



**California Public Utilities Commission**  
**505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact: Terrie Prosper, 415.703.1366, [news@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:news@cpuc.ca.gov)

**PRESS RELEASE**

Docket #: R.20-10-002

**CPUC CAPS PHONE RATES FOR THOSE INCARCERATED**

SAN FRANCISCO, August 19, 2021 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in its ongoing efforts to ensure affordable telecommunications services for all Californians, today acted to decrease the high rates and fees that financially burden incarcerated people, their families, and others that provide them with support, impeding their ability to communicate—a burden that has been made more difficult by the ongoing pandemic.

Today’s decision imposes a per-minute cap of seven cents (\$0.07) for intrastate debit, prepaid calls, and collect calls for all incarcerated person calling services (IPCS) operating within California. The decision also prohibits single-call service fees, automated payment/automated deposit fees, live agent fees, and paper bill fees; limits third-party financial transaction fees to the pass through of the exact third-party fee, with no markup, up to a limit of \$6.95 per transaction; and prohibits the markup of any mandatory pass-through government taxes and fees.

Additionally, the decision directs telephone companies to fully disclose the rate caps and ancillary fee requirements on websites, bills, and marketing materials, and to maintain information on the adopted rate clearly and prominently on their websites.

Commissioner Martha Guzman Aceves, who is assigned to the proceeding, said, “While we will continue to explore more comprehensive, long-term options for relieving the burdens on communication faced by incarcerated people, this decision gives those people and their loved ones some immediate relief during this difficult time.”

All telephone companies providing IPCS in California must submit to the CPUC a Notice of Compliance with information confirming their implementation of the interim rate cap ordered today



and the ancillary fee requirements within 45 days, and must file an Interim Rate Compliance Report on a quarterly basis.

The CPUC recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed many pre-existing inequalities, making communication services more of a lifeline and creating challenges for disadvantaged communities. Today's decision finds that making phone calls more affordable for incarcerated people is essential to ensure that they retain the ability to stay connected to family.

On August 8, 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposed to update its rate caps on out-of-state calls and urged state partners to take action to address the high in-state inmate calling service rates because the FCC lacked the authority to cap intrastate calling prices. On October 8, 2020, the CPUC opened this proceeding to ensure that incarcerated people and their families have access to affordable communications services. The CPUC has not previously regulated the rates of telephone services provided to people incarcerated in California's jails and prison.

The proposal voted on is available at

<https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M400/K629/400629229.PDF>.

Documents related to the proceeding are available at

[https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5\\_PROCEEDING\\_SELECT:R2010002](https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5_PROCEEDING_SELECT:R2010002).

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](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov).

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