

# EARTHJUSTICE [ Union of Concerned Scientists



COMMUNITIES  
FOR A BETTER  
ENVIRONMENT  
established 1978



SUSTAINABLE  
SILICON VALLEY



ACTION FOR A  
HEALTHY PLANET



UNDAUNTEDK12  
Climate-resilient schools. Future-ready students.



MENLO  
SPARK



Patricia Poppe  
CEO  
PG&E Corporation  
300 Lakeside Drive  
Oakland, California  
94612

August 24, 2023

Dear Ms. Poppe,

As organizations working toward a clean energy future in California, often in partnership with PG&E, we are writing to urge you to reconsider membership with the American Gas Association

(AGA) – a trade association that is a significant barrier to climate action, especially as it relates to cutting emissions from the building sector.

We recently learned that Eversource Energy, an investor-owned utility that sells both electricity and gas in the Northeast, has decided to end its membership with AGA, in order to “redirect costs to more targeted associations and memberships with a focus on decarbonization.” The decision recognizes the misalignment between Eversource’s own commitment to decarbonization and AGA use of membership dues to fight climate policies across the nation.

Given PG&E’s history of leadership on decarbonization efforts in California – including support of all-electric new construction and a commitment to avoiding gas system expansion – we urge you to do the same. By contributing more than \$800,000 every year to AGA, PG&E is sending Californians’ hard-earned dollars to an organization that is fighting the very policies that both PG&E and Californians support.

The actions of the American Gas Association do not align with PG&E’s values. AGA has been instrumental in [undermining climate policy](#) at the local, state and federal level. AGA uses its [members’ dues](#) to spread [misinformation](#) and fund front groups to fight the same electrification policies PG&E has supported.

AGA also fights efficiency standards that will help save Americans money and cut pollution. They have led an effort to ban local governments in dozens of states from utilizing their authority to increase energy efficiency and upgrade buildings to cut pollution and ensure residents can withstand the impacts of climate change.

Much like the tobacco industry, AGA has also done considerable harm by hiring [pay-to-play toxicologists](#) in an attempt to mislead the public about the scientific documentation of the health harms that can arise from burning gas indoors. This has restricted peoples’ ability to keep themselves and their families safe in their homes.

In light of AGA’s actions, it is difficult to see how PG&E can continue to meet its own climate commitments while financially contributing to the harmful actions of this trade association. How can the utility engage in good faith on climate solutions with investors, customers and policymakers while also propping up a key barrier to those solutions?

Eversource’s decision to leave AGA is proof that a major gas service provider can continue to safely and responsibly continue its operations without supporting climate obstruction by the American Gas Association. By shifting support to trade associations that are more aligned with PG&E’s values, as Eversource is doing, PG&E can simultaneously provide safe energy service to California without undermining its own commitment to a healthier future.

Just as PG&E exercised tremendous leadership by leaving the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in 2009 over its “extreme position” on climate change, so too should PG&E now stand up to AGA’s actions to stall the transition to a clean and affordable energy future.

We strongly urge PG&E to leave the American Gas Association, and appreciate your consideration of this proposition. Leaving AGA would not only ensure that ratepayer dollars are not being misused, it would send a strong signal to other utilities that the era of climate obstructionism must end. We all must partner to help safeguard Americans from the devastating impacts of climate change.

Sincerely,

Matt Vespa, Senior Attorney  
Earthjustice

Brandon Dawson, Director  
Sierra Club California

Shana Lazerow, Legal Director  
Communities for a Better Environment

Daniel Barad, Western States Policy Manager  
Union of Concerned Scientists

Tyson Slocum, Director, Energy Program  
Public Citizen

Robert M. Gould, MD, President  
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility

Jonathan Klein, Co-founder, CEO  
Undaunted K-12

Dennis Murphy, Director, Water and Sustainability  
Sustainable Silicon Valley

Ash Lauth, National Director of Campaigns  
Action for the Climate Emergency

Lauren Weston, Executive Director  
Acterra

Mitchel Slomiak, Board Chair / Co-Founder  
Menlo Spark

Laura Neish, Executive Director

350 Bay Area

Cheryl Weiden, Steering Committee  
350 Silicon Valley

Sven Thesen, Co-Founder  
Project Green Home

Sean Armstrong, Managing Principal  
Redwood Energy

Leslie Alden, Executive Director  
Drawdown Bay Area

Andrew McNamara, Principal and Co-founder  
Carbon Zero Buildings

Bruce Hodge, Chairman  
Carbon Free Palo Alto

Bruce Hodge, Chairman  
Carbon Free Silicon Valley

Debra Little, CEO  
AjO