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PRESS RELEASE

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CPUC MAKES IMPROVEMENTS TO CALIFORNIA LIFELINE TELEPHONE PROGRAM

San Francisco, CA – July 16, 2012 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has made modifications to improve the California LifeLine Program by preventing waste and fraud while improving customer enrollment, administrative procedures, program accountability, and complying with new federal reforms.

California LifeLine provides basic home phone service at a discount to eligible households. The modifications made at the CPUC's July 12th Voting Meeting were the result of the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Lifeline Reform Order issued on February 6, 2012. The goals of the new federal order are to strengthen protections against abuse; tighten LifeLine administration; improve customer procedures; initiate modernization of the LifeLine program by transitioning the Universal Service Fund (USF) from supporting stand-alone telephone service to broadband Internet service; and constrain the growth of the federal Lifeline program in order to reduce the burden on all that contribute to USF.

The modifications made to the program include:

- All new applicants will be required to provide supporting documentation of their eligibility (household income level) for the program. Previously, applicants already enrolled in other state assistance programs were not required to provide supporting documentation.
- All current participants must self-certify on an annual basis, under penalty of perjury, that they still qualify for the program to continue receiving their California LifeLine discounts.
- Beginning February 1, 2013, all new applicants and current participants must provide their date of birth, housing status, and the last four digits of their Social Security Number (or Tribal Identification Number) to be eligible for California LifeLine.

- The program’s annual renewal process will be suspended beginning June 1, 2012, in order to facilitate the transition to a new third-party program administrator. The annual renewal process will resume by October 31, 2012.
- Application and renewal forms will be modified to conform to the FCC’s Lifeline program requirements.
- Reimbursement of the service connection charge from the California LifeLine fund is clarified in light of the FCC’s elimination of the federal Link-Up support.

Said CPUC President Michael R. Peevey, “Our actions strengthen California’s efforts to ensure universal access to telephone services among all Californians by providing discounts to low income consumers.”

Said Commissioner Timothy Alan Simon, “I have long advocated a technology-neutral Lifeline program, whereby people can choose the technology that best fits their communications needs. I am also a strong proponent of a streamlined application process that achieves the objective of the Moore Act; bringing affordable service to California consumers. I believe the new direct application process will bring us closer to this goal.”

Added Commissioner Catherine J.K. Sandoval, “We have brought the LifeLine application process into the 21st century. The LifeLine application will soon be available on the Internet or through participating telephone service providers and others. Consumers will be able to get help to send in their applications faster. This streamlined process will enable qualifying low income and disabled Californians to get federal aide to bring down the cost of their cell phone bill with eligible telecommunications carriers.”

For more information on California LifeLine, please visit www.CaliforniaLifeLine.com/en.

The proposal voted on is available at <http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PUBLISHED/Graphics/170561.PDF>.

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