

  
CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

## OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER FIFE

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**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 332 (WAHAB), WHICH WOULD, AMONG OTHER PROVISIONS, COMMISSION A FEASIBILITY STUDY THAT COMPARES VARIOUS NOT-FOR-PROFIT UTILITY MODELS TO TRANSITION THE LARGE GAS AND ELECTRIC INVESTOR-OWNED UTILITIES TO A SUCCESSOR ENTITY, PRIORITIZING PUBLIC BENEFITS IN ENERGY GENERATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND TRANSMISSION**

**WHEREAS**, the failures of the current energy system and of California's current regulatory infrastructure, have caused grievous harm to California residents and its environment by causing catastrophic wildfires, smoke, shutoffs, excessive and escalating utility rates and debts, environmental injustice and climate disruption; and

**WHEREAS**, investor-owned utilities (IOUs) in California operate as monopolies prioritizing shareholder profits over the public interest, leading to distribution of record profits to shareholders while one in five Californians are in energy utility debt; and

**WHEREAS**, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) rates are the highest in California, which has the second highest electric rates in the nation.<sup>1</sup> In 2024 alone, PG&E was granted six rate hikes<sup>2</sup>, and rates increased by over twelve percent (12%). PG&E's rates are increasing nearly four times faster than the national average.<sup>3</sup> These substantial and excessive rate hikes disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color; and

**WHEREAS**, a study by the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation analyzed PG&E data from the second quarter of 2020 and found that certain Oakland Zip codes with higher proportions of Black and Latino residents had some of the highest percentages of households in arrears (utility debt) within all of PG&E's service territory. In zip code 94621, approximately 30% of households were more than 90 days behind on their utility bills.<sup>4</sup> Since the study was conducted, total utility debt for PG&E customers has nearly tripled, from \$284 million in 2020 to \$675 million today<sup>5</sup>; and

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<sup>1</sup> [California electricity prices now second-highest in U.S.: 'Everyone is getting squeezed](#)

<sup>2</sup> [https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/agendadoes/3556\\_results.pdf](https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/agendadoes/3556_results.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [California electric bills have essentially doubled over the past decade](#)

<sup>4</sup> [COVID-19 UTILITY DEBT | UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Energy Utility Arrearages](#)

**WHEREAS**, PG&E-caused wildfires, due to criminal negligence<sup>6</sup> in failing to maintain or check the safety of their transmission and distribution infrastructure generate a range of adverse outcomes for communities across California, including deaths, destruction of forests and properties, respiratory harms from smoke, mental health impacts and economic impacts.<sup>7</sup> PG&E has been found and/or admitted guilt to having contributed to the death of at least 117 people since 2010.<sup>8</sup>

**WHEREAS**, utility shut-offs, which cause significant and disproportionate health, safety, and economic impacts on low-income people, disabled people, children, babies, and elderly people due to perishable food going bad and refrigerated medications expiring when the power is out for extended periods; endangerment of life and significant health impacts on people dependent on power to live through medical devices such as ventilators and electric wheelchairs, and health risks from heat stroke or heat exhaustion from loss of air conditioning during extreme heat days, and safety risks from breakdown of telecommunications<sup>9</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Oakland's electrical and gas infrastructure faces unique risks of inundation or limited access to energy facilities or infrastructure due to flooding and sea level rise<sup>10, 11</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Legislative Analyst's Office, on average, California IOUs' electricity rates are more than 50 percent higher than rates charged by publicly owned utilities.<sup>12</sup> Anza Electric Cooperative's rates are 59% cheaper than PG&E's;<sup>13</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, Alameda Municipal Power (AMP), a publicly owned utility, offers residential rates averaging \$0.24048 per kilowatt-hour, compared to PG&E's \$0.46792, representing a 48.61% lower rate;<sup>14</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, the Port of Oakland provides electricity to its facilities at an average commercial rate of \$0.1712 per kilowatt-hour, barely a third of PG&E rates and supports port operations and local businesses; and

**WHEREAS**, Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) rates are 57.8% cheaper than PG&E's;<sup>15</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Oakland understands the principle that access to safe, renewable, clean, affordable and reliable energy is a human right; and

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<sup>6</sup> [THE CAMP FIRE PUBLIC REPORT](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Profits over safety: PG&E blamed for wildfire that killed 85](#)

<sup>8</sup> [PG&E disasters killed 117 people last decade.](#)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/energy-justice/pdfs/Powerless\\_Report\\_2025.pdf](https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/energy-justice/pdfs/Powerless_Report_2025.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://skylab.cdph.ca.gov/CCHVIZ/>

<sup>11</sup> [Oakland/Alameda Resilience Study](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Assessing California's Climate Policies—Residential Electricity Rates in California](#)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.anzaelectric.org/sites/default/files/Rate%20Sheet%20-%20Rate%201%20Residential%20OCT%202024.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.alamedamp.com/DocumentCenter/View/482/Alameda-Municipal-Power-Fact-Sheet-PDF>

<sup>15</sup> [How our rates compare](#)

**WHEREAS**, in 2020 the state created the not-for-profit public benefit corporation, Golden State Energy, through passing SB 350<sup>16</sup>, the Golden State Energy Act. Golden State Energy is legally designated as a receiver for PG&E's assets for the purpose of owning, controlling, operating, or managing electrical and gas services for its ratepayers should the utility fail; and

**WHEREAS**, a technical feasibility study would enable the state to determine if the best governance structure for such a successor entity to PG&E should be a public utility, mutual benefit corporation (cooperative), or not-for-profit public benefit corporation (as is currently written in law); now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That the Oakland City Council declares Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs), including PG&E, have made utilities unsafe, unaffordable, and unsustainable and an alternative is needed; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Council finds that it is in the best interest of its residents for California to support a worker and community-led just transition to not-for-profit utility service models, and away from all for-profit utility service models; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the City of Oakland hereby supports and endorses Senate Bill 332 and urges the Legislature and Governor to advance the bill in order to identify a recommended model, assess the feasibility of transitioning PG&E to a successor entity, and identify priority just design features for the successor entity, with the goal of serving the public interest and meeting the health, safety, affordability and sustainability needs of the people and ecologies of California.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - BROWN, FIFE, GALLO, HOUSTON, RAMACHANDRAN, UNGER, WANG, AND  
PRESIDENT JENKINS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
ASHA REED  
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the  
City of Oakland, California

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<sup>16</sup> [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201920200SB350](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB350)