



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

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PRESS RELEASE

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CPUC Announces Leuwam Tesfai as Executive Director

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 16, 2026 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today announced Leuwam Tesfai as its new Executive Director. A seasoned leader with extensive experience in regulatory policy and law, Ms. Tesfai will officially assume the role on Feb. 2, 2026.

Ms. Tesfai currently serves as the CPUC’s Deputy Executive Director for Energy and Climate Policy. Since joining the CPUC in 2011, she has held various high-level positions, including Chief of Staff and Legal Advisor to former Commissioners, and has contributed her expertise to the Legal, Energy, and Administrative Law Judge Divisions.

Beyond her internal leadership at the CPUC, Ms. Tesfai brings a wealth of private sector experience, specifically in the development of renewable energy markets, facility permitting, and the commercialization of clean energy technologies. In 2023, her contributions were recognized on a national scale when she received the C3E Clean Energy Education and Empowerment Government Award from the U.S. Department of Energy.

“Leuwam has consistently shown that effective policy depends on strong leadership and execution,” said CPUC President Alice Reynolds. “As Deputy Executive Director for Energy and Climate Policy, she has shown a rare combination of problem-solving through particularly complex policy issues and a remarkable ability to bring people together. This experience makes her exceptionally well suited to lead as Executive Director.”

As Executive Director, Ms. Tesfai will oversee the CPUC's daily operations and expedite all matters within the CPUC's jurisdiction, ensuring the agency continues to meet its regulatory mandates effectively.

"I am honored to be named the CPUC's Executive Director at this important moment," said Ms. Tesfai. "I look forward to working with the Commissioners and staff to support a smooth leadership transition and advance the CPUC's priorities. Together, we will champion equity and innovation while promoting affordability, reliability, and safety in our forward-looking utility regulation for all Californians."

A native of San Diego, Ms. Tesfai is a graduate of Emory University and the University of San Francisco School of Law. She remains deeply engaged in the legal and civic community, serving on the Advisory Board for the Center for Law, Energy & the Environment at UC Berkeley School of Law; the Executive Committee of the Environmental Law Section of the California Lawyers Association; and the Board of Directors for the League of Women Voters San Francisco.

Ms. Tesfai succeeds current Executive Director Rachel Peterson, who will conclude her service on Jan. 31, 2026.

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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 for more information.