

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company for Approval of the 2009-11 Low Income Energy Efficiency and California Alternate Rates for Energy Programs and Budget (U39M)	Application 08-05-22 (Filed May 15, 2008)
And Related Matters.	Application 08-05-024 Application 08-05-025 Application 08-05-026

**BLACK ECONOMIC COUNCIL, LATINO BUSINESS CHAMBER OF GREATER LOS ANGELES AND NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION (JOINT PARTIES) SUPPORT FOR THE JOINT EMERGENCY MOTION OF THE EAST LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY UNION (TELACU), THE ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY AND ENERGY SERVICES (ACCES) AND THE MARAVILLA FOUNDATION TO CONTINUE THE LOW-INCOME ENERGY SAVINGS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ESAP) FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GAS COMPANY'S LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.**

The Black Economic Council, Latino Business Chamber of Greater Los Angeles and the National Asian American Coalition strongly support the joint emergency motion filed by TELACU, the Maravilla Foundation and ACCES to continue ESAP for Southern California Gas Company's low income households.

Low income ratepayers are presently in an extremely vulnerable position and should not have to face suspension of their services through the ESA program. The Joint Parties, led in their efforts by Low Income Oversight Board member Faith Bautista, have been urging the utility companies to triple the funding for the CARE and ESA programs. This increase is especially important because the number of poor and near-poor eligible for these programs is far greater than the utility companies have calculated. This is in part attributable to the growing number of long-term unemployed, long-term under-employed, increasing foreclosures and cutbacks in vital

services for the poor and near poor . One new element has been called to the attention of this Commission and the utilities as of October : specifically, the Census Bureau has offered new poverty data that indicates the existing definition of the poor and near -poor is outdated . Therefore, the Commission may be underestimating the number of persons qualified for the program and may be providing benefits to a portion of the population that is, in fact, neither poor or near poor. See , for example , The New York Times <sup>1</sup> and its statement that one -third of Americans under the new census bureau definition are poor and near poor. In California, because the cost of living is far higher than the national average, the percentage may be closer to 40%.

In a time when ratepayer confidence in the utilities is particularly low due to the recent gas pipeline explosions and the ratepayers are suffering from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, suspending the ESA program, even for a month, will cause further mistrust of the utilities. The Joint Parties urge the Commission to immediately require Southern California Gas Company to rescind any suspension and continue the ESA program without interruption.

Respectfully submitted,

November 29, 2011

/s/ Len Canty

Len Canty, Chairman  
Black Economic Council

/s/ Faith Bautista

Faith Bautista, President and CEO  
National Asian American Coalition

/s/ Jorge Corralejo

Jorge Corralejo, Chairman  
Latino Business Chamber of Greater Los Angeles

/s/Robert Gnaizda

Robert Gnaizda, Of Counsel

/s/ Shalini Swaroop

Shalini Swaroop, Senior Staff Attorney

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<sup>1</sup> *The Poor, the Near Poor and You*, N.Y. Times, Nov. 23, 2011 available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/24/opinion/the-poor-the-near-poor-and-you.html>