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June 26, 2014

Service via e-mail

Huyen Nguyen
President
Service Worker Project for Affordable Utilities

Dear Ms. Nguyen:

We have received and reviewed your June 26, 2014, letter to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regarding the "Disconnection Settlement" on the CPUC's June 26, 2014, meeting agenda. PG&E appreciates your concerns and shares your goals of providing effective and convenient assistance to low income customers and their representatives. Your letter requests that certain elements of the Disconnection Settlement be rejected and that PG&E also be stopped "from blocking third parties who are assisting low-income customers facing disconnections [who are] advocating with PG&E customer service representatives."

PG&E notes that the CPUC at its June 26 meeting approved the Disconnection Settlement. In response to your concerns about the Settlement, PG&E supports the Settlement because it provides fair and equitable payment extensions and arrangements for customers, as well as reasonable and balanced criteria for reconnection fees and credit deposits.

Your letter also states that, "as of May 1, 2014, [PG&E] has prohibited third parties, such as Service Worker Project for Affordable Utilities volunteer advocates, from advocating for and assisting low-income customers who face shut-offs or have already had their power shut off, even though the customers are on the telephone and confirm our volunteers' authorization to represent them." In fact, PG&E's customer service policies allow such third parties, such as Community Based Organizations (CBO) representing low-income customers, to obtain access to customer energy usage and billing information by telephone while the customers are present and confirm the third party's authorization to represent them. The prior written authorization for third party access to customer energy usage information that normally is required by the CPUC privacy rules is **not** required in this situation, because the customer is on the telephone and receiving the same information as the third party. PG&E will continue to seek to improve the ability of our customers and their representatives to receive services, while at the same time protecting the privacy of those customers.

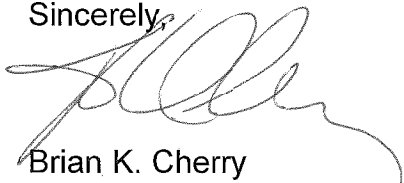
In addition, as you may know, PG&E and the CPUC are sponsoring a pilot program, known as the Community Help and Awareness with Natural Gas and Electricity Services

(CHANGES) program which supports Limited English Proficient consumers by providing education, needs and dispute resolution services through a statewide network of CBOs. This service is open to all consumers, especially low-income families, seeking support to manage their utility bills. Under the CHANGES program, **no customer authorization or presence is required** for CBOs to access customer energy usage information under appropriate non-disclosure agreements for purposes of customer support and outreach, because the program is a utility program and the CBOs are under contractual obligations to protect the privacy of the customer under the CPUC's privacy rules.

PG&E is committed to continuing to provide support and advocacy assistance to low income customers in our daily customer services as well as through innovative programs such as CHANGES. PG&E appreciates the support of all the parties that worked on and supported the Disconnection Settlement, which was the result of many months of discussions among the California utilities and consumer and low-income group representatives.

Please feel free to contact me if you have additional questions about our services and support for low income customers.

Sincerely,



Brian K. Cherry
VP – Regulatory Relations

cc: President Michael Peevey
Commissioner Michel Florio
Commissioner Catherine Sandoval
Commissioner Carla Peterman
Commissioner Michael Picker
Paul Clanon, Executive Director
Karen Miller, Public Advisor, Consumer Services & Information Division