

California Public Utilities Commission
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PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: R.10-05-005

CPUC REVISES SMALL BUSINESS BILLING AND DEPOSIT RULES

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 28, 2010 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today revised its electric and natural gas billing and deposit rules for the state's small businesses.

Today's decision:

- Revises utility back-billing tariffs so that utilities may only back-bill small businesses for up to three months rather than the current rule of three years.
- Revises utility deposit rules. Currently, small businesses are required to pay upfront twice the maximum monthly bill as a deposit. Today's decision revises the rule to only require small business utility customers to pay twice the average bill.
- Creates a warning system so that a small business will not be caught unaware when they are asked to provide a deposit. Utilities are now required to provide small business customers ample notification prior to asking for a deposit.

"It is important that the CPUC address this issue because many small businesses have called us asking for help after receiving large back-bills," said CPUC Commissioner John A. Bohn.

"Small businesses are much like residential customers; they do not have the resources available to larger corporations nor the flexibility in accessing funds that bigger businesses have. This is a crucial time for policy makers to ensure that our small businesses stay afloat, and I am happy that the CPUC can do its part in revising the utility back-billing and deposit rules to ensure that small business customers are on an equal footing with residential customers."

The proposal voted in is available at:

http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/word_pdf/AGENDA_DECISION/125617.pdf

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

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