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PRESS

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Docket

CPUC ACTS TO CONTINUE ENERGY LOW INCOME PROGRAMS

SAN FRANCISCO, August 23, 2012 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today authorized approximately \$5 billion to continue two energy related programs that benefit the state's low income consumers.

Today's decision allows Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric, and Southern California Gas Company to continue to offer the Energy Savings Assistance and California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) programs to their customers through 2014. Eligible CARE customers receive a 20 percent discount on their electric and natural gas bills, while the Energy Savings Assistance Program provides no-cost weatherization services to households who meet income guidelines.

Both programs are funded by ratepayers as part of a statutory public purpose program surcharge that appears on monthly utility bills. The CPUC monitors the programs to ensure that CARE continues its current and successful course of effectively providing necessary assistance to eligible customers, and that the Energy Savings Assistance Program delivers the benefits envisioned in the California Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan.

“Today’s decision establishes important milestones in energy efficiency and in meeting the need to provide a safety net to California’s investor-owned utility customers who qualify for financial assistance,” said Commissioner Timothy Alan Simon, who is assigned to this proceeding. “Our decision affirms California’s leadership in engaging underserved communities and leveraging the diverse resource of ethnic-owned media as a mechanism to advance energy literacy throughout our great state.”

Added Commissioner Mike Florio, “Today we approved a budget of billions of dollars over three years for assisting poor people to pay their energy bills, while at the same time helping them to reduce their energy use. Electricity and gas are essential components of our lives both for survival and for thriving as a state and as a nation. Therefore, assisting people who are struggling to make ends meet during these challenging times is one of my major tasks as a Commissioner. I believe that protecting the most vulnerable segment of California’s population should be one of our top priorities.”

Said Commissioner Catherine J.K. Sandoval, “This decision brings energy efficiency and energy assistance programs to millions of low income Californians, including apartment-dwellers. Through this order, energy efficiency professionals will be trained to diminish the hazards of lead-based paint as they make California homes and businesses more energy efficient and comfortable.”

“I support whole-heartedly both bill relief and targeted energy efficiency programs for low income consumers,” said Commissioner Mark J. Ferron. “These are critical public purpose programs and they must remain a cornerstone of the services that our energy utilities provide.”

A second phase of this proceeding will further examine issues related to CARE and the Energy Savings Assistance Program, including a comprehensive multifamily segment strategy, Energy Savings Assistance Program cost-effectiveness methodology, and assessment of the low income communities’ current needs so that those needs can continue to be met going forward.

The proposal voted on today is available at
<http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M026/K020/26020764.PDF>.

For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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California Public Utilities Commission

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