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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company for Approval of Energy Savings Assistance and California Alternate Rates for Energy Programs and Budgets for 2021-2026 Program Years. (U39M.)

Application 19-11-003

And Related Matters.

Application 19-11-004
Application 19-11-005
Application 19-11-006
Application 19-11-007

**ASSIGNED COMMISSIONER'S RULING IN RESPONSE TO
MAY 22, 2020 ALL-PARTY MEETING ON CALIFORNIA
ALTERNATE RATES FOR ENERGY OUTREACH
IN LIGHT OF COVID**

As follow-up to the May 22, 2020 all-party meeting on the California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) program's education and outreach efforts in light of COVID, this Assigned Commissioner Ruling 1) urges the four large Investor-Owned Utilities - Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, and Southern California Gas Company - and all Class A and B water utilities with low-income assistance programs to share low-income customer information in July 2020 in addition to the scheduled March and September 2020 data exchanges, and 2) directs parties to address additional questions in their upcoming testimony filings.

1. Background

On May 22, 2020, the Commission held an all-party meeting on the CARE program's current education and outreach efforts in light of COVID. The purpose of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the many utility efforts underway to increase CARE and Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) education and outreach during the pandemic, and to consider whether additional actions would be beneficial. Based on the discussion at the all-party meeting, this ruling takes the following steps.

2. Additional Sharing of Low-Income Customer Information between Energy and Water Utilities

Decision (D.) 11-05-020 requires regulated energy utilities and Class A and B water utilities to share low-income customer information to increase the participation rates in water low-income assistance programs.¹ Energy and water utilities currently share data bi-annually, in March and September, per the terms of their respective memorandums of understanding. Due to the large increase in CARE enrollments since the Governor's stay-at-home² order went into effect, there was general consensus among stakeholders at the May 22, 2020 all-party meeting that an additional data share in the summer could be beneficial in order to increase participation rates in water low-income assistance programs.

To this end, we encourage the four large investor-owned utilities (IOUs) and all Class A and B water utilities with low income assistance programs to share low-income customer information in July 2020, in addition to their March and September 2020 data shares. This one-time additional data exchange may be

¹ D.11-05-020, Ordering Paragraph 1.

² On March 19, 2020, to protect public health, all individuals living in the State of California were ordered to stay at home or at their place of residence to slow the spread of COVID-19.

helpful in increasing enrollments in the low-income water programs given the sharp rise in CARE enrollments since the March 2020 data share. Energy and water utilities should also consider postponing their September 2020 data share to October or November 2020 to ensure more even spacing between now and March 2021. Energy and water utilities may record costs associated with the additional data share in their existing memorandum accounts for tracking data sharing costs.

3. Questions

Parties are directed to file and serve responses to the following questions in their testimony in the consolidated Application (A.) 19-11-003 et al. proceeding.

1. All Parties: What best practices can be implemented to support community-based organization capitation work to result in more CARE and FERA enrollments, including in populations newly eligible for the programs due to COVID?
2. Large IOUs: How does your utility track and evaluate the effectiveness of its various CARE education and outreach channels, and how is this information incorporated into the overall education and outreach strategy?

IT IS SO RULED.

Dated June 15,2020 at San Francisco, California.

/s/ GENEVIEVE SHIROMA

Genevieve Shiroma
Assigned Commissioner

/s/ AVA TRAN

Ava Tran
Administrative Law Judge