

Decision No. 13800

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application
of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON
COMPANY for Authority to File and
Make Effective new Schedules Pro-
viding for an Emergency Increase
of Electric Rates.

ORIGINAL

Application No. 10143.

BY THE COMMISSION:

PRELIMINARY OPINION AND ORDER

The above-entitled matter is an application of Southern California Edison Company for an emergency increase in electric rates to offset increased operating expenses resulting from a shortage of hydro-electric power which is, in turn, the result of drought. At a public hearing, the Company introduced evidence showing the extent of the shortage in water power, with its effect upon operating expenses, and an adjournment was taken in order that representatives of consumers might have an opportunity to examine the Company's evidence and prepare for cross-examination or rebuttal. The adjourned hearing has not yet been held.

The evidence so far presented in this matter and in Case No. 2013, which is an investigation on the Commission's own motion into the supply of power available and the method of its distribution among the consumers, indicates that for approximately five months, from and after June 15th, 1924, Southern California Edison Company will be able to supply but approximately seventy-five percent of the requirements of its electric consumers.

The Railroad Commission has appointed a Power Supervisor, under whose direction the plants of Southern California Edison Company and certain other electric utilities are to be operated, and who will supervise the distribution of available electricity among consumers. Under the direction of this Power Supervisor, the Edison Company has required its consumers to curtail their use of electricity, and has urged that all possible auxiliary sources of power be brought into use.

Certain of the rate schedules now in effect on the Edison System provide minimum charges which apply to consumers using less than the amount of energy covered by the minimum charge. These minimum charges contemplate a supply of available energy sufficient for all of the consumer's requirements, and it is clear that when such a supply is not available the consumer does not receive the full service for which the minimum charge is intended to compensate the Company. The curtailment in the use of electricity is being administered upon the basis of a general reduction of twenty-five percent of normal use, and it seems fair that a corresponding reduction should be made in minimum charges. There are, however, a few special uses of electric power where a twenty-five percent reduction in use would involve a menace to public health or safety, and there are other uses where a reduction of more than twenty-five percent can be made without hardship upon the individual consumer and with advantage to the community. It is impossible to enforce a strictly uniform curtailment of twenty-five percent, and it would be correspondingly unfair to provide a strictly uniform reduction in minimum charges. Such conditions are taken care of in the following form of Order:

O R D E R

The electric rates of Southern California Edison Company

now being before the Railroad Commission in the above-entitled matter for adjustment because of increased operating expenses brought about by a shortage of hydro-electric power, and the evidence before the Commission indicating that such shortage will result in the curtailment of service to electric consumers, and the Commission being of the opinion that modification in minimum charges should be made on account of such curtailment in service, and other good cause appearing.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that

1. Effective with bills based on regular meter readings taken on and after July 15, 1924, and until further ordered, the minimum charges set forth in Schedules C-1, C-2, P-1, P-4, P-5, P-6 and P-11, now filed with this Commission by Southern California Edison Company, as applicable to each individual consumer, shall be reduced in the same proportion that it can be shown that his use of electricity has been curtailed, provided that in no case shall any minimum charge be reduced where there has been a curtailment of the use of power of less than fifteen percent.

2. In cases where a consumer operates an auxiliary source of power and thereby reduces his normal demand upon Southern California Edison Company for energy, the minimum charges provided in said Schedules of rates shall be reduced during the period of operation of such auxiliary source of power and the pendency of this Order, in the proportion that the use of energy from the system of the Southern California Edison Company is reduced from said normal de-

mand by the operation of such auxiliary source of power.

3. The Railroad Commission hereby reserves the right at any time to make any further order or orders in the premises that may to it appear just and reasonable.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 11th day
of July 1924.

CC Seaver
W. B. Burdette
Josiah Martin

Commissioners