



Local 132

AMI UPDATE

What your Union is fighting for: Job Guarantees and protections

The Company has written a 7-page book trying to explain why it will not guarantee jobs, pay or rights for displaced meter readers. We do not need 7 pages to tell you what is wrong with the Company's plan. We appreciate the concerns of members who, having read the Company propaganda, have called in to make absolutely sure we don't sign. We ask again, **"Why would we sign an agreement which states that nothing in it, not pay provisions, job provisions or anything else, is enforceable?"**

We can do the math too. Even assuming the absolute best of every Company promise, **there are not enough jobs to go around. The Company is proposing – with lots of fancy priorities and bidding mazes – to put several hundred meter readers out on the street without a dime, with no rights and no benefits.**

As we have demanded of the Company, we are asking you to join us in demanding real jobs and real layoff rights with money and recall rights for every single person affected by AMI. We are not prepared to let any of our sisters and brothers be thrown to the wolves while the rest fight over the scraps.

That simply said, however, there are a few items, among the many misleading statements in the Company's "update" which are so far from accurate that you should have better information:

1. The Union has never signed any document limiting how many hours part-timers can work. The Union has forced the Company to agree that if a part-timer works more than an average of 30 hours in a week (1560 a year), the Company must make that part-timer full time with full rights and benefits. The Company doesn't want part timers to have those rights and benefits, and Company supervisors actively try to reduce hours to stay under the cap. Ask them why.
2. A Company manager did, in fact, lie in the arbitration that involved part-timer rights. He testified under oath, with a court reporter there, that to his knowledge there had never been an arbitration of a part-timer discipline case. The actual Arbitrator's decision from an earlier just cause arbitration on behalf of a part-timer was later shoved in the Company's face: it showed that the offending Company witness had been the Company's representative on the Board of Arbitration at the previous arbitration and signed the decision that he was denying any knowledge of!!! Lie or no lie? You be the arbitrator.

Turn Page Over

3. Of course, Sempra was guilty of ripping off customers during the energy crisis a decade ago. We quote from the California Attorney General's press release at the time of the settlement which forced Sempra to pay more than \$400 million back to consumers: *"During the energy crisis, Enron, Sempra and other energy companies created phony energy shortages, blackouts and record high energy prices ...In legal documents, Sempra was accused of "Enron-style gaming" of the energy markets and "a pervasive pattern of market manipulation and abuse." ...For the past nine years, the Attorney General has investigated, litigated and negotiated with Sempra and other energy sellers whose misconduct caused the energy crisis."* Again, you be the judge.

4. Perhaps the most outrageous part of Company propaganda is about the ETR-A position. In negotiations, the Company demanded the elimination of ETR-A, and now they are bypassing qualified part time meter readers for ETR positions, even going to such far-flung locations as Utah and Wyoming to get less qualified candidates. The Company has told meter readers to quit their GasCo jobs, instead of allowing them to bid, so they can be hired into GasCo jobs they are already qualified for. **The Union is suing the GasCo in Federal Court to enforce the bidding rights of well-qualified part-time meter readers.** This is the same Company that needs 7 pages to refute its own quotes and to try to convince you that it is a true friend of meter readers. You be the judge.

5. As to pay rates being wrong, we checked again, and we are not sure which contract the Company is looking at, but apparently it is a different one. We admit to being conservative when talking about existing full time positions where we quoted only the lowest pay for the low-end classifications. In other words, we gave the Company the benefit of the doubt – and the wages they are proposing are still below our contract.

6. The Company suggests that you contact the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. Maria Elena Durazo, the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Fed just wrote to new Gas Co. CEO Mike Allman about the Company's AMI bargaining in which she said, *"The Gas Company's position at the CPUC regarding job loss and voiced through its quote in the April 9th LA Times that "the effect on jobs should be minimal" becomes an entirely different position when behind closed bargaining doors. Insisting on eliminating basic workplace rights is a direct contradiction to your public position."* Did the Company lie again? You be the judge. [See the full letter on-line at our website: <http://www.uwua132.org>]

Again we say to Sempra and the Gas Company, if you have \$400 million to settle lawsuits where you claim you are not guilty, spend much less money on your own employees and guarantee them good jobs at decent wages with benefits which will protect us and our families. Be a good corporate citizen and respect your employees.

The Gas Co. has no more credibility than another energy company: BP.

Stay Strong, Stay United