

Decision 24-05-020 May 9, 2024

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of Southern California Gas Company (U 904 G) for Authority to Establish a Memorandum Account for the Angeles Link Project.

A.22-02-007
(Filed February 17, 2022)

DECISION GRANTING COMPENSATION TO SIERRA CLUB FOR SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO DECISION 22-12-055

Intervenor: Sierra Club	For contribution to Decision (D.) 22-12-055
Claimed: \$84,834	Awarded: \$74,463.75
Assigned Commissioner: President Alice Reynolds ¹	Assigned ALJ: ALJ Elaine Lau

PART I: PROCEDURAL ISSUES

A. Brief description of Decision:	D.22-12-055 authorizes Southern California Gas Company (“SoCalGas”) to establish a memorandum account to record costs of Phase One of its Angeles Link Project. SoCalGas’ application sought authority to record costs of three distinct phases of developing the Angeles Link Project, a pipeline system that would deliver pure hydrogen to the Los Angeles Basin. The California Public Utilities Commission (“the Commission” or “CPUC”) authorized only the first phase and provided that costs would only be recoverable if SoCalGas complied with certain conditions.
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¹ This proceeding was reassigned to Commissioner Alice Reynolds November 27, 2023.

B. Intervenor must satisfy intervenor compensation requirements set forth in Pub. Util. Code §§ 1801-1812²:

	Intervenor	CPUC Verification
Timely filing of notice of intent to claim compensation (NOI) (§ 1804(a)):		
1. Date of Prehearing Conference:	4/6/2022	Verified
2. Other specified date for NOI:	n/a	N/A
3. Date NOI filed:	5/4/2022	Verified
4. Was the NOI timely filed?		Yes
Showing of eligible customer status (§ 1802(b)) or eligible local government entity status (§§ 1802(d), 1802.4):		
5. Based on ALJ ruling issued in proceeding number:	A.21-12-009	Verified
6. Date of ALJ ruling:	5/18/22	Verified
7. Based on another CPUC determination (specify):	n/a	N/A
8. Has the Intervenor demonstrated customer status or eligible government entity status?		Yes
Showing of “significant financial hardship” (§1802(h) or §1803.1(b)):		
9. Based on ALJ ruling issued in proceeding number:	A.21-12-009	Verified
10. Date of ALJ ruling:	5/18/22	Verified
11. Based on another CPUC determination (specify):	n/a	N/A
12. Has the Intervenor demonstrated significant financial hardship?		Yes
Timely request for compensation (§ 1804(c)):		
13. Identify Final Decision:	D.22-12-055	Verified
14. Date of issuance of Final Order or Decision:	12/20/2022	Verified
15. File date of compensation request:	2/21/2023	Verified
16. Was the request for compensation timely?		Yes

² All statutory references are to California Public Utilities Code unless indicated otherwise.

<p>Communities Foundation (“PCF”), Sierra Club was responsible for leading the discussion on the application of the Commission’s memorandum account standards to this case. Notice of Ex Parte Communication at 1–2 (Sept. 16, 2022).</p>	<p>regarding whether Angeles Link responds to an exceptional and unforeseen event outside its control. Citing Sierra Club’s joint brief, the decision states: “They argue that climate change is an ongoing global environmental change that has evolved over decades and is neither an unforeseen or sudden event, and that the federal funding, regional initiatives, and local interests are business opportunities that SoCalGas elected to pursue.” <i>Id.</i> at 19 (citing Sierra Club/CEJA Opening Brief at 5-8). The Commission agrees that SoCalGas has not identified events of an exceptional nature or an unforeseen event. <i>Id.</i></p> <p>The decision notes that Sierra Club is among the parties that “agree that the Angeles Link Project should be considered in its own proceeding and not the [general rate case (“GRC”).” <i>Id.</i> at 21 (citing Sierra Club/CEJA Opening Brief at 9–11). The Commission agreed that it was appropriate for SoCalGas to propose Angeles Link in a separate application instead of its 2019 or 2024 GRC. <i>Id.</i></p> <p>“Sierra Club and CEJA also recognize that including the Project in a GRC could oblige SoCalGas’ gas customers to bear the costs of the Project.” <i>Id.</i> at 22 (citing Sierra Club/CEJA Opening Brief at 9). The Commission addressed this concern by agreeing “not all ratepayers may benefit from the Project” and assuring the parties that “rate recovery from all ratepayers would not be appropriate” under the cost causation principle. <i>Id.</i> As a basis for this finding, the Commission specifically agreed with Sierra Club’s concerns regarding recovery of project costs from SoCalGas’ current ratepayers. <i>Id.</i> at 22.</p>	<p>Verified</p>
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	<p>The Commission notes that Sierra Club was among the parties that agree SoCalGas is requesting to record substantial costs in a memorandum account. <i>Id.</i> at 23 (citing Sierra Club/CEJA Opening Brief at 11).</p> <p>The Commission notes that Sierra Club is among the parties that agree approving the Angeles Link Memo Account would send signals that distort the private market. <i>Id.</i> at 34 (citing Sierra Club/CEJA Opening Brief at 16–17). The Commission addressed Sierra Club’s concerns that the Project could give SoCalGas an unfair advantage over unregulated companies that compete in the hydrogen industry if captive methane customers subsidized SoCalGas’ hydrogen business. Specifically, the Commission clarified that its cost causation policy that provides that the customers who pay for a project are the ones that benefit from it, which limits any significant risk of cross-subsidization. <i>Id.</i> at 35.</p>	<p>Verified</p>
<p><u>2. Scope of costs that could properly be recorded in an Angeles Link memorandum account.</u></p> <p>Sierra Club contributed to the Commission’s decisions to protect ratepayers by limiting the costs SoCalGas could record to the memorandum account it approved in this case. Specifically, the Commission did not authorize SoCalGas to book the costs of Phase Three or the costs of government affairs or public relations to the memorandum account.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protest at 7–9 (Mar. 21, 2022); • Opening Brief at 17–26 (July 29, 2022); • Reply Brief at 2–3 (Aug. 15, 2022); • Opening PD Comments at 13 (Nov. 28, 2022); • Reply PD Comments at 5 (Dec. 5, 2022). <p>The Commission notes that Sierra Club was one of the parties that proposed limits on the costs allowed to be recorded in the Memo Account. <i>Id.</i> at 39 (citing Sierra Club/CEJA Opening Brief at 17–26). It noted Sierra Club’s support for The Utility Reform Network’s (“TURN”) point that memorandum account treatment may fall outside the cost control measures</p>	<p>Verified</p> <p>Verified</p>

<p>Sierra Club contributed to the Commission’s decision on the scope of costs SoCalGas should be permitted to track in the memorandum account through one separate filing (its protest) and multiple joint filings with CEJA. In the joint filings, Sierra Club was responsible for primary drafting of the sections of the Joint Opening Brief on why the memorandum account should exclude Phase Three costs and government affairs or public relations costs.</p>	<p>inherent in the Commission’s cost-of-service ratemaking. <i>Id.</i> at 39–40 (Sierra Club/California Environmental Justice Alliance Reply Brief at 2–3). The Commission responded to these concerns by imposing a cost cap on the memorandum account as an added cost control measure. <i>Id.</i> at 40.</p> <p>One of Sierra Club’s specific recommendations for limiting the scope of costs in the memorandum account was to exclude the costs of Phase Three, on the grounds that those costs are speculative at this stage. Protest at 8–9; Opening Brief at 26. Although the Commission did not discuss this particular recommendation, the decision aligns with this recommendation by excluding both Phase Two and Phase Three costs. D.22-12-055 at 73 (authorizing only Phase One costs).</p> <p>The Commission noted that Sierra Club was among the parties that opposed allowing SoCalGas to record costs for public outreach and public relations because the costs are inappropriate for ratepayer recovery. <i>Id.</i> at 48 (citing Sierra Club and CEJA Opening Brief at 24–26). “Sierra Club and CEJA specifically request that the Commission explicitly exclude costs associated with influencing the public, local officials, or legislators on the Project and Memo Account.” <i>Id.</i> (citing Sierra Club and CEJA Opening Brief at 24–26). The Commission granted Sierra Club’s request, ordering SoCalGas not to record public outreach costs or the costs of engaging public officials or legislators to the memorandum account. <i>Id.</i></p>	<p>Verified</p> <p>Verified</p>
<p><u>3. Reducing the potential harms of Angeles Link.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protest at 2–7 (Mar. 21, 2022); 	<p>Verified</p>

<p>drafting on the environmental harms of producing non-green hydrogen, air quality impacts from hydrogen combustion, and financial costs.</p>	<p>Brief at 29–36). The Commission required SoCalGas to report on several areas of concern intervenors raised in protests and briefs, directing SoCalGas to answer questions of party concern in Phase One. <i>Id.</i> at 54. Several of these issues relate to concerns Sierra Club raised. For instance, the requirement to identify the demand and end uses for the Project will help bring transparency to whether the Project would support combustion end uses, which emit NOx. <i>See id.</i> at 52. The requirement to identify potential sources of hydrogen production and water will help bring transparency toward the environmental impact of producing the hydrogen the Project would transport. <i>See id.</i> The requirement to evaluate alternatives should force SoCalGas to examine whether there are less burdensome means of decarbonizing Angeles Link’s potential customers. <i>See id.</i> at 53. Assessments of fugitive hydrogen emissions, NOx emissions, appropriate control measures, and plans for mitigating impacts on DACs are all essential for understanding the potential environmental harms of the Project. <i>See id.</i></p> <p>The Commission noted Sierra Club among the intervenors who were concerned “the Project would transport hydrogen that may not be derived from clean energy sources, and request that the Commission define ‘green’ hydrogen to ensure that the Project aligns with decarbonization and clean energy goals.” <i>Id.</i> at 41 (citing Sierra Club/CEJA Opening Brief at 21–23). “Sierra Club and CEJA also raise concerns that the hydrogen carried in the Angeles Link would be blended with methane natural gas, and that the hydrogen delivered through the Project</p>	<p>Verified</p> <p>Verified</p> <p>Verified</p>
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<p>Sierra Club also advocated to avoid financial harms to captive methane ratepayers from the project by ensuring that these customers do not pay for a hydrogen pipeline system that does not serve them. This advocacy contributed to the Commission’s guidance on the Project beneficiaries who would pay for Phase One under the Commission’s cost causation principles.</p> <p>In joint briefing efforts, Sierra Club was primarily responsible for legal research and drafting related to limitations on cross-subsidization between customers who take different utility services from a dual-fuel utility. <i>See</i> Opening Brief at 4–5, 9–10.</p>	<p>would include production pathways that emit pollution, particularly into California communities.” <i>Id.</i> (citing Sierra Club/CEJA Opening Brief at 17–18 and 21–23). The Commission responded to these concerns by finding “it reasonable to only allow costs to be recorded if the feasibility studies are restricted to studying the transport of only clean renewable hydrogen.” <i>Id.</i> at 41–42. The Commission considered Sierra Club’s comments on the definition of eligible hydrogen. <i>Id.</i> at 57.</p> <p>The Commission notes that Sierra Club was among the parties that raised concerns “the Angeles Link Memo Account would cause all SoCalGas gas ratepayers to pay for and subsidize a clean renewable hydrogen energy system they do not use.” <i>Id.</i> at 54 (citing Sierra Club/CEJA Opening Brief at 4–5). The Commission responded to these concerns by identifying the beneficiaries of the Angeles Link Memo Account Phase One expenses who would bear these costs under normal cost causation principles. <i>Id.</i> at 55. This finding should protect SoCalGas’ captive methane customers from bearing the costs at issue in this decision.</p> <p>The Commission considered Sierra Club’s opposition to SoCalGas’ request to modify the Proposed Decision to allow it to apply for memorandum account treatment of Phase Two before it completes Phase One. “Sierra Club opposes SoCalGas’ request and argues that that [sic] the requested flexibility is an exemption from Commission oversight.” <i>Id.</i> at 59. In consideration of Sierra Club’s concerns, the Commission only allowed SoCalGas the</p>	<p>Verified</p>
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	flexibility it requested under narrow circumstances. <i>Id.</i> at 54, 59.	
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B. Duplication of Effort (§ 1801.3(f) and § 1802.5):

	Intervenor’s Assertion	CPUC Discussion
a. Was the Public Advocate’s Office of the Public Utilities Commission (Cal Advocates) a party to the proceeding?	Yes	Yes
b. Were there other parties to the proceeding with positions similar to yours?	Yes	Yes
<p>c. If so, provide name of other parties: The California Environmental Justice Alliance (“CEJA”), The Utility Reform Network (“TURN”), Protect Our Communities Foundation (“PCF”) aligned with Sierra Club on certain issues in the proceeding, but no party shares the unique interests of Sierra Club and its members.</p>		Noted
<p>d. Intervenor’s claim of non-duplication: Sierra Club avoided duplication of efforts by filing joint briefs and joint comments with CEJA, the party with which it was most closely aligned in this proceeding. Sierra Club and CEJA were able to work efficiently by contributing primary drafting on the issues for which each party has unique expertise. Sierra Club also avoided duplication of effort with other parties by having calls to coordinate with PCF and TURN. Within this broader network of intervenors, the parties with relevant specialized expertise led the drafting on issues of shared concern. For instance, Sierra Club shares TURN’s concern that authorizing a memorandum account could create momentum toward approving cost recovery, even for the cost of activities that failed to benefit ratepayers. Sierra Club supported TURN’s arguments on this topic in its Reply Brief but did not duplicate TURN’s efforts by investing the many hours of attorney time it would have taken to demonstrate how infrequently the Commission disallows recovery of costs that are booked to an authorized memorandum account.</p>		Noted

PART III: REASONABLENESS OF REQUESTED COMPENSATION

A. General Claim of Reasonableness (§ 1801 and § 1806):

	CPUC Discussion
<p>a. Intervenor’s claim of cost reasonableness: Sierra Club’s advocacy in this case was reasonably calculated to protect SoCalGas’ methane customers from bearing the financial costs of a hydrogen pipeline system that does not benefit them and to protect customers from the public health and environmental costs of a hydrogen pipeline system that could contribute to increased emissions. The cost of Sierra Club’s advocacy in this case is far less than the financial costs it potentially helped ratepayers avoid. Most importantly, the Commission followed Sierra Club’s recommendation to not authorize booking the costs of Phase 3 to a memorandum account. SoCalGas estimated that Phase 3 activities alone “would cost several hundreds of millions of dollars.” Application of SoCalGas at 28 (Feb. 17, 2022). Within Phase One, the Commission required SoCalGas to bear its own public outreach and public relations costs and adopted other ratepayer protection policies, at Sierra Club’s request. The public health and environmental benefits of Sierra Club’s contributions are also key, even if difficult to measure. Sierra Club’s contributions to the Commission’s decision to exclude costs of studying transportation of hydrogen produced from fossil fuels and its decision to require reporting to the Commission on NOx emissions, hydrogen fugitive emissions, and other issues were reasonably calculated to protect southern California residents from costly harms.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>b. Reasonableness of hours claimed: Sierra Club’s investment of time in this case was reasonable given the complexity, novelty, and importance of the issues it raised. As discussed in Part II.B.d., Sierra Club avoided duplication of efforts through careful coordination with allied parties. One of Sierra Club’s most important strategies for ensuring the reasonableness of hours claimed was filing joint briefs and comments with CEJA and divvying drafting responsibilities according to each parties’ areas of expertise.</p> <p>Sierra Club is also claiming a reasonable number of hours for its work in this proceeding because its attorneys were able to work efficiently due to their unique expertise on hydrogen policy issues. Sara Gersen is the co-author of a white paper on the appropriate role of hydrogen in economy-wide decarbonization, <i>Reclaiming Hydrogen for a Renewable Future</i>. Katherine Ramsey is the lead Sierra Club attorney for issues related to the potential use of hydrogen in the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power’s in-basin power plants. Ms. Gersen and Ms. Ramsey’s specialized</p>	<p>Noted</p>

	CPUC Discussion
<p>prior work on hydrogen significantly reduced the number of hours it took for them to make a significant contribution to D.22-12-055.</p> <p>In this claim, Sierra Club is not including hours spent on research activities that did not ultimately contribute to the Commission’s decisions in D.22-12-055. Specifically, this claim excludes hours devoted to submitting public records requests to agencies operating in the Los Angeles Basin for documents related to the Angeles Link Project and reviewing documents from the agencies. Moreover, Sierra Club’s claim is conservative because it does not include all the hours paralegals spent cite checking Sierra Club’s filings in this proceeding.</p>	
<p>c. Allocation of hours by issue:</p> <p>Issue 1: 18.7% (34.2 hours) Issue 2: 20.7% (37.9 hours) Issue 3: 43.4% (79.3 hours) General: 17.2% (31.5 hours)</p> <p>Timekeeping records and the calculation of hours by issue are included in Attachment 2.</p>	Noted

B. Specific Claim:*

CLAIMED						CPUC AWARD		
ATTORNEY, EXPERT, AND ADVOCATE FEES								
Item	Year	Hours	Rate \$	Basis for Rate*	Total \$	Hours	Rate \$	Total \$
Sara Gersen (attorney)	2022	101.5	\$500	Requested here (see Comment 1)	\$50,750	101.50	\$415.00 [1]	\$42,122.50
Katherine Ramsey (attorney)	2022	52.4	\$510	Requested here (see Comment 2)	\$26,724	52.40	\$485.00 [2]	\$25,414.00
Subtotal: \$77,474						Subtotal: \$67,536.50		
OTHER FEES								
Describe here what OTHER HOURLY FEES you are Claiming (paralegal, travel **, etc.):								
Item	Year	Hours	Rate \$	Basis for Rate*	Total \$	Hours	Rate \$	Total \$
Emma Kaboli (paralegal)	2022	29	\$160	Requested here (see Comment 3)	\$4,640	29.00	\$155.00 [3]	\$4,495.00

CLAIMED						CPUC AWARD		
<i>Subtotal: \$4,640</i>						<i>Subtotal: \$4,495.00</i>		
INTERVENOR COMPENSATION CLAIM PREPARATION **								
Item	Year	Hours	Rate \$	Basis for Rate*	Total \$	Hours	Rate \$	Total \$
Sara Gersen	2023	7.7	\$250	Half of requested 2022 rate	\$1,925	7.70	\$217.50 [1]	\$1,674.75
Katherine Ramsey	2023	3	\$265	Half of new rate requested for 2023 (see Comment 2)	\$795	3.00	\$252.50 [2]	\$757.50
<i>Subtotal: \$2,720</i>						<i>Subtotal: \$2,432.25</i>		
TOTAL REQUEST: \$84,834						TOTAL AWARD: \$74,463.75		

*We remind all intervenors that Commission staff may audit the records and books of the intervenors to the extent necessary to verify the basis for the award (§1804(d)). Intervenors must make and retain adequate accounting and other documentation to support all claims for intervenor compensation. Intervenors' records should identify specific issues for which it seeks compensation, the actual time spent by each employee or consultant, the applicable hourly rates, fees paid to consultants and any other costs for which compensation was claimed. The records pertaining to an award of compensation shall be retained for at least three years from the date of the final decision making the award.

**Travel and Reasonable Claim preparation time are typically compensated at ½ of preparer's normal hourly rate

ATTORNEY INFORMATION			
Attorney	Date Admitted to CA BAR ³	Member Number	Actions Affecting Eligibility (Yes/No?) If "Yes", attach explanation
Sara Gersen	8/31/2011	277563	No
Katherine Ramsey	2/11/2015	302532	No

**C. Attachments Documenting Specific Claim and Comments on Part III:
(Intervenor completes; attachments not attached to final Decision)**

Attachment or Comment #	Description/Comment
Attachment 1	Certificate of Service
Attachment 2	Time Records

³ This information may be obtained through the State Bar of California's website at <http://members.calbar.ca.gov/fal/MemberSearch/QuickSearch>.

Attachment or Comment #	Description/Comment
	<p>A daily listing of the specific tasks performed by Sara Gersen, Katherine Ramsey, and Emma Kaboli in connection with the work in this proceeding that contributed to D.22-12-055. Ms. Gersen, Ms. Ramsey, and Ms. Kaboli maintained detailed contemporaneous time records indicating the number of hours devoted to work on this case. In preparing this attachment, Ms. Gersen reviewed all the hours she and Ms. Kaboli recorded as devoted to this proceeding and included only those that were reasonable for the underlying tasks that contributed to D.22-12-055. Ms. Ramsey reviewed all the hours she devoted to this proceeding and included only those that were reasonable for the underlying tasks that contributed to D.22-12-055.</p>
Attachment 3	Sara Gersen Resume
Attachment 4	Katherine Ramsey Resume
Attachment 5	Emma Kaboli Resume
Comment 1	<p><u>2022 Rate for Sara Gersen</u> Sierra Club requests a rate of \$500 for Sara Gersen for work performed in 2022. The most recent year for which the Commission has approved an hourly rate for Ms. Gersen is 2020. D.21-02-017 at 9 (Feb. 22, 2021) (approving an hourly rate of \$390 for work Ms. Gersen performed in 2020). The Commission has not approved an hourly rate for Ms. Gersen since its adoption of its most recent market rate study, though Sierra Club and East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice have both submitted pending intervenor compensation requests for hours Ms. Gersen worked in 2022. Under the current market rate study, Ms. Gersen is a Level IV attorney with 10–15 years of experience. A 2022 hourly rate close to the market rate study’s median rate for Level IV attorneys would be conservative for Ms. Gersen, given her specialized experience in environmental and administrative law.</p> <p>Ms. Gersen is an attorney who graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law in 2010 with a certificate of specialization in environmental law. Ms. Gersen has practiced environmental and administrative law for her entire legal career and has specialized in issues related to the regulation of utilities since 2014. Ms. Gersen practices primarily before the state utility regulatory commissions in California, Nevada, and New Mexico. Ms. Gersen has also represented Sierra Club in the proceeding on SoCalGas’ hydrogen pipeline proposal (A.22-02-007), the CPUC’s integrated distributed energy resources proceeding (R.14-10-003), the electric utilities’ 2017 rate design window proceedings (A.17-12-011 et al.), the demand response prohibited resources proceeding (A.18-10-008 et al.), on issues related to a potential renewable hydrogen tariff in the biomethane rulemaking (R.13-02-008), the orders to show cause the Commission issued against SoCalGas in the current energy efficiency</p>

Attachment or Comment #	Description/Comment
	<p>rulemaking (R.13-11-005); and the Aliso Canyon replacement proceeding (I.17-02-002). Ms. Gersen has also represented East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice and the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice in the proceeding on San Diego Gas & Electric's medium/heavy-duty program (A.18-01-012) and the Commission's rulemaking on the transportation electrification framework (R.18-12-006). Ms. Gersen also has unique expertise on hydrogen policy and has co-authored a white paper on the appropriate means of producing and using green hydrogen. Ms. Gersen's resume is included as Attachment 3.</p>
Comment 2	<p><u>2022 Rate for Katherine Ramsey</u> Sierra Club requests that the Commission adopt a 2022 hourly rate of \$510 for Katherine Ramsey, based on the same inputs to the Market Rate spreadsheet used for her 2021 rate, established at \$470 in D.21-09-013 and D.2-10-033. Her 2021 hourly rate was based on the market rate spreadsheet using the following inputs: the attorney role at level IV with 10–15 years of experience. The same data points in the market rate chart shows a 2022 median rate of \$513.61 for a Level IV attorney with 10–15 years of experience. Sierra Club's requested 2022 hourly rate of \$510 is just below this median and appropriate for Ms. Ramsey's role and experience. The requested rates of \$530 for work in 2023 reflect an increase commensurate with Ms. Ramsey's increased experience and a COLA adjustment.</p> <p>Katherine Ramsey is an attorney with 10 years of experience in environmental and energy law, is barred in New York and California, and has practiced before the Commission for 7 years. She practices primarily before public utilities commissions in California, Nevada, and Arizona. Ms. Ramsey has represented Sierra Club in dozens of utility proceedings and has been awarded Intervenor Compensation in previous decisions, including D.22-10-033, D.20-01-019, D.21-02-017, and D.21-08-032. Her resume is attached as Attachment 4.</p>
Comment 3	<p><u>2022 Rate for Emma Kaboli</u> Sierra Club requests that the Commission adopt an hourly rate for representative Emma Kaboli, a Senior Litigation Assistant for the Clean Energy Program at Earthjustice, at \$160 per hour for work performed in 2022. Sierra Club has filed prior requests for compensation for work Ms. Kaboli performed in 2022, which are still pending. At the time of this filing, a proposed decision in R.20-05-012 would approve a rate of \$150 per hour for work Ms. Kaboli performed in 2021 in contribution to D.21-06-005.</p> <p>In 2022, Ms. Kaboli had 5 years of paralegal experience, including over 2 years with the Clean Energy Program at Earthjustice working on matters</p>

Attachment or Comment #	Description/Comment
	<p>relating to regulatory and administrative energy law. As a paralegal at Earthjustice, Ms. Kaboli has assisted attorneys, experts, and clients at public utility commissions across the country, including this Commission, in applications, rulemakings, and investigations. Ms. Kaboli has completed various projects as a paralegal, such as drafting motions; editing data requests and responses; cite checking, proofreading, and reviewing expert testimony, briefs, comments, and other filings; ensuring all commission rules are being met; as well as conducting factual and technical research. It is reasonable for Ms. Kaboli's 2022 rate to be at the high end of the range listed in the Level IV Ventures hourly rate lookup tool for a Paralegal with 2–5 years of experience because Ms. Kaboli is among the most experienced Level II Paralegals and has specific expertise in Commission practice. Ms. Kaboli holds Bachelor's degree in International Relations and Spanish from Cornell College in 2017, and is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Policy from Georgetown University. Please see Attachment 5 for Ms. Kaboli's full resume.</p>

D. CPUC Comments, Disallowances, and Adjustments

Item	Reason
[1] Sara Gersen 2022 and 2023 Rate	D.23-08-044 verified a 2022 and 2023 rate of \$415.00 and \$435.00 for Sara Gersen. We apply ½ the hourly rate for a 2023 intervenor compensation preparation rate of \$217.50.
[2] Katherine Ramsey 2022 and 2023 Rate	<p>D.24-01-051 verified a 2022 rate of \$485.00 for Katherine Ramsey. We apply the same rate here.</p> <p>Using our calculation methodology, based on the approved 2022 rate of \$485.00, the 2023 escalation factor of 4.46% and rounding to the nearest \$5 increment:</p> <p>2023: \$485.00 x 1.0446 = \$505.00</p> <p>We find the 2023 rate of \$505.00 reasonable and adopt it here. We apply ½ the hourly rate for a 2023 intervenor compensation preparation rate of \$252.50.</p>
[3] Emma Kaboli 2022 Rate	D.24-02-034 verified a 2022 rate of \$155.00 for Emma Kaboli. We apply the same rate here.

PART IV: OPPOSITIONS AND COMMENTS
Within 30 days after service of this Claim, Commission Staff
or any other party may file a response to the Claim (see § 1804(c))

A. Opposition: Did any party oppose the Claim?	No
B. Comment Period: Was the 30-day comment period waived (see Rule 14.6(c)(6))?	Yes

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Sierra Club has made a substantial contribution to D.22-12-055.
2. The requested hourly rates for Sierra Club’s representatives, as adjusted herein, are comparable to market rates paid to experts and advocates having comparable training and experience and offering similar services.
3. The claimed costs and expenses are reasonable and commensurate with the work performed.
4. The total of reasonable compensation is \$74,463.75.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

1. The Claim, with any adjustment set forth above, satisfies all requirements of Pub. Util. Code §§ 1801-1812.

ORDER

1. Sierra Club is awarded \$74,463.75.
2. Within 30 days of the effective date of this decision, Southern California Gas Company shall pay Sierra Club the total award. Payment of the award shall include compound interest at the rate earned on prime, three-month non-financial commercial paper as reported in Federal Reserve Statistical Release H.15, beginning May 7, 2023, the 75th day after the filing of Sierra Club’s request, and continuing until full payment is made.

3. The comment period for today's decision is waived.

This decision is effective today.

Dated May 9, 2024, at Sacramento, California.

ALICE REYNOLDS

President

DARCIE L. HOUCK

JOHN REYNOLDS

KAREN DOUGLAS

Commissioners

Commissioner Matthew Baker recused himself from this agenda item and was not part of the quorum in its consideration.

APPENDIX**Compensation Decision Summary Information**

Compensation Decision:	D2405020	Modifies Decision?	No
Contribution Decision(s):	D2212055		
Proceeding(s):	A2202007		
Author:	ALJ Elaine Lau		
Payer(s):	Southern California Gas Company		

Intervenor Information

Intervenor	Date Claim Filed	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded	Multiplier?	Reason Change/Disallowance
Sierra Club	2/21/23	\$84,834	\$74,463.75	N/A	See Part III.D CPUC Comments, Disallowances and Adjustments

Hourly Fee Information

First Name	Last Name	Attorney, Expert, or Advocate	Hourly Fee Requested	Year Hourly Fee Requested	Hourly Fee Adopted
Sara	Gersen	Attorney	\$500	2022	\$415.00
Katherine	Ramsey	Attorney	\$510	2022	\$485.00
Katherine	Ramsey	Attorney	\$530	2023	\$505.00
Emma	Kaboli	Paralegal	\$160	2022	\$155.00

(END OF APPENDIX)