then it doesn't matter if you're sitting here, your voice will not be counted.

It will not be counted, and they'll say only five people contested today, and that's horrifying for us. So if you want to see the gas go up, don't get up here today. You've got to get up here today and you've got to protest. I protest.]

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you. All right. The next person on our list is Wayne Taylor.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER TAYLOR

Good evening, everyone. Yes, my name is Wayne Taylor, W-a-y-n-e T-a-y-l-o-r.

And the reason why I'm here is that in August of this year, my bill went up to $215, I think it was. And I called Bear Electric to find out why my bill was so high, and they said because of the -- the percentage rate that they had created an increase. And I asked them. And then the lady said, "Well, I'm going to look at your record." She looked at my record, and she said, "Well, nothing is changed, you know." She said, "But, however, we're still going to have to increase your money," my bill. And I asked her, I said, "Well, is this going to be every month that I would have to pay a rate increase?" And she couldn't answer that.

And then so I'm saying I feel that there should be a ceiling placed on these increase that they be doing, and -- and be transparent in giving us a proof of how the money is being spent. And that's basically what I wanted to say this evening to you all. And thank you very much.

(Applause.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right. Thank you much, sir.

Next person I have on the list is Timothy

Dobbs.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER DOBBS

Yes. Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My last name is spelled D-o-b-b-s. Okay.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Yes.

SPEAKER DOBBS: So I heard recent -- you know, well, I'll go back to my bill. Like this gentleman who's looking at his August bill, I did the same thing. I used less electricity than I did August a year ago, and my bill went up 80 percent. So I don't -- it doesn't tie in with the -- with the -- the rate case increases that I'm seeing, you know, in your -- in your statement, in your paperwork. So I don't know how to explain that, but that's what it was. It went up 80 percent.

And so then I heard that -- from a reliable source that -- and I can't tell you who that is, but -- that they're spending a lot of money on infrastructure improvements, and what that is is they're replacing good equipment with new equipment that may have been driven by the Eaton Fire in Los Angeles down in Pasadena.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: There you go.

SPEAKER DOBBS: And so -- so there may be some overreaction to what happened in Los Angeles. I don't know. We have four fire agencies up here that protect

us, and we're comfortable with that. So I don't know about the fire risk.

But, now they're asking for more money. And -- and I've lived here 13 years. I've never experienced these kind of rate increases. If they -- if it's true that they need to make infrastructure improvements, why don't they pace their spending so we don't get hit so hard, you know, in -- year to year the first, you know, couple years? That can be managed.

But, it's a risk factor with the fires. Assess the risk. How many -- how many lawsuits have they -- have they experienced in Bear Valley Electric? I don't know. If they haven't had any lawsuits, then that's a reflection of what -- what the risk may be. Because Edison got blamed for the Eaton Fire, and they're financially liable. And that was huge, but -- so -- so I -- you know, I think spending is out of control. It's like they're -- they're spending over a $100 million on infrastructure improvements like, bam, right now. Why don't they pace it? You know, I've never -- I've lived here 13 years, and I've never seen rate increases like these.

And again, like everybody, you know, a lot of people here tonight, I'm on a fixed income. I moved here 13 years ago because I like -- I wanted to get out

of Dodge City and live in Big Bear, because I retired. And so I'd like that to be considered. I -- you know, I just think that the spending out -- is out of control. That's all behind these rate increases, is what they spend. And so I -- I think it needs to be paced, it needs to be managed, there needs to be cost management, risk analysis. I worked for Southern California Edison before I retired, and so -- in -- in finance, and all this forecasting -- and, you know, that was part of my responsibility, was -- was forecasting our business cost.

But, so I hope you -- you all can consider that. We're -- I think these are ridiculous increases, bigger than I've ever seen in 13 years. So thank you for allowing me to speak.

(Applause.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you much for your comment.

Our next person I have on my list here is David Delay.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER DELAY

My name is David Delay, D-e-l-a-y. Thank you, your Honor, and all staff.

I've been a valley resident up here for approximately 59 years. I've seen a lot of changes, a

lot of crazy stuff going on; but, this is -- this really takes the cake. We just came up with a -- a 30 percent increase. I don't know how many people actually protested, but, you know, I'm pretty sure I remember the valley was unhappy about it. Now we got a 31 percent increase. What are they going to do next time? This is -- this is insane.

What I'd like to know is there has been some information floating around, who knows if it's true or whatever. Bear Valley's a little skeptical about giving you the whole information. But, we'd like to know where this -- these increases within the past 30 percent or this 31 percent's going to go to. Is it actually infracture? Is it going to go to investors? Is it going to go to wages and salary from unions and all this other stuff?

This is -- you know, the fixed income -- I'm on a fixed income now, you know. Thankfully, I'm enjoying retirement, until I get my bill.

But, where's the money going? That 30 percent that they just finished, did it go into infrastructure or did it go into some other account that's whatever? Last I understood, and I've told people before, you have two charges on your account, on your bill. One is the general usage. I thought that was the infrastructure

cost. I believe it's $27, for most households, and then whatever it is off of that for commercials and things like that. But, wasn't that supposed to be set aside for capital improvements? I'm not sure, because we don't see it. So if they're not doing it for capital improvements, then what about the 31 percent? Where is that money going to?

A little misnomer: We know that SoCal Edison -- when we have our power outages, everybody blames SoCal Edison for shutting off the power so that they don't have the wildfire issue; fine and dandy. I do know that Bear Valley ends up having to shut down systems once in a while within the valley that Edison has nothing to do with. But, either way, if SoCal Edison shuts down the power to the valley to protect us from wildfire, there is no danger, at least not for the power lines. They could fall down in a heavy wind or anything else, but they're not supposed to start fires, if -- if I remember my electricity 101 fact, and then they check the system prior to energizing the -- the program. All of a sudden, we're doing all this wildfire mitigation? But again, where is that money coming from? Is it for your user fees? Not your usage fees. You get charged on that additionally.

I have a neighbor that has solar on his house.

Bear Valley charges him, when he's on the grid, approximately 81 cents -- again, he's telling me this -- per kilowatt. When he overproduces on his solar system, which is typically, he says, during the day, he gets back credited to his account approximately one and a half cents. That's incredibly ridiculous. They're giving Bear Valley Electric electricity, and they only credit them a penny and a half, yet charge him 80 cents when they're using it. That is thievery. That is not equal. Your Honor, if you were on the court bench, and somebody did that to another person, that would be criminal.

It seems like -- it seems like every time somebody comes up here and they -- and they complain or they -- they throw some sort of petition against the rate increase, whether it's the electric company, water company, BBARWA, whoever it is, city, it's basically automatically approved, and your commission has a serious serious negligible effect when people start thinking that. They complain they don't have the money, they're turning off their lights, they're moving to other states, if they can, they're doing without; yet, the -- the -- the increases are just automatically approved, in their opinion. You need to be more up-front and straight why it's been approved. Where is

the money going? Why aren't they using their capital improvement funds that we paid for, which included the last 30 percent increase, for their infrastructure improvements? I know they have a fat bank account. It's a private entity. They have investors. They pay out dividends. And we're the ones that are doing it. We're giving them that money.

Please, please do not accept this rate increase. They need to tighten up their belt, like we have to do. Thank you, everybody.

(Applause.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right. Thank you very much for your comment.

Next person I have on my list is Gina Weiss.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER WEISS

Hi. Gina, G-i-n-a, Weiss, W-e-i-s-s. I lived in Big Bear City over 40 years. I love it up here.

There's three issues I just want to mention: The billing, the medical equipment, and solar, before I forget, because I have nothing written down.

My understanding is that Bear Valley Electric -- okay. Forget -- the billing first. My bill this month is 400 and something, like $450; but, it's been 75 the last couple months. We're not using a lot of electricity. This is the third time that my bill has

been absolutely outrageous. And I have an analog meter, because I fought to keep it, because I didn't want a digital meter and a wireless meter. And so this is the third time that I've called. And fortunately, I did get through to customer service, who will send somebody else out each time to read it again. The second reading on one of them still had the same thing. They sent somebody out again. But, what -- my issue there was nobody knows how to read an analog meter anymore.

But, aside from that, I have spoken to so many people, as many other people here have said, that have regular wire -- wireless meters who are also getting crazy bills that are absolutely impossible for them to be running up their electricity like that. So that's a -- an issue that absolutely needs to be solved before anybody is willing to pay more for our electricity. Like we need to have reliable bills.

The second issue is that people -- the averages. And I do understand that most of the averages come from down the hill, and I do understand that Bear Valley Electric has made major efforts to become independent from that during this short period of time, and -- and maybe the CPUC needs to help with that. I don't know what -- what the roles are, exactly. But, somebody else needs to kind of jump in and make that

happen this year, because I think that some of the plans are pretty good, from what I've heard.

But, you know, people with CPAP machines, oxygen machines, maybe any other kind of, you know, medical equipment -- when we get a text that says the electricity is or may be turned off because the wind is blowing down the mountain, it also says so make -- so if you need to, make alternative arrangements. Well, let me just run out and buy a generator or, you know, go spend the night down the hill someplace else, not Lucerne. I mean I don't know what was -- what our alternative arrangements are supposed to be that's so easy to do for so many people. I don't like to admit this, but I got a CPAP machine last year, and I woke up three times recently breathing my own exhaled air because the electricity had gone off, and I didn't realize it. You know, and -- and one of them was notified, but I like didn't put it on my calendar and, you know, do something. So I think that's a serious issue for the health of people in the community, and we have a very large older population here, senior population.

The third thing is solar that I have more questions about, than anything. But, I know one of the plans that Bear Valley Electric had was the solar farm,

and I know that got shot down from the community, for whatever reason. I wasn't involved in that. I -- I would like to know kind of what the status of that is; just putting that out there. I looked into putting solar on my home a few years ago, and I was told that Bear Valley had capped out on the buy-back program, so then I would then have to buy a battery, which then made it cost prohibitive. And I haven't had -- I'm just wondering if anything has changed in that the state is doing anything more to help people get solar. And the third thing about the solar would be if a -- if a -- if the state did -- if there was help for people that wanted to put some solar out there to mitigate their own bills, would -- would the effect of a lot of people having solar negatively impact Bear Valley Electric? So these are just more questions than comments, I guess. Thank you.

(Applause.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much. Next person I have on my list is Ashley Segall.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER SEGALL

Hi. My name's Ashley Segall. I'm a resident of Big Bear City. I spoke earlier, but I'm speaking again, because this is very important to me, because it's going to be the end of my small business of

13 years, because we cannot afford these increases anymore.

The same bill -- using -- it's a business, so the -- the usage is -- is the same, you know, it's -- you can look back at my bill for 13 years, and they say, "Oh, yeah, your usage is the same; it's actually maybe a little bit less." My bill has over doubled. We got a bill for $5800 that we couldn't pay, and their solution is to put me on the 12-month payment plan. That's not a sustainable solution for a small family business.

My home in Big Bear City was all over the board, couldn't count on my bill to be reliable. I don't have AC. I don't have children. At home, I cook by firelight, because I'm afraid to turn on my electricity. We managed to buy solar, 27 panels, missed the deadline because of paperwork error, so we get .013 cents a kilowatt, and then they charge me, I think, 30 -- I think it's 36 cents a kilowatt; might be more. But, so I have 27 panels. I'm making three to four times the electricity that I'm using, yet, my bill was $342 at my house.

So, you know, there needs to be a solution. There needs to be oversight. Like they're already got 30 percent rate increase. Most of my neighbors and people up here are all on fixed incomes. You know,

there just -- there needs to be better oversight on what Bear Valley Electric is doing with their rate increases. The electricity is not getting better. It seems to be getting worse. So, you know, I'd like to see an audit of the last increase before they are awarded another increase, you know. We work hard for our money, and I think that's just like common decency.

(Applause.)]

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much for your comment.

So that is everybody that I have on the list. Is there anybody who I missed or is there anybody who would like to speak that wasn't on the list, by show of hands?

Yes, sir? Please -- please restate your name, please.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER DOBBS

Timothy Dobbs.

I've been in finance. In fact, I was in finance for most of my career. I ended up as a project manager, and I worked for Southern California Edison, so I'm familiar with rates, I'm familiar with costs, business costs. There are nonrecurring costs and there are recurring costs.

When a business goes through a high spending

for nonrecurring costs, at some point those costs go away. We have a system that only reviews cost -- rate increases, so at what time do we back off the rate when the nonrecurring costs drop off?

I've never seen a rate drop down because of a reduction in nonrecurring costs, and I think that's something we need to consider. I don't think -- I don't know if Edison ever did.

I worked for them, but I wasn't part of a rate case, but -- but would they ever present a case where their nonrecurring costs have dropped, and therefore, they should reduce their rates? Probably not.

Once they have a projection, they get a high rate, they're only -- it's only going to go up. So that's my point about rates.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right. Thank you very much, sir.

Anybody else who would like to speak, by show of hands?

Yes, I see a hand in the back. Please come on up; and please restate your name and spell it, please.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER CHUNG

Yes. I was here in the earlier meeting, Chi, C-h-i, last name is Chung, C-h-u-n-g.

So we're -- you know, Bear Valley Electric is

telling us that all this wildfire to -- you know, all this rate increase is to prevent wildfire from starting, and all that stuff.

Well, I've been here for a long time, and he's been here longer than me, and I've known him for that long, and in October one year, we had this huge fire that was coming over -- almost over Bear Mountain, and I could see ash and everything. The town was pretty much evacuated, and never turned the electricity off, so, you know -- so I was operating.

The -- the funny story is me and my -- my friend here, he's our baker, and we were operating the business for the entire time. We never closed, and electricity was working, so I don't understand the rate increase.

So that's all I had to say.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right. Thank you very much.

Anybody else who'd like to speak, by a show of hands?

Yes, ma'am, back there? Please be sure to state and spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER SCOTT

I'm Charlee Scott, C-h-a-r-l-e-e S-c-o-t-t.

And I do not agree with this at all. In fact,

I agree with everything that's been said here tonight.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: All right.

Anybody else who would like to speak, by show of hands?

Yes? Please state and spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER PAULOO

My name is Jhni Pauloo, first name J-h-n-i, last name P-a-u-l-o-o.

I don't want to repeat everything everybody said. I agree with them. One thing I do think somebody touched on that you should look into are the mystery spikes on people's bills.

I'm a bookkeeper. I see approximately 20 to 30 bills on a regular basis; and about every eight to nine months, there will be a mystery spike. You never get an explanation for why. There's no -- there's no logic, there's no change in usage, there's not an obvious reason why.

And you never get an answer, but you're just forced to pay the bill or lose your power. So that's a big one to remember.

Something to remember too, electricity up here often equals heat; and when they turn that off or when they, you know -- our public safety, how safe is it that

I have no heat? And nobody's addressing the fact that all our food is going bad in that amount of time, and who's replacing our groceries?

So I think that was most -- I agree with everything everyone else said. I just wanted to point out that mystery spike. Somebody really needs to look into that. It is an issue.

Okay. Thank you so much.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

Anyone else?

Yes, sir. Please come up, and please state and spell your name.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BUSH

Ray Bush, B-u-s-h.

My question is how come there's no explanation of where this money is going? There's no -- they're asking for a rate increase, but there's no breakdown of anything. There's no breakdown of where the money goes, where it's going to go or how it's being spent, what it's for, or nothing.

It's just a breakdown of they want an increase. How come? I mean, usually when there's a financial expenditure, there's a breakdown of where it's going, but I haven't seen anything other than an increase. That's my question.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

Anybody else, by a show of hands?

Yes, please come up.

Please state and spell your name for the court reporter.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER DRISCOLL

My name is Liz Driscoll, D-r-i-s-c-o-l-l; and I felt like I needed to stand up and speak for myself and my family and everybody here.

I'm just a lowly grocery clerk; but I would like to retire soon, and I don't see that I'm going to be able to retire with everything going up.

And I want to reiterate that it seems like there's really not a lot of accountability from everybody that I've heard about the spikes, about the erroneous charges; and before anything is accepted, I think that Bear Valley Electric Service needs to be audited and investigated.

Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you very much.

Yes, sir? Please come up.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ACOSTA

I wanted to speak, if that's all right.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Yes, please.

Please state and spell your name for -- for the court reporter.

SPEAKER ACOSTA: Andy Acosta, Big Bear Lake.

I've been a resident up here since '69; and years ago -- this was brought up years ago. Bear Valley Electric -- that's why we're here, right? It has a monopoly, which is against the law under federal law, which is -- which is the AT&T statute.

And I tried, but I couldn't get four people to go with me on a federal class action lawsuit; because I have property in Lucerne Valley, Running Springs, and Angelus Oaks, and my power rate is $0.15 a kilowatt-hour with probably the biggest criminals in the world, Southern California Edison.

They sell power to Bear Valley Electric, Bear Valley Electric sells it to us and marks it up. And most of the general public doesn't understand electricity, and I'm an expert in it.

My friend has a cogeneration plant which burns wood to make electricity up until about three years ago, when Gavin Newsom and his buddies shut them all down, over 22,000 megawatts of power in California being burned by wood, trash wood.

And he petitioned the PUC for a one-penny raise. A 25-megawatt plant, and one penny gave him

$1,135,000 extra per month. Big Bear currently draws around 20 megawatts; so if you think about one penny giving my friend an additional million dollars-plus, how is it that Bear Valley Electric can sell power to us for $0.40 a kilowatt-hour and claim poverty when Edison is doing it for 15?

And this is what people don't understand, so I put it in language that people can understand it. If you're in San Bernardino and you're buying gas for $6 a gallon, you come to Big Bear, it's $50; and if gasoline was $50 a gallon in Big Bear, nobody would buy it.

But right now all of us in this town and our visitors have a gun to their head because we can't buy it from anywhere else; and that was done through Gray Davis, our last governor that we got rid of, because he stopped the wheeling law.

So in Georgia, you can buy power from 11 different companies because the wires are owned by people, they're not owned by the criminals. So basically, this is extortion, and if the PUC gives them another raise, I want to see the car the guy is doing that gave them the raise.

He's probably driving a Ferrari because the executives of Bear Valley Electric, all you have to do is look at the pay and look at the money they're

bringing in. Like I said, Edison is making it on what they're selling us to it.

They did get a raise. They did get some crazy requirements, insulating all the wires so we don't have a fire, and insulating the -- doing this and, you know, shut the door after the horse left the barn. That's fine. But some of that stuff works, and most of it doesn't.

I can give you another example. I've been cutting trees my whole life; and I had a tree next door to my house that got cut down by the power company, and just for giggles, I went out and asked the guy "Can you tell me how much this tree is costing to cut down?"

$29,300. My company could have done it for 4,000 and made money, but that's what you get with the IEBW (sic) unions, and there ain't a tree on this mountain that's getting cut down that -- that isn't getting done -- well, I'll give you an example.

Last week -- last month, I gave a bid for $12,000 to cut one tree down on Sherwood. Bear Valley Electric's contractor did it because of a law that any tree that can hit a structure, they have to cut down.

And I asked them how long it took, and they wouldn't tell me; and finally they took me -- and it was $77,000 to cut that tree down. And who pays for that

but the ratepayers?

Now, Edison has got the same thing going everywhere else; and their contractors are different, prices are different, things are better. But basically these meetings to talk to people and give them suggestions and that, it's all over because PUC is going to give them whatever they want because that's the last -- what happened the last 12 meetings I went to.

I've seen my bills go up. I mean, I have a little office. I don't even turn the lights on, hardly. Everything is LED. I don't turn my compressors on anymore, I run a diesel welder to run my shop, and I have a $750 bill right now. When I moved in there in 2007, it was $49 a month.

So the big thing about it is -- is that -- grocery stores, go talk to them. Wonder why your food's so much? Vons's bill is four times what the bill is down in Victorville. The bills over in Stater Bros. in Lake Arrowhead are not even comparable to the bills in Big Bear.

So basically the only way this is going to get stopped, the only way you can count on, is the people. The PUC is not going to help us. None of the -- none of the agencies in the state are going to help us. We have to file a federal lawsuit on the AT&T precedent, which

is a monopoly.

We all played the game when we were kids. You know what happens when you own all the fricking railroads and you own everything else. You're screwed; wherever you land, you've got to pay, and that's where we are now.

It doesn't matter what we do in our houses. They give us benefits for reducing this and that, and our bill doubles. I mean, I switched my whole house over to LEDs completely. My house bill is 465 a month.

My sister lives in fricking La Quinta, and her bill is 300 in the middle of summer and it's 120 and she's got air conditioning running. What's going on here? I can tell you what's going on here. There's $5-a-gallon gas in San Bernardino, and it's 50 bucks a gallon in Big Bear.

So I don't know what else I can say other than four people need to get together, file a class action federal lawsuit against Bear Valley Electric, and the judge will force Edison to take us over because it's against the law what they're doing.

We are surrounded, folks. If we were -- if we were in wagons, there would be a lot of Indians around us because that's where we're at. They're on the backside at Angelus Oaks, they're on the front side at

Running Springs, and they're on the desert side. Technically Edison stops at the Bear Valley Dump.

You see that substation at the dump? That's a Edison facility. Edison's facility stops in Running Springs. We have no power coming from Running Springs because of the terrain. We have power down in Seven Oaks. Those are the 300-megawatt line coming out of there; but Bear Valley Electric shut that down, and that's why we don't have enough power.

And then the thing that really just -- I'm going to be honest with you -- pisses me off, and a lot of people, is how much money Bear Valley Electric spent on that fricking power plant that doesn't run. They shut our power off, yet it doesn't run.

Why? Because Edison shut it off because of the wind, not Bear Valley. There's no wind in Big Bear and the power is shut off. And now the Democrats passed a law, no generators, so what happens? Vons throws away all the food, Stater Bros.

You know, they said screw it. Drive in the back of Vons, there's a 2.3 megawatt generator that looks like a locomotive parked behind Vons for a reason, because of the $4.5 million worth of food they threw away the last time they shut the power off. They couldn't even give it to the people of Big Bear because

all their power was off, and that's what I don't understand.

You see, I worked for Snow Summit for a long time on a higher level, and our power plant there was 34.6 megawatts. We could have run our power plant and run this whole valley and then some; but they're not allowed to because of the wheeling law.

So instead of making a deal with Snow Summit, Bear Valley Electric takes a whole crapload of money and puts a power plant in that they don't run; and last year the economy in Big Bear got greatly affected because our government said to Snow Summit "You're not allowed to run your generators," yet they told us seven years ago "If you change them to this model version so they don't pollute, you can run them."

Now you can't run them at all. $38,700,000. And like I said, there's enough power at Snow Summit to run Big Bear, Lake Arrowhead, Crestline, Angelus Oaks, and half of Victorville off of that power plant. If anybody has ever seen it, it's amazing.

And why is it that way? Because they couldn't get any power, so the Forest Service said "What do you need?"

"We need a power plant."

"Okay. Put it in." So we put it on National

Forest system's land, which makes us exempt from California law, but the new owners didn't want to follow that rule, so last year, they made no snow. We weren't open.

The tourists didn't come, the Valley didn't get taxes; TOT bed taxes, end sales tax, field tax, you name it. It's all taxes. We don't get the tourists, this town dies, and that's the way it is.

So this resort community, in order to be saved -- because we're going to lose the workforce, we're going to lose the retirees, the people who are on fixed income because they can't pay their power bill -- and that's the point now, is if you take the power bill, compare it to Running Springs, you're going to see it's about four and a half times of what it should be.

So I know I probably talked too long, not the three minutes, but that's what I can say. And unless you have any questions for me -- I've got the answers; but, you know, we're never going to get a power plant in this town. We've already tried that.

We were going to put a co-gen in at the dump, and they said absolutely not, so -- but one of the best things in a plant they ever built, they closed all of them. Every one of them were closed. 31 of them are still sitting dormant hoping we get a new governor to

get rid of the law.

But, I mean, if anybody understands power, Big Bear runs 21 to 25 megawatts when everybody is up here, and the average cogeneration plant is 50 megawatts, so do the math; and the power plant they put in down here, I think was 18 or 19 megawatts.

There's plenty of power to run this town; but at this point, you know, they cry if their Ferraris aren't fast enough, they need new ones, they raise the rates, and we pay. That's why there's a mass exodus out of this valley. People have left because they can't afford to live here.

So any questions?]

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank -- thank you much for your comments.

SPEAKER ACOSTA: No problem. All right.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

SPEAKER ACOSTA: Have a good night.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: You, too. Yes?

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER ENYART

Hi. Pat Enyart again. I just have a really quick question.

The gentleman had some incredibly important information to share, but I noticed that both of the transcribers had quit transcribing, and I don't know if

that was due to the speed that he was speaking or if you shut off at a certain hour or how that works, but I just wanted to address that, to make sure it went on record.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Let's go off the record quick.

(Off the record.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Let's go back on the record, please.

Okay. Yes, sir.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER OROZCO

Just one more quick thing. It's Chuck Orozco, O-r-o-z-c-o.

I -- the most powerful thing we can do is organize here, and that's what we're doing today. I have a -- a Facebook page. It's called Big Bear Residents For Fair Electric Rates. If you want to see me after, we can -- we can organize, and that's what we should do.

Mr. Acosta, class action suit, yeah, that sounds good.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Let's do it.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you. Yes?

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER GATSBY

I -- I just have one other thing. Jill Gatsby. Back on the record for one more thing.

Yeah, I'm on a CPAP machine, too, just so you

know; got hit by a -- a very tiny person in the car trying to get off the mountain with no chains on their car, 55 miles an hour.

In any case, the other thing I want to say is that this -- this -- this electric company is crippling everybody up here in a way that is so unspeakable with the -- the solar. So if you want to get solar up here, you have to live with them to take a lien on your house. That's outrageous. And it's against the law for me to go down to, for example, like a Costco to get my own solar panels to put on my house. That's against the law here. This is outrageous.

This is a -- this is -- this -- we are about to have a very hard winter, according to newscasts, a winter that will pale in comparison into like three years ago that killed people up here. This one's supposed to be a lot worse. This is dangerous when they're allowed to decide who lives and dies on this mountain, and when they're allowed to explode the prices to the point where there's no normal person can pay that; no normal person. My -- I grew up in a mansion in Beverly Hills, 27 bedrooms. We paid $500 a month. How is this possible? How is this possible?

So anyways, yes, what I'm going to say is -- just one more time is, please, we need to have a full

audit of these people. I want all records open. I want a full investigation into this company, because I believe this is mass fraud. This is criminal mass fraud on a very Trump level.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you. Any other speakers, by a show of hands? Yes.

STATEMENT OF SPEAKER BUERBA

Hi, Joe -- Joe Buerba again. I did some quick calculations. I guess what Bear Valley's asking for is to -- customers to pay the burden, on average, of -- on average, of $206 per year increase from two -- 2027 through 2023 -- or 20 -- 2030, and the utility is also seeking a guaranteed 11.3 return on equity to their shareholders. So why should shareholders receive their 11.3 while the customers, the community, bears the cost to cover their investment? Thank you.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you.

(Applause.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Any other comments, by show of hands?

(No response.)

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Okay. Seeing none, all right. So that concludes the public comment portion of this meeting. Let me find myself here just a minute.

Okay. Commissioner Douglas, are there any

final remarks that you would like to make?

COMMISSIONER DOUGLAS: I would just like to thank everyone for being here tonight, and for those of you who spoke for letting us know your views, sharing your perspectives and your questions.

ALJ VAN DYKEN: Thank you. Once again, any person may submit written comments on the docket card at any time by going to the website that's on the screen up here above me, apps.cpuc.ca.gov/C/A2601022. We really do want to receive as many comments as -- as we can, and, you know, your thoughts, experiences are very important to us in helping us to -- in -- in -- in helping us to make our decision toward Bear Valley's application.

On behalf of myself and all of the CPUC commissioners, I want to thank everyone for your participation here today. We certainly appreciate the time that you took out of your day to come here and -- and be with us and express yourselves.

I also want to thank everyone here who helped to pull off this meeting, the two court reporters here, our Public Advisor's office staff, and also, especially, the City of Big Bear Lake for use of their city hall.

This concludes our public meeting for Application 26-01-022, Bear Valley Electric Service. We

are now adjourned and off the record. Thank you.

(At the hour of 7:27 p.m., this matter having been concluded, the Commission then adjourned.)]

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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

OF THE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATION OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

I, REBEKAH L. DE ROSA, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER NO. 8708, IN AND FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE PAGES OF THIS TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY ME COMPRISE A FULL, TRUE, AND CORRECT TRANSCRIPT OF THE TESTIMONY AND PROCEEDINGS HELD IN THIS MATTER ON OCTOBER 27, 2026.

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

EXECUTED THIS 2ND DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2026.



REBEKAH L. DE ROSA
CSR NO. 8708

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

OF THE

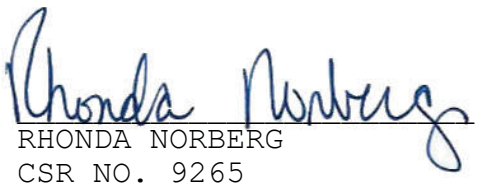
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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

EXECUTED THIS 2ND DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2026.



RHONDA NORBERG
CSR NO. 9265

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