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PG&E IMPOSES CUSTOMER FEES FOR CHOOSING CLEANER ENERGY SERVICE AND CALLS FOR INCREASE, DESPITE HAVING $1 BILLION TO COVER FEES

PG&E argues that Community Choice customers need to pay their "fair share"

San Rafael, CA – PG&E recently proposed that Marin Clean Energy (MCE) and Sonoma Clean Power customers should pay even more "exit" fees than they already do to the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) every month. The proposed increase ranges from 44% to 127% depending upon customer class, and forces residential customers, including low-income, to pay the highest rates associated with these fees.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) currently authorizes PG&E to impose exit fees on customers who choose to buy their electric generation from local providers like MCE or Sonoma Clean Power. Although these fees are always included in cost comparisons, they reduce the savings that MCE and Sonoma Clean Power customers receive and increase the cost of choosing a local provider.

PG&E's exit fee, called the Power Charge Indifference Adjustment (PCIA), is billed monthly, based on usage, and charged to customers who choose to buy energy from another provider. When a customer makes this choice, PG&E sells the excess electricity that they bought for that customer. Depending on the market conditions, PG&E may earn or lose money when they sell the power. PG&E has accumulated more than $1 billion from earning money on the market when selling this excess power. However, if PG&E doesn't earn money through the sale of the excess power, the PCIA fee is applied. This covers any losses incurred by PG&E, forcing the customer to bear this burden and pay for energy that they will never use.

Along with their request to increase the exit fees, PG&E also requested to close the account with over $1 billion. When asked how the money would be used, PG&E indicated that it "simply goes away."

"What PG&E is proposing is outrageous. They've collected $1 billion from selling excess power on the market but when they aren't able to make a profit, they collect from our customers to avoid pulling funds from their billion dollar stockpile," said Dawn Weisz, CEO of Marin Clean Energy. "Those profits should be applied against any losses, so that the homes, schools, non-profits and businesses in our communities are not burdened further."

This year, MCE estimates that its customers will be forced to pay PG&E $19.3 million in PCIA fees. Should the CPUC approve PG&E's proposed increase, MCE customers are projected to pay $30.6 million to PG&E, in 2016 alone, and residential customers, including low or fixed-income customers, will be forced to pay more than half of it ($16.3 million). PG&E is the only California utility to impose these fees on low-income customers.

MCE is protesting the proposed surge in the PCIA fee and calling attention to PG&E's attempt to close the $1 billion account of ratepayer funds. The CPUC is scheduled to make its determination on the PCIA increase in December 2015.

About MCE: MCE is a not-for-profit, community-based electricity provider that gives customers the choice of having 50% to 100% of their electricity supplied from clean, renewable sources such as solar, wind, bioenergy, geothermal and hydroelectric at competitive rates. By choosing MCE, customers help support new in-state and local renewable energy generation. For more information about MCE, visit www.mceCleanEnergy.org or call 1 (888) 632-3674.