



# California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **PUC SPONSORS FREE CONSUMER UTILITY BILL FAIR IN SALINAS**

SAN FRANCISCO, August 27, 2007 -- The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is sponsoring a free Bill Fair to enable consumers to get answers directly from utility and communications company representatives and other service agencies in the Salinas area. La Union de Pueblo Entero (LUPE) is supporting the event, which will be held at its facilities. PG&E, which provides electricity and natural gas service to the community, is donating a free Bar-be-que for the first 100 participants.

**WHEN:** Tuesday, September 11, 2007  
2 p.m. – 6 p.m.

**WHERE:** Firehouse Community Center  
1330 E Alisal St., Salinas

**WHO:** The PUC's Consumer Services Representatives and representatives from PG&E, AT&T, Alco Water, California Water Service, Comcast, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon Wireless, LUPE, Food Bank for Monterey County, Area Agency on Aging, MC-Choice, the California Telephone Access Program, and others.

**WHY:** To provide a place where consumers can talk in-person with representatives from cable, electricity, telephone, and water companies about bills, services, cell phone use, to apply for energy and telephone discount programs and energy conservation programs, and to sign up and learn about the services available to them from various community agencies. Door prizes donated by the utilities and communications companies, including a high-definition television donated by Comcast, will be raffled throughout the day (you must be present to claim your prize).

“Our Bill Fairs are an excellent way for consumers to speak with the PUC and utility representatives in-person and get their questions answered,” said PUC Commissioner Dian M.

Grueneich. “These community events allow us to reach consumers to educate them about all the services the PUC has to offer.”

Consumers should bring their bills - cell phone, landline telephone, water, or energy - with them to the Bill Fair. If they need assistance programming their cell phones, they should bring those as well.

Consumers who qualify based on their household income levels can sign up for discount programs as follows:

- California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) provides a discount on electricity and natural gas bills. Income limits for CARE start at \$29,300 for one to two people and increase as more household members are added.
- California LifeLine (formerly known as Universal Lifeline Telephone Service) provides a discount on basic telephone service. California LifeLine income limits start at \$22,000 for one to two people and increase as more household members are added.
- Low-Income water service.

Consumers can also learn about other programs that are available, for example:

- REACH, a program that provides one-time funding to pay a PG&E bill, based on special circumstance.
- Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA), which has a higher income allowance than CARE and bills more of a family’s electric usage at lower rates.
- Medical Baseline, which gives more baseline allowances to consumers with specific medical conditions.
- Low-income energy efficiency programs.
- Other energy efficiency programs, such as rebates.
- Consumers who are deaf or have other medical conditions can sign up for free specialized telephone equipment.
- Sign up for the food bank program, food stamps, learn about services for seniors, medical, health related programs including drug and alcohol abuse for families and more.

This is the sixth Bill Fair sponsored by the PUC. Others are planned throughout the state this year. Information will be posted on the PUC’s website as it becomes available at

[www.cpuc.ca.gov/static/070302\\_cubfairs.htm](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/static/070302_cubfairs.htm).

For consumer information on communications issues, please visit [www.calphoneinfo.com](http://www.calphoneinfo.com).

The PUC serves the public interest by protecting consumers and ensuring the provision of safe, reliable utility service and infrastructure at reasonable rates, with a commitment to environmental enhancement and a healthy California economy. We regulate utility services, stimulate innovation, and promote competitive markets, where possible, in the communications, energy, transportation, and water industries. For more information on the PUC, please visit [www.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov).

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