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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Rulemaking to Modernize the Electric Grid for a High Distributed Energy Resources Future.	Rulemaking 21-06-017 (Filed June 24, 2021)

OPENING COMMENTS OF CALSTART, INC. ON ASSIGNED COMMISSIONER'S AND ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE'S RULING REQUESTING COMMENT ON ASSIGNED COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSAL ON FLEXIBLE SERVICE CONNECTIONS

Alex Pfeifer-Rosenblum
Senior Manager
Current Energy Group
4764 E Sunrise Drive, Unit 508
Tucson, AZ 85718
Telephone: (520) 527-2201
E-mail: apfeifer-rosenblum@currentenergy.group

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On July 7, 2026, the California Public Utilities Commission ("CPUC" or "the Commission") issued an Assigned Commissioner's and Administrative Law Judge's Ruling Requesting Comment on Assigned Commissioner's Proposal on Flexible Service Connections ("Assigned Commissioner and ALJ Ruling").[1] On July 9, 2026, the Public Advocates Office ("Cal Advocates") served a request for a schedule extension and noting an alternate proposal from the Interstate Renewable Energy Council ("IREC"). On July 13, 2026, the Commission granted its Email Ruling Granting Schedule Modification ("Email Ruling"). The Email Ruling extended the deadline for initial comments on the Assigned Commissioner's Proposal ("Proposal") and on responses to questions in Sections 2 and 4 of the Assigned Commissioner and ALJ Ruling from July 21 to July 27, 2026, and extended the deadline for Reply Comments from July 28 to July 31, 2026.[2] In accordance with the Rules of Practice and Procedure of the CPUC, CALSTART, Inc. ("CALSTART") respectfully submits these Opening Comments in response to the Assigned Commissioner and ALJ Ruling.

CALSTART, headquartered in California, is a U.S.-based 501(c)3 clean transportation industry organization that partners with 200 member companies across the vehicle, technology, manufacturing, and infrastructure sectors. Our focus is on building a competitive, efficient, and high-tech transportation industry that creates high-quality jobs, drives U.S. innovation, and strengthens American economic leadership while also reducing harmful air pollution. While

[1] Assigned Commissioner's and Administrative Law Judge's Ruling Requesting Comment on Assigned Commissioner's Proposal on Flexible Service Connections (July 7, 2026).
[2] Email Ruling Granting Schedule Modification (July 13, 2026).

CALSTART is not a trade association, our member-driven approach means that these comments are informed by industry perspectives from across the transportation value chain. Not every member aligns on every issue, but all share the view that advancing affordable, cleaner, more efficient transportation solutions is essential to long-term market growth, domestic supply chain resilience, and public health. In this proceeding, CALSTART's comments focus primarily on perspectives from CALSTART members who develop charging infrastructure for fleets.

I. INTRODUCTION

California is entering a period of historic electric load growth, with transportation electrification a leading driver. Meeting the state's zero-emission vehicle goals depends on energizing new charging loads faster and more affordably. Flexible service connections ("FSCs") are a promising tool for closing that gap, letting customers use existing grid capacity more intensively while avoiding or deferring upgrades where those solutions are permanent, with benefits to all ratepayers. CALSTART appreciates the Proposal's direction and the opportunity to provide stakeholder input.

CALSTART emphasizes that the framework's value will turn on whether it is usable by the customers who need it most. Our comments reflect three central, related concerns. First, commercial fleet charging does not behave like residential load: fleets run on fixed duty cycles and have little practical ability to move charging in response to shifting price or grid signals, so what they need above all is firm, predictable access to power. A framework optimized for utility-managed, dynamically varying arrangements, or one that routes every customer through a single mandated technology, will leave much of that value unrealized. Crucially, there are significant cost barriers associated with UL 3141 certification as it relates not to a single piece of equipment but to an entire architecture. Second, CALSTART is mindful that new requirements adopted here should not introduce delays that run counter to the goal of accelerating energization; customers requiring infrastructure upgrades or bridging solutions should retain a clear path for either option without delay. Finally, the value of Limited Power and static FSCs for fleet customers depends on consistent, pre-application visibility into power availability and Limited Load Profiles—without which many fleet customers cannot reasonably determine whether these tools will meet their needs before committing to a costly application.

CALSTART recommends that the Commission:

- Offer Static Operating Envelopes as an additional default mitigation option alongside Limited Power, given that firm arrangements are typically the best fit for fleet duty cycles;
- Clarify that pursuing a "default mitigation"—whether Limited Power or a Static Operating Envelope—is provided upon customer request, as a first offer rather than a final determination. The true default should remain an upgrade or bridging solution unless and until the customer requests a mitigation. Customers should retain a clear, low-friction path to request the mitigation of their choice without causing delay to customers who prefer permanent upgrades or bridging solutions;
- Avoid mandating UL 3141 certification for Limited Power or Static Operating Envelope customers. Such certification should be one of several compliance options until certified Power Control System products become commercially available at cost-effective price points, with self-managed, customer-owned solutions permitted in the interim;
- Clarify that a self-managed, customer-owned Limited Power or Static Operating Envelope arrangement qualifies as a durable non-bridging solution, and allow bridging customers converting to non-bridging status to request additional time beyond the standard election window if needed;
- Clarify that Limited Power or Static FSC customers will not be defaulted onto Real-Time Pricing given such customers' limited ability to shift load in response to price signals; and
- Ensure consistent, pre-application visibility into Limited Load Profiles and power availability for all customers at all three major IOUs, so that fleet customers will be able to utilize FSCs.

II. RESPONSES TO RULING QUESTIONS

Question 2: Section 9 of the Proposal includes a summary of the recommendations for Commission action. Please provide feedback on the recommendations, being as specific as possible regarding the pros and cons of the proposed recommendations, and on the feasibility of implementation.

CALSTART appreciates the direction of the Commission's Proposal and provides the following feedback on its recommendations for Commission action:

Section 4 Recommendations: Operating Envelopes and load control. CALSTART recommends that Static Operating Envelopes, alongside Limited Power, be designated as default mitigations, given that firm arrangements are typically the best fit for fleet duty cycles. As fleets operate on fixed duty cycles and cannot readily curtail, these firm arrangements deliver most of the utilization benefit the Proposal seeks while sparing fleet customers the operational uncertainty of the non-firm Variable and Dynamic tiers.

The Commission should clarify that pursuing a default mitigation—whether Limited Power or a Static Operating Envelope—is provided upon customer request, as a first offer rather than a final determination. The true default should remain an upgrade or bridging solution unless and until the customer requests a mitigation. As drafted, the Proposal's direction that IOUs offer Limited Power "before the upgrade design process is initiated"[3] could be read to position a mitigation as the IOU's starting course of action rather than an option the customer must affirmatively elect. The risk is that, absent a clear statement that a mitigation is provided only upon request, an IOU could treat it as the default path forward, delaying or displacing the upgrade or bridging solution the customer may actually need—particularly for fleet customers whose duty cycles often necessitate permanent upgrades over the long term. The Commission should instead direct IOUs to make clear, at the point capacity constraints are identified, that a customer may request Limited Power or a Static Operating Envelope as an alternative to a planned upgrade or bridging solution, while the upgrade or bridging process proceeds on its ordinary timeline absent such a request. Because this is an affirmative customer election rather than a default the customer must opt out of, it should not import the 45-day, design-stage timeline established in Section 6, which governs a different decision point—a customer's initial election between bridging and non-bridging once the IOU has presented engineering results and a proposed design. The Commission should instead direct IOUs to propose, in the Tier 2 FSC Implementation AL, a short notice process describing how and when a customer may request Limited Power or a Static Operating Envelope, and confirming that doing so does not delay the customer's underlying upgrade or bridging timeline unless and until the request is granted.

[3] Flexible Service Connections: Advancing Affordable Electrification Through Efficient Distribution Grid Utilization — Assigned Commissioner's Proposal (July 2026) ("Proposal") at 47.

Keeping in mind the above constraints of commercial EV fleets, CALSTART's principal concern with Section 4 is the proposed requirement to implement Limited Power through UL 3141-certified devices as the default mitigation. According to a CALSTART member with direct experience working with the UL 3141 standard, the currently published version of UL 3141 from October 2024 remains an Outline of Investigation, and not yet a full consensus standard. This CALSTART member also estimates that certification would likely cost about $100,000-$120,000 per utility service[4]—a prohibitive cost for many fleet customers. Conditioning access to Limited Power and Static Operating Envelopes where certified products remain scarce or costly risks excluding fleet customers who cannot absorb this cost from the very tools the Proposal is intended to make available to them—undermining the affordability and deployment goals the Proposal seeks to advance. It would also concentrate demand among a small number of qualifying vendors, raising the risk of lock-in and elevated pricing for those who can participate, and adding cost and delay just as the State needs fleet charging to scale to meet its climate goals.

A mandate is also unnecessary to achieve the underlying objective of ensuring that a customer reliably hold its load within its firm allocation. That objective can be met by a range of proven approaches: customer energy-management software, fixed-setpoint load-limiting controls of the kind already relied on elsewhere in the utilities' interconnection rules, or service equipment rated to the utility service available. This is consistent with the course the Commission recently charted for the Standard Offer for flexible service connections (D. 26-02-025), which declined to require UL 3141 certification or equipment commissioning as a condition of Standard Offer participation. D. 26-02-025 instead allowed customers to choose the load control method that best meets their needs and reserved safe harbor treatment—not eligibility itself—for certified systems.[5]

With certified products scarce and expensive, a mandate would slow rather than speed deployment. CALSTART recommends the Commission pair the Limited Power recommendation

[4] R. 24-01-018, Comments of CALSTART, Inc. on Administrative Law Judge's Ruling Directing Utilities to File Additional Information Providing Transparency on Current Static Flexible Service Connection Offerings (July 8, 2025) ("CALSTART Comments on FSC Transparency Ruling") at 20.
[5] D. 26-02-025 at 81.

with transparent, technology-neutral qualifying criteria in place of a fixed certification requirement.

Section 6 Recommendations: Bridging and non-bridging approaches. CALSTART supports the durable non-bridging pathway but asks the Commission to clarify that a self-managed, customer-owned Limited Power or Static Operating Envelope arrangement qualifies, so durable status is not, in practice, reserved for utility-interoperable Variable or Dynamic configurations. For fleets, a firm self-managed connection is a stable, long-term way to raise utilization of existing infrastructure, not a stopgap.

CALSTART also recommends that the Commission direct IOUs to allow existing bridging customers requesting to transition to non-bridging solutions to seek an extension of the applicable 45-day conversion window, beyond the default deadline, given the engineering and capital review such a commitment requires. This should remain a customer-initiated extension request limited to bridging customers converting to non-bridging status, rather than a default extension for all bridging customers or a change to the separate election window applicable to new customers selecting between bridging and non-bridging solutions. This extension should not disturb the existing safeguard allowing IOUs to recover prudently incurred engineering and design costs for work performed prior to a customer's election, which appropriately protects ratepayers regardless of the length of the election window.

Section 7: Competition and market access. CALSTART supports resolving these questions through an Energy Division workshop.

Section 8: Real-Time Pricing. CALSTART requests that the Commission resolve an apparent inconsistency between the Proposal's narrative and its recommendation regarding Real-Time Pricing ("RTP") enrollment. The discussion in Section 8 recommends that IOUs "default enroll flexible connection customers" onto RTP rates generally, without qualification by tier.[6] The corresponding recommendation in Section 9, however, is narrower, directing IOUs to default enroll only "any customer taking service on a Variable or Dynamic Operating Envelope" onto an RTP rate.[7] CALSTART interprets the Proposal's intent as reflected in the narrower Section 9

[6] Proposal at 42.
[7] *Id*. at 55.

language—applying default RTP enrollment only to customers on Variable or Dynamic FSCs—and asks the Commission to confirm this reading and correct Section 8's broader language accordingly.

This clarification matters directly for commercial fleet charging customers, who, as noted above, typically require Static Operating Envelopes or Limited Power arrangements rather than Variable or Dynamic configurations. Fleets run on fixed duty cycles and route schedules and have little to no operational flexibility to shift charging in response to price signals. Defaulting these customers onto a rate they cannot respond to does not produce the intended load-shifting; it simply creates price volatility and introduces cost uncertainty for customers who cannot manage it.

CALSTART therefore recommends that the Commission:

- Confirm that default RTP enrollment applies only to customers taking service on a Variable or Dynamic Operating Envelope, consistent with the recommendations in Section 9, and revise the language in Section 8 to remove any implication that default enrollment extends to Limited Power or Static Operating Envelope customers;
- Exclude commercial fleet charging customers on Limited Power or Static Operating Envelope arrangements from any default Real-Time Pricing enrollment; and
- Make dynamic and real-time rates available to fleet customers on a voluntary, opt-in basis.

Question 3: Section 9 of the proposal summarizes recommendations for Commission action based on the stated goal of the proposal. Do parties find that any additional recommendations are warranted in support of this goal?

Yes. CALSTART has raised concerns about pre-application visibility into power availability in the Energization Timelines rulemaking (R. 24-01-018), including in its recent comments[8] and Protest to PG&E's and SCE's advice letters formalizing the preliminary capacity

[8] R. 24-01-018, Opening Comments of CALSTART, Inc. on Assigned Commissioner's Amended Phase 2 Scoping Memo and Ruling (April 30, 2026) ("CALSTART Opening Comments on Amended Phase 2 Scoping Memo") at 9-13; R. 24-01-018, Reply Comments of CALSTART, Inc. on Assigned Commissioner's Amended Phase 2 Scoping Memo and Ruling (May 28, 2026) at 3-4.

assessment ("PCA") process.[9] CALSTART raises the issue again here because it bears directly on whether this Proposal's goals can be realized: as the Commission considers scaling Limited Power and static FSCs—extending them to SDG&E, expanding their use as permanent as well as temporary solutions, and relying on them more heavily to defer or avoid ratepayer-funded upgrades—the underlying visibility problem does not resolve itself. It scales with the program. Left unaddressed, it risks limiting fleet customer access to the very tools this Proposal and D. 26-02-025 were designed to deliver, regardless of the proceeding in which it is ultimately resolved.

First, while CALSTART appreciates that D. 26-02-025 ordered PG&E and SCE to formalize and streamline the PCA process—the critical step through which utilities provide the visibility into power availability that customers require before submitting costly applications for service—the utilities' advice letters would formalize a process that would be less efficient and represent material steps backwards in several important respects.[10] For Limited Power and static FSCs to scale, it is essential that the Commission formalize a PCA that maintains the integrity of existing best practices while streamlining resolvable bottlenecks.

Second, the Commission should direct the utilities to consistently provide pre-application visibility into LLPs. While D. 26-02-025 directed utilities to provide LLPs after an application is submitted, submitting an application typically requires six figure customer investments,[11] creating a circular challenge: Fleets cannot reasonably make six figure investments without sufficient certainty that an LLP will meet their needs, yet an LLP provides the information needed to determine whether power can be delivered on a schedule that justifies that investment. CALSTART members have indicated that they may inconsistently receive LLP or equivalent information prior to filing an application for service, as part of the PCA[12]—though the PCA process being formalized currently excludes LLPs.[13] The Commission should formalize a

[9] *See*: CALSTART's Protest to Pacific Gas & Electric Company Advice Letter 7899-E and Southern California Edison Company Advice Letter 5809-E, Formalization of Preliminary Capacity Assessment, Pursuant to Decision 26-02-025, served on parties to R. 26-02-025 on May 18, 2026 ("CALSTART PCA Protest").
[10] *See*: CALSTART PCA Protest.
[11] D. 26-02-025 at 59; CALSTART Comments on FSC Transparency Ruling at 9.
[12] CALSTART Opening Comments on Amended Phase 2 Scoping Memo at 12-13, CALSTART PCA Protest at 6.
[13] *See*: CALSTART PCA Protest.

process for pre-application LLP visibility to ensure that customers consistently have the opportunity to utilize static FSCs, whether as a temporary or permanent solution.

Question 7: The proposal recommends the Commission direct SDG&E to stand up a static FSC offering that is aligned with the requirements directed in D. 26-02-025 for PG&E and SCE. For SDG&E to implement this proposal, what, if any, modifications to the requirements directed in D.26-02-025 should the Commission consider?

CALSTART supports extending a static FSC offering to SDG&E and, more broadly, aligning all large IOUs on a common set of flexible-connection options. CALSTART recommends a consistent FSC framework across service territories rather than territory-by-territory variation that raises cost and complexity for multi-site fleets. To provide consistent access to Standard Offer FSCs across all three major IOUs, the Commission should direct SDG&E to formalize the PCA—as D. 26-02-025 required for PG&E and SCE[14]—and require all three utilities to provide pre-application visibility into LLPs.

III. CONCLUSION

CALSTART thanks the Commission for the opportunity to provide these Opening Comments and looks forward to collaborating with the Commission, our members, the utilities, and other stakeholders on designing a flexible service connection framework that can be used by the customers who need it most, streamlining energization, advancing affordability, and supporting the timely achievement of California's decarbonization goals.

Respectfully submitted,
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/s/ Alex Pfeifer-Rosenblum
Alex Pfeifer-Rosenblum
Senior Manager
Current Energy Group
4764 E Sunrise Drive, Unit 508
Tucson, AZ 85718
Telephone: (520) 527-2201
E-mail: apfeifer-rosenblum@currentenergy.group

[14] D. 26-02-025 at 85.