



The California Public Utilities Commission Regulating Essential Services

A Century of Service to California

California's economy depends on the infrastructure the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and utilities provide. For almost 100 years, the CPUC has worked to protect consumers and ensure the provision of safe, reliable utility service and infrastructure at reasonable rates, with a commitment to environmental enhancement and a healthy California economy.

The CPUC is one of the most influential regulatory agencies in the U.S. It regulates essential services including privately owned electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water, railroad, and passenger transportation companies.

Working For You: Commissioners and Staff

The Governor appoints five Commissioners for six year terms to the CPUC and designates one as President. Commissioners make all policy decisions, usually meeting twice a month to vote on issues noted on a public agenda.

In order to fulfill its role in overseeing services that are essential to the lives of Californians, the CPUC employs a dedicated staff of analysts, economists, engineers, administrative law judges, accountants, lawyers, safety and transportation specialists, and other professionals. It also has a Division of Ratepayer Advocates, an independent division that represents consumers in CPUC proceedings.

Energy Leadership

The CPUC has helped make California a national and international leader through groundbreaking energy programs and policies designed to benefit consumers, the environment, and the economy. The CPUC's energy initiatives include:

- Ensuring energy reliability;
- Implementing aggressive renewable energy goals;
- Promoting energy efficiency and demand response;
- Advancing climate strategies;
- Conducting transmission planning and permitting;

Californians spend more than \$50 billion annually for services from industries regulated by the CPUC.

Electricity: 11.5 million customers; 32,698 miles of transmission lines; 239,112 miles of distribution lines; more than 200 electric generation units; \$23.7 billion in revenue

Natural Gas: 10.7 million customers; 103,000 miles of pipelines; \$7.7 billion in revenue

Telecommunications: 82.7 million numbers assigned, with 34 million to wireless devices; 2.2 million VoIP lines; 2.1 million DSL lines; 10.5 million residential broadband connections; 1,030 certified carriers; \$23.9 billion in revenue

Water: 127 water and 13 sewer utilities serving about 18 percent of California's population; \$1.2 billion in revenue

Railroad Safety: 10,385 miles of main/branch tracks; 16,016 pieces of railroad equipment; several thousand HAZMAT facilities; 10,000 public railroad crossings; 3,250 private railroad crossings; 12 rail transit agencies



- Setting electricity and natural gas retail rates and overseeing Public Purpose Programs;
- Ensuring electric, natural gas, and propane gas system safety; and,
- Inspecting and auditing power plants and utility infrastructure.

Safe Transportation

The CPUC oversees the safety of railroads, rail transit systems, and rail crossings in California. In doing so, the CPUC promotes a “safety culture” within California passenger and freight rail systems as a fundamental component of decreasing rail accidents. The CPUC also protects consumers from illegally operating moving companies and for-hire passenger carriers. The CPUC’s transportation responsibilities include:

- Safety jurisdiction over the rail system, including freight railroads, inter-city passenger railroads, commuter railroads, and rail transit systems such as BART, Sprinter, Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority, San Diego Trolley, Sacramento Regional Transit District, and the San Francisco International Airport AirTrain;
- Safety of all rail crossings in California, including the power to determine their design, location, terms of installation, operation, maintenance, use, and warning devices;
- Licensing, insurance, and consumer protection oversight of moving companies and passenger carriers such as limousines, airport shuttles, and charter and scheduled bus operators; and,
- Services and rates of privately owned ferries.

Evolving Communications

The CPUC develops and implements policies for the rapidly changing communications and broadband markets, including ensuring fair, affordable universal access to necessary services, and removing barriers that prevent a fully competitive market. The CPUC’s telecommunications work includes:

- Administering Universal Telephone Service programs;
- Issuing video franchises;
- Enforcing customer service standards for telephone services;
- Regulating rates for basic phone service and rural carriers;
- Reviewing and approving grants through the California Advanced Services Fund to bring broadband to underserved and unserved communities;
- Helping consumers managing their phone service in the competitive telecommunications market;
- Protecting against telecommunications fraud;
- Licensing wireline, wireless, two-way paging, cable telephony, and mobile radio providers serving residential and business customers; and,
- Addressing area code and telephone number conservation issues.



Clean, Reliable Water

The CPUC is responsible for ensuring that California's investor-owned water utilities deliver clean, safe, and reliable water to their customers at reasonable rates. The CPUC's work in water includes:

- Investigating water and sewer system service quality issues;
- Promoting water conservation and metering;
- Reducing the energy usage in the delivery and treatment of water;
- Improving low income programs;
- Analyzing and processing rate change requests;
- Tracking and certifying compliance with CPUC requirements; and,
- Enforcing compliance with CPUC orders through a citation program.

Reaching Out To Consumers

The CPUC reaches out to consumers to help with utility issues and to encourage interest and participation in CPUC proceedings. To better reach and assist consumers, the CPUC's actions include:

- Holding public hearings, meetings, and workshops throughout the state on issues important to consumers, such as managing energy bills, obtaining utility contracts for small businesses, and issues related to formal proceedings such as rate change requests by utilities;
- Utilizing speaking engagements and community and local government partnerships to promote the CPUC's programs and policies;
- Establishing a call center (1-800-649-7570) to help answer questions about utility service and bills and resolve disputes;
- Establishing a Public Advisor's Office to provide procedural information, advice, and assistance to individuals and groups who want to participate in CPUC proceedings;
- Creating a Small Business Program to promote procurement opportunities with the state and utilities and provide education on issues impacting the small business community; and,
- Creating a Supplier Diversity Program to promote and monitor supplier diversity in procurement by utilities and overseeing a certification clearinghouse.

This is just a brief overview of what the CPUC does and how it helps consumers, the state, and economy. For more information about the CPUC, please contact the News and Public Information Office at (415) 703-1366 or news@cpuc.ca.gov or visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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