California Public Utilities Commission
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CPUC CONTINUES LOW INCOME ENERGY PROGRAMS TO BENEFIT CONSUMERS

SAN FRANCISCO, June 3, 2021 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in ongoing efforts to assist low-income utility customers, today authorized $11 billion for the California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE), Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA), and Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) programs of the state's investor-owned utilities for 2021- 2026. The programs will continue to directly benefit low-income customers by reducing their energy bill, increasing the comfort and safety of their home, and promoting energy education and efficiency practices that lead to a reliable electricity grid and a lower carbon footprint.

CARE and FERA, which provide utility bill discounts to income-qualified customers, was funded at approximately $9 billion. ESA, which provides no-cost energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades to income-qualified customers in residential homes and at multifamily properties, was funded at $2.2 billion.

For the CARE program, the CPUC maintained the goal of enrolling at least 90 percent of eligible customers for 2021-2026 and directed tailored marketing and outreach efforts to reach the program enrollment goals, including broadband outreach, expanding relationships with community based organizations, and targeting tribal communities and mobile home parks.

For the FERA program, targeting families whose household income slightly exceeds the CARE eligible income, the CPUC established a 50 percent enrollment goal by 2023 and a 70 percent enrollment goal by 2026, and directed tailored marketing and outreach efforts to reach the program enrollment goals. The CPUC also established a program to reimburse community based organizations assisting with FERA enrollments at a reimbursement rate of up to $30 per enrollment.

For the ESA program, the CPUC ordered investor-owned utilities to establish strategic coordination efforts among low-income and clean energy programs, and to take into account a customer's individual needs, including demographic, financial, geographic, and health condition characteristics when customizing the energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades. The utilities are expected to treat approximately 1.1 million households from July 1, 2021 through the end of 2026.

"Today's Decision strengthens the backbone of our energy support programs, CARE and FERA, which proved essential to supporting customers during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma. "In addition, the Decision brings innovation to the ESA program to better leverage our existing clean energy programs for customers, dovetail with wildfire and utility Public Safety Power Shutoff resiliency efforts through weatherization, and grow our workforce development opportunities in the energy sector in order to better integrate our low-income, disadvantaged, and tribal communities into California's clean energy economy."

The utilities have operated the CARE and ESA programs since the 1980s, and the FERA program since the mid-2000s. The CPUC issued guidance in June 2019 for new program goals, budgets, and a program design for the 2021-26 program cycle. In November 2019, the utilities submitted their applications, which are the subject of today's Decision.

The proposal voted on is available at https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M386/K727/386727000.PDF.

Documents related to this proceeding are available at https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5_PROCEEDING_SELECT:A1911003.

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, 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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