

May
2016

MONTHLY DATA REPORT



Consumer
Protection and
Enforcement
Division
California Public
Utilities Commission



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The Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division (CPED) serves the public interest and the mission of the California Public Utilities Commission by assisting consumers in resolving their informal complaints against service providers under the Commission's jurisdiction. CPED is proud to be able to assist consumers with an informal complaint resolution process, with answers to questions, and with referral information. In assisting consumers, we are able to gain a useful picture of consumer issues and trends.

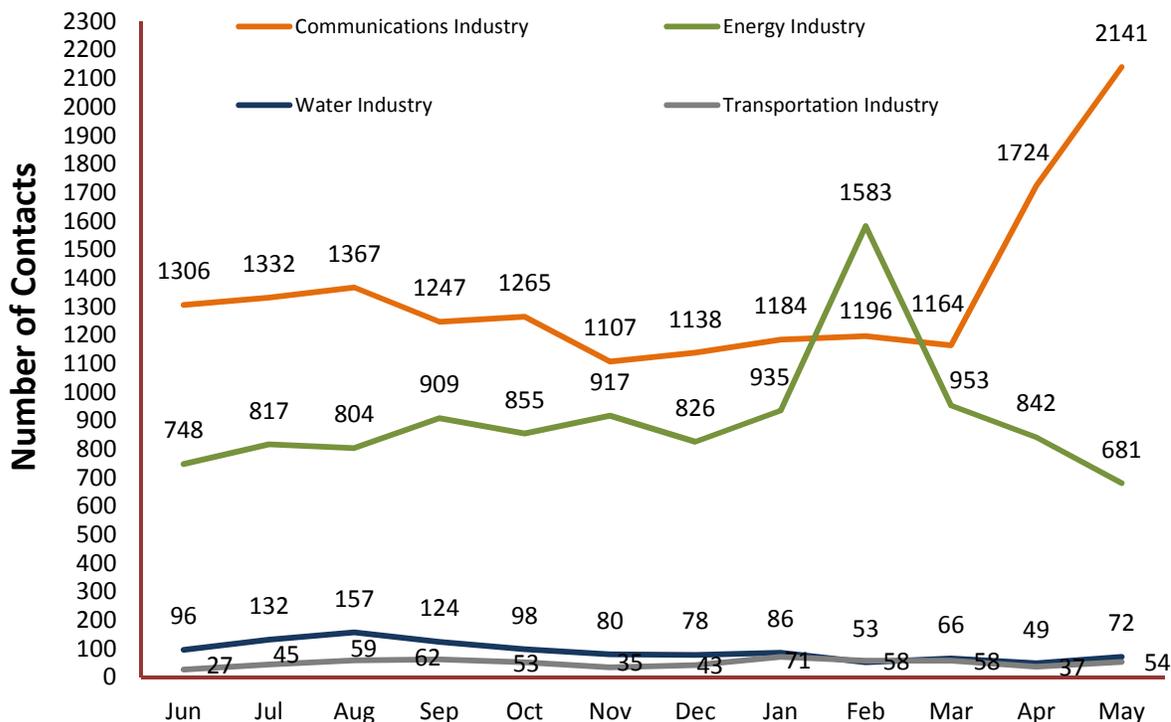
This report is based on contacts (informal complaints and questions) received by the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) and the Transportation Enforcement Branch (TEB) within CPED, and presents annual and monthly data for the communications, energy, water, and transportation industries. Page 2 presents annual trend data, and pages 3 through 10 report data by industry for the current month. For context, the report also includes comparable data from the previous month, as well as May data from the previous year. Finally, the report includes contact data specifically related to safety concerns, by industry.

The Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division serves as the first line of support for consumers of Commission-regulated services. CPED collects and resolves consumer informal complaints, enforces laws and regulations governing transportation carriers, and investigates allegations of utility waste, fraud, and abuse.

Overview

2,948 CONTACTS (May 2016)

Consumer Contacts Received by Industry 12-Month Trend (June 2015 - May 2016)



Overall, total aggregated contacts increased by 10% between April and May of 2016 across the four regulated industries: 2,652 contacts in April compared to 2,948 contacts in May. The 19% increase in contacts for telecommunications offsets a 23% decrease in energy contacts, while water contacts increased 32% and transportation contacts increased by 31%.

Communications: Contacts related to communications averaged about 1,348 contacts between June 2015 and May 2016. Between April 2016 and May 2016, total contacts increased from 1,724 to 2,141, which is largely attributable to issues with Frontier Communications' acquisition of Verizon California landlines and the corresponding service cutover on April 1, 2016 (D.15-12-005).

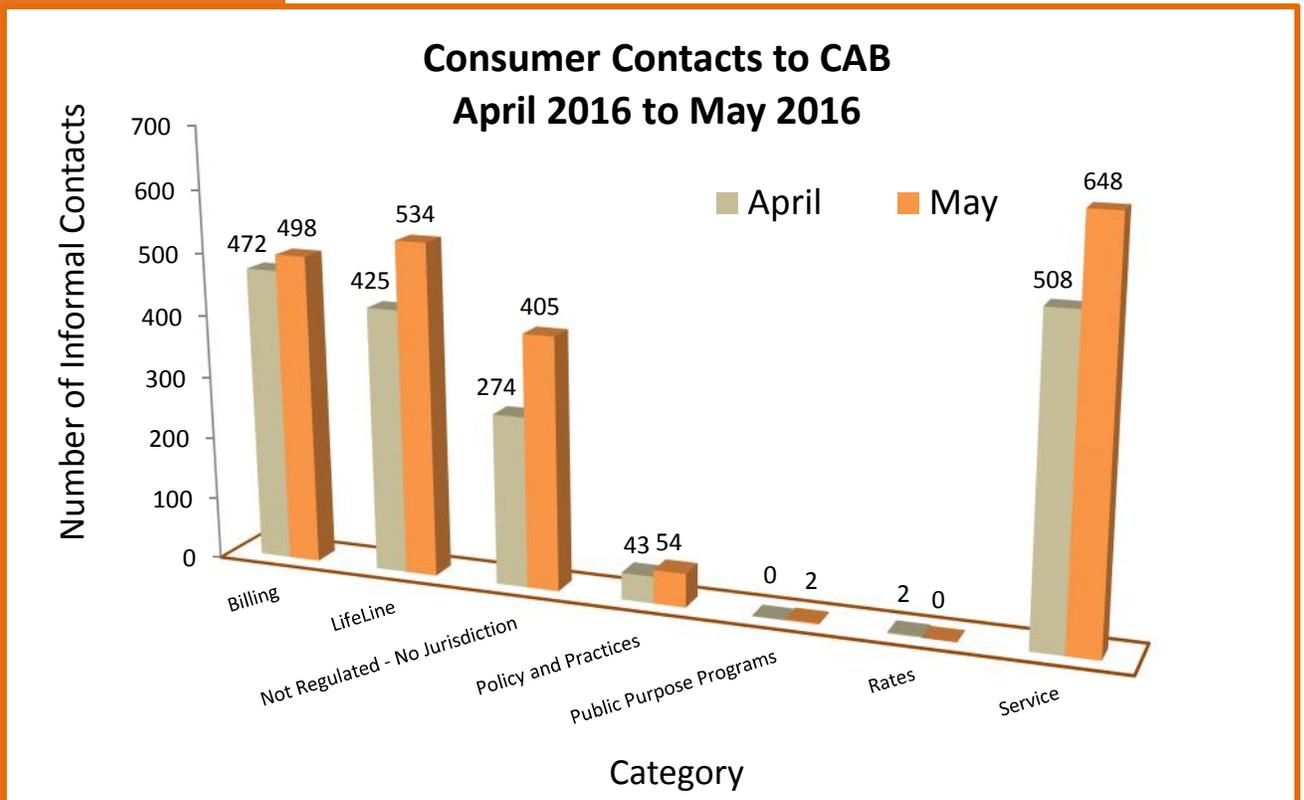
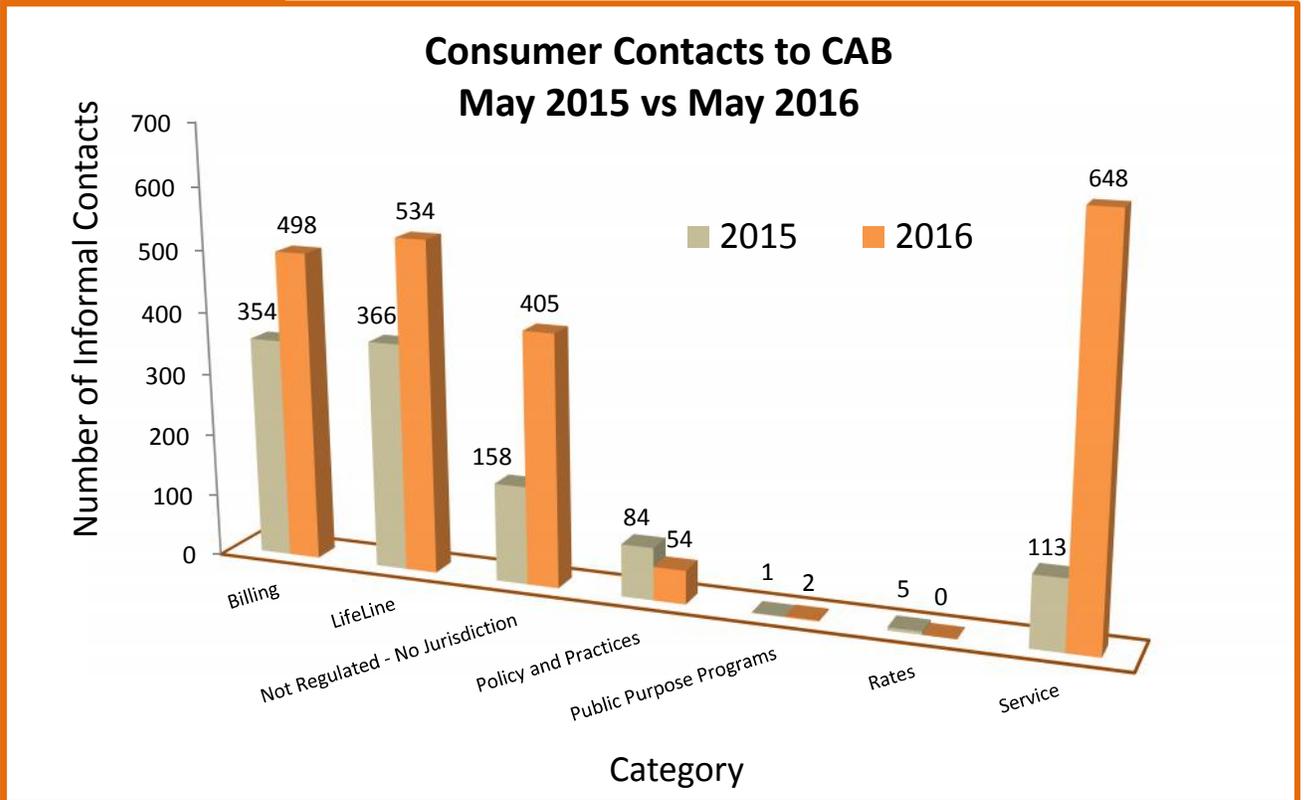
Energy: Contacts related to energy averaged about 839 between June 2015 and December 2016. In February 2016, CAB received 1,583 energy related contacts. The sharp increase is largely attributable to consumer issues reported regarding the gas leak at Aliso Canyon. After February 2016, the average contacts returned to the pre-spike level.

Water: Contacts related to water remained fairly flat over the 12 month period between June 2015 and May 2016, averaging about 90 contacts per month in that time period.

Transportation: Contacts related to transportation averaged 48 per month from May 2015 through May 2016. The majority of contacts involved allegations of operating without active authority.

Communications

2,141 CONTACTS (May 2016)



Communications

In May 2016, CAB received 2,141 communications-related contacts, which fell into one of the following categories: billing, LifeLine, non-regulated/no jurisdiction, policy and practices, public purpose programs, rates, and service. In addition to the 2,141 categorized contacts displayed in the above charts, CAB also received 310 uncategorized contacts which are pending assignment, lack sufficient information to be processed, or were inadvertently sent to CAB instead of the consumer's utility provider. CAB assists these misdirected consumers by directing them to the entity which can address their concerns.

The number of communications-related contacts increased by 50% between May 2015 and May 2016. Frontier's acquisition of Verizon California landlines and the corresponding problems from the service cutover on April 1, 2016 contributed heavily to that increase (D.15-12-005). Frontier-related contacts are included in the billing, non-regulated, and service categories, which increased from 625 contacts in May 2015 to 1,551 contacts in May 2016.

Increased enrollment in the California LifeLine program also contributed to the overall increase in contacts. More wireless providers offered LifeLine services, and renewed availability of activation fee reimbursements allowed more consumers to participate. As a result of these changes, LifeLine-related contacts increased from 366 in May 2015 to 534 in May 2016. Common reasons for contacting CAB include changes to the LifeLine application signature guidelines, wireless equipment issues, and identity verification.

Safety

Communications Safety-related Contacts	11
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	7
Utility Infrastructure	4

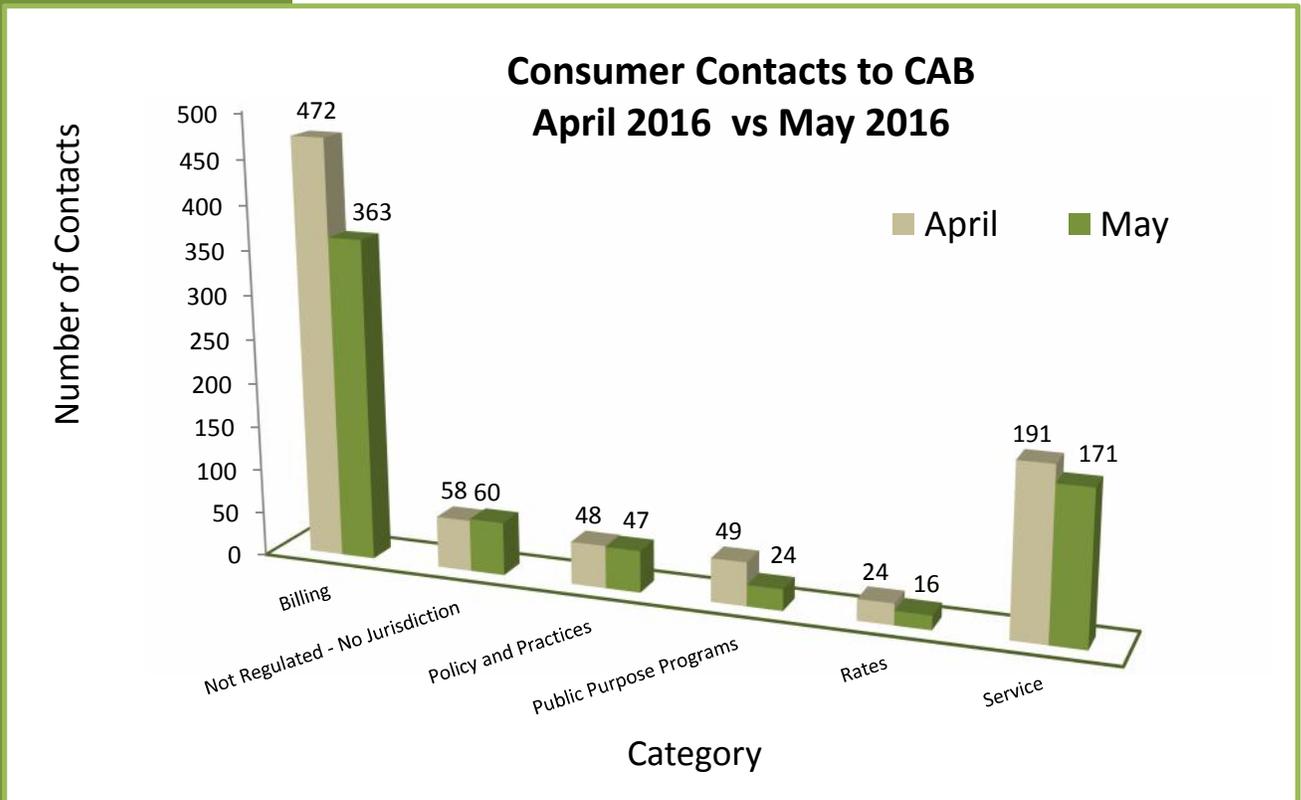
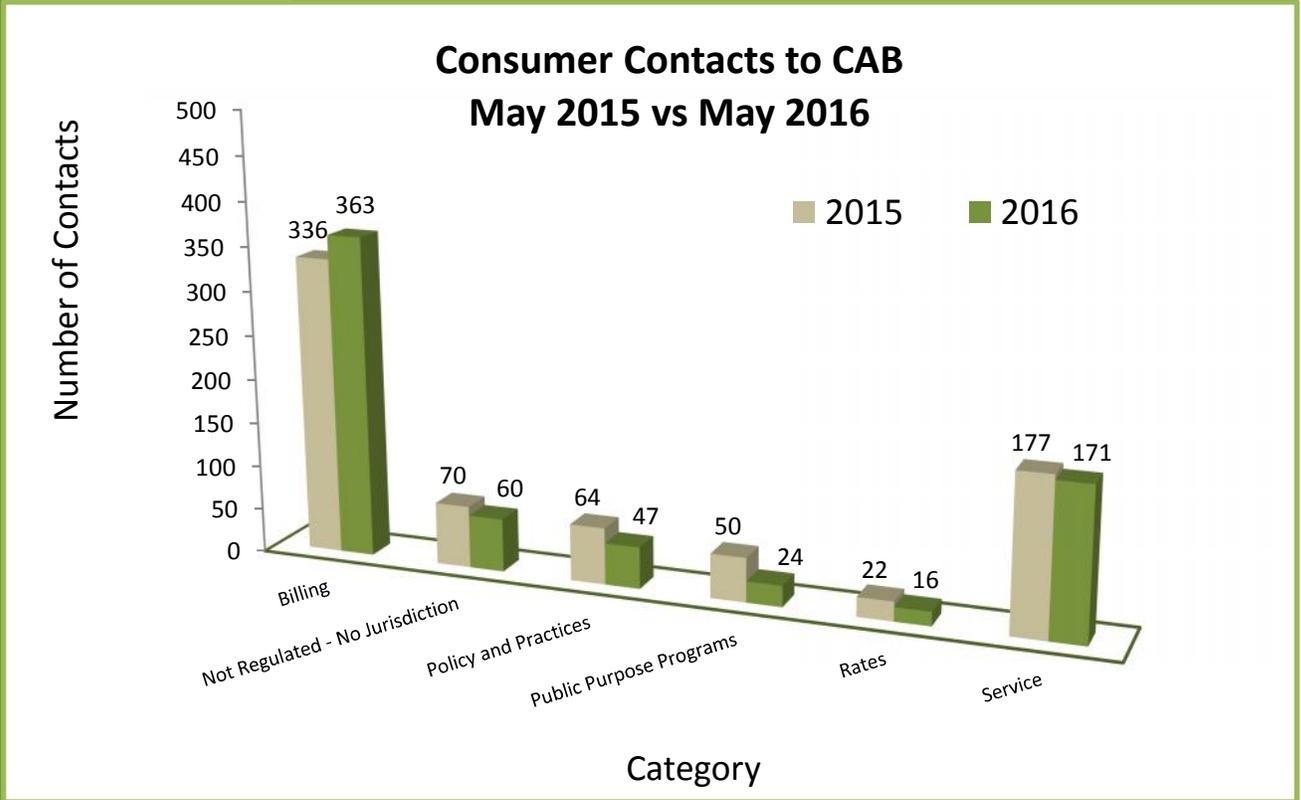
CAB received 11 safety-related contacts in May 2016 about communication carriers. Of those contacts, seven concerned emergency service issues or health concerns. The remaining four contacts related to unsafe conditions posed by utility infrastructure.

Consumers contact CAB when a service outage prevents them from being able to contact 911 or family for emergency assistance. These consumers may be elderly or suffer from a physical ailment which requires reliable, easy and immediate access to local police, fire and medical services.

Safety concerns regarding utility infrastructure often involve dangling telecommunications cables or exposed wiring. Consumers also contact CAB regarding telephone poles which appear to be in danger of falling.

Energy

681 CONTACTS (May 2016)



Energy

Energy-related contacts to CAB decreased in May 2016, compared to both the previous month and previous year. CAB received 842 contacts in April 2016 and 681 contacts in May 2016. The decrease in energy-related contacts between April and May 2016 correlates to a reduction in contacts regarding the Aliso Canyon leak. May 2016 contacts decreased 5% compared to contacts received during May 2015.

In addition to the 681 categorized energy-related contacts received in May 2016 and displayed in the above graphs, CAB also received 72 uncategorized and misdirected contacts. These contacts are still either pending assignment, lack sufficient information to be processed, or were better directed to some other entity. CAB assists these consumers by redirecting them to the entity best able to address their concerns.

Safety

Energy Safety-related Contacts	9
Gas Leaks	1
Property Restoration	7
Utility Infrastructure	1

CAB received nine safety-related contacts in May 2016 about energy utilities. Of those contacts, one involved a gas leak, seven inquired about property restoration issues, and one concerned utility infrastructure.

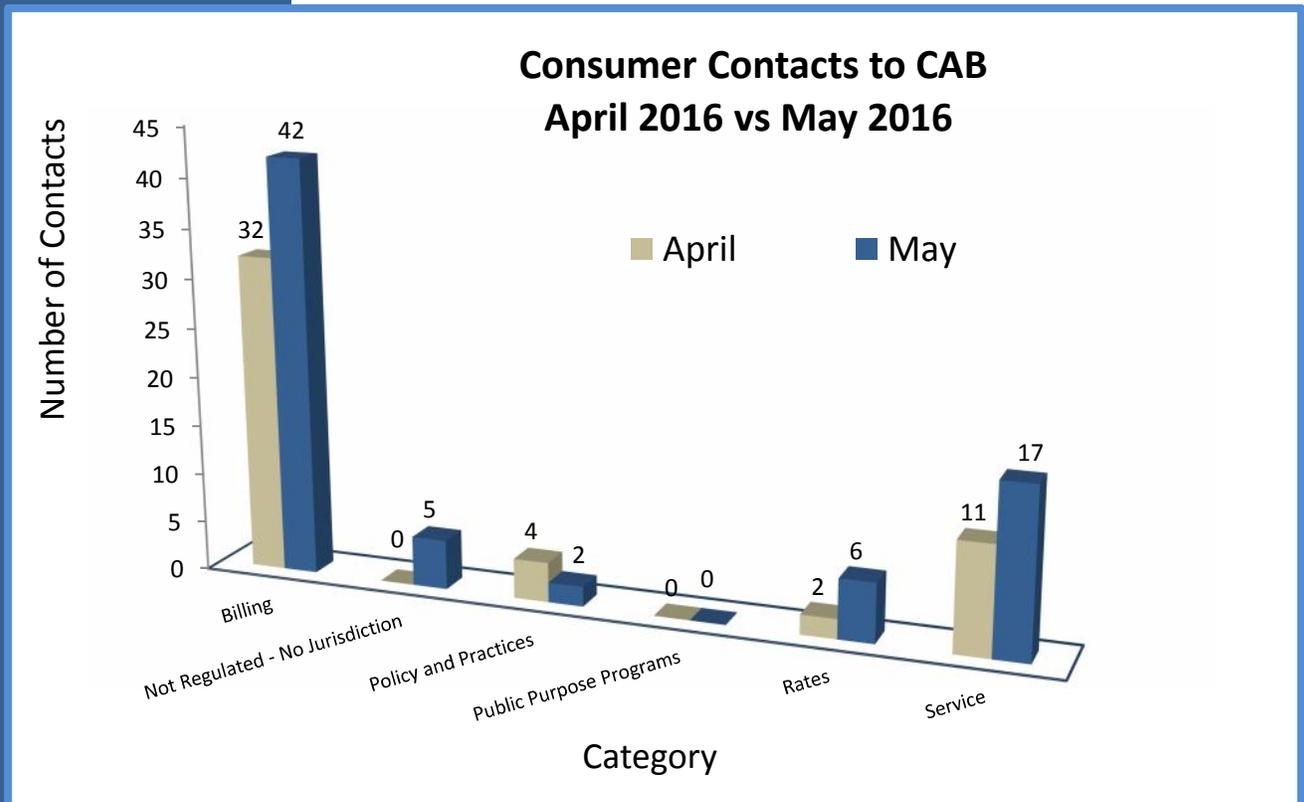
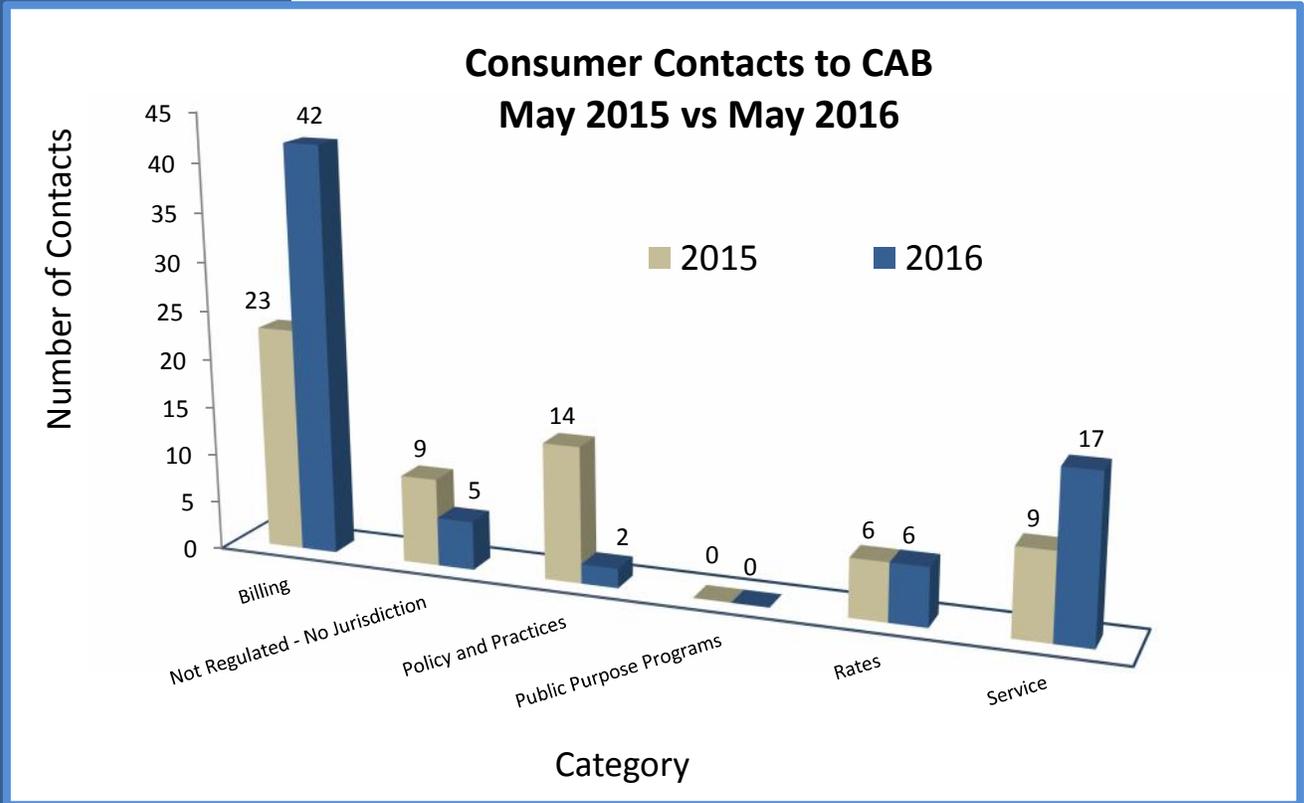
Consumers who contact CAB about a gas leak typically smell gas in their home and seek immediate assistance from the utility company. Others complain about a reoccurring gas leak that the utility did not properly repair.

Safety contacts categorized as property restoration issues generally involve ground hazards such as holes or trenches, tripping hazards, leftover debris, and tree trimming requests. Informal complaints about unsafe utility infrastructure include observations of exposed wires or faulty transformers.



Water

72 CONTACTS (May 2016)



Water

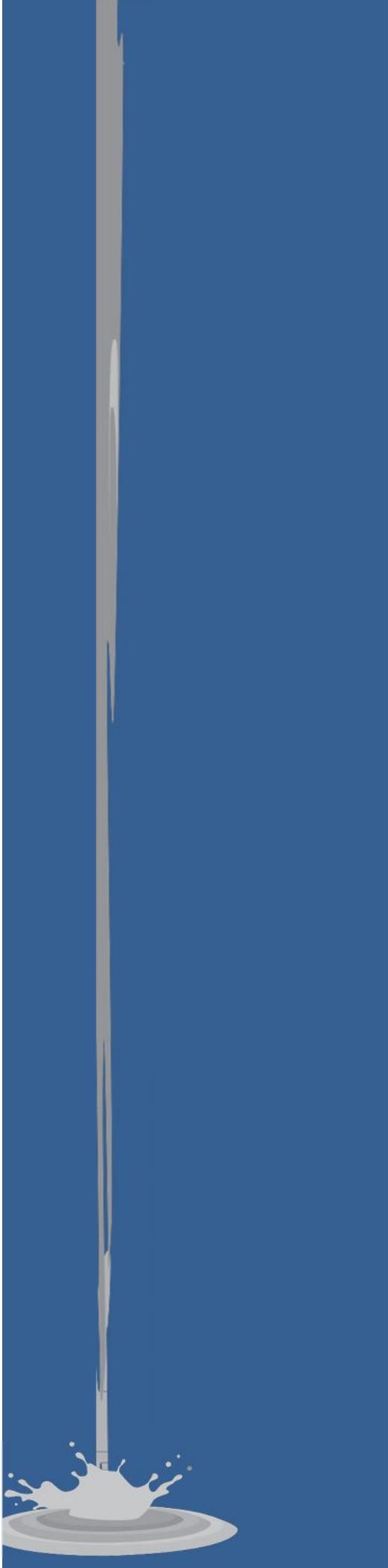
In May 2016, CAB received 72 water-related contacts, a 15% increase over May 2015 when CAB received 61 water-related contacts. Between April 2016 and May 2016, CAB experienced a 32% increase in contacts, with the overall number of contacts rising from 49 to the previously stated 72. CAB could not determine a specific issue as a key driver of that increase, but drought conditions may have contributed to the near doubling of billing issues from 2015 counts.

In addition to the 72 categorized contacts, CAB received 49 uncategorized contacts relating to water utilities. The uncategorized contacts include contacts which are still pending assignment or lack sufficient information to be processed. Also included are contacts better directed to another entity, such as consumers attempting to reach their utility provider. CAB assists these consumers by directing them to the entity best able to address their concerns

Safety

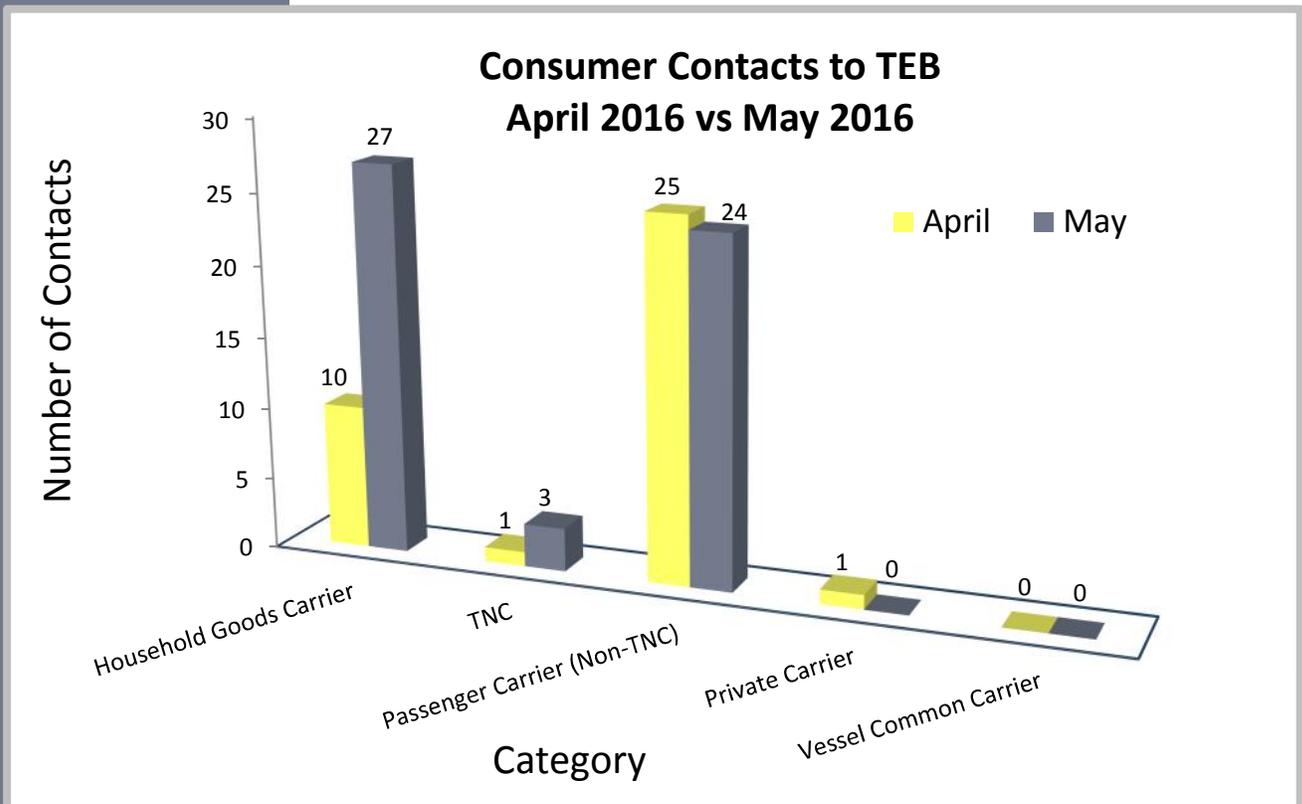
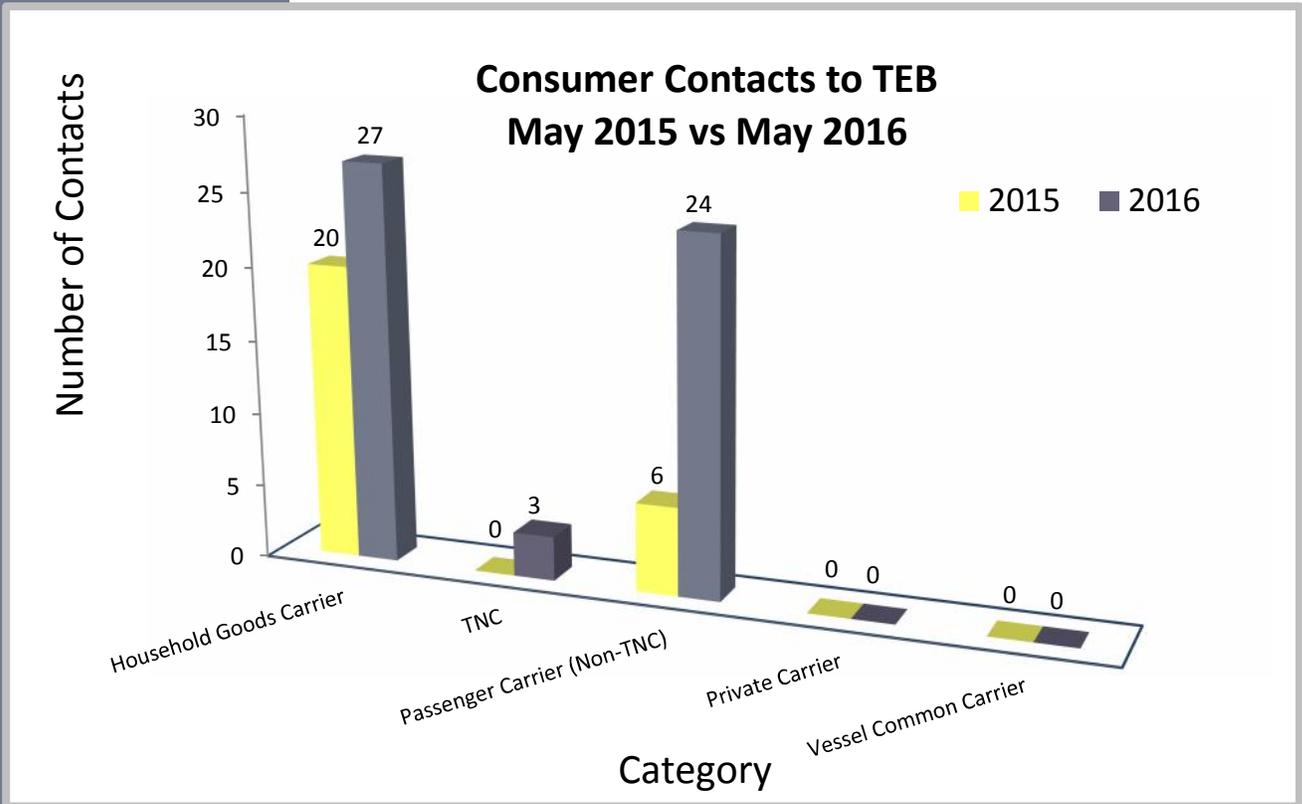
Water Safety-related Contacts	0
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No safety concerns were raised regarding water utilities in May 2016.



Transportation

54 CONTACTS (May 2016)



Transportation

In May 2016, transportation contacts were evenly divided between household goods (27) and passenger carriers (24). Most informal complaints involved allegations of operating without active authority: 21 among household goods carriers and 17 among passenger carriers, including one TNC. The remaining household goods-related contacts (6) involved allegations of overcharges, loss and damage, and false estimates. Ten passenger informal complaints (two against TNCs) involved allegations of loss and damage, taxi-like operations, failure to display a TCP number, operating without workers' compensation insurance, wages not paid for service, fraudulent DMV documents and failure to enroll drivers in a drug and alcohol testing program.

Contacts relating to household goods movers increased from 10 in April 2016 to 27 in May 2016, likely due to an overall increase in moves attributed to more favorable weather conditions and lower mortgage interest rates in May.

TEB rarely receives informal contacts relating to vessel common carriers or private carriers. Private carriers transport passengers on a "not-for-hire" basis, such as a church transporting members of its congregation or an employer transporting its own employees.

Safety

Transportation Safety-related Contacts	39
Operating without active authority	38
Single or multiple infractions – fraudulent DMV documents, failure to enroll drivers in drug and alcohol testing program	1

Out of the 39 transportation-related contacts TEB received in May 2016, all but one involved allegations of operating without active authority. TEB investigates all such allegations to ensure that each carrier maintains or obtains an active CPUC permit and submits proof of meeting all applicable requirements, including 1) an active insurance policy; 2) participation in a certified drug and alcohol testing program; 3) enrollment in the DMV's Employer Pull Notice Program; 4) a CHP inspection; 5) workers' compensation; and 6) a background check.