



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.18-07-005

## **CPUC Introduces New Payment Plan Option for Customers Facing Bill Challenges**

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 31, 2023 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in ongoing affordability efforts, today directed Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric, and Southern California Gas Company to introduce a 24-month payment plan option for residential customers who are 60 days behind on their bills and not currently enrolled in a payment plan.

The CPUC’s latest initiative aligns with its ongoing efforts to address disconnection rates across California’s electric and natural gas investor-owned utilities, while simultaneously enhancing the reconnection process. Under the new 24-month payment plan, customers will have the flexibility to manage their bills, allowing for up to two missed payments before disconnection. Moreover, utilities are now mandated to provide customers with notice of a missed payment via text message or email prior to disconnection.

“This decision addresses the need for essential natural gas and electric services at a time when ratepayers are still rebounding from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Commissioner Darcie L. Houck, who is assigned to the proceeding. “With the COVID payment plans coming to an end soon, the 24-month payment plan provides ratepayers the opportunity to continue paying off their past due balances and maintain their utility services. This also helps to further the goal of lowering disconnection rates and avoiding the costs of reconnections.”

“The arrearages payment plans approved by the CPUC today will help customers avoid disconnections while allowing them to catch up on what they owe,” said Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma. “It’s

important that we continue these essential programs that are helping utility customers maintain their service while staying current on their bills. I appreciate these updates to the program.”

Today’s decision also extends the Arrearage Management Payment Plan program, originally introduced in June 2020, until October 1, 2026. To optimize program implementation, utilities are required to engage in collaborative discussions with involved parties to identify best practices.

Further demonstrating its commitment to consumers, the CPUC has granted utilities the authority to conduct a comprehensive [Medical Baseline](#) study. This study will inform proposals for new enrollment goals over the next five years and medical discounts on non-tiered rates. The decision also outlines guidelines for updating the Medical Baseline study regularly.

The proposal voted on is available [here](#).

Documents related to the proceeding are available [here](#).

###

### **About the California Public Utilities Commission**

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. Visit [www.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov) for more information.