

PG&E - Marketing & Communications | Patti Poppe Letter to Customers - Open Lines

Dear customers, I joined PG&E in 2021 because I wanted to help turn the company around and serve you better. From day one, I said leading with love would be key to our transformation. It may seem strange to see the word love in a letter from a business leader. But I believe love and connection are essential to building a culture where people care for each other and our customers. I want every coworker and customer to know we care about them. And that starts with listening to you.

I want to share what I'm hearing and what we're doing in response. Here's what you've said. "PG&E has not done enough to prevent future wildfires." "Bills are too high. And you're concerned that you're paying for PG&E's past mistakes." "PG&E has too many outages, making prices even more frustrating." "Sometimes it seems like shareholders and profits are the most important thing to PG&E."

Clearly, we must regain your trust. I think the best way to do that is to show you we're acting on your feedback. And I'm up for that. I'm making this personal letter my annual tradition. You deserve to know about our progress and the things you care about most. Let's go one by one, starting with wildfire prevention.

When I first arrived, people said PG&E hadn't invested enough in updating equipment, especially given the impacts of climate change. I agreed with them. So we're doing that now. Our inspections, repairs, and equipment rebuilds have contributed to dramatic improvements. The result-- we've cut your exposure to wildfire risk by over 90%. And we're on a multi-year run of no major wildfires due to our equipment, a record we intend to keep.

Now let's talk about energy prices. I know many of you think that undergrounding power lines is driving up rates. But here's the reality. On average, just \$1 a month of your bill goes to undergrounding. Tree trimming, on the other hand, is \$20 a month of the average bill.

Undergrounding reduces wildfire risk 98%. So the more lines we bury, the safer you are, the more reliable our power is, and the less we have to spend cutting vegetation away from our lines.

Preventing wildfire is only part of the story. There are other factors driving up prices that are less apparent. Energy use in California has been decreasing over the past 15 years because of advances in energy efficiency and solar adoption. These are positive developments for our planet and for individual customers.

However, because our rates are based on dividing total costs by the units of energy used, when customers overall use less energy, it means rates rise. And that, unfortunately, impacts our most financially vulnerable customers.

Here's some good news. We added 14,000 new customers to the grid this year and expect to add many more in future years, as more data centers and electric vehicle charging stations come online. These new customers will all take on a share of paying for the energy system. And that's one way we will make bills more affordable in the long run.

As for company practices, we're teaching our workforce how to put you, the customer, first in our decision-making and how to do that at a lower cost. That's right. Believe it or not, we want you to feel the love from PG&E every day.

In 2024, we saved \$650 million through 250 cost-cutting projects, where teams applied new technologies, improved processes, and renegotiated contracts to save money, all without compromising safety. We reinvested those dollars into creating the safer, more reliable, cleaner energy system you deserve. We are creating a culture that rejects waste and excess. Please know not a day goes by that we are not focused on making energy more affordable.

We're also working on reducing our financing costs and improving our credit ratings so we can pass those savings on to you. Want to know what's not driving up your utility bills? Advertising, executive compensation, fines, and legal costs. The investors who fund the improvements we make every day pay for these costs. They don't add to your bill. They reduce our profits.

Now let's talk about power reliability. If you've been a PG&E customer for a while, you'll remember the threat of rolling blackouts on the hottest summer days. I want you to know that our investments have made the California grid stronger. Extending the operations of our Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant and adding more clean energy, like battery storage and renewables, resulted in zero Flex Alerts or rolling blackouts in 2024, even with our hottest July on record and an extremely hot October.

So who's PG&E today? PG&E is made up of people who are your friends, your families, and your neighbors. We know more progress is needed. And sincerely, that's what gets us out of bed in the morning. By showing our commitment to becoming a better utility, we are acting on our pledge to lead with love. And we hope to earn back your trust.

I'll be back with another letter next year. And you'll be hearing more from me and the PG&E team in the meantime. We want to keep this conversation going. Our lines are open. Scan the QR code to find out about opportunities to meet with our team or visit pge.com/open-lines. With love, Patti.