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San Francisco Tries to Rally Public to Buy Piece of PG&E.

- **City creates website touting \$2.5 billion offer for local gear**
- **Bankrupt company has rebuffed offers for bits of its grid**

Beset by fires, bankruptcy and blackouts, PG&E Corp. now faces a marketing campaign from government officials in its hometown bent on replacing the utility giant.

San Francisco has launched the “Our City, Our Power” campaign to rally public support for buying PG&E’s local wires and taking over electricity service within the city. It includes a website asking residents to sign up in favor of the effort, arguing the city can provide better service.

“Local control of the entire San Francisco electric system will provide increased affordability, safety, reliability and accountability,” Mayor London Breed said in a statement on the site.

PG&E, which filed for Chapter 11 last year facing \$30 billion in liabilities from wildfires blamed on its equipment, has already turned down a \$2.5 billion offer from San Francisco to buy the gear, saying it’s worth more. Allowing communities to buy parts of the system could delay needed investments in California’s aging electric grid, the company said in an emailed statement Monday.

“While recent proposals for state or municipal ownership of PG&E’s infrastructure are not new concepts, we don’t agree that the outcomes of this type of framework will benefit customers, taxpayers, local communities, the state or our economy,” the company said.

The utility, founded in San Francisco more than a century ago, has also turned down offers from three other local public agencies in California interested in buying portions of its grid. As part of a proposed reorganization plan, PG&E has called for keeping itself intact and setting up regional divisions to address local concerns.

A San Francisco official, meanwhile, has raised the possibility of seizing PG&E’s equipment through eminent domain if the company refuses to sell.

Bloomberg

By David R Baker

February 10, 2020, 2:14 PM PST Updated on February 10, 2020, 3:49 PM PST