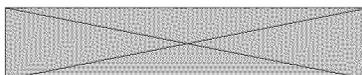


From: Cherry, Brian K
Sent: 9/23/2013 8:30:48 AM
To: Prosper, Terrie D. (terrie.prosper@cpuc.ca.gov)
Cc:
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CPUC Must Show Fairness and Balance Toward PG&E

By Joseph J. Haraburda (Guest Commentary)
Contra Costa Times
September 20, 2013

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) is an important and responsible corporate citizen serving the energy needs of residents, businesses and others throughout the Bay Area.

In serving this mission, PG&E is a major job provider and one of the top taxpaying and philanthropic organizations in the region. The company will soon be facing a major test before the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

The explosion in San Bruno occurred three years ago. Since that horrific tragedy, which claimed the lives of eight people and destroyed 37 homes, the gas transmission and distribution industry has undergone significant changes of operation.

In the aftermath, PG&E has provided more than \$100 million to the city of San Bruno and has settled nearly all lawsuits filed by the affected parties. PG&E has also invested more than \$2 billion improving the gas system at shareholder expense.

With that backdrop, the CPUC is now weighing a very important issue, the imposition of penalties on the company. While penalties are inevitable, our concern is what is truly fair and just without creating any unexpected consequences.

In the complex world of financing infrastructure improvements, an excessive penalty will only create financing challenges that could have detrimental effects. PG&E's investment since San Bruno including the siting of their systemwide headquarters in the East Bay has been remarkable.

Here in Oakland, tens of millions of dollars has been spent on gas pipeline inspections, testing and replacement rendering the city safer than ever before. This has also brought significant economic stimulus to the area and additional revenue to our cash-strapped city in need of more public safety and general services.

We encourage the CPUC to consider the many contributions PG&E has made to Oakland such as the Greenery Project, moving power lines underground, and lighting projects that are helping to save energy.

The Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce will be reviewing this CPUC process with interest and will be commenting more in the future.

Suffice to say, an iconic company with a strong history of union employment and community support -- hangs in the balance. Let's hope the CPUC proceeds with a sense of fairness and balance as they move forward on this delicate

but extremely important decision.

Joseph J. Haraburda is president/CEO of the Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce.

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