

Decision _____

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Rulemaking to
Consider New Approaches to
Disconnections and Reconnections to
Improve Energy Access and Contain
Costs.

Rulemaking 18-07-005

ORDER EXTENDING STATUTORY DEADLINE**Summary**

This decision extends the statutory deadline in this proceeding to December 31, 2026.

1. Background

Public Utilities Code (Pub. Util. Code) Section 1701.5(a) provides that the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) shall resolve the issues raised in the scoping memo of a quasi-legislative proceeding within 18 months of the date the proceeding is initiated, unless the Commission makes a written determination that the deadline cannot be met and issues an order extending that deadline. The current statutory deadline for resolving this proceeding is March 2, 2026.

On July 12, 2018, the Commission initiated this Order Instituting Rulemaking pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 598 (Hueso), Stats. 2017, ch. 362 to address residential disconnection rates across California's electric and gas investor-owned utilities. The primary goal of this proceeding is to reduce residential disconnections and improve reconnection processes.

Phase 1 of this proceeding established immediate and near-term disconnections improvements for Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, and Southern California Gas Company (together, the Large Utilities).

On December 13, 2018, the Commission issued Decision (D.) 18-12-013, which established immediate interim rules to reduce residential disconnections by the Large Utilities. On June 11, 2020, the Commission issued D.20-06-003, which adopted ongoing rules to reduce residential disconnections by the Large Utilities, created the Arrearage Management Payment Plan program, and concluded Phase 1 of this proceeding. The small and multi-jurisdictional energy utilities (SMJUs) were exempted from the requirements of the Phase 1 decisions.

On October 11, 2021, the Commission approved Percentage of Income Payment Plans (PIPP) pilot programs for the Large Utilities in D.21-10-012, concluding the PIPP phase of this proceeding.

The Commission approved residential disconnection protections for the SMJUs in D.22-08-037, which concluded Phase 1-A of this proceeding.

On April 18, 2022, the Commission issued D.22-04-037 in Rulemaking 21-02-014 to require the development of a Community-Based Organization (CBO)

Arrears Case Management Pilot Program (CBO Pilot Program) in this proceeding.

On July 15, 2022, the assigned Commissioner issued a Phase 2 scoping memo and ruling to establish the scope and schedule for this proceeding and request party comments on Phase 2 issues. On February 13, 2023, the assigned Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) issued a ruling that requested party comments on additional questions about the CBO Pilot Program Proposal. On August 24, 2023, the assigned Commissioner issued a ruling to request additional comments on the payment structure for the CBO Pilot Program Proposal. On February 20, 2024, the Commission issued D.24.02-046 approving a CBO Arrears Case Management Pilot Program.

On March 22, 2024, the assigned ALJ issued a ruling seeking party comment on Phase 2 issues including disconnection caps and the allocation of payments of past-due bills between Community Choice Aggregators and utilities. Parties submitted opening comments on April 19, 2024, and reply comments on May 3, 2024.

D.24-07-21 extended the statutory deadline for this proceeding to July 15, 2025.

D.25-09-018 extended the statutory deadline for this proceeding to March 2, 2026.

The Commission requires time to further develop the record for outstanding policy issues. Extending the deadline to December 31, 2026, provides sufficient time for necessary next steps.

2. Waiver of Comment Period

Under Rule 14.6(c)(4) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Commission may waive the otherwise applicable 30-day period for public review and comment on a decision that extends the deadline for resolving ratesetting or quasi-legislative proceedings pursuant to Pub. Util. Code Section 1701.5. Under the circumstances of this proceeding, it is appropriate to waive the 30-day period for public review and comment.

3. Assignment of Proceeding

Darcie L. Houck is the assigned Commissioner and Andrew Dugowson is the assigned ALJ in this proceeding.

Findings of Fact

1. The current statutory deadline for resolving R.18-07-005 is March 2, 2026.
2. R.18-07-005 cannot be completed by March 2, 2026.
3. An extension of the statutory deadline to December 31, 2026 is necessary to allow adequate time to complete this proceeding.

Conclusions of Law

1. Pursuant to the authority granted to the Commission under Pub. Util. Code Section 1701.5(a), the statutory deadline should be extended to December 31, 2026.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The statutory deadline for completion of this proceeding is extended to December 31, 2026.
2. The 30-day period for review and comment on this order is waived.

This order is effective today.

Dated _____, at Santa Maria, California