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Cc:
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Subject: Another Opinion

Opinion: PG&E Should be Fined but not Forced Into Bankruptcy

By Will Hardee
Post News Group
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To the Editor:

PG&E is about to receive a hefty fine for their role in the San Bruno tragedy – and they should. The Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce believes PG&E should pay. However, we also believe the men and women who benefit from the company as a job creator, economic engine and supporter of diversity and inclusion in the work place, shouldn't pay the price too.

PG&E may reportedly be fined up to \$2.25 billion and if they are forced to pay that much we should assume they won't be able to pay for the billions of dollars they are investing to improve crucial infrastructure. In fact, it has been reported that PG&E may have to file for bankruptcy if the fine is so high. The money that goes to make infrastructure improvements – the jobs they create and the revenue they generate – is money East Bay businesses big and small can't afford to see go away.

Additionally, if PG&E can no longer afford to invest in our communities we will lose a partner with a proven track record of supporting diversity. The company was ranked as the top regional utility for diversity efforts in 2012 and is among the top ten companies in the entire nation when it comes to supplier diversity, according to Diversity Inc. We need companies like that to remain on sound fiscal ground. The CPUC should recognize that a fine of \$2.25 billion would be 40 times that of any similar fine in our nation's history – and that seems excessive. Perhaps if they realize that it is not just PG&E who will pay a price, they will reconsider that figure.

PG&E should be fined and forced to pay help San Bruno rebuild and recover and to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again. Let's make sure the fine they receive does not imperil their ability to improve our infrastructure, create jobs, spark local economic activity and foster diversity and inclusion in the work place.

Sincerely,

Wil Hardee President & CEO, Oakland African-American Chamber of Commerce

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