

December 13, 2012

Michael R. Peevey, President
Timothy Alan Simon, Commissioner
Mike Florio, Commissioner
Catherine J.K. Sandoval, Commissioner
Mark J. Ferron, Commissioner

California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Overly Restrictive Background Check Policy Proposed by PG&E

Dear President Peevey and Commissioners:

We write to express our deep concern regarding PG&E's implementation of unduly strict background check requirements for contractors. All of our communities will benefit if people with arrests and conviction records have opportunities to support themselves and their families. The process for choosing background check requirements should be transparent, efficient, and effective. We urge you to consider the impact that an overly restrictive policy will have not only on job-seekers, but also on the economic progress of the community at large.

For 40 years, NELP has advocated on behalf of low-wage workers, the unemployed, and others facing barriers to economic success. NELP's Second Chance Labor Project, which is based in Oakland, California, supports reducing barriers to employment for people with criminal records.

For these reasons, we support The Greenlining Institute's Petition for Modification of Decision 12-05-015, which seeks to eliminate overly restrictive requirements like those proposed by PG&E. We urge the Commission to immediately address background check policies for workers in CPUC-funded energy efficiency programs. If the Commission is unable to open a proceeding before 2012 ends, as Greenlining requested in the Petition, we urge you to take action to ensure that none of the utilities change their existing background check policies until the Commission fully addresses these concerns.

We also remind the Commission that restrictive background check requirements will impede the achievement of the goals of the California Long Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan to ensure that people of color and low-income and disadvantaged communities fully participate in training and education programs at all levels of the DSM and energy efficiency industry as well as go on to have rewarding careers.

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Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maurice Emsellem", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Maurice Emsellem
Co-Policy Director