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Sent: 12/16/2010 1:07:43 PM
To: Hall, Thomas A. (thomas.hall@cpuc.ca.gov)
Cc:
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Subject: DRA Release: DRA Applauds SDG&E and SoCalGas for Commitment to Minimize Service Disconnections

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DRA Applauds SDG&E and SoCalGas for Commitment to Minimize Service Disconnections

SAN FRANCISCO, December 16, 2010 – The Division of Ratepayer Advocates (DRA), an independent consumer advocacy division of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), today commended the CPUC, San Diego Gas and Electric Company (SDG&E), and Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) for working with DRA and other consumer groups (Disability Rights Advocates, The Greenlining Institute, The National Consumer Law Center, and The Utility Reform) to set the standard for reducing service disconnections in California.

A decision approved by the CPUC today puts into place an innovative approach to reducing utility service disconnections for customers of SDG&E and SoCalGas. A [2009 report by DRA](#) shed light on significant increases in the number of low-income customers whose power was shut off by California's utilities from 2006 to 2009, compared to other customers. The CPUC responded to the report by instituting measures and eliminating credit deposits, allowing consumers more time to pay bills.

Today's decision marks the approval of an agreement reached between DRA, SDG&E, SoCalGas and other consumer groups to take the CPUC's new rules even further. Under the decision, SDG&E agrees to keep disconnections below about 2 percent of its customer base and SoCalGas agrees to keep its disconnections below 3.4 percent. The two utilities also agreed to avoid disconnections during extreme weather events, and SDG&E agreed to bring low-income disconnection rates more in line with its overall rate.

However, the CPUC's decision makes no changes to the disconnection policies of Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) or Southern California Edison.

"DRA is pleased to have worked with SDG&E and SoCalGas on developing an innovative approach to reducing service disconnections," said DRA acting director Joe Como. "We hope PG&E and Edison will adopt similar policies, and we look forward to continuing our work to reduce the number of disconnections."

For more information on DRA, please visit www.dra.ca.gov.

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