

Philadelphia Gas Commission
1515 Arch St # 9A
Philadelphia, PA 19102

December 5, 2020

Dear Councilman Green, Councilman Jones, Ms. Rebecca Rhynhart, Ms. Jocelyn Hill, and Mr. Royal E. Brown,

We write to you to express our deep concern and disappointment regarding the lack of transparency in the appointment of the next CEO and COO of Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW). As a municipally-owned utility, PGW should function as a public institution — transparent, accountable, and focused on the wellbeing of Philadelphia’s residents, workforce, and environment. By forgoing a comprehensive and open process for selecting PGW’s new CEO and COO, the City has failed in its basic responsibility to put its people first at a time when the future of PGW — and its role in the life of Philadelphians — is being reevaluated. The Gas Commission should suspend the proposed appointment and direct the Kenney Administration to conduct a transparent and public search for these vital roles.

This is a critical moment in PGW’s history. Staff with decades of experience in the safe operation of our existing utility system are retiring. The pandemic has put tremendous financial pressure on the utility when it must be positioned to meet the needs of all residents, many of whom are struggling with high energy burden, loss of income, and unemployment. The climate crisis demands that PGW take bold action towards a just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy that protects ratepayers, residents, PGW workers, and PGW retirees. PGW’s leadership must be ready for these challenges and is set up to succeed.

We are concerned that a process that fails to have more public engagement and transparency will only set up new leadership for failure as it is inconsistent with the needs of the public during this time of crisis, reinforces institutional racism, and will erode people’s trust. First, Philadelphians need a leader who can address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic, economic downturn, and energy burdens on Black, brown, and poor residents in Philadelphia. The lack of an accountable and public process amidst these challenges minimizes the grave reality too many Philadelphians are facing. Second, the business as usual hiring process reinforces institutional racism by failing to seriously consider the diversity of potential leadership for these posts. Lastly, the appointment comes at time before the City’s Office of Sustainability has completed its business diversification study and research into energy burdens that residents are experiencing. As a result, the proposed appointment undercuts a process intended to solicit

from the public the needs, concerns, and solutions to inform and reimagine PGW's future. The appointment of public officials, especially in institutions as critical as PGW, should build, not diminish, the public's confidence in our city's institutions.

Therefore, we humbly request the Gas Commission reconsider the Mayor's appointment and instead direct the administration to conduct a transparent and public search for these vital roles.

Further, we are asking for a process that is responsive to needs identified in the ongoing diversification study. To this end, we ask that the Gas Commission propose that the Administration consider the following suggestions in this process:

- Provide documentation of the public hearings that have been done to this point on PGW's future, including OOS Business Diversification Study.
- Create a Residents Advisory Board of community and labor representatives consisting of grassroots leaders, advocates, workers, and community residents who will work with the Gas Commission to create listening sessions with the public on what people need to see from PGW and new leadership and hold additional hearings to ensure that the needs of Black, Brown, poor residents and workers are heard in this time of Covid 19 and its impact on jobs and energy burdens.
- The Residents Advisory Board should work with the Gas Commission and Philadelphia Facilities Management Corporation to incorporate public feedback into a job search process.
- The Mayor should conduct a far-reaching search for a candidate with interviews with the Gas Commission and the Residents Advisory Board taking into account people's input from the Resident Advisory Board hearings and listening sessions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing the results of the meeting on Tuesday.

Respectfully,

ORGANIZATIONAL SIGNERS

1. 215 People's Alliance
2. 350 Philadelphia
3. 500 Women Scientists Philadelphia
4. A SMART Collaboration
5. Asian Americans United
6. Grassroots Advocacy for South Philadelphia (GRASP)

7. JUNTOS
8. Just Community Energy Transition Project
9. Lilac
10. Movement Alliance Project
11. Neighbors Against the Gas Plants
12. Pennsylvania Chapter of the Sierra Club (including Ready For 100/Philly and Southeastern PA Group)
13. The Pennsylvania Debt Collective
14. Philadelphia Climate Works
15. Philadelphia Neighborhood Networks
16. Philly Thrive
17. POWER Interfaith
18. Reclaim Philadelphia
19. Sunrise Movement Philadelphia Hub
20. Transit Forward Philadelphia
21. The Climate Mobilization, Philadelphia Chapter
22. The Shalom Center

INDIVIDUAL SIGNERS

1. Deb Bentzel, PGW rate payer
2. John Braxton, PGW rate payer
3. Jeff Brown, PGW rate payer for 50 years
4. Terri Burgin, PGW rate payer
5. Harvey Chanin, PGW rate payer
6. Mitch Chanin, resident
7. Sherrie Cohen, PGW rate payer
8. Emily Davis, resident
9. Stephanie Davis, PGW rate payer
10. Caleb Delp, PGW rate payer
11. Margaret Rose Dillon, PGW rate payer, associate committee person 01-21
12. Patricia Eakin, resident
13. Zakia Elliott, resident
14. Steve Ellis, PGW rate payer
15. Nora Elmarzouky, PGW rate payer
16. Caitlin Fritz, PGW rate payer
17. Anthony Giancatarino, PGW rate payer

18. Gloria Gilman, PGW rate payer
19. James Gitto, PGW rate payer
20. Rabbi Julie Greenberg, PGW rate payer
21. Dyresha Harris, PGW rate payer
22. Lauren Horner, PGW rate payer
23. Mindy Isser, PGW rate payer
24. Chenjerai Kumanyika, PGW rate payer
25. Hannah Lebowitz-Lockard, resident
26. Michelle Lee, PGW rate payer
27. Andrea Moselle, PGW rate payer
28. Kathleen Melville, PGW rate payer, committee person 01-03
29. Frank M. Ortiz, PGW rate payer
30. Germán Parodi, PGW rate payer
31. Dana Pavlichko, PGW rate payer, committee person 01-11
32. Adams Rackes, PGW rate payer, Ward Leader
33. Meenal Raval, Philadelphia resident
34. Lynn Robinson, PGW rate payer
35. Kolson Schlosser, PGW rate payer
36. Stan Shapiro, PGW rate payer
37. Kayla Speedy, PGW rate payer
38. Margaret Stephens, resident
39. Andrew Stober, PGW rate payer
40. Eo Trueblood, PGW rate payer
41. Rabbi Arthur Waskow, PGW rate payer
42. Peter Winslow, resident
43. Ron Whitehorne, resident
44. Todd Wolfson, PGW rate payer
45. Thakiyah Yankowy