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PRESS RELEASE

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DRA Press Room: <http://www.dra.ca.gov/DRA/News/releases.htm>

DRA Urges the CPUC
to Expand the Net Energy Metering Cap

SAN FRANCISCO, May 22, 2012 – The Division of Ratepayer Advocates (DRA), the independent consumer advocate within the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), today urged the CPUC to adopt its proposed decision to expand the “net energy metering” (NEM) cap because it will benefit California consumers, as well as promote California’s goals for the economy and the environment.

Net Energy Metering allows customers to offset their energy use and receive a bill credit for excess energy produced by their home solar unit. The excess energy is then purchased by the utility. The CPUC’s proposed decision would expand the number of customers who could take advantage of this billing arrangement by raising the net energy metering cap.

NEM has many customer benefits:

- It promotes investment in renewable energy, which has the benefit of reducing GHG emissions and stabilizing energy fuel costs for the long term;
- It diversifies California’s generation resources and could help to reduce the need for expensive transmission resources;
- It may also create more jobs in California.

Expansion of NEM may also result in fewer overpriced utility renewable programs. California’s investor owned utilities (Pacific Gas and Electric, Southern California Edison, and San Diego Gas & Electric) are opposed to expanding NEM, yet they lobby the CPUC to approve their own renewable energy programs that are often far above the market price.

“The utilities don't like net metering because it cuts into their business,” said Joe Como, Acting Director of DRA. “Net energy metering is a way of leveraging private money for the public benefit. The benefits that NEM promotes are all good things for California ratepayers.”

A further benefit of NEM is that it creates and fosters competition, which aids in bringing down the cost of renewables for customers. NEM is an important policy engine that can drive the growth of renewable power to diversify our energy supply and make Californians less dependent on fossil-fuel power plants.

DRA Acting Director Como added, "The utility argument that there is a 'cost-shift' from NEM participants to non-NEM participants is an overly simplistic statement. They do not substantiate their claims and don't consider all of the benefits to net metering."

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

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