



California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

Commissioner Statement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT OF PUC COMMISSIONER GRUENEICH ON THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONSUMER PROTECTION DECISION

SAN FRANCISCO, March 2, 2006 – The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) adopted PUC President Michael R. Peevey’s proposed decision on Market Rules to Empower Telecommunications Consumers at its business meeting today. In so doing, the PUC declined to adopt an alternate decision issued by Commissioner Dian M. Grueneich. The decision approved today retains a Consumer Bill of Rights (BOR) similar to that adopted by the Commission in 2004, but repeals the majority of the rules associated with the BOR and institutes a new consumer education and enforcement program.

Said Commissioner Grueneich, “While I will work with my fellow Commissioners and our staff on developing an enhanced education and enforcement program, I am skeptical of the efficacy of the program given that there are no underlying rules to enforce that apply to all carriers. I am concerned that starting a new multi-million dollar statewide education campaign is not the best use of ratepayer dollars given the lack of enforceable rules on which to educate customers.”

Commissioner Grueneich’s alternate decision had proposed a streamlined set of rules, applicable to both wireline and wireless carriers. It would have required disclosure of key terms and conditions of service at the point of sale, reinstated California’s “anti-cramming” rules, and added important protections for non-English speaking residents of California. The decision would have required carriers that advertise in a non-English language to provide the contract or confirmation of sale in the same language. The Grueneich alternate also proposed an education program focusing on the most vulnerable populations, including low-income and non-English speaking communities, and a comprehensive enforcement program.