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26-03018

Public Utilities Commission of Nevada
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NEVADA CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Nevada Conservation League
PO Box 61378
Las Vegas, NV 89160

June 15, 2026

Public Utilities Commission of Nevada
9075 W. Diablo Drive, Suite 250
Las Vegas, NV 89148

Re: Docket #: 26-03018

Dear Chair Williamson and Commissioners Cordova and Brown,

The Nevada Conservation League (NCL) is the independent political voice of Nevada's Conservation Community. We work to maintain and enhance Nevada's natural character and the quality of life for Nevadans through effective advocacy and collaboration with Nevada's leaders. As longtime advocates for local, clean energy, we know that our state can and must lead the nation toward a clean energy future: one with improved air quality, a stronger economy, and reduced climate impacts.

Across the state, families continue to struggle to pay their utility bills and are often forced to choose between groceries and keeping the air conditioning on during Nevada's dangerous summer heat. At the same time, NV Energy and Southwest Gas continue to pursue repeated rate increases, higher profits, and policies that make it harder for customers to lower their bills. Meanwhile, Berkshire Hathaway, NV Energy's parent company, paid its CEO more than $22 million[1] last year, and Southwest Gas paid its CEO over $10 million[2] in 2025 — about 68 times the compensation of the company's median employee. This makes the Commission's oversight of monopoly utilities more important than ever.

In recent years, PUCN staff and customer advocates have uncovered decades of NV Energy's overcharges,[3] attempts to recover inappropriate costs[4] from customers, repeated rate hike

[1] Kim, J. (2026, April 21). Utility CEO pay surges amid higher profits, customer struggles. Energy and Policy Institute. https://energyandpolicy.org/utility-ceo-pay-2025
[2] Haller, K. and Conley E. (2026, May 7). 2026 Proxy Statement: Notice of 2026 Annual Meeting of Stockholders. Southwest Gas. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1692115/000169211526000080/swx-20260323.htm
[3] Spears, D. (2026, February 23). NV Energy customers to receive refunds after overcharge scandal: What to expect and when. KTNV. https://www.ktnv.com/13-investigates/whats-the-deal/nv-energy-customers-to-receive-refunds-after-overcharge-scandal-what-to-expect-and-when
[4] Haas, G. (2024, December 13). NV Energy, Southwest Gas criticized by national utility watchdog over improper charges. KLAS.

requests,[5] and failures to deliver on key utility commitments. These are not isolated incidents and underscore the need for stronger oversight, customer protections, and utility accountability. NCL is also concerned that the overcharge investigation ultimately resulted in too few safeguards to prevent future wrongdoing. While customer refunds were necessary, they represented only the bare minimum, and the Commission missed an opportunity to pair refunds with stronger enforcement measures and meaningful deterrence.

NCL appreciates that NV Energy's 2026 Integrated Resource Plan includes major additions of renewable energy resources, particularly solar and battery storage, which are critical for Nevada's clean energy future, grid reliability, and long-term affordability. At the same time, the plan proposes 1,200 MW of new methane gas-burning power through the addition of three peaker plants, largely driven by data center demand growth. NV Energy projects that data centers could account for 64% of total electricity sales in the state by 2046. These gas plants would cost customers billions of dollars, while exposing them to long-term financial risks tied to volatile fuel costs and the possibility of paying for power plants that were ultimately not needed.

Instead of doubling down on expensive gas systems, Nevada should aggressively scale demand response programs and customer-owned energy systems that are already installed in homes and businesses across the state. Smart thermostats, battery systems, rooftop solar, EV charging technologies, and other distributed energy resources can help reduce peak demand faster, more flexibly, and at far lower cost to customers. Nevada should invest in expanding these proven solutions instead of locking ratepayers into another generation of costly fossil fuel infrastructure.

NCL is deeply concerned by the Commission's recent decision on Southwest Gas's Integrated Resource plan, which approved extensive pipeline projects costing hundreds of millions of dollars despite significant questions regarding the necessity of those investments and the availability of lower-cost alternatives. Decisions like this risk burdening ratepayers with decades of costly gas infrastructure while further exposing them to volatile fuel costs. Moving forward, the Commission should require stronger evidence of need and a comprehensive evaluation of more affordable alternatives before approving large-scale utility projects.

Additionally, Southwest Gas is seeking a substantial rate increase through its General Rate Case. The proposal would increase the company's annual revenue by over $70 million and raise its rate of return, resulting in an estimated $7 monthly bill increase for Southern Nevada customers.[6] At a time when many households are already struggling with rising costs, this proposal would place additional financial strain on customers while increasing utility shareholder returns. We urge the Commission to carefully scrutinize this request and reject attempts to increase utility shareholder profits further.

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https://www.8newsnow.com/news/local-news/nv-energy-southwest-gas-criticized-by-national-utility-watchdog-over-improper-charges/

[5] Spears, D. (2024, February 6). 'People just can't afford it': Customers fuming over Southwest Gas rate hikes demand answers. KTNV. https://www.ktnv.com/13-investigates/whats-the-deal/people-just-cant-afford-it-customers-fuming-over-southwest-gas-rate-hikes-demand-answers

[6] Sean Hemmersmeier, "Southern Nevada Customers Could See 7% Increase in Gas Bills," Las Vegas Review-Journal, September 2025, accessed June 12, 2026, https://www.reviewjournal.com/business/energy/southern-nevada-customers-could-see-7-increase-in-gas-bills-3729318/

Nevadans deserve clean energy that delivers better air quality and predictable, affordable energy bills. To get there, Nevada must meet its Renewable Portfolio Standard, reduce dependence on volatile methane gas, and continue expanding local, reliable energy resources. We urge the PUC to prioritize consumer protection and ensure that Nevada advances low-cost, clean energy and energy efficiency. We depend on you to protect Nevadans and pave the way for a cleaner, more affordable energy future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
/s Kristee Watson
Executive Director
Nevada Conservation League