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Mr. Thomas J. Donohue
President and Chief Executive Officer
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1615 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20062-2000

Dear Tom:

I am writing to express PG&E Corporation's deep concern over the U.S. Chamber's actions in the debate over climate change legislation. Extreme rhetoric and obstructionist tactics seem to increasingly mark the Chamber's public stance on this issue. These reflect neither the true range of views among members nor, in many cases, an honest view of the economic and environmental realities at hand.

As a company with a clear and strong position on the importance of addressing climate change, we have now reached a crossroads where the divergence between the Chamber's principles and ours on this issue has forced us to reconsider our future as a member.

A case in point is the Chamber's recent much-publicized call to put climate change science "on trial." We find it dismaying that the Chamber neglects the indisputable fact that a decisive majority of experts have said the data on global warming are compelling and point to a threat that cannot be ignored.

In our view, an intellectually honest argument over the best policy response to the challenges of climate change is one thing; disingenuous attempts to diminish or distort the reality of these challenges are quite another. Unfortunately, it is difficult to read the Chamber's latest maneuvers on this issue as anything but the latter.

To the extent I'm wrong and the Chamber earnestly believes these questions should be heard in a courtroom, let's recall that the U.S. Supreme Court opined on the threat of climate in a 2007 decision. "The harms associated with climate change are serious and well recognized," the Court wrote.

PG&E is not alone in its position on climate change and the need for action. Many prominent and respected Chamber members publicly recognize that the challenge of climate change is an established fact and are working constructively to forge meaningful policy solutions. Regrettably, though, we have seen little interest in recognizing and accommodating the views of these members.

This is unfortunate. A number of other groups in Washington, for example USCAP and Edison Electric Institute, have taken stock of the diversity of views among their members and found opportunities to hammer out consensus positions born out of compromise. Both they and their members have benefited as a result. Because the Chamber has never encouraged a similar dialogue in its ranks, I fear it has forfeited an incredible chance to play a constructive leadership role on one of the most important issues our country may ever face.

Tom, let me offer one related thought I hope you will consider. I noted a few days ago that the Chamber is embarking on an effort aimed at rehabilitating the image of American business and the public's faith in free enterprise in the wake of the past year's troubles. Bravo. This is an important job. But I'm struck by the irony that, as we try to restore public trust in business on the one hand, on the other, the Chamber's behavior on the climate issue only reinforces stereotypes that erode that very same confidence.

On many issues, we are well aligned with the Chamber and supportive of its good work. We also respect the Chamber's long history as a positive force for America's businesses and its economy.

Yet, as I indicated, and as the tone of this letter surely conveys, PG&E considers climate change to be among the most serious issues ever for our company, our country, and the world. With this in mind, after careful consideration, we have come to the difficult conclusion that our fundamental differences over this issue have grown so significant that we will not renew PG&E's Chamber membership next year. We also plan to inform our business associates at USCAP and EEI of this decision.

We hope the concerns raised in this letter will serve as food for thought as the Chamber continues its work on climate change in the future.

Sincerely,