

OR Highway safety

Don't blame PUC president

As a former member of the California Public Utilities Commission (1983-86), I agree that this regulatory entity bears responsibility for the safety of gas lines.

But knowing the process, it is wrong to take political shots — at times cheap shots — at the current commission leadership ("Time for new leadership," Open Forum, Sept. 7).

In the ratemaking process, simple arithmetic tells us that by lowering mandated capital expenditures, you lower a utility's rate base, thus lowering earnings and thus consumers' bills.

Utilities always ask for higher authorized expenditures (e.g., for more new pipes), but the commission always reduces the total request. That is what the commission and its staff have done for 100 years.

Almost 30 years ago, it was I and others who did not require searches for then-accessible records that would have led to more replacements for all pipe installations that preceded the newly adopted pipe standards.

The commission, then as now, responds to the understandable cry not to cause rate increases.

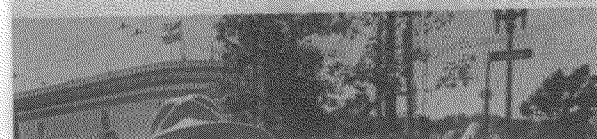
So blame the process, blame all past commissions, but do not place blame on one current commissioner.

Commissioner Michael Peevey graduated from UC Berkeley with a master's in labor economics. He was a labor/consumer advocate in Washington and Sacramento for years, working for the AFL-CIO.

To refer to him as only a "former utility executive" is a very cheap "cheap shot."

William T. Bagley, San Rafael

we want to see



after special 19.99. Clearance styles from Royal Premium, WearFirst and more. Waists 30-38.

CHASES NEEDED.

SPECIAL \$99

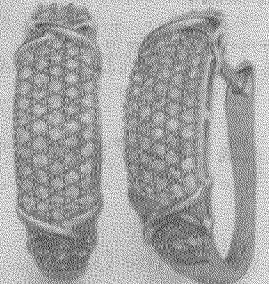
CULTURED FRESHWATER PEARLS
Reg. \$300, after special \$120.
2-pc. set: 8x11mm earrings and 9x11mm pendant with diamonds in sterling silver.
★ WebID 472941



SPECIAL \$299

DIAMOND EARRINGS
Reg. \$700, after special \$392.
1 ct. t.w.† earrings in sterling silver.
★ WebID 585849

own: 280158 garnet, quartz.



SPECIAL 50% OFF

MATTRESS PADS AND TOPPERS
Special 24.99-239.99
Reg. \$50-\$480, after special 29.99-287.99.

All mattress pads, feather beds & foam toppers. Shown:
★ WebID 497277

Only 2018

