



California Public Utilities Commission
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PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: R.18-07-005

CPUC PROVIDES ADDITIONAL CUSTOMER PROTECTIONS FOR DISCONNECTION OF ENERGY SERVICE

SAN FRANCISCO, June 11, 2020 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today provided additional protections for utility customers in an effort to reduce customer disconnections.

The CPUC’s 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. Specifically:

- Orders 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 a new stage to develop the 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
- Physician assistants and qualified medical professionals are now authorized to e-sign applications for the medical baseline program

In addition, the CPUC made permanent the below interim protections from its previous Disconnections Decision ([D.18-12-013](#)):

- Prevent disconnections during extremely hot or freezing days



The COVID-19 protections adopted previously by the CPUC 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 voted on is available at

<https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M339/K750/339750846.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.

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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