

Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

November 17, 2011

Mr. Paul Clanon
Executive Director
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mr. Clanon:

I am writing you to enlist the assistance of the California Public Utilities Commission with obtaining natural gas and electric billing histories from the State's regulated utilities in support of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) national evaluation of its Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). The WAP enables low-income families to permanently reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. The requested utility data is critical to provide both California and federal policy makers, along with state program implementers, with up-to-date and reliable information needed for effective decision making and cost-effective operations of the Program.

DOE has tasked Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) with conducting two national evaluations of the Program. The first is a retrospective evaluation covering the two years prior to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The second is an evaluation to cover the ARRA period itself. One of the major tasks of the evaluations is to estimate national energy savings attributable to WAP for each evaluation period.

To achieve this task, the evaluation team is implementing the standard practice of collecting and analyzing natural gas and electric billing histories for weatherized and control homes across the Nation. All WAP participants' personal data collected during the evaluations will remain confidential, protected and not subject to the Freedom of Information Act. ORNL and its key subcontractor, APPRISE, Inc., have reported that the major California investor-owned utilities (IOUs), including PG&E, SCE and SDG&E, are declining to provide billing histories for homes weatherized in the evaluations due to a CPUC ruling on personal privacy issues regarding customer data. The IOUs claim that the existing California state-approved LIHEAP billing history waivers that WAP customers previously signed to participate in the Program during the requested time periods are no longer acceptable for the IOUs to provide the requested billing histories. This is based on the IOUs' understanding of a recent CPUC ruling on personal privacy as a result of the increasing use of smart meters in the state. In order to provide the requisite billing histories, the IOUs are insisting that these low-income customers be re-contacted to sign new and complicated, three-page waivers – a time-consuming and expensive task.



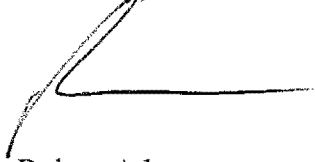
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We are very concerned that our retrospective evaluation and the ARRA period evaluation will lack enough billing histories to calculate statistically defensible energy savings estimates for California. This hole in our analysis also will bias our overall national estimate of energy savings attributable to the Program. In order to test the possibility of receiving the additional three-page waiver, the APPRISE team contacted 100 PG&E customers participating in the retrospective evaluation and who received Weatherization services in the 2007 and 2008 time period. Only nine replied – far too few to warrant the high expense of this labor intensive, burdensome approach.

As you can see, we have tried to seek cooperation from the aforementioned IOUs to work with us in this data request. It seems our only remaining course of action is to appeal to the CPUC to intervene on our behalf to help the national evaluation team acquire the requisite number of billing histories from each IOU. Our discussions with the IOUs and other officials in the State suggest that they will cooperate if given the direction to do so by your office. Considering that signed and legal California-approved LIHEAP billing history waivers for these periods already exist, we implore the CPUC to help in directing these IOU's to honor the original information release forms signed by the customers and provide the necessary data for the national evaluation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions about this matter. Technical questions about this issue can be answered by ORNL's Project Manager, Dr. Bruce Tonn (865-574-4041, tonnbe@ornl.gov) and Mr. David Carroll of APPRISE (609-252-8010, david-carroll@mail.appriseinc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Adams', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert Adams
Supervisor
Weatherization Assistance Program