

Testimony for Gas Commission Town Hall
Bishop Dwayne Royster
May 11, 2021

I am Bishop Dwayne Royster, Executive Director of POWER Interfaith. We are a multifaith multi racial organizing force deeply rooted in Phila, working for racial and economic justice on a livable planet.

Thank you for responding to our request for meaningful public participation in relation to the Business Diversification Study and overall for a Just Transition for PGW. We'll be submitting detailed written comments soon.

POWER supports **a bold pilot project on networked geothermal** which we see as the most promising option for good jobs in a just transition.

But the shocking fact is that PGW's lobbying activities are undermining the city's goals. The Business Diversification Study shows a powerful and essential role for building electrification in a sustainable future for PGW.

- However, PGW funds and participates actively in **lobbying campaigns by gas industry trade associations** such as the American Gas Association and the American Public Gas Association **that seek to block and oppose building electrification**
- We have also received very concerning reports that PGW is currently lobbying and working to build support for Senator Yaw's bill that seeks to **preempt** municipalities from adopting policies advancing building electrification. We understand that there's a Senate hearing about the bill underway this morning.
- **This lobbying is directly opposed to the City's interests.** City Council unanimously passed a resolution opposing Senator Yaw's preemption bill a couple of weeks ago.
- **The City should require PGW to provide a comprehensive and public accounting of its lobbying activities relating to the Yaw bill and to building electrification generally, and PGW must be directed in no uncertain terms to cease such activities.**
- Such strong action is necessary to ensure that the business diversification study has a meaningful future. Why spend so many public resources on a study if PGW is allowed to work behind the scenes to undermine that study's recommendations?

Thank you and we look forward to seeing our concerns and recommendations reflected in the final draft of the study.