

Assembly Committee on Utilities & Commerce
Informational Hearing on CPUC Contracting Practices
August 17, 2015

SPEAKERS BIOGRAPHIES

Matt Bender is legislative affairs manager for the Department of General Services, where he has worked since 2004. His area of focus is legislative issues related to procurement and contracting.

Mr. Bender was previously an acquisitions supervisor in the Procurement Division from 2009 to 2012, a legislative coordinator from 2006 to 2009, and assistant public affairs officer from 2004 to 2006.

Mr. Bender started his career as a research specialist in public health at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he worked from 1999 to 2000. He was a reporter for the San Bernardino Sun from 2000 to 2004.

Mr. Bender holds a bachelor's degree in politics from Pomona College and did graduate work in public health at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

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Ross Brown is a Principal Fiscal and Policy Analyst at the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO). Mr. Brown has worked at the LAO for five years, and he currently covers energy and climate related issues.

Mr. Brown earned a bachelor's degree in economics and environmental studies from University of California Santa Barbara and a master's degree and a PhD in Natural Resource Science and Management from the University of Minnesota.

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Michelle Cooke was appointed Director of Administrative Services at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in June 2012. Between August 2011 and April 2012, she was on special assignment as Interim Director of the Consumer Protection and Safety Division. In April 2013, she began performing the duties of the Deputy Executive Director for Budget and Administration. These positions were consolidated in January 2015, to become the Deputy Executive Director, Administrative Services. Ms. Cooke started her career with the CPUC in 1990, advising commissioners and administrative law judges on resource planning, demand-side management, and avoided cost issues.

Ms. Cooke is responsible for all administrative operations of the agency, including information technology, human resources, budget, fiscal operations, procurement, and business services.

Ms. Cooke holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematical Economics from Pomona College, has a Certificate in Business Administration, and has completed coursework at the National Judicial College.

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Ed Howard is Senior Counsel for the Center for Public Interest Law. His expertise in California legislative politics and policy stems from his years as Special Counsel and Chief Policy Advisor to a State Senator and Chief Consultant of two standing California legislative committees. During his years as a staffer in the Legislature, he spearheaded the enactment of numerous and nationally trend-setting laws in the areas of privacy, technology, IT procurement, the regulation of licensed professions, health care, and consumer rights.

Mr. Howard is a recognized expert in regulatory and administrative law stemming from his ten-plus years of experience litigating against or appearing before a myriad of administrative agencies in high-profile matters, including the State Board of Education, the California Insurance Commissioner, the Public Utilities Commission, and the California Coastal Commission.

Mr. Howard received his BA from The George Washington University's political science program in Washington, D.C. and received his JD from Loyola Law School, where he was awarded the American Jurisprudence Award for Constitutional Law and was selected as Chief Justice of the Moot Court. He is a member of the State Bar of California, and as well is admitted to practice law before the Ninth Circuit and United States Supreme Courts.

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Edward Randolph is the Director of the Energy Division at the CPUC. Prior to this, Mr. Randolph was the CPUC's Director of Governmental Affairs and Senior Policy Advisor.

Mr. Randolph joined the CPUC in 2010 from his position as Chief Consultant to the California State Assembly's Committee on Utilities and Commerce, a position he held since 2003. Prior to his role with the Committee on Utilities and Commerce, Mr. Randolph served as Senior Consultant to Assemblymember Lloyd Levine, as both Chief of Staff and Senior Consultant to former Assemblymember Joe Canciamilla, and as Chief of Staff to Former Assemblymember Lou Papan.

Mr. Randolph earned a B.A. in Political Science from the University of California San Diego, and a Juris Doctorate degree from the McGeorge School of Law where he graduated with great distinction.