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PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: R.10-02-005

**CPUC CONTINUES MEASURES TO ADDRESS
RESIDENTIAL ENERGY UTILITY DISCONNECTIONS**

SAN FRANCISCO, July 29, 2010 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today approved several measures to reduce the number of residential energy customer service disconnections as part of its ongoing efforts to identify cost-effective ways to help consumers keep the lights on.

The CPUC said that as the economic crisis in California continues, taking immediate action before winter 2010-2011 is necessary to help reduce natural gas and electric disconnections. The actions approved today are part of a proceeding the CPUC opened in order to address arrearage management and shutoff prevention for residential energy customers in Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas and Electric Company (SDG&E), and Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) service areas.

The CPUC continued the requirement that all PG&E, Edison, SDG&E, and SoCalGas customer service representatives must inform any customer that owes an arrearage on a utility bill that puts the customer at risk for disconnection that the customer has a right to arrange a bill payment plan extending for a minimum of three months the period in which to repay the arrearage. Other measures approved include:

- California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) and Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) customers are not required to pay additional reestablishment of credit deposits with a utility for either slow-payment/no-payment of bills or following a disconnection.
- Medical baseline or life support customers will not be disconnected without an in-person visit from a utility representative.
- SDG&E and SoCalGas must develop an automatic payment plan that allows new customers or reconnecting customers a payment option that is in lieu of a cash deposit for credit.

- PG&E and Edison must continue to offer their non-cash credit deposit options to all new customers and those required to post a reestablishment of credit deposit following a disconnection.
- PG&E, SDG&E, and Edison can collect from customers a reestablishment of credit deposit following a disconnection based on twice the average monthly bill, rather than twice the maximum monthly bill.
- SoCalGas and SDG&E must waive reestablishment of credit deposits for late payment of bills. PG&E and Edison must continue their practice of not collecting credit deposits for late payment of bills.

“This decision represents another step toward ensuring California households keep their gas and electric services on during the continuing economic downturn. The actions we take today address the needs of those who are financially limited while keeping costs down for other ratepayers,” said Commissioner Dian M. Grueneich.

The proposal voted on today is available at:

http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/WORD_PDF/AGENDA_DECISION/121196.pdf.

For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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