

FINANCE
2/16/2022

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Wednesday, February 16, 2022
9:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

BILLS: 220006, 220079, 220080

1 - - -

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good
3 morning. This is the Committee on
4 Finance for today Wednesday, February
5 16, 2022.

6 I understand that state law
7 currently requires that the following
8 announcement be made at the beginning of
9 every remote public hearing as follows:
10 Due to the current public health
11 emergency, City Council Committees are
12 currently meeting remotely on Microsoft
13 Teams to have these remote hearings
14 possible.

15 Instructions for how the public
16 may view and offer public testimony at
17 public hearings of Council Committees
18 are included in the public hearing
19 notices that are published in the Daily
20 News, Philadelphia Inquirer and Legal
21 Intelligencer prior to the hearings and
22 can also be found on PHLCouncil.com. I
23 now note that the hour has come to call
24 this hearing to order.

25 Mr. Iannuzzi, will you please

1 call the roll to take attendance.
2 Members that are in attendance, will you
3 please indicate that you are present
4 when your name is called and say a few
5 words when responding so that your image
6 will be displayed on screen when you
7 speak.

8 THE CLERK: Apologies.

9 Councilmember Allan Domb.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning,
11 Mr. Chair and colleagues. I'm present.

12 THE CLERK: Councilmember Helen
13 Gym.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
15 morning, Mr. Chair and colleagues. I am
16 present.

17 THE CLERK: Councilmember
18 Curtis Jones, Jr.

19 (No response.)

20 THE CLERK: Councilmember Mark
21 Squilla.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Morning,
23 Mr. Chair and colleagues. Present.

24 THE CLERK: Chair Green.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good morning

1 and good morning to all of my
2 colleagues. Councilmember Jones I know
3 is also here. Just give us a few
4 moments.

5 (Brief recess.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
7 morning.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good
9 morning. Thank you, Councilmember Bass.

10 We will now proceed with the
11 hearing. Thank you. We now have a
12 quorum and the Committee is present.
13 The hearing is now called to order.
14 This is the public hearing of the
15 Committee on Finance regarding Bill Nos.
16 220006, 220079 and 220080.

17 Mr. Iannuzzi, will you please
18 read the titles of the bills.

19 THE CLERK: Bill No. 220080, an
20 ordinance authorizing the execution,
21 delivery and performance by the
22 Philadelphia Facilities Management
23 Corporation on behalf of the
24 Philadelphia Gas Works of a Renewal of
25 Service Agreement for Gas Storage and

1 Transportation under Rate Schedule GSS
2 with Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line
3 Company, LLC.

4 Bill No. 220079, an ordinance
5 constituting the Twenty-sixth
6 Supplemental Ordinance to the Restated
7 General Water and Wastewater Revenue
8 Bond Ordinance of the 1989, as
9 supplemented, et cetera.

10 And Bill No. 220006, an
11 ordinance amending Chapter 19-4000,
12 entitled "Income Inequality Initiative
13 Earned Income Tax Credit," by requiring
14 employers to provide notification to
15 workers regarding availability of
16 certain additional federal and City tax
17 benefit programs and extending the
18 Department of Revenue's notification and
19 reporting requirements to such
20 additional tax benefit programs; all
21 under certain terms and conditions.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
23 Mr. Iannuzzi.

24 Before we begin to hear
25 testimony from the witnesses we have for

1 today, everyone who has been invited to
2 the meeting to testify -- excuse me, the
3 hearing to testify should be aware that
4 this public hearing is being recorded.
5 Because the hearing is public,
6 participants and viewers have no
7 reasonable expectation of privacy. By
8 continuing to be in this hearing, you
9 are consenting to being recorded.

10 Additionally, prior to
11 recognizing Members for questions or
12 comments that they have for witnesses, I
13 will note for the record at this time
14 that we will use the chat feature
15 available in Microsoft Teams to allow
16 Members to signify that they wish to be
17 recognized. In order to comply with the
18 Sunshine Act, the chat feature must only
19 be used for this purpose.

20 Mr. Iannuzzi, will you please
21 call the first witness regarding Bill
22 No., give me one second, 220080.

23 THE CLERK: John Zuk, Senior
24 Vice-president for Gas Management at
25 PGW.

1 MR. ZUK: Good morning,
2 Councilpeople. Chairman Green, would
3 you like me to read my testimony?

4 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes.
5 Mr. Zuk, before you state your
6 testimony, I would also like to
7 acknowledge that we are joined by
8 Councilmember Jones as well.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: And
10 Councilmember David Oh. Thank you,
11 Chairman.

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And
13 Councilman David Oh. Thank you,
14 Councilmember Oh.

15 Mr. Zuk, please just state your
16 name for the record and then proceed
17 with your testimony.

18 MR. ZUK: My name is John Zuk,
19 as Senior Vice-president for Philly Gas
20 Works. Good day, Chairman Green and
21 members of City Council Committee on
22 Finance. My name is John Zuk. I am the
23 Senior Vice-president, Gas Management of
24 Philadelphia Gas Woks. I'm appearing
25 today on behalf of PGW in support of

1 Bill No. 220080, which would approve a
2 request to renew service agreement for
3 Rate Schedule GSS, approving a request
4 for authorization to execute, deliver
5 and perform a renewal of service
6 agreement under rate GSS with
7 Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Company,
8 LLC.

9 PFMC enters into natural gas
10 storage and transportation contracts on
11 behalf of PGW to allow PGW to, one,
12 balance both its system requirements as
13 well as third party supplier
14 requirements when actual demand may be
15 more or less than forecasted demand,
16 reduce the amount of gas and additional
17 firm pipeline capacity that PGW needs to
18 keep under contract for demand spikes in
19 the operating season, maintain added
20 security in case of pipeline
21 disruptions, i.e., hurricanes, pipeline
22 failures, supplier freeze-offs and
23 terrorist attacks, reduce dependency on
24 PGW's supplemental supply assets, i.e.,
25 LNG, and obtain a physical pricing

1 advantage during the operating season
2 since all gas volumes are historically
3 injected in the out-of-operating season
4 time frame when gas demand and pricing
5 is historically lower.

6 PGW's current Rate GSS Service
7 Agreement with Transcontinental Gas Pipe
8 Line Company, LLC has a term ending
9 March 31, 2023, and Transco has informed
10 PGW that they are willing to offer PGW a
11 renewal of the agreement for an
12 additional term ending on March 31,
13 2028, provided that PGW enters into such
14 renewal by March 31, 2022.

15 The gas storage and bundle
16 transportation that is the subject of
17 this proposal of the agreement comprises
18 approximately 20 percent of PGW's total
19 storage capacity and is one of PGW's
20 least expensive storages. And if PGW is
21 unable to renew its contract for GSS
22 storage and transportation with Transco,
23 PGW will have to attempt to replicate
24 this service for both balancing and
25 operating season delivery, at an

1 increase in cost at approximately \$8.5
2 million per year.

3 PGW is required to comply with
4 the least cost fuel procurement policy
5 requirement mandated by the Pennsylvania
6 Public Utility Commission at 66 Pa. In
7 order to meet this legal requirement,
8 PGW must respond to market procurement
9 conditions and standards regarding the
10 acquisition of gas supply, storage,
11 distribution, transportation and
12 transmission, and the renewal of Service
13 Agreement Under Rate Schedule GSS is
14 consistent with the form of agreement
15 for use under Transco's GSS Rate
16 Schedule contained in the Transco FERC
17 Tariff.

18 In conclusion, PGW proposed the
19 approval of the request to renew a
20 service agreement for Rate schedule GSS.
21 Therefore, PGW respectfully asks the
22 Committee for a favorable report on Bill
23 No. 220080 and the City Council
24 approval. PGW also respectfully
25 requests suspension of the rules for

1 initial reading of this bill.

2 I would like to extend our
3 appreciation to both the Commission and
4 its staff conducting the budget review
5 that was both efficient and
6 comprehensive. Also, on behalf of PGW,
7 I would like to thank City Council for
8 its past support of our efforts to serve
9 the citizens of Philadelphia and look
10 forward to your continued support. I am
11 available to respond to any questions
12 concerning this matter. Thank you for
13 your time and consideration in this
14 matter.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
16 Mr. Zuk. Before we take any questions
17 from members of Council that they may
18 have, just from an overall perspective,
19 you provided a lot of information. But
20 if you can just in a very succinct way
21 state the savings that the citizens or
22 the ratepayers of the City of
23 Philadelphia will benefit by this
24 contract?

25 MR. ZUK: The savings, we

1 currently inject as I stated earlier
2 inject into the off system storage at
3 approximately it will last about \$3 per
4 dek. And if we would have went out --

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Mr. Zuk,
6 when you say dek, you're saying
7 dekatherm, correct?

8 MR. ZUK: Yes, thank you,
9 dekatherm. And if we were to go out and
10 have to purchase this gas we'll say
11 previously in January, you were talking
12 about \$10 per dekatherm, so you can see
13 it's a \$7 difference. If we had to go
14 out and if we didn't have the storage to
15 go out and purchase it during the time
16 that we needed it.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Absolutely.
18 And this provides the opportunity to
19 from a timing perspective enable us to
20 purchase and also have the storage
21 ability within the Transco pipeline at a
22 time and at a means that make it more
23 feasible and more economical for both
24 the ratepayers and for the system as a
25 whole?

1 MR. ZUK: That is correct.

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

3 Are there any questions from any members
4 of the Committee?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I know that
7 the Gas Commission staff and I know
8 Gemela McClendon, Esq., Chair of -- the
9 Executive Director of the Gas Commission
10 and her staff also reviewed and approved
11 this proposal through their review. The
12 Gas Commission also supported this
13 approval unanimously through our Gas
14 Commission hearing previous to this
15 Finance Committee hearing.

16 So with that, are there any
17 additional questions from members of the
18 Committee for Mr. Zuk?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.
21 Seeing and hearing none, thank you,
22 Mr. Zuk, for your testimony. And I
23 believe that is the only witness for
24 this matter, Bill No. 220079.

25 And I don't see or hear any

1 other members of Council that have
2 questions for this witness regarding
3 this bill.

4 So we'll now call on
5 Mr. Iannuzzi to call the next panel of
6 witnesses to testimony regarding Bill
7 No. 220006. Before we have those
8 witnesses testify, I know Councilmember
9 Domb would like to be recognized for a
10 comment.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
12 Chairperson Green.

13 And I'm pursuing this
14 legislation today that requires
15 employers to notify their employees
16 about the Philadelphia Wage Tax refund
17 and the Federal Child Tax Credit, in
18 addition to the EITC program which is
19 already required in our Philadelphia
20 Code. And these programs were really
21 created to help Philadelphians who are
22 doing their best to put food on their
23 table to pay their bills.

24 And speaking to Bill Golderer
25 at United Way, he tells me there's over

1 \$1 billion in federal money in some of
2 these programs that we don't get into
3 the hands of Philadelphians, and we
4 continue to leave this money on the
5 table. So if we really want to help
6 these struggling families -- and every
7 one of us should be doing this, there's
8 nothing more important that I can think
9 of right now -- is public safety and
10 getting federal money of \$1 billion into
11 the hands of Philadelphians.

12 So I appreciate our employers
13 working in partnership to increase the
14 number of people signing up for these
15 safety net programs they help fund. And
16 I also want to mention this bill also
17 includes the payroll service companies.
18 So a payroll service company, whether
19 it's ADP or Paychex, whatever that
20 company is, we want them to also send
21 out a notification to the employees that
22 are getting checks about these programs.

23 I want to thank my cosponsors
24 on this legislation, Councilmembers
25 Green, Gilmore Richardson, Johnson,

1 Brooks, Gauthier, Thomas and Gym. And
2 today we also have members of the
3 Revenue Department who have been
4 extremely helpful in crafting this
5 legislation. Thank you to all of you.
6 And also, Mary Arthur who's from
7 Campaign for Working Families, a
8 nonprofit fighting alongside of us
9 working tirelessly -- she does a great
10 job -- to ensure Philadelphians file
11 their taxes and access these benefits.

12 So I thank my colleagues for
13 being here today, and hope to have your
14 votes on this legislation. And I want
15 to thank all the partners. Really we
16 owe a debt of gratitude to all of you.

17 Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
19 Councilmember Domb.

20 Councilmember Jones would like
21 to be recognized.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
23 Mr. Chairman.

24 I just want to go on record
25 thanking Member Domb for staying focused

1 on this important component of the
2 reduction of poverty and actually
3 putting food on the plates of
4 Philadelphians. We average, at least
5 back in the day, before the Benefits
6 program was designed which is a
7 codification of eligibility for
8 Philadelphians and if you plug in your
9 information one time, you get qualified
10 for many benefits under what your
11 particular demographic is eligible for,
12 it was estimated back in its time to be
13 about \$11,000 per eligible family that
14 was being left on the table. Everything
15 from dental benefits, eye benefits,
16 health care benefits and rebates that we
17 were eligible for, but the federal
18 government gave --

19 (Background interruption.)

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Hold on,
21 Councilmember Jones.

22 Councilmember Sanchez, if you
23 can mute yourself. Thank you.
24 Please proceed, Councilmember Jones.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes, that's

1 quite all right. So for you to stay
2 focused on this, it is equal to any
3 rebate or any stimulus package that gets
4 given, it's money we are deserving of
5 and definitely needed when all other
6 benefits are slowly being waned away,
7 that staying focused on these kinds of
8 things are very important. So thank
9 you, Member Domb.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
11 Councilmember Jones. Thank you,
12 Councilmember Domb.

13 We will now move forward to the
14 panel for Bill No. 220006.
15 Mr. Iannuzzi, if you can call the
16 witnesses for this panel.

17 THE CLERK: Rebecca Lopez
18 Kriss, Deputy Commissioner for Policy &
19 Outreach, Philadelphia Department of
20 Revenue.

21 MS. LOPEZ KRISS: Good morning.
22 Good morning, Chairperson Green and
23 members of the Committee on Finance. My
24 name is Rebecca Lopez Kriss. I'm the
25 Deputy Commissioner for the Policy &

1 Outreach at the Department of Revenue.

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
3 and please proceed with your testimony.

4 MS. LOPEZ KRISS: Good morning.

5 My name is Rebecca Lopez Kriss and I'm
6 the Deputy Revenue Commissioner for
7 Policy & Outreach. I am here today to
8 present on Bill 220006. This bill
9 expands the City's reporting
10 requirements for the following tax
11 programs: The Earned Income Tax
12 Program -- excuse me, the Earned Income
13 Tax Credit or EITC, the Child Tax Credit
14 or CTC and the Low Income Wage Tax
15 Refund. Specifically, Bill 220006
16 requires three things: It requires the
17 creation of a new tax liability
18 reduction eligibility notice by the
19 Department of Revenue. This notice,
20 accessible to all Philadelphia
21 residents, will describe each program,
22 its eligibility requirements,
23 application processes and associated
24 contact information.

25 The bill also requires all

1 employers to provide the tax liability
2 reduction notice to their employees by
3 February 15th of each year. And
4 finally, the bill also establishes
5 annual reporting requirements on its
6 implementation. By July 1st of each
7 year, the Department of Revenue will
8 publish a report on its website that
9 includes the number of Philadelphia
10 residents to receive the benefits from
11 the EITC, CTC and Low Income Wage Tax
12 Refund program and the estimated
13 eligible populations.

14 The Administration supports
15 Bill 220006. However, I do want to just
16 make it clear in our testimony that due
17 to eligibility expansion last year and
18 the lack of specific data from the
19 federal government, estimating the
20 number of residents eligible for CTC is
21 complicated. We will do our best to
22 comply with all annual reporting
23 requirements outlined in this bill.

24 Like City Council, we believe
25 it's important to help taxpayers apply

1 for our tax program like the Low Income
2 Wage Tax Refund and federal programs
3 like the EITC and CTC. We also believe
4 it is important to show taxpayers what
5 is available in clear and understandable
6 terms. This bill will help us do both
7 things by establishing the informational
8 tax liability reduction form as creating
9 fixed reporting requirements.

10 We look forward to working with
11 City Council and the Office of
12 Community, Empowerment & Opportunity in
13 implementing this bill. Thank you for
14 the opportunity to testify, and I'm
15 happy to answer any questions.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
17 Ms. Lopez Kriss.

18 Are there any questions for
19 this witness?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Seeing and
22 hearing none, Mr. Iannuzzi, can you call
23 the next witness.

24 THE CLERK: Mary Arthur, CEO
25 and President of the Campaign for

1 Working Families.

2 MS. ARTHUR: Good morning,
3 everyone. Thank you for the invitation
4 and thank you, Councilman Domb, for
5 keeping this on the forefront on all of
6 our minds. I've been doing this work
7 now for 18 years and I'm just going to
8 start with a taxpayer that we did work
9 for on Saturday. She --

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Ms. Arthur,
11 if you can just --

12 MS. ARTHUR: Can you hear me?

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes. If you
14 can state your name for the record for
15 the stenographer so she can hear that,
16 and then proceed with your testimony.

17 MS. ARTHUR: Sorry. I get too
18 excited about my work.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's okay.

20 MS. ARTHUR: My name is Mary
21 Arthur, and I am the President and CEO
22 of the Campaign for Working Families.
23 We provide free tax preparation services
24 to residents of the City of
25 Philadelphia. So again, I'm very

1 grateful for this opportunity to talk
2 about this work.

3 But I wanted to start with a
4 story from Saturday. We prepared a
5 young lady's tax return who was eligible
6 for all the credits that are being
7 mentioned here. She received a refund
8 check of \$17,000. Her goal is to buy a
9 home. So with the help of the City and
10 employers, think of the impact that this
11 bill will have on all the families.

12 Part of our task is to put out
13 in the community the credits that are
14 available to them, to reach as many
15 people, individuals and families to
16 receive these credits. However, with
17 your support and the support of this
18 bill, just think about the impact that
19 this could have on the residents. When
20 we talk about a renter, someone moving
21 from renting to owning, someone that can
22 feed their family without the stress of
23 wondering where that next meal is going
24 to come from, buying clothes for their
25 children, making home improvements and

1 those home improvements become community
2 improvements and all the refunds that
3 come back to the families and
4 individuals come back to the City of
5 Philadelphia, because that's where
6 they're going to spend their dollars.

7 So we are absolutely in support
8 of Bill 220006 because of all that it
9 can do for the residents of the City of
10 Philadelphia. And if our goal is to
11 help move Philadelphia out of poverty,
12 this bill is a great starting place for
13 it. All the families, all the working
14 people that do not know, we've been in
15 business for 19 years.

16 However, there are thousands in
17 the City that still do not know that
18 these credits are available to them.
19 And in the education of letting them
20 know that it is, we the Campaign can
21 educate them to the point of following
22 those returns for them and letting them
23 know that by getting these tax credits,
24 it does not affect any other of your
25 benefits. It does not go to cause any

1 negativity in your life outside of the
2 improvements.

3 People are afraid to fall for
4 these credits because they don't know if
5 they have to pay them back. They really
6 just don't understand what the word tax
7 credit means. And with your help and
8 the work that we do, we can really make
9 impact in the City of Philadelphia. So
10 I really thank you for this opportunity,
11 and I'm available for any questions.

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
13 Ms. Arthur, for your testimony this
14 morning. And thank you for your many
15 years of service leading the Campaign
16 for Working Families. We met many years
17 ago when I actually had some hair when I
18 worked for Councilmember Tasco, and
19 you're also partnering with Sharmain
20 Matlock-Turner, Urban Affairs Coalition.
21 And I just have a quick question and
22 then I will recognize Councilmember Domb
23 for a question.

24 Considering some of the recent
25 challenges pre-COVID in reference to

1 policies and other initiatives regarding
2 those that may have a different
3 background regarding immigration and
4 then also because of the impact of the
5 pandemic, how has that impacted the work
6 that you've done with the Campaign for
7 Working Families to get more people
8 knowledgeable about this Earned Income
9 Tax Credit and how has things progressed
10 over the years as well?

11 MS. ARTHUR: So if we go back
12 to 2018 tax year, which we were working
13 in 2018, we were able to service upwards
14 of 37,000 families. When COVID hit, of
15 course numbers decreased. We actually
16 had to change our delivery service of
17 model.

18 I would say last year we are on
19 our way back. We were able to service
20 upwards of 27,000 which going through
21 the pandemic and the fears, a lot of
22 people did not file. A lot of people
23 were on unemployment and they did not
24 file because unemployment is not
25 considered earned income. And what they

1 missed out on was we could do a look
2 back for them to the year that they did
3 have earnings and use that for them to
4 receive their Earned Income Tax Credit.

5 So I believe that we are
6 finally moving to the other side of
7 COVID where people are now coming out.
8 When it comes to the Child Tax Credit,
9 there's one year of a major change that
10 someone in immigration status for the
11 parent, but the child has Social
12 Security numbers, they're eligible for
13 the Child Tax Credit and they're
14 eligible if they have no income. So you
15 don't have to have income for the Child
16 Tax Credit.

17 The change in the tax law for
18 the EITC, if you are 18 years of age
19 aging out of foster care, you are now
20 eligible for the Earned Income Tax
21 Credit to the amount of \$1502, right.
22 They changed the Earned Income Tax
23 Credit for 19-year-olds, and now seniors
24 who are working can now receive it.

25 So someone who's 68 years old

1 and have still limited income, they're
2 now eligible for that full credit amount
3 of \$1500. So with the tax law changes,
4 there are a lot of benefits to the
5 families. If someone is married filing
6 separately, in the past they could not
7 claim the EITC. Now, they can. So the
8 expectation on our part is that the more
9 people learn about the tax law changes,
10 they are now -- they will come in and
11 receive those services. So we're hoping
12 we're on a good path this year reaching
13 some substantial numbers in those areas.
14 But again, with your help and with
15 employers sending out notices and as it
16 was stated, all employers sending out,
17 not just to City workers, but if we can
18 get all employers to send out that
19 information, that would be tremendous
20 for the families as well as the City.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. And
22 thank you for your testimony and that
23 update.

24 Councilmember Domb.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,

1 Mr. Chair. I want to thank also
2 Councilman Jones on his comments. I
3 appreciate it. And, Mary, thanks for
4 your great work. And, Rebecca, thanks
5 for all your help. And I also want to
6 thank Laurel in my office for crafting
7 this legislation and doing a great job.

8 But I also wanted to mention to
9 Rebecca, I think what we should do is we
10 have a problem with people not knowing
11 about these programs. We passed that
12 Wage Tax refund where the Revenue
13 Department told us it could be 40,000 to
14 50,000 in families that qualify, it
15 could be 140,000 people to get checks on
16 Wage Tax refunds. And sadly last year,
17 I think it was 1450 families or 1500
18 actually applied. And it just breaks
19 your heart that this money is available
20 and people don't know about it.

21 And the breakthrough here is
22 not just employers because most
23 employers today use payroll service
24 companies. The breakthrough here is how
25 do we sit down with ADP, how do we sit

1 down with Paychex and other payroll
2 service companies and say to them in a
3 positive way, this is a great tool for
4 you to help Philadelphians. This is a
5 great tool for you to sell your services
6 because you go to a employer and say,
7 not only can we do your payroll, but we
8 can help your employees achieve other
9 monies that they are due from the
10 federal government.

11 And I think this is something
12 that we should -- and, Rebecca, I'm
13 happy to work with you on this -- call
14 ADP, Paychex and other companies, sit
15 down, meet with them and figure out in a
16 positive way how we can make this happen
17 where they get the notifications out.
18 So I just wanted to mention that.

19 And thank you, Mr. Chair. And
20 thank you for all your help on this.
21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
23 Councilmember Domb.

24 I recognize Councilmember
25 Jones.

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
2 Mr. Chairman.

3 Ms. Arthur, do you still
4 administer BenePhilly, that whole
5 program for codification of benefits?

6 MS. ARTHUR: Yes. When someone
7 comes into the tax site, we can screen
8 them for the 29 public benefits that
9 they're eligible for. And by screening
10 them, it immediately tells them what
11 those benefits are that they are and the
12 amounts that they can receive. Then the
13 process is to refer them to the
14 BenePhilly centers or to Benefits Data
15 Trust.

16 Prior to COVID, we had eight
17 resource managers on staff at the
18 campaign to do that work inhouse, and
19 that is a goal of ours to get back to
20 that process. But we do screen the
21 taxpayer for those benefits.

22 I'd like to mention that -- I'm
23 sorry.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Before you
25 go on, can you cite the top three

1 benefits that people miss out on
2 normally?

3 MS. ARTHUR: Well, you wouldn't
4 believe, but SNAP is a major one.
5 People that are working every day,
6 they're being challenged at work, they
7 can't put in to take time off, so they
8 don't know what they're eligible for.
9 So they don't take the extra day to go
10 and research because they're going to be
11 penalized by losing a day's pay. So
12 SNAP is something that I would say 50
13 percent, if not 60 percent, of our
14 clients would be eligible for, as they
15 are eligible for all the credits that
16 have been spoken about today. That is
17 amazing to hear that, isn't it. But
18 that is one that truly could benefit the
19 families.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: What about
21 things like LIHEAP, all of that in
22 there?

23 MS. ARTHUR: Yes, LIHEAP is
24 another one because it's a window, and
25 people have to hit that window of time

1 to apply for LIHEAP. Other things are
2 on your mind and no one is calling you
3 to remind you that there's that
4 opportunity or they're not receiving
5 notices that they are eligible, they can
6 miss that window as well.

7 We're working to get more
8 people enrolled in health care. That
9 has changed tremendously. There's no
10 reason why a person should be walking
11 around without health care today. But I
12 can try and pull some other numbers for
13 you to get some real numbers I guess,
14 statistics.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
16 Mr. Chairman.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
18 Councilmember Jones.

19 Are there any additional
20 witnesses for this panel?

21 MS. ARTHUR: I would like to --

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: You can --

23 MS. ARTHUR: Excuse me. I
24 wanted to make one comment.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes.

1 MS. ARTHUR: You know, a lot of
2 people are paid by direct deposit so
3 they don't get mail, they don't get
4 notices from the payroll companies. So
5 as you speak through this, it would have
6 to be a special notice that they are
7 given because normally they don't get
8 anything in the mail. They would go
9 online to look at -- even their W2, they
10 go online to print that out. So I just
11 wanted to bring that to the forefront
12 that a lot of people that are getting
13 direct deposit would not necessarily get
14 mail from the payroll companies. So I
15 just wanted to put that on the table.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank
17 you, Ms. Arthur.

18 Are there any additional
19 questions for this panel?

20 MS. LOPEZ KRISS: Chairperson
21 Green, I have a quick comment I'd like
22 to make.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Please
24 proceed with your comment, Ms. Lopez
25 Kriss.

1 MS. LOPEZ KRISS: To respond to
2 Councilmember Domb about the Low Income
3 Wage Tax refund, one thing that's very
4 exciting at the Department of Revenue is
5 that we launched the Philadelphia Tax
6 Center which now includes all wage tax
7 refunds, including the Low Income Wage
8 Tax Refund, which you don't need to use
9 your name or password. It's on the
10 front page of the website. It's also
11 translated into Spanish and it's mobile
12 and able, so folks will be able to do
13 that on their phone or let's say if,
14 Mary Arthur, if someone is with you,
15 they can literally be doing it on a
16 tablet. So I'm hopeful since that will
17 also support the uptick of that program.

18 And then the other thing I just
19 want to mention to Councilmember Jones,
20 there's a really important program that
21 was launched by the state that we are
22 trying to get the word out about along
23 with our colleagues at the Water
24 Department, and that's LIHWAP. That's a
25 program that is a bucket of money that

1 is to help folks pay for water debt, and
2 it's across the Commonwealth. And once
3 the money is gone, it's gone. So we're
4 trying to do our best to get the word
5 out about that program. And I'm happy
6 to send you some more information about
7 it.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES:

9 Mr. Chairman.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes,

11 Councilmember Jones.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Would that
13 be eligible for things like lateral
14 repair with that bucket of money from
15 the state?

16 MS. LOPEZ KRISS: I have to
17 double check. I can double check, but
18 it's definitely for water debt that's in
19 arrears. So I'm not sure if that would
20 involve like let's say if you had a HELP
21 loan or something like that and I wanted
22 to pay off your HELP loan. So I can
23 check with you and follow up later.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Member Green
25 has been very much involved in that

1 whole issue. Lateral damage can make
2 you homeless. And so, anything that can
3 give working families an opportunity to
4 avoid a \$3,000 usually debt we would be
5 interested in.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
8 Councilmember Jones. And you're
9 referring to the Water and Sewer Line
10 Protection Program that is in
11 partnership with the Philadelphia Energy
12 Authority and American Water. That is a
13 program that helps to protect people to
14 not get into the situation where they
15 would need the HELP loan.

16 Many laterals in the City are
17 very seasoned because we live in a very
18 seasoned city, but also you have private
19 laterals and there are a number of
20 constituents that don't realize that
21 they have a private sewer line and they
22 have to pay for that, and often the cost
23 for that repair are thousands of
24 dollars, which it can be very expensive
25 when we have a city that has a 25

1 percent poverty rate. So thank you for
2 that line of questions, Councilmember
3 Jones.

4 Councilmember Domb, I see
5 you've indicated with your finger up
6 like you're in church. And I will
7 recognize you for a comment.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
9 Mr. Chair. That's a good one.

10 Rebecca, that's great about the
11 Tax Center. That's great customer
12 service on behalf of the City. I
13 applaud you guys. That's really good.
14 And, Mary, I'm glad you mentioned that.
15 We'll have to figure out a way to
16 electronically notify people too. I
17 think we're on top of this. I just want
18 to make sure between our Water
19 Department, our real estate tax billing,
20 our gas bills that we send out, that all
21 this information about all these
22 benefits that Councilmember Jones spoke
23 about and you spoke about, Mary, that
24 people are aware that those exist when
25 they receive the bills so if they need

1 help, they can apply for these funds
2 that will pay the bills. Is that
3 happening now with gas, water, sewer and
4 real estate taxes?

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Is that
6 directed to Rebecca Lopez Kriss?

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yes.

8 MS. LOPEZ KRISS: Are you
9 asking if we're including bill stuffers
10 with let's say, for example, water
11 bills?

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yes.

13 MS. LOPEZ KRISS: We have done
14 that in the past. I'd have to look at
15 what the schedule was. But we've
16 definitely done Homestead stuffers.
17 We've done some other things. If you'd
18 like, I can look into what the last
19 schedule was.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: The goal is
21 just to get the communication out that
22 these programs exist. And I think you
23 guys are doing a really good job. So
24 whatever we can do to advance that will
25 be great.

1 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

3 Thank you both, Councilmembers Domb and
4 Jones, for your questions. Thank you,
5 Ms. Arthur and Mr. Lopez Kriss, for your
6 testimony.

7 Are there any additional
8 questions for either of these two
9 witnesses from members of Council and
10 are there any other witnesses for this
11 panel?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank
14 you both for your testimony.

15 And seeing and hearing none, we'll now
16 move to the final panel for this
17 morning.

18 Mr. Iannuzzi, will you please
19 call the witnesses for Bill No. 220079.

20 THE CLERK: Natalia Dominguez
21 Buckley, Deputy Director of Finance for
22 the City of Philadelphia; Melissa
23 LaBuda, Deputy Commissioner for the
24 Philadelphia Water Department; and
25 Matthew Bowman, Executive Director of

1 Philadelphia Sinking Fund Commission.

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you
3 all. Ms. Dominguez Buckley, please
4 state your name for the record and then
5 proceed with your testimony.

6 MS. DOMINGUEZ BUCKLEY: Sure.
7 Natalia Dominguez Buckley. Good
8 morning, Chair Green and members of the
9 Finance Committee. My name is Natalia
10 Dominguez Buckley and I am the First
11 Deputy City Treasurer. With me here are
12 Melissa LaBuda, Deputy Water
13 Commissioner and Matthew Bowman, Deputy
14 Treasurer for Debt and Executive
15 Director of the Sinking Fund Commission.
16 I am here to testify on behalf of Bill
17 220079.

18 Bill No. 220079 would provide
19 authorization to issue order Water and
20 Wastewater Revenue Bonds in an aggregate
21 amount up to \$1 billion, exclusive of
22 original issue discount, if any. Bill
23 No. 220079 authorizes the issuance of
24 Water and Wastewater Revenue Bonds to
25 pay for projects which consist of such

1 capital improvements to the Water System
2 that are authorized and included in the
3 capital budget of the City;
4 constructing, acquiring, reconstructing
5 and renovating wastewater treatment
6 plans and related facilities and
7 equipment for the sewer system;
8 constructing, acquiring, reconstructing
9 and renovating water treatment plants;
10 constructing, acquiring, replacing
11 water, wastewater and stormwater pipes;
12 pump stations and related facilities;
13 purchasing equipment and apparatus of a
14 capital nature for the water and
15 wastewater systems; constructing,
16 acquiring, reconstructing and renovating
17 a stormwater management and mitigation
18 improvements and facilities and other
19 improvements and facilities in
20 furtherance of the City's Combined Sewer
21 Overflow (CSO) Long-term Control Plan
22 Update, referred to as the Green City,
23 Clean Waters Program; purchasing
24 vehicles that serve the water or
25 wastewater system; paying the issuance

1 costs of the Bond and for other
2 transaction-related costs as well as the
3 defeasance of any obligations issued
4 through the proposed Commercial Paper
5 program.

6 Appropriations under this bill
7 can also support the Philadelphia Water
8 Department's utilization, pending an
9 approved application, of the federal
10 Water Infrastructure Finance and
11 Innovation Act known as WIFIA program to
12 support its approved capital program.

13 The Administration recommends
14 the adoption of this bill, and
15 respectfully requests that the Committee
16 gives this bill its favorable
17 recommendation. Thank you for your
18 consideration and the opportunity to
19 testify. We're happy to answer any
20 questions you may have at this time.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you
22 for your testimony.

23 I believe next is it Ms. LaBuda
24 or Mr. Bowman?

25 (No response.)

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Why don't we
2 go with Ms. LaBuda and then we'll be
3 followed by Mr. Bowman, in that order.

4 MS. LaBUDA: Good morning. We
5 submitted joint testimony so I don't
6 have anything additional to add. I'm
7 happy to answer any questions,
8 Councilman Green.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.
10 Mr. Bowman.

11 MR. BOWMAN: Likewise. Melissa
12 and I are just here for questions.
13 Natalia's testimony reflects all of our
14 testimony.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. I
16 like the efficiency.

17 Are there any questions for
18 either Ms. Dominguez Buckley, Ms. LaBuda
19 or Mr. Bowman by any of the members of
20 Council?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Calling
23 once, calling twice, calling like that
24 band from Tuskegee, Alabama, the
25 Commodores, Three Times a Lady. I don't

1 see any additional questions or comments
2 from members of Council.

3 Councilmember Jones, it's early
4 in the morning. You got to keep it
5 lively. I don't see any additional
6 questions. I want to thank you all for
7 your testimony this morning.

8 We're about to go into the
9 public meeting. Just giving my
10 colleagues notice so you can come back,
11 so we can make a quorum for that. I
12 want to thank all the witnesses for
13 being here this morning and being
14 timely. As you know, it's always sunny
15 in Philadelphia, and thank you for your
16 time and attention this morning with
17 these very important matters before the
18 Finance Committee.

19 And so, are there any people
20 from the public that are here this
21 morning that would like to testify on
22 any of the bills that are being heard
23 this morning?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. There

1 being no further questions from members
2 of the Committee and no other witnesses
3 to testify, I've also just asked if
4 there is anyone else to present this
5 morning and I did not see any other
6 people whose name we failed to call and
7 that wishes to offer testimony on any of
8 these bills.

9 There being none, I want to
10 thank all the panel for their
11 participation today. We of course
12 always value your opinions, and we'll
13 now invite all the panels of witnesses
14 to please disconnect from the meeting
15 before we go into our public meeting.
16 And we'll now pause the proceedings
17 briefly as multiple participants quietly
18 leave the hearing.

19 Okay. This concludes the
20 public hearing of the Committee on
21 Finance. We will now go into the public
22 meeting to consider the action to be
23 taken on the bills before the Committee
24 today.

25 I will give a few moments to

1 make sure all of my colleagues are here
2 and ready. I see Councilmember Squilla
3 as well as other Councilmembers are here
4 and ready.

5 And now, we will ask
6 Mr. Iannuzzi to convene the public
7 meeting. Will you please call the roll
8 to take attendance. Members that are in
9 attendance will please indicate that you
10 are present when your name is called,
11 and please say a few brief words when
12 responding so that your image will be
13 displayed on screen when you speak.

14 THE CLERK: Councilmember Cindy
15 Bass.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
17 morning. I am present.

18 THE CLERK: Councilmember Allan
19 Domb.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning.
21 I am present.

22 THE CLERK: Councilmember Helen
23 Gym.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I am
25 present.

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

2 THE CLERK: Councilmember

3 Curtis Jones, Jr.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good

5 morning. I'm present.

6 THE CLERK: Councilmember David

7 Oh.

8 COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning.

9 I'm present.

10 THE CLERK: Councilmember Maria

11 Quinones-Sanchez.

12 (No response.)

13 THE CLERK: Councilmember Mark

14 Squilla.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good

16 morning, Mr. Chair, colleagues.

17 Present.

18 THE CLERK: And, Chair Green.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I am

20 present. Thank you all. We'll now go

21 into our public meeting.

22 And, Councilmember Squilla, are

23 you ready to do the motions for the

24 public meeting?

25 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes.

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

2 Chair recognizes Councilmember Squilla

3 for a motion on the amendment to Bill

4 No. 220006.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,

6 Mr. Chair.

7 I offer an amendment to Bill

8 No. 220006. A copy of the amendment has

9 been circulated to all members of the

10 Committee. I move that the amendment to

11 Bill No. 220006 be approved.

12 COUNCILMAN OH: Second.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's been

14 seconded by Councilmember Oh, and it has

15 been moved and properly seconded that

16 the amendment to Bill No. 220006 be

17 approved.

18 All those in favor of the

19 motion will signify by saying aye.

20 (Aye.)

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Those

22 opposed?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The ayes

25 have it and the amendment to Bill No.

1 220006 has been approved.

2 The Chair recognizes

3 Councilmember Squilla for a motion on

4 Bill No. 220006 as amended.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,

6 Mr. Chair.

7 I move that Bill No. 220006 as

8 amended be reported from this Committee

9 with a favorable recommendation and

10 further move that the rules of Council

11 be suspended as to permit the first

12 reading of this bill at the next session

13 of Council.

14 COUNCILMAN OH: Second.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's been

16 seconded by Councilmember Oh. It's been

17 moved and properly seconded that Bill

18 No. 220006 as amended be reported from

19 this Committee with a favorable

20 recommendation and further move that the

21 rules of Council be suspended to permit

22 first reading of this bill at the next

23 session of Council.

24 All those in favor of this

25 motion will signify by saying aye.

1 (Aye.)

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Those
3 opposed?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The ayes
6 have it and the motion carries.

7 I will now recognize
8 Councilmember Squilla for a motion on
9 Bill No. 220079.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chair.

12 I move that Bill No. 220079 be
13 reported from this Committee with a
14 favorable recommendation and further
15 move that the rules of Council be
16 suspended as to permit the first reading
17 of this bill at the next session of
18 Council.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Second.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Seconded by
21 Councilmember Bass. It's been moved and
22 properly seconded that Bill No. 220079
23 be reported from this Committee with a
24 favorable recommendation and further
25 move that the rules of Council be

1 suspended to permit first reading of
2 this bill at the next session of
3 Council.

4 All those in favor of the
5 motion will signify by saying aye.

6 (Aye.)

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Those
8 opposed?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The ayes
11 have it and the motion carries.

12 I will also recognize
13 Councilmember Squilla once again for a
14 motion on Bill No. 220080.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
16 Mr. Chairman.

17 I move that Bill No. 220080 be
18 reported from this Committee with a
19 favorable recommendation and further
20 move that the rules of Council be
21 suspended as to permit the first reading
22 of this bill at the next session of
23 Council.

24 COUNCILMAN OH: Second.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's

1 seconded by Councilmember Oh. It has
2 been moved and properly seconded that
3 Bill No. 220080 be reported from this
4 Committee with a favorable
5 recommendation and further move that the
6 rules of Council be suspended to permit
7 first reading of this bill at the next
8 session of Council.

9 All those in favor of the
10 motion will signify by saying aye.

11 (Aye.)

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Those
13 opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The ayes
16 have it and the motion carries.

17 This concludes this meeting of
18 the Committee on Finance. I want to
19 thank all of you for your attendance and
20 participation this morning. Thank you
21 and have a great day.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.
23 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,

1 Mr. Chair.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

3 meeting.

4 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Have a great

5 day.

6 (Committee on Finance concluded

7 at 9:55 a.m.)

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1 C E R T I F I C A T I O N

2 I, hereby certify that the
3 proceedings and evidence noted are contained
4 fully and accurately in the stenographic notes
5 taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that
6 this is a correct transcript of the same.
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TANEHA CARROLL
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