



The Public
**ADVOCATES
OFFICE**

*The Voice of Consumers
Making a Difference*

Annual Presentation to the
Assembly Utilities & Energy Committee

January 22, 2020 · Elizabeth Echols, Director



The Public **ADVOCATES OFFICE**

*The Voice of Consumers
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OUR MISSION

Obtain the lowest possible rate for service consistent with safety, reliability, and the state's environmental goals.

WHAT WE DO



Staff inspection at PG&E.



Staff monitors main replacement to ensure reliable water delivery.



Staff inspects Booster Station so you have fresh clean water when you need it.

2019 SAVINGS



Total customer savings was over \$4.3 billion through reduced utility revenues and avoided rate increases.



POLICY EFFORTS

**Achieve the Best Value for
Consumers by Ensuring:**

- Access & Affordability
- Safety and Reliability
- Environmental Goals





ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY

Energy Rate Cases

- Saved customers over \$4 billion across four general rate case proceedings: Southern California Edison Company (SCE), Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas), San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E), and Bear Valley Electric Service.
- Recommended rejection of PG&E's proposal for a 500% increase to the minimum monthly charge for residential customers (from \$3 to \$15). Instead, the CPUC adopted our modest proposal for a \$1 increase.

Water Rate Cases

- Saved customers over \$97 million (\$272 per connection) in three general rate case proceedings: Suburban Water Systems, Golden State Water Company, and Great Oaks Water Company.

Small Telephone Company Rate Cases (California High Cost Fund A Program)

- Saved customers over \$2 million (\$692 per line) in two general rate case proceedings: Ducor Telephone Company and Foresthill Telephone Company.

Proposed Merger of T-Mobile and Sprint

- Opposed the proposed merger because, among other reasons, it would increase prices and reduce competition and customer choice, particularly in the pre-paid wireless market which serves many lower income customers. (CPUC decision pending).

Electric Rate and Bill Impacts

- Advocated that the CPUC require utilities to provide a running total of all proposed and approved increases to customer bills to enable the CPUC to identify potential significant increases to customers' rates and bills.



SAFETY AND RELIABILITY

Emergency Disaster Relief Program Proceeding

- Recommended the CPUC exercise its authority to require wireless service providers to install back-up power in their cell sites and critical network nodes and to employ all means necessary to ensure wireless service is maintained for at least 72 hours from the start of an electrical outage (CPUC decision pending).

Protocols and Procedures for Voluntary Power Shutoffs

- Urged the CPUC to assess the utilities' decision-making processes, including a review of their operations, maintenance, impacted infrastructure, and their compliance with their current wildfire mitigation plans.
- Recommended the CPUC require utilities to immediately ensure the accuracy of their lists of customers who participate in programs for persons with special energy needs due to medical conditions.
- Advocated that the utilities conduct a more detailed examination of vulnerable customers such as those who depend on medical devices that run on electricity.

2019 Wildfire Mitigation Plans

- Identified numerous deficiencies and concerns about the proposed plans filed by the six investor-owned electric utilities ranging from unrealistic workload estimates to insufficient data to support the plans' objectives.

Emergency Disaster Relief Program Proceeding

- Recommended the CPUC exercise its authority to require wireless service providers to install back-up power in their cell sites and critical network nodes and to employ all means necessary to ensure wireless service is maintained for at least 72 hours from the start of an electrical outage (CPUC decision pending).



PG&E Locate and Mark Investigation

- Identified that PG&E's practices were not consistent with standard protocols, and in some instances resulted in excavators hitting PG&E's unmarked or improperly marked infrastructure.
- Opposed a settlement agreement that fails to address potential systemic issues.

PG&E Bankruptcy and Safety Culture Investigation

- Recommended a process to establish performance requirements to determine if PG&E should continue to serve California and to establish a competitive process in which other entities could compete to serve California.

SoCalGas Aliso Canyon Storage Facility Investigation

- Demonstrated that SoCalGas Gas did not conduct the necessary analysis that could have uncovered corrosion in one of the wells that leaked, and that the utility is missing critical safety information.

California Water Service Company General Rate Case

- Reached settlement with the utility that included funding to support the Chromium 6 treatment plants in Dixon and Willows. (CPUC decision pending).

Great Oaks Water Company General Rate Case

- Reached settlement with the utility to deploy a new system-wide disinfection process.



ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

Interconnection Rules for Distributed Energy Resources

- Urged the CPUC to establish an interconnection procedure that integrates Distributed Energy Resources (DERS) efficiently without increasing customers' costs.
- Recommended load management approaches for electric vehicles that will help avoid the need for distribution upgrades and will improve grid sustainability through coordinated charging.

Transportation Electrification

- Entered into a settlement agreement regarding SDG&E's medium- and heavy-duty EV infrastructure program resulting in \$60 million in customer savings while doubling SDG&E's original program goals.
- Recommended that a minimum number of EV charging infrastructure be installed in schools and state parks located in disadvantaged communities.

Integrated Resource Planning

- Objected to the procurement of new fossil fuel resources to meet system reliability needs.
- Recommended that any new projects involving existing fossil fuel generation be paired with storage projects that decrease GHG emissions, and projects that increase the efficiency of existing fossil fuel generation.

Energy Efficiency

- Continued to be a driving force in ensuring programs reduce customers' bills and spur innovation to meet the state's GHG reduction goals.
- Pushing for increased program benefits, and the elimination of wasteful spending on administrative costs.



2020 PRIORITIES

Achieve the best value for California consumers across the regulated industry sectors – energy, water, and telecommunications consistent with the state’s safety, reliability, and environmental goals.

- Affordable and Equitable Access
- Safe and Reliable Service
- State’s Environmental Goals



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