

Testimony for Gas Commission Town Hall
Frances Upshaw
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Hello Commissioners, I am Frances Upshaw, a Board member of POWER Interfaith, an active leader on our Economic Dignity Team and a founder of our Climate Justice and Jobs Team.

We at POWER are very concerned about the collision of racism, economic inequality and climate crisis. As people of faith we are called to be part of the solution and we call on each of you to be part of the solution.

We want to see responsive, creative new ideas. Our Climate team members have studied the options for PGW in the Study. We recommend a pilot project on geothermal energy. From a good pilot, we can learn how to make this work in a city with high poverty. One way to make energy more affordable is through energy efficiency, home repair and weather-ization. That keeps energy bills lower.

PGW should manage the jobs in energy efficiency, home repair and weather-ization. These are good union jobs and they help our low-income communities afford energy and not lose their homes to gentrification.

We need PGW to truly diversify its business model and to think big about new ideas. We are learning about Heat as a Service. This approach creates incentives for PGW to sell less energy and remain stable. This addresses energy bills **and** climate crisis.

I am busy with the church, not an energy expert. Regular people like me have to raise our voices and call on our elected leaders to listen. And you, our elected leaders, need to tell PGW what direction to take. You need to align the lobbying, the fee structures, EVERYTHING, in a sane way so that the people, the city and PGW are working together for a vision of clean energy and equity.

I will contribute further in the written comments. I look forward to the way these comments will be included in the final report.