



California Public Utilities Commission
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PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: R.18-07-005

CPUC ISSUES PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL CUSTOMER PROTECTIONS DUE TO NON-PAYMENT

SAN FRANCISCO, May 6, 2020 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today issued for public comment a proposal for additional customer protections due to non-payment. The proposal enhances both the immediate and longer-term goals to reduce customer disconnections. The proposal will be on the CPUC’s June 11, 2020, Voting Meeting agenda.

The proposal, officially termed a Proposed Decision, orders the four major investor-owned utilities (Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas Company, and San Diego Gas & Electric) to implement a variety of policies and rule changes that build upon the disconnections protections passed by the CPUC in December 2018.

The proposal specifically:

- Adopts sliding, utility-specific, annual disconnection caps through 2024
- Institutes an Arrearage Management Payment program that forgives eligible customers’ debt in return for monthly on-time utility payments
- Directs the establishment of a CPUC staff citation program to enforce customer protections
- Directs the utilities to file applications to establish Percentage of Income Payment Plan pilot programs that will cap bills at the level the customer can afford to pay
- Eliminates all deposits and reconnection fees
- Directs utilities to file plans for increasing Medical Baseline in-line with Senate Bill 1338

In addition, the proposal makes permanent the below interim protections from the previous Disconnections decision ([D.18-12-013](#)):



- Prevent disconnections of elderly and medically vulnerable customers, such as those who qualify for Medical Baseline, life support, and/or who are above 65 years old
- Prevent disconnections during extremely hot or freezing days

The COVID-19 protections adopted in Resolution M-4842 will remain in place and prevent disconnections entirely until next year.

In response to Senate Bill 598, the CPUC initiated this proceeding to develop rules, policies, and regulations to reduce the statewide disconnection rate of natural gas and electric utility customers by January 1, 2024. Additionally, the CPUC must analyze the impacts of any utility rate increases on disconnection rates in each utility's General Rate Case.

On September 18, 2018, Senate Bill 1338 was signed into law requiring the CPUC to set rules for investor-owned utilities to demonstrate they are working with the medical community to increase awareness and education of the Medical Baseline program. It also allows a physician assistant to be able to verify to an investor-owned utility that a customer is eligible for the Medical Baseline program.

The proposal is available at:

<http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M336/K533/336533906.PDF>.

Documents related to the proceeding are at:

https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5_PROCEEDING_SELECT:R1807005. By clicking the "Public Comments" tab, members of the public can submit comments on the proposal.

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians' access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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