

DOCKETED

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CPUC COVID 19 Response Update



California Public Utilities Commission

DACAG Quarterly Meeting

June 19, 2020





CPUC COVID 19 Responses

- More details: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/covid/>
- By Industry Division:
 - Energy
 - Wildfire Safety
 - Communications
 - Water
 - Rail Safety
 - CPED/Transportation





Overview of Energy & Gas Industry Measures for Rate and Bill Impact Relief

- **Implementing Resolution M-4842 and Residential and Small Commercial Customer Protections, including:**
 - (1) Disconnections moratoria,
 - (2) Waiver of all deposits and late fees,
 - (3) Payment plan options,
 - (4) Support of low income and vulnerable populations through increased enrollment in CARE, FERA, medical baseline, and Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) programs,
 - (5) Enhanced public outreach, and
 - (6) CCA/DA/IOU cost recovery / sharing arrangements.





Energy Division

Overview of Energy & Gas Industry Measures for Rate and Bill Impact Relief

- **Held Public Workshop on Impacts of COVID-19 on Customer Clean Energy Programs on April 23, 2020**
 - Learnings: Difficulties getting into homes to do behind-the-meter work, delays in inspections, cashflow issues of contractors
- **Supported Key Decisions to Provide Relief to Ratepayers:**
 - High Usage Charge temporarily reduced from 75% to 25% of the Tier 2 price for all three IOUs. Temporary Price reduction effective June 1st to October 31st 2020
 - Advancing Electric Climate Credits for PG&E and SCE to May/June.
 - Advancing Electric Climate Credits for Liberty and PacifiCorp.





Overview of Mitigation Measures to Protect Income Qualified Programs & Customers

Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESA)

- All IOUs have offered 60-day advance payment to ESA Contractors
 - to ease layoffs and financial impact of program suspension
 - recommended by March 23rd and April 7th Executive Director letters to IOUs
 - ratified in Resolution E-5074 (voted out on 5/28)
- All IOUs are temporarily allowing self-certification of income via affidavit for ESA program

California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE) and Family Electric Rates Assistance (FERA) Programs

- All IOUs have temporarily suspended all CARE and FERA program removals
 - recommended by March 17th Executive Director letter to IOUs
- All IOUs have increased CARE/FERA marketing, sign-up and enrollments
- **CARE All Party meeting, held May 22nd**, to discuss additional outreach and data sharing efforts





Overview of Energy & Gas Industry Measures for Rate and Bill Impact Relief

- **Set up Pandemic Protections Memo Account (CPPMA) to track costs.**
This will assist us moving forward in determining how to deal with the anticipated under-collections.
- For San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) customers, the CPUC has **eliminated a summer rate increase**, delayed an increase on small business gas bills, and reduced the seasonal differential from residential default time-of-use rates in order to help reduce summer bills.
- The CPUC is conducting regulatory oversight of the Electric IOUs' **preparation for the 2020 Wildfire and Public Safety Power Shutoff season**, including adjusting for the impact of COVID-19. CAL FIRE participated in the oversight briefings.





Disconnections PD voted out 6/11/20

Background

- On July 20, 2018, in response to Senate Bill 598 and SB 1338 the CPUC initiated this proceeding to develop rules, policies, and regulations to reduce the statewide disconnection rate of natural gas and electric utility customers by January 1, 2024
- Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 5 residential customers in SCE's service territory was eligible for disconnection.
- While disconnections are prohibited during this period, customers whose livelihoods were impacted by this crisis continue to build high arrearages which put them at higher risk of disconnection when the moratorium ends





Disconnections PD voted out 6/11/20

Builds upon disconnection protections passed by CPUC in Dec 2018 for the 4 major IOUs, eliminates antiquated policies by the IOUs, + adds new progressive customer protections

- Orders sliding, utility-specific, annual disconnection caps through 2024
- Institutes an Arrearage Management Payment (AMP) program that forgives eligible customers' debt in return for monthly on-time utility payments - up to \$8,000
- Directs a new stage to develop the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) pilot programs that will cap bills at the level the customer can afford to pay
- Eliminates all deposits and reconnection fees





Disconnections PD voted out 6/11/20

Payment Plan Protections

- The 4 major IOUs must enroll eligible customers in all applicable benefit programs administered before disconnection
- The 4 major IOUs must offer 12-month payment plans before disconnection, and [seniors, 1 yr younger, but now all]
- Customers cannot be disconnected if they are a LIHEAP pledge participant

Additional Protections

- Directs the establishment of a CPUC staff citation program to enforce customer protections
- Directs a new stage to develop the Percentage of Income Payment Plan pilot programs that will cap bills at the level the customer can afford to pay





Disconnections PD voted out 6/11/20

- Benefit of service investigation to again presume the customer is telling the truth
- Directs utilities to file plans for increasing Medical Baseline in-line with Senate Bill 1338
- Physician assistants and qualified medical professionals are now authorized to e-sign applications for medical baseline programs
- In addition, the CPUC made permanent the below interim protections from its previous Disconnections Decision (D.18-12-013):
 - Prevent disconnections during extremely hot or freezing days sign applications for the medical baseline program
- Additionally, the CPUC must analyze the impacts of any utility rate increases on disconnection rates in each utility's General Rate Case.





Electric, Gas, Wildfire Safety in Response to COVID-19

Public Safety Power Shutoffs –

- Oversight of all electric utility PSPS preparation:
<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/covid/>
- Requiring adjustment for COVID-19 impacts: Community Resource Centers, Customer Notifications, Public Safety Partner Coordination, Tabletop Exercises

Gas & Electric Utility Business Continuity Plans –

- Cross-division staff subject matter experts ensuring robust plans for workforce and customer safety

Wildfire Mitigation and Essential Services –

- Joint CPUC, CAL FIRE, Cal OES guidance in March 2020 to electric utilities for essential wildfire mitigation activity while adjusting for shelter in place orders





Electric, Gas, Wildfire Safety in Response to COVID-19

Gas, Electric, Wildfire Incident Investigations, Audits and Inspections

- Incident investigations performed with COVID-19 precautions
- Audits and inspections of mobile home parks, natural gas pipelines, and electric infrastructure conducted remotely or paused; near-term restart of fieldwork anticipated

Wildfire Mitigation –

- Field inspections of utilities' 2019 Wildfire Mitigation Plan work launched May 2020

Cyber Security & Statewide Coordination –

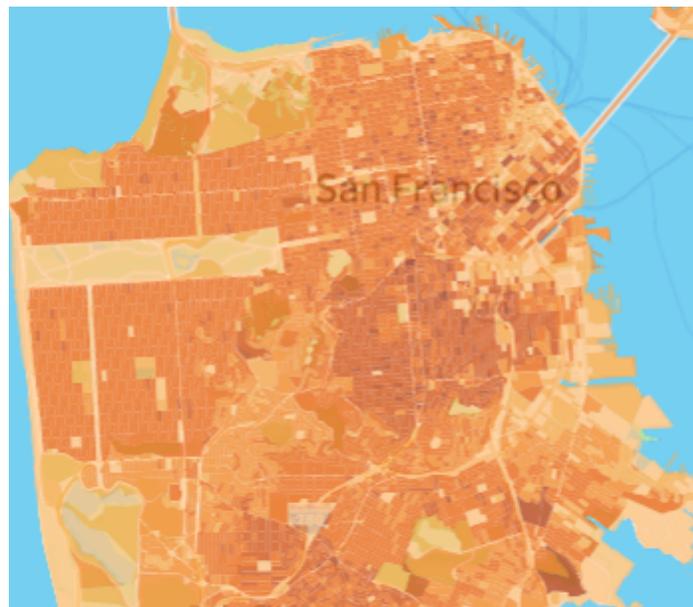
- Coordinating with California Cyber Security Integration Center on sector-specific impacts related to COVID-19
- 12 • CPUC COVID-19 Task Force supports internal response, coordinates extensively with other state agency Task Forces





Update on Supporting Access to Broadband

- [Mar 20, 2020 letter](#) from the Executive Director Regarding Providing Protections for those impacted by the pandemic (i.e., waiving fees, stopping disconnections) and [Mar 23, 2020 letter](#) recommending Internet Service Providers remove data caps.
- [Apr 24, 2020 letter](#) from President Batjer to Internet Service Providers urging them to improve affordable broadband plans.
- Continue collection information on affordable plans offered in each school district with the [Affordable Broadband Plan lookup tool](#)



Update on Broadband Funding Support

- Lifeline COVID-19 90-day actions to support users
 - Annual renewal process is suspended
 - Waiver of non-usage de-enrollment rule
 - Waiver of 3-month income documentation rule
- \$25 million from subsidizing Wi-Fi hotspots for students from the California Teleconnect Fund
- \$5 million from California Advanced Services Fund Adoption to the California Department of Education for computing and hotspot devices
- Grants supporting non-profits to help households sign up for affordable broadband offers.





CDE/CPUC

\$5mil COVID Partnership

District	City	County	number laptops	Granted Amount Maximum
Mendota Unified School District	Mendota	Fresno	1800	\$540,000
Riverbank Unified School district	Riverbank	Stanislaus	860	\$258,000
Chatom Union School District	Turlock	Stanislaus	600	\$180,000
Brawley Elementary School District	Brawley	Imperial	761	\$228,300
Brawley Elementary School District	Brawley	Imperial	900	\$270,000
Brawley Elementary School District	Brawley	Imperial	700	\$210,000
Mountain View SD	El Monte	Los Angeles	600	\$180,000
King City USD	King City	Monterey	260	\$78,000
Lindsay Unified School District	Lindsay	Tulare	1000	\$300,000
Lennox School District	Lennox	Los Angeles	1650	\$495,000
Greenfield Union School District	Greenfield	Monterey	350	\$105,000
Lamont Elementary School District	Lamont	Kern	2500	\$750,000
San Ysidro School District	San Ysidro	San Diego	1935	\$580,500
North Monterey County Unified School District	Moss Landing	Monterey	2750	\$825,000





Update on Policy Changes

- Lifeline
 - D.20-05-043 Authorizes Commissioner or ALJ to Extend Protections
 - June 8 ruling extended protections through June 30, 2020
 - Investigating inclusion of broadband in the California LifeLine program
 - June 8 ruling set schedule and requested wireless and wireline broadband provider data
 - [Lifeline statistics dashboard](#)
- FCC activities, including Keep America Connected pledge through June 30 and Lifeline protections





Customer Protections Directives to Water Companies

- [March 17, 2020 letter](#) from the Executive Director to Class A/B Water Utilities to suspend disconnections for non-payment
- [March 20, 2020 letter](#) from the Executive Director to requiring Class A/B Water Utilities provide CPUC their COOPs for continuing operation through the COVID-19 pandemic
- [March 26, 2020](#) letter to Class C/D Water Utilities to suspend disconnections for non-payment





CPUC Resolution M-4843

- WD was instrumental in developing CPUC [Resolution M-4843](#) adopted by the Commission May 28, 2020
 - Allows utilities to apply quickly for Federal loans related to COVID-19.
 - For COVID-19 loans of >12 months duration – Reduces the approval time from 1 year to about 1 month.
 - Resolution was modified to include Communications Small LECs, Electric and Gas Utilities < 175K CA customers.
 - This authority is effective for two years.





Rising Participation in Water Low-Income Programs

- About 1.2 million residential water customers are served by Class A Water IOUs.
 - When COVID-19 struck in March, about ~221K (~ 18%) of these residential customers were enrolled in the [low-income programs](#) provided by Class A Utilities.
 - Since the COVID-19 onset in March, enrollment increased by ~11K (~ 5%) as of May.
 - The total percentage of residential customers now enrolled in low income programs is ~ 19% (~232K).





Establishing CEMA Accounts

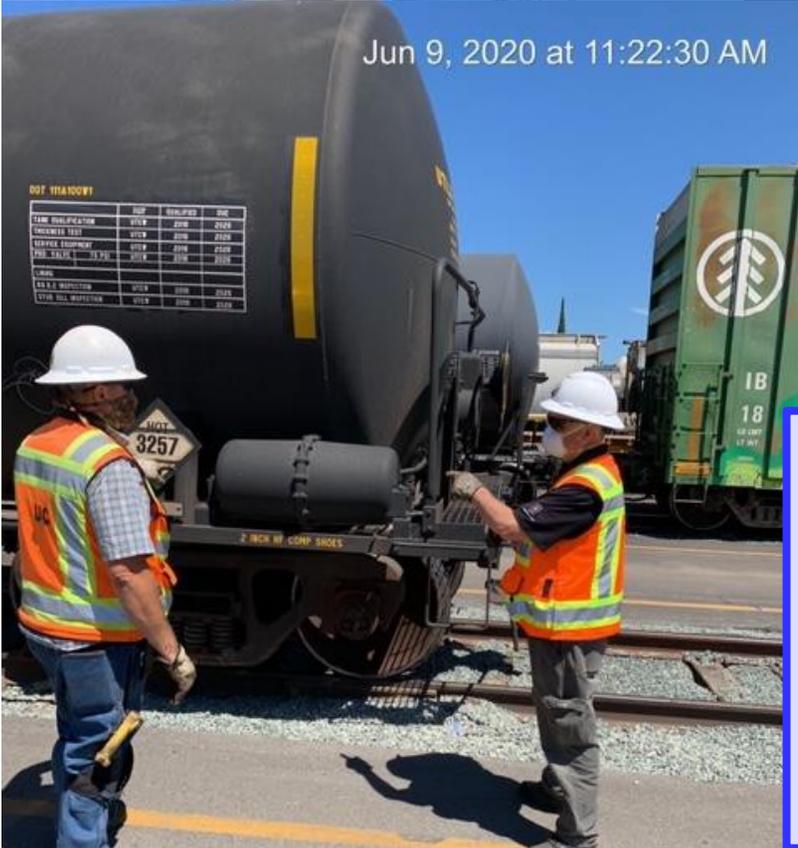
- Catastrophic Event Memorandum Accounts (CEMAs) have been a long-standing tool for Water Utilities. These accounts are activated during catastrophic events, such as the COVID-19 Emergency.
 - CEMA accounts are used by the Utilities to track costs associated with responding to COVID-19.
 - If deemed appropriate, these costs may be allowed for reimbursement. The CPUC will make that determination.
 - Since the start of COVID-19 in March, 100% Class A/B and ~40% of Class C/Ds have activated CEMAs .



RSD Proactive Field Work Boots-On-The-Ground During – COVID-19



MP&E Inspector
Inspecting freight
Cars during the
Coronavirus
COVID-19
Pandemic



**STAYING ENGAGED
KEEPING SAFE**
Railroad Utilities
Operations & Infrastructure

CPUC RSD ROSB
Real-Time Involvement
Communication
Direction & Leadership





Rail Safety Divison

Communication with RSD Staff and Railroad Utilities

Rail Transit Safety Branch (RTSB)

- RTSB Staff and management reviewed Transit Agency responses to the Commission Executive Director's inquiries, regarding individual Transit Agency business plans for dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- RTSB Receives ongoing **updates from rail transit agencies** regarding changes to service or implementation of requirements for employees and patrons.
- RTSB works with **small system operators** to determine what actions are necessary and appropriate as systems cease or re-initiate service (Angels Flight, Getty Center Tram, Americana Trolley, Grove Trolley)
- Rail transit agencies meet regularly amongst themselves, via conference call, to discuss best practices and impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic and potential actions to mitigate them.
- RTSB Staff notified our rail transit agencies of the availability of personal protective equipment being offered by the State through the California Office of Emergency Services.

Railroad Operations Safety Branch (ROSB)

- ROSB has a weekly COVID-19 Staff Meetings
- ROSB reviews COVID-19 related changes/ developments provided by the Railroads to the CPUC ROSB.
- ROSB Management has contacted Railroads, further making them aware of the availability of personal protective equipment(PPE) being offered by the State through the California Office of Emergency Services.

Railroad Crossing and Engineering Branch (RCEB)

- RCEB continues rail crossing safety regulation work via WebEx conferences and field diagnostic meetings with railroads, local agencies, and contractors by always encouraging and respecting the CDC recommended Covid-19 guidelines.





Transportation Actions in Response to COVID-19

- CPED sent letters in March 2020 to all TNCs and common carriers requesting information on how they are responding to COVID-19 and communicating their actions to customers:
 - 167 letters to Passenger Stage Corporations (scheduled service)
 - 19 letters to Vessel Common Carriers (water vessel transportation)
 - 22 letters to Transportation Network Companies (on-demand)
- In coordination with CalSTA's Interagency COVID-19 Task Force, CPED staff notified our regulated carriers of personal protective equipment being offered to private industry through CalOES.





Ongoing COVID-19 Actions

- CPED coordinates with the Greater California Livery Association's (GCLA) Executive Director regarding COVID-19's impacts on the industry and on health and safety practices.
- CPED is prioritizing processing voluntary suspensions and reinstatements of carriers' operating authorities.
- CPED checks in regularly with major airports including SFO, LAX, San Jose, Oakland, and San Diego, and law enforcement agencies to gather details on carrier activity.
- CPED staff monitors TNC actions (e.g. Lyft and Uber) and reports weekly to management on new and planned developments in response to COVID-19.





Questions

