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CHAPTER 9
REVISED PREPARED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
RACHELLE R. BAEZ
ON BEHALF OF SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

September 29, 2023



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	OVERVIEW	1
II.	ESSENTIAL BILLS	2
III.	AFFORDABILITY METRICS	5
	A. Hours at Minimum Wage (HM)	5
	B. Affordability Ratio (AR).....	7
IV.	SUPPLEMENTAL CARE ANALYSIS.....	9
V.	SUPPLEMENTAL ENERGY BURDEN (EB) ANALYSIS	11
VI.	STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS	15

**REVISED PREPARED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
RACHELLE R. BAEZ
(CHAPTER 9)**

I. OVERVIEW

Pursuant to Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Mutialu’s August 2, 2023 Ruling and consistent with the requirements of Decision (D.) 22-08-023, San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) is submitting this revised preparedAffordability Metrics testimony in its Test Year (TY) 2024 General Rate Case (GRC) Phase 2 application.¹ Accordingly, this testimony provides the Affordability Ratio (AR) 20 by climate zone, AR 50 by climate zone, and Hours-at-Minimum-Wage (HM) (collectively, the Affordability Metrics) associated with both current revenue allocation and rate design in effect and the revenue allocation and rate design requested in revised prepared direct testimony of SDG&E witness Ray C. Utama (Chapter 2) and witnesses Ray C. Utama, Erica Wissman, Hannah Campi and Gwendolyn Morien (Chapter 3). It also provides current and resulting essential usage bills by climate zone.

This testimony will further present additional analyses of (1) the impact on affordability of including California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) discounts for low-income households; and (2) energy burden to isolate the impact of the electric bill. SDG&E argued for the inclusion of these metrics in the Affordability Order Instituting Rulemaking 18-07-006 (Affordability OIR), and although the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC or Commission) declined to adopt them as official affordability metrics, D.22-08-023 permits stakeholders to provide alternatives to the adopted metrics.² SDG&E still believes these are

¹ D.22-08-023 Ordering Paragraph (OP) 7.

² D.22-08-023, Findings of Fact (FOF) 17 at 77.

1 important supplemental metrics that complement the affordability metrics adopted in D.22-08-
2 023 and provide a rounded view of potential impacts to its customers.

3 My testimony is organized as follows:

- 4 • **Section I – Overview**
- 5 • **Section II – Essential Bills**
- 6 • **Section III – Affordability Metrics**
- 7 • **Section IV – Supplemental CARE Analysis**
- 8 • **Section V – Supplemental Energy Burden Analysis**
- 9 • **Section VI – Statement of Qualifications**

10 **II. ESSENTIAL BILLS**

11 Essential usage bills represent the average monthly bill a customer would pay for their
12 essential energy, water, or telecommunications usage. For electric, essential usage has been
13 defined as the baseline allocation of electricity, which is generally 60% of the average household
14 usage in a given climate zone.³ To calculate the essential usage bills, SDG&E multiplied (1) the
15 baseline allowance per climate zone for individually metered electric residential customers by (2)
16 the Tier 1 electric residential Schedule DR rate, which is uniform by baseline territory.⁴ This is
17 the same agreed-upon methodology between SDG&E and Energy Division (ED) that is used in
18 its quarterly Cost and Rate Tracking tool submissions as part of the Affordability OIR. By
19 utilizing Schedule DR, which is a tiered, non-time-of-use (TOU) rate, there is no additional
20 forecasting of usage patterns, which vary by customer. SDG&E then weighted the metrics by the

³ See D.20-07-032 at 20-21. Daily baseline quantities vary based on climate zone, season (summer vs winter) and service type (all-electric vs basic).

⁴ Tier 1 rates are applicable to customers who use up to 130% of baseline allowance.

1 number of households in each baseline territory to produce a system average.⁵ Essential usage
2 bills are used as the numerator to calculate the AR and HM metrics.

3 Figure RRB-1 presents a map of baseline territories in SDG&E’s service area which
4 represent different climate zones.

5 **FIGURE RRB-1**
6 **SDG&E BASELINE TERRITORY MAP**



7
8 To understand the impact that SDG&E’s TY 2024 GRC Phase 2 proposals have on the
9 affordability metrics, SDG&E calculated the electric essential usage bills (1) based on rates
10 effective January 1, 2023 and (2) based on the proposed revenue allocation and rate design. The

⁵ The number of households by climate zone were used from the AR calculator is the 2020 Affordability Ratio Calculator, published by Energy Division on July 8, 2022, available at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/electrical-energy/affordability>.

1 resulting electric essential usage bills are summarized in Tables RRB-1 and RRB-2 for non-
 2 CARE basic and non-CARE all-electric customers, respectively.⁶

3 **TABLE RRB-1**
 4 **MONTHLY ELECTRIC ESSENTIAL USAGE BILLS (BASIC SERVICE, NON-CARE)**

	Current – 2023	2024		
Climate Zone	Bill (\$)	Bill (\$)	Change (\$)	%
Coastal	\$124.10	\$119.44	-\$4.66	-3.8%
Desert	\$176.73	\$170.10	-\$6.63	-3.8%
Inland	\$135.22	\$130.14	-\$5.07	-3.8%
Mountain	\$179.57	\$172.83	-\$6.74	-3.8%
Average	\$129.73	\$124.86	-\$4.87	-3.8%

5 **TABLE RRB-2**
 6 **MONTHLY ELECTRIC ESSENTIAL USAGE BILLS (ALL-ELECTRIC SERVICE,**
 7 **NON-CARE)**

	Current – 2023	2024		
Climate Zone	Bill (\$)	Bill (\$)	Change (\$)	%
Coastal	\$104.10	\$100.19	-\$3.91	-3.8%
Desert	\$232.02	\$223.31	-\$8.71	-3.8%
Inland	\$146.14	\$140.66	-\$5.48	-3.8%
Mountain	\$261.96	\$252.13	-\$9.83	-3.8%
Average	\$124.62	\$119.94	-\$4.68	-3.8%

⁶ For simplifying purposes, all months were assumed to be 30-day months to get the monthly baseline allocation. The calculation of the essential usage bills does not incorporate the biannual electric residential California Climate Credits (CCC).

1 **III. AFFORDABILITY METRICS**

2 **A. Hours at Minimum Wage (HM)**

3 The HM metric represents the number of hours a household that earns the minimum wage
4 would need to work per month to pay their monthly essential usage bill.⁷ It is calculated by
5 dividing the essential usage bill by the hourly minimum wage.⁸ The HM formula is shown
6 below:

7
8 **HM = essential electric usage bill / hourly minimum wage**

9
10 SDG&E is presenting two sets of HM metrics – City of San Diego and Non-City of San
11 Diego. These two sets of metrics are necessary because the minimum wage for the City of San
12 Diego is greater than the Statewide minimum wage (i.e. Non-City of San Diego). For 2023, the
13 minimum wage for the City of San Diego, which makes up approximately 40% of SDG&E’s
14 service territory) is \$16.30/hour, which is higher than the California statewide minimum wage of
15 \$15.50/hour.⁹ For purposes of forecasting HM minimum wage for 2024, SDG&E used the five-
16 year average increase in CPI-W.¹⁰

⁷ D.20-07-032 at 11.

⁸ D.20-07-032 at 47.

⁹ SDG&E’s service territory is made up of the San Diego county and parts of Orange County. Source: State of California, Department of Finance, E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State — January 1, 2021-2023. Sacramento, California, May 2023.

¹⁰ City of San Diego uses the August to August percent change in CPI-W pursuant to San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) Chapter 3, Article 9, Division 1, Section 39.0107. Statewide increase based on the lesser of 3.5 percent or the 12 month period from July to June percentage change in CPI-W pursuant to California Labor Code section 1182.12.c.

The resulting HM metric for each climate zone is presented in Tables RRB-3 and RRB-

4.¹¹

TABLE RRB-3
HM METRIC FOR ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS – CITY OF SAN DIEGO (NON-CARE)

	Current – 2023	2024		
Climate Zone	Hours	Hours	Change (hrs)	Change (%)
Coastal	7.4	6.8	-0.6	-7.6%
Desert	12.7	11.7	-1.0	-7.6%
Inland	8.5	7.8	-0.6	-7.6%
Mountain	13.0	12.0	-1.0	-7.6%
Average	7.9	7.3	-0.6	-7.6%

TABLE RRB-4
HM METRIC FOR ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS – NON-CITY OF SAN DIEGO (NON-CARE)

	Current – 2023	2024		
Climate Zone	Hours	Hours	Change (hrs)	Change (%)
Coastal	7.7	7.2	-0.5	-7.0%
Desert	13.3	12.4	-0.9	-7.0%
Inland	8.9	8.3	-0.6	-7.0%
Mountain	13.7	12.7	-1.0	-7.0%
Average	8.3	7.7	-0.6	-7.0%

¹¹ The essential usage bill used in the HM metric is the weighted average of basic vs all-electric bills using the “Percentage of Customers on All-Electric Rate” field from the AR Calculator to align with the affordability ratio calculations.

1 **B. Affordability Ratio (AR)**

2 The AR seeks to quantify the percentage of a representative household’s income that is
3 required to pay for an essential utility service after non-discretionary costs, such as housing and
4 other essential utility services, are removed from the household income.¹² It is calculated by
5 dividing the essential usage bill by the discretionary income for a given geography.¹³ The ED
6 created a tool (AR Calculator) to calculate the AR that considers the essential usage bills for each
7 commodity (electric, gas, water and telecommunications) and the tool is updated annually.¹⁴

8 SDG&E utilized the AR Calculator by entering the electric average monthly essential
9 usage bills by climate zone (shown in Tables RRB-1 and RRB-2) and ran the macro to calculate
10 and populate the results by year at the 20th and 50th percentiles of income distribution in
11 SDG&E’s territory. The AR Calculator calculates Individual AR values for each commodity,
12 which includes only the essential usage bill for the given commodity in the numerator with the
13 denominator equal to household income minus housing costs and the remaining essential usage
14 commodity bills. The AR formula for electric is shown below:

15
16 **Individual Electric AR = Electric Essential Bill / (Income – Housing – Other**
17 **Essential Bills [gas, water, telecom.]**

18
19 The individual AR values are calculated at the climate zone level. In addition to the
20 underlying assumptions within the AR Calculator, the following assumptions and definitions
21 apply:

¹² D.20-07-032 at 51.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ The current AR Calculator used for all calculations in this testimony is the 2020 Affordability Ratio Calculator, published by ED on July 8, 2022, available at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/electrical-energy/affordability>.

- 1) Electric essential bills are based on the essential usage for non-CARE residential customers on Schedule DR by climate zone. Electric essential bills do not include the biannual CCC.
- 2) Other commodity bills (gas, telecommunications and water) are pre-populated by the AR Calculator.
- 3) Current metrics are based upon rates effective January 1, 2023, per AL 4129-E.
- 4) Proposed metrics include SDG&E’s residential revenue allocation and rate design proposals presented in the revised prepared direct testimony of SDG&E witnesses for Chapters 2 and 3.
- 5) The Electric AR20 and AR50 metrics are meant to represent the percentage of income after housing and all other essential commodity (gas, water and telecommunications) expenses that essential electric bills require for households at the 20th lowest and 50th income percentile, respectively.

The resulting individual electric AR20 and AR50 metrics for each climate zone are presented in Tables RRB-5 and RRB-6, respectively.¹⁵

**TABLE RRB-5
AR20 METRIC FOR ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS (NON-CARE)**

Climate Zone	Current - 2023	2024	
	AR20	AR20	Change in AR20
Coastal	7.4%	7.1%	-0.3
Desert	8.4%	8.0%	-0.5
Inland	11.2%	10.8%	-0.4
Mountain	10.4%	9.8%	-0.5
Average	9.1%	8.8%	-0.4

TABLE RRB-6

¹⁵ The results in Tables RRB-5 and RRB-6 reflect the decreases in electric essential bills along with the embedded calculator assumptions such as inflation for income, housing, and other utility bills, which were unchanged by SDG&E.

1 **AR50 METRIC FOR ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS (NON-CARE)**

	Current - 2023	2024	
Climate Zone	AR50	AR50	Change in AR50
Coastal	2.0%	1.9%	-0.1
Desert	3.3%	3.1%	-0.2
Inland	2.2%	2.1%	-0.1
Mountain	3.4%	3.2%	-0.2
Average	2.1%	2.0%	-0.1

2 **IV. SUPPLEMENTAL CARE ANALYSIS**

3 The Affordability Metrics presented above utilize non-CARE rates to calculate the HM
4 and AR metrics. However, the CARE program, which offers a 35% effective discount on
5 electricity bills and 20% discount on gas bills to low-income customers, should be taken into
6 consideration as an additional metric in determining a low-income customer’s cost of essential
7 utility service.¹⁶ For customers that participate in the CARE program, excluding the CARE
8 discount inflates the true cost of essential utility charges and provides an inaccurate
9 representation of affordability. Additionally, the 2020 Annual Affordability Report
10 acknowledges that, when low-income discounts are considered for purposes of assessing

¹⁶ See Public Utilities Code Section 739.1; D.01-06-010, OP 2. Further, as of May 2023, SDG&E has achieved a 116% penetration rate and thus it is reasonable to assume that most SDG&E low-income customers in the 20% income percentile are enrolled in the CARE program discount. See A.19-11-003, *et al.*, Monthly Report of SDG&E on Low Income Assistance Programs for May 2023 (June 23, 2023), Appendix A at CARE Table 2; available at <https://liob.cpuc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2022/11/SDGE-SEPTEMBER2022-Low-Income-Monthly-Report.pdf?emrc=17bab7>

1 affordability, there is a “sizable improvement in utility affordability for customers who are
2 enrolled in the programs in the most vulnerable areas.”¹⁷

3 Accordingly, because CARE discounts are relevant to the issue of affordability, SDG&E
4 provides supplemental HM (both City of San Diego and Non-City of San Diego) and AR20
5 metrics using the CARE discount in the bills in Tables RRB-7, RRB-8 and RRB-9,
6 respectively.¹⁸ These figures were developed using the "2020 CARE Rates" pre-loaded scenario
7 in the AR Calculator, updating the electric essential usage bills with current and proposed CARE
8 bills. By utilizing this scenario, this also includes the impact of the gas CARE discount.

9
10 **TABLE RRB-7**
11 **HM METRIC FOR ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS – CITY OF SAN DIEGO (CARE)**

Climate Zone	Current - 2023	2024		
	Hours	Hours	Change (hrs)	Change (%)
Coastal	4.8	4.4	-0.4	-7.6%
Desert	8.2	7.6	-0.6	-7.6%
Inland	5.5	5.1	-0.4	-7.6%
Mountain	8.5	7.8	-0.6	-7.6%
Average	5.1	4.8	-0.4	-7.6%

12
13

¹⁷ CPUC, 2020 Annual Affordability Report (October 2022) at 52, available at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/electrical-energy/affordability>.

¹⁸ The results in Tables RRB-7 – RRB-9 reflect the decreases in electric essential bills along with the embedded calculator assumptions such as inflation for income, housing, and other utility bills, which were unchanged by SDG&E.

1 **TABLE RRB-8**
 2 **HM METRIC FOR ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS – NON-CITY OF SAN DIEGO (CARE)**

	Current - 2023	2024		
Climate Zone	Hours	Hours	Change (hrs)	Change (%)
Coastal	5.0	4.7	-0.4	-7.0%
Desert	8.7	8.1	-0.6	-7.0%
Inland	5.8	5.4	-0.4	-7.0%
Mountain	8.9	8.3	-0.6	-7.0%
Average	5.4	5.0	-0.4	-7.0%

3
 4 **TABLE RRB-9**
 5 **AR20 METRIC FOR ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS (CARE)**

	Current - 2023	2024	
Climate Zone	AR20	AR20	Change in AR20
Coastal	4.8%	4.6%	-0.2
Desert	5.4%	5.2%	-0.3
Inland	7.2%	6.9%	-0.3
Mountain	6.7%	6.3%	-0.3
Average	5.9%	5.6%	-0.2

6 **V. SUPPLEMENTAL ENERGY BURDEN (EB) ANALYSIS**

7 The Energy Burden metric is the percentage of total income spent on an energy bill or
 8 bills. Although the Commission declined to adopt this metric in the Affordability OIR, the
 9 Commission specifically found that the Decision Implementing the Affordability Metrics (D.22-
 10 08-023) “does not preclude stakeholders from generating variations on or alternatives to the

1 adopted metrics... in Commission proceedings.”¹⁹ The energy burden metric is an additional,
2 complementary metric that should be considered in conjunction with the required affordability
3 metrics addressed above. The energy burden metric is a simple, easily understood calculation
4 that isolates the impact of SDG&E’s Residential revenue allocation and rate design request and
5 excludes the uncertainty posed by non-discretionary expenses outside the Commission’s control
6 (e.g., housing costs). In addition, it allows for greater ease of comparison across utility services.

7 The electric energy burden formula is shown below:

$$\text{Electric EB} = \text{Electric Essential Bill} / \text{Income}$$

8
9
10
11 The AR metrics discussed above remove housing and other essential utility/service bills
12 from total income. The electric EB metric does not remove any bills or expenses from total
13 income. By not removing non-discretionary expenses from total income, the EB metric is able to
14 better isolate the impact of any utility bill—here the electric bill—and create a metric that is
15 comparable across utility services. The EB metric further eliminates the impact of housing costs,
16 which can vary across SDG&E’s service territory and between income levels. While SDG&E
17 recognizes that housing costs may be non-discretionary, neither SDG&E nor the Commission
18 influence or determine housing affordability. Additionally, because the denominator for the AR
19 metric changes based on what utility service is being analyzed, the various AR metrics cannot be
20 compared or added together. For example, the Electric AR value cannot be added to the Gas AR
21 value for a total SDG&E AR value. Because the denominator for the EB metric is total income,
22 it is a more flexible metric that allows for comparison and combination across utility services.

¹⁹ D.22-08-023, FOF 17 at 77.

Further, although the EB metric has been previously used in the Affordability OIR to represent median-income households and average usage, SDG&E uses the same income assumptions and essential usage bills as the AR metric to make an apples-to-apples comparison to the AR metric. Thus, for purposes of the electric EB metric, SDG&E used the AR calculator and cleared the gas, water, and telecommunication bill inputs as well as the housing and propane cost embedded assumptions to calculate the electric EB for a median income household (EB50) and a low-income household (EB20).

The resulting electric EB50 and EB20 (both Non-CARE and CARE) metrics for each climate zone are presented in Tables RRB-10, RRB-11 and RRB-12, respectively.

**TABLE RRB-10
EB50 METRIC FOR ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS (NON-CARE)**

Climate Zone	Current - 2023	2024	
	EB50	EB50	Change in EB50
Coastal	1.4%	1.4%	-0.1
Desert	2.6%	2.5%	-0.2
Inland	1.7%	1.6%	-0.1
Mountain	2.6%	2.5%	-0.2
Average	1.6%	1.5%	-0.1

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TABLE RRB-11
EB20 METRIC FOR ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS (NON-CARE)

	Current - 2023	2024	
Climate Zone	EB20	EB20	Change in EB20
Coastal	3.3%	3.1%	-0.2
Desert	5.5%	5.2%	-0.3
Inland	4.2%	4.0%	-0.3
Mountain	5.9%	5.5%	-0.4
Average	3.7%	3.5%	-0.2

3
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TABLE RRB-12
EB20 METRIC FOR ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS (CARE)

	Current - 2023	2024	
Climate Zone	EB20	EB20	Change in EB20
Coastal	2.1%	2.0%	-0.1
Desert	3.6%	3.4%	-0.2
Inland	2.7%	2.6%	-0.2
Mountain	3.8%	3.6%	-0.2
Average	2.4%	2.3%	-0.1

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This concludes my revised prepared direct testimony.

1 **VI. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS**

2 My name is Rachelle R. Baez and I am the Electric Rates Manager in the Customer
3 Pricing department of SDG&E. My business address is 8330 Century Park Court, San Diego,
4 California 92123. I have worked for SDG&E since June 2010 and have held various positions in
5 Accounting Operations, Strategic & Financial Planning, and Electric Rates with increasing levels
6 of responsibility. I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with an
7 emphasis in Finance from San Diego State University in 2011.

8 I have previously testified before the California Public Utilities Commission. I have
9 previously submitted testimony before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.