

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 21, 2023

The Honorable Willie Phillips
Chair
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Chair Phillips:

We write to express our concerns regarding the significant rise in natural gas prices across California and urge you to begin an investigation into determining if there are anti-competitive practices or market manipulation activities driving up the costs of home gas prices across our state. This is an issue of deep importance as many of our constituents are suffering economic hardships posed by these extremely high utility gas costs.

Data shared by the California Public Utilities Commission found that average home gas bills for PG&E customers in Northern California rose from \$151 to \$195. Meanwhile, SoCalGas customers' prices more than doubled compared to the previous year—rising from an average of \$123 to \$300. This contrasts with natural gas prices falling by an average of 50 percent across the country based on recent analysis¹.

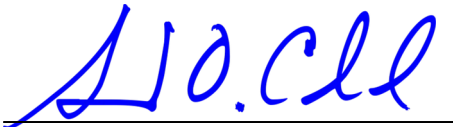
We understand that the U.S. Energy Information Agency has asserted that the spike in natural gas prices is due to an array of different issues like widespread below-normal temperatures, high gas use, lower imports of natural gas from Canada, gas pipeline constraints, and lower gas storage levels in the Pacific region. While a colder than usual winter has exacerbated the current supply of natural gas, this is not a unique issue to the Western United States or California.

We are pleased with the actions the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has taken in response to the unexpected rise in home utility gas prices. The CPUC has accelerated the delivery of payments of annual gas and electric credits to consumers. However, this is not a long-term solution and consumers need certainty as they plan their home budgets. With unexpectedly high home gas prices, we have heard stories from our constituents who have had to make the hard choice between staying warm at night or not having enough funds to buy groceries for the week.

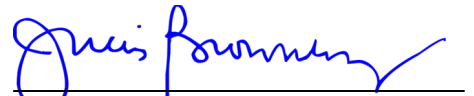
Therefore, we ask that you move expeditiously and open an investigation to ensure there are no unfair market manipulation or anti-competitive practices that are hurting many of our constituents across the state of California. We stand ready to provide any assistance.

Sincerely,

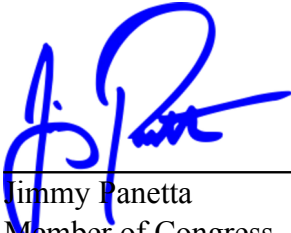
¹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-02-01/california-natural-gas-prices-surge-with-bills-300-higher-than-normal?leadSource=uverify%20wall>



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



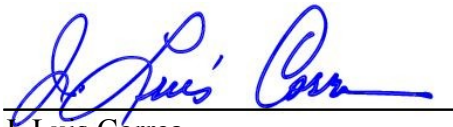
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



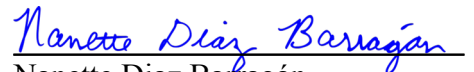
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



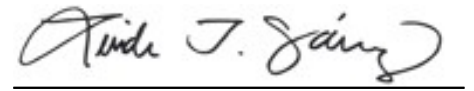
J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress




Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



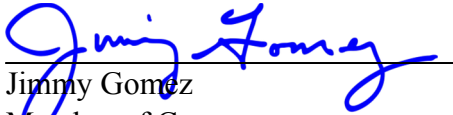
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

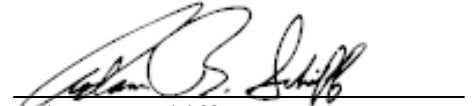


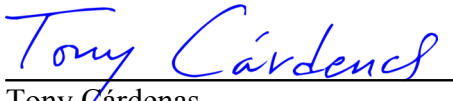
MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



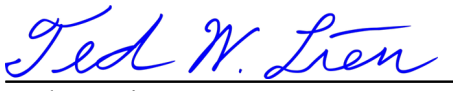
Pete Aguilar
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Jimmy Gomez
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Ted W. Lieu
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