



A Voice for Nurses. A Vision for Health Care.



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November 14, 2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
California State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

We urge you to facilitate a public takeover of PG&E to protect ratepayers, California communities, and our climate. PG&E has shut off power to millions of residents, been found responsible for starting numerous wildfires that have killed Californians, destroyed homes, neighborhoods and whole towns, and cost billions of dollars. This devastation is the result of PG&E's decision to neglect maintenance and investments in infrastructure in favor of paying out billions in shareholder profits and executive pay. Workers at PG&E are not responsible for the bad decisions made by the board of directors and management, and any public take over should protect them by respecting existing labor contracts.

At a recent press conference, you implored PG&E to fundamentally change the way it operates and raised the prospect of a public takeover as a backup option. However, given PG&E's track record and the benefits of public power, public ownership should be plan A. If you are really interested in ushering California into a safe, reliable, renewable energy future, you should immediately move forward with exploring public power options that complement existing public models.

Inherent conflicts of interest between paying shareholder dividends and providing reliable, affordable electric service to ratepayers will not be resolved by reshuffling corporate owners or the board of directors. That is why you must act now to facilitate public control and ownership over this embattled utility.

Public ownership will help increase accountability and transparency. Currently, the public cannot attend corporate board meetings and has limited leverage over these boards. Public records laws do not apply to private corporations, which makes oversight and accountability even harder. Ratepayers are also unable to compete with the multimillion-dollar lobbying arm of companies like PG&E that have fostered a weak regulatory environment for electric utilities.

We need major investments in the electricity sector to address fire safety and climate change, including everything from developing local energy resources, to burying lines and cutting trees to replacing dirty, greenhouse-gas-emitting power plants with clean, renewable energy from the sun and wind. These investments can be done at a lower cost to ratepayers under a public utility,

which can borrow at a fraction of the cost of private power companies. Furthermore, public utilities do not have to pay out profits, taxes or exorbitant executive salaries.

Public ownership is not new, nor is it radical. California has forty municipal utilities that provide reliable service to their customers, including LADWP, which recently advanced a major solar project that will provide solar and battery storage needed to power over 280,000 homes.

It is time for California to take over PG&E and stop letting profits stand in the way of a safe, clean energy future we all need and deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zenei Cortez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Zenei" and last name "Cortez" clearly distinguishable.

Zenei Cortez, RN
Co-President, California Nurses Association