Decision 91-07-028   July 24, 1991

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Charles H. Powell,   )
)
                    Complainant,   )
)
          vs.   )
)
Pacific Gas and Electric Company,   )
)
                    Defendant.   )
_____)

ORIGINAL
(ECP)
Case 91-03-054
(Filed March 26, 1991)

O P I N I O N

Complainant Charles H. Powell disputes the billing to a laundromat for a period when the gas meter was found to be not operating.   For the billing period in question, April 9 to May 10, 1990, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) estimated the bill at $402.48 based on complainant's usage for the same month in 1989.

Powell contests the legality of backbilling, and alleges that he is aware of similar instances in which PG&E did not backbill the customer.   Powell does not disagree with PG&E's estimate of usage which results in the $402.48 bill.   A hearing on this complaint was held May 16, 1991.

There is no question about the legality of backbilling. Under PG&E's Tariff Rule 17, Section C.3, approved by the Commission, PG&E may bill a customer for the estimated gas service used but not metered.   Powell offered no evidence of other PG&E customers being handled differently.   PG&E states that it backbills all customers with inoperable meters, except that when the amount is less than $25, PG&E does not render a backbill due to the administrative costs involved.

We conclude that the billing rendered in the amount of $402.48 for the billing period, April 9 to May 10, 1990, is reasonable.   The complaint is denied.
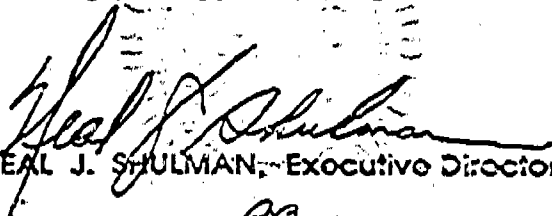
O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The complaint in Case 91-03-054 is denied.

2. The $402.48 fee impounded by the Commission shall be disbursed to Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

This order becomes effective 30 days from today.

Dated July 24, 1991, at San Francisco, California.

PATRICIA M. ECKERT
President
G. MITCHELL WILK
JOHN B. OHANIAN
DANIEL Wm. FESSLER
NORMAN D. SHUMWAY
Commissioners

I CERTIFY THAT THIS DECISION
WAS APPROVED BY THE ABOVE
COMMISSIONERS TODAY

NEAL J. SHULMAN, Executive Director