

July  
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 (CPUC) 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.

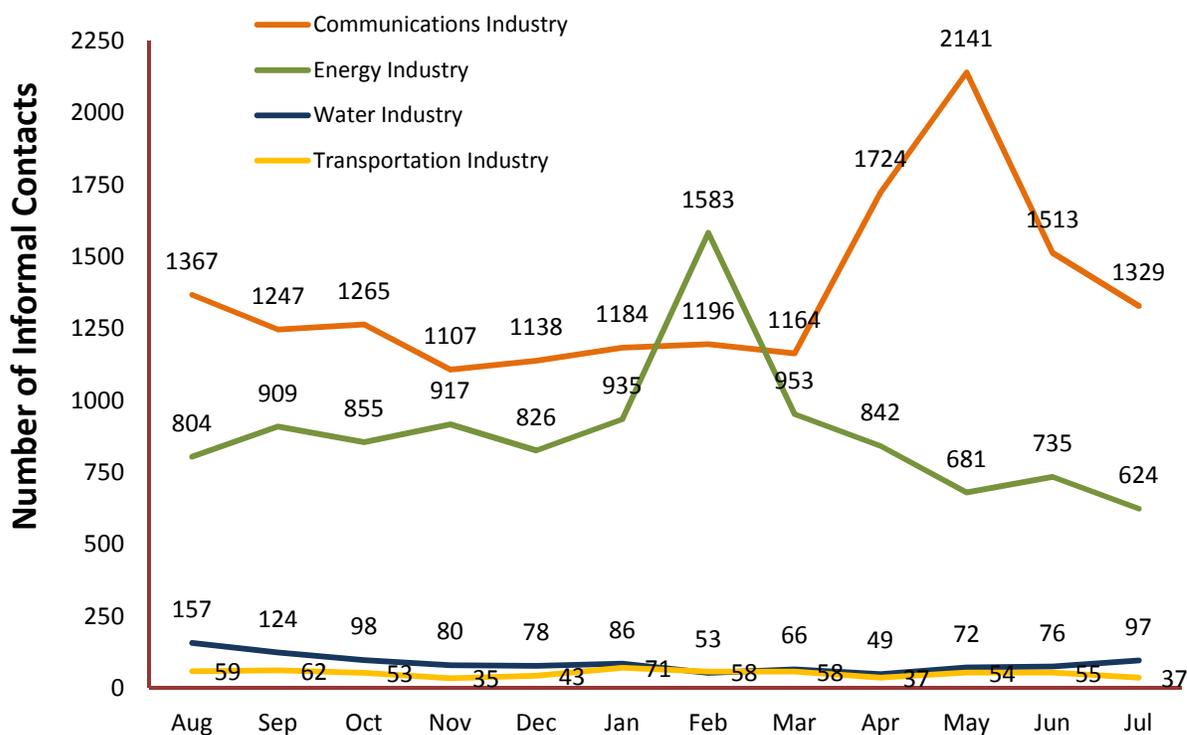
This report is based on contacts (informal complaints and questions) received by the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) and the Transportation Enforcement Branch (TEB) within CPED, and presents annual and monthly data for the communications, energy, water, and transportation industries. Page 2 presents annual 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 July 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 CPUC-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

2,087 CONTACTS (July 2016)

## Consumer Informal Contacts Received by Industry 12 Month Trend 2015-2016



Overall, total aggregated contacts decreased by 12% between June and July of 2016 across the four regulated industries: 2379 contacts in June and 2087 contacts in July. There was a decrease in contacts related to telecommunications (12%), energy (15%) and transportation (33%). Contacts related to water saw an increase of 28%.

**Communications:** Contacts related to communications decreased from 1,513 contacts in June 2016 to 1,329 contacts in July 2016. The decreasing trend in contacts continues after a peak in May 2016 that is attributable to Frontier Communications' acquisition of Verizon California landlines and the corresponding service problems from the cutover on April 1, 2016 (D.15-12-005). The 1,329 contacts received in July are only slightly higher than the pre-spike 12 month average of 1,259 contacts per month.

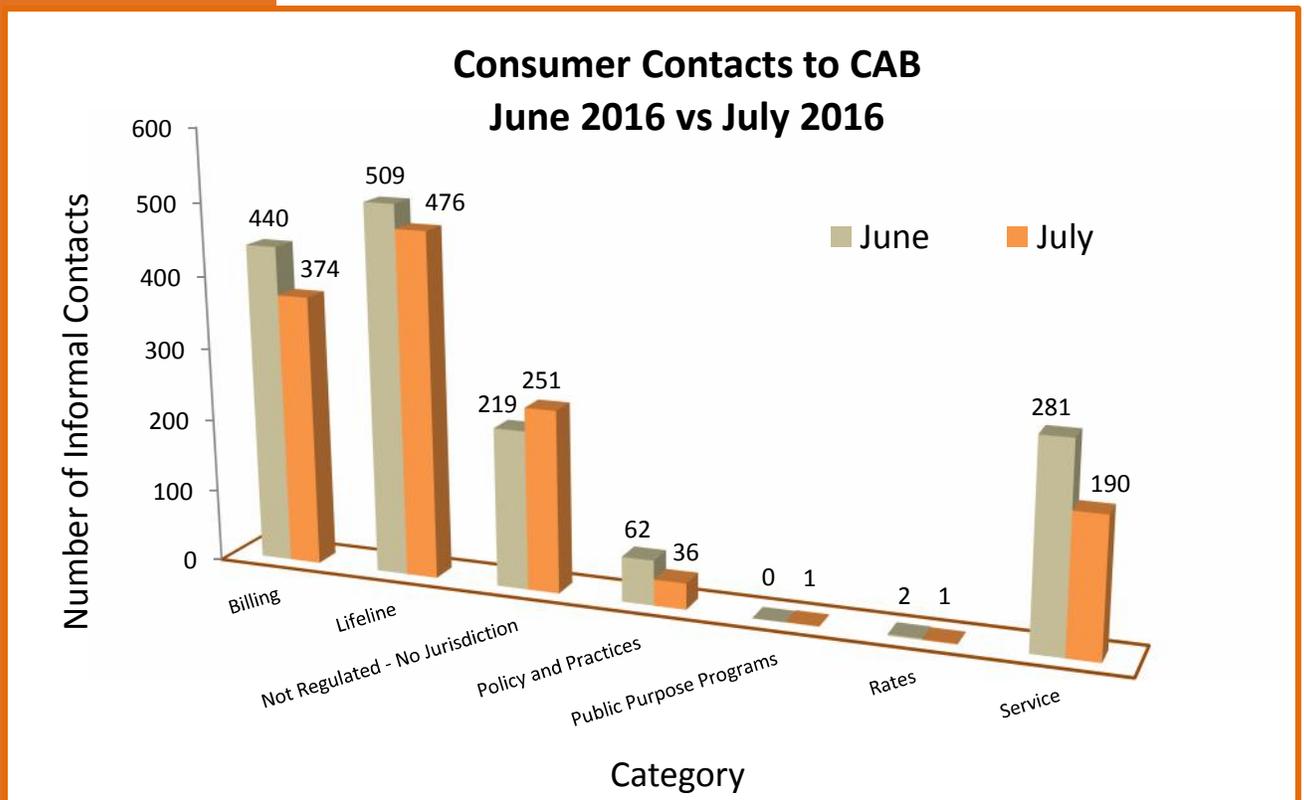
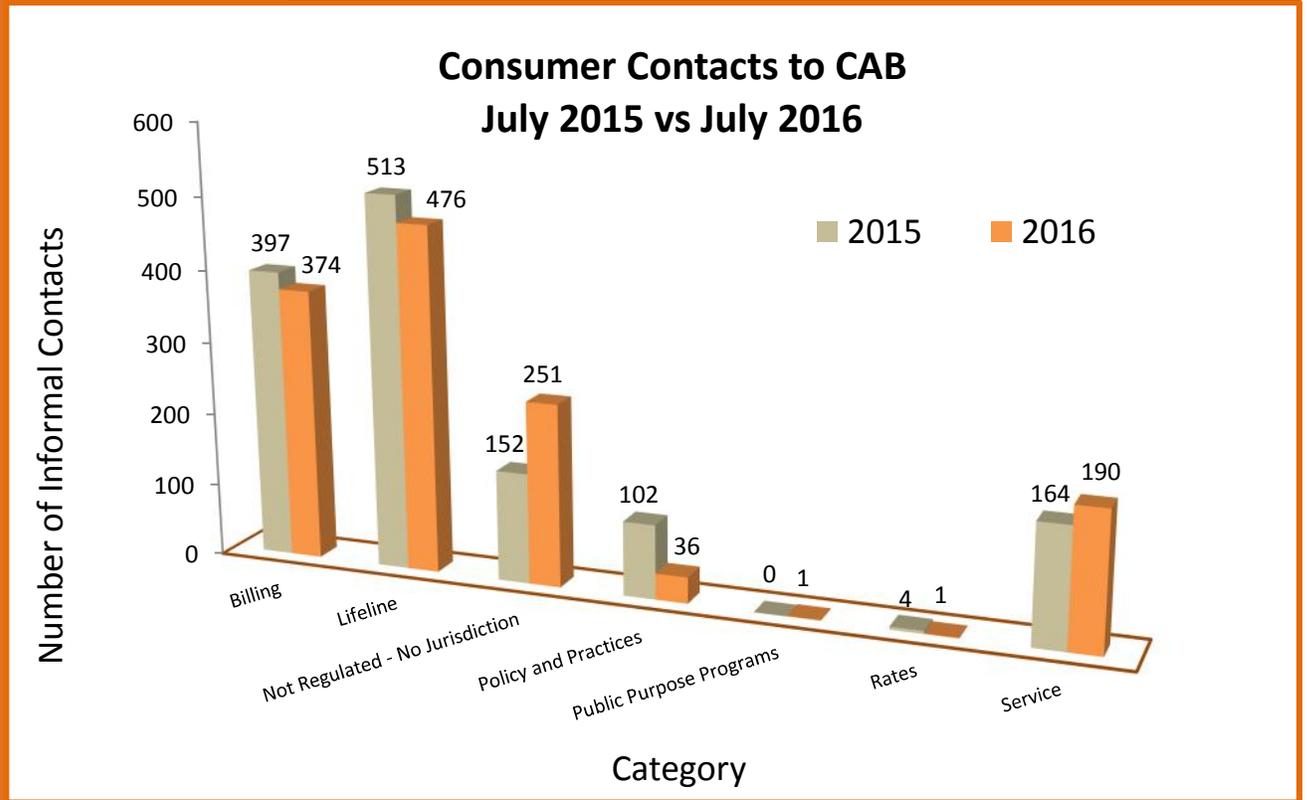
**Energy:** Contacts relating to energy decreased from 735 contacts in June 2016 to 624 contacts in July 2016. Decreases in billing-related contacts were the primary drive. The number of contacts received in July is lower than the prior 12 month average of 905 contacts.

**Water:** Contacts related to water increased from 76 contacts in June 2016 to 97 contacts in July 2016. Overall, water contacts remain fairly flat over the 12 month period between August 2015 and July 2016, averaging about 86 contacts per month.

**Transportation:** The overall number of transportation-related contacts decreased from 55 contacts in June 2016 to 37 in July 2016, although the number of contacts regarding household goods carriers increased while those regarding passenger carriers decreased.

# Communications

1,329 CONTACTS (July 2016)



# Communications

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In July of 2016, CAB received 1,329 communication-related contacts, which fell into one of seven categories: Billing, Lifeline, Non-Regulated/ No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, and Service. In addition to the 1,329 categorized contacts displayed in the above charts, CAB also received 196 uncategorized contacts which are pending assignment, lack sufficient information to be processed, or in which the consumer inadvertently contacted CAB when they were trying to instead reach their utility provider or another entity (Misdirected/Wrong Number). CAB assists these consumers by directing them to the entity that can best address their concerns.

The number of categorized communication-related contacts decreased since June 2016, falling from 1,513 to 1,329 contacts. Similarly, there was a small decrease in categorized contacts between July 2015 and July 2016. These decreases fall with historical ranges.

## Safety

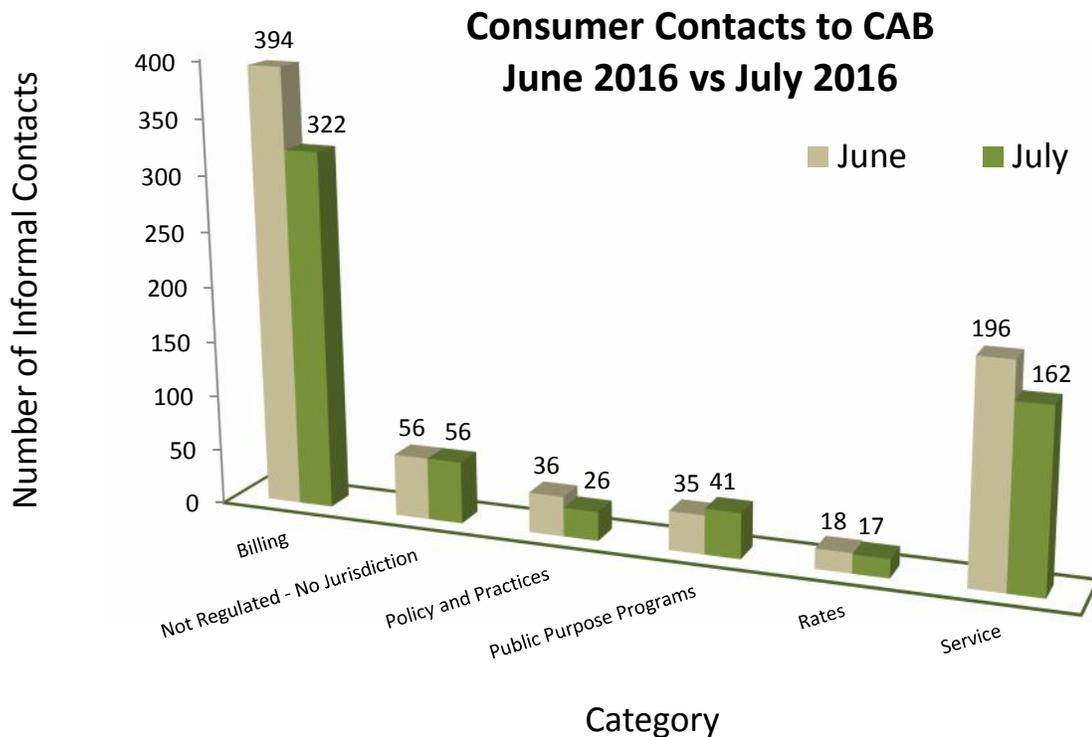
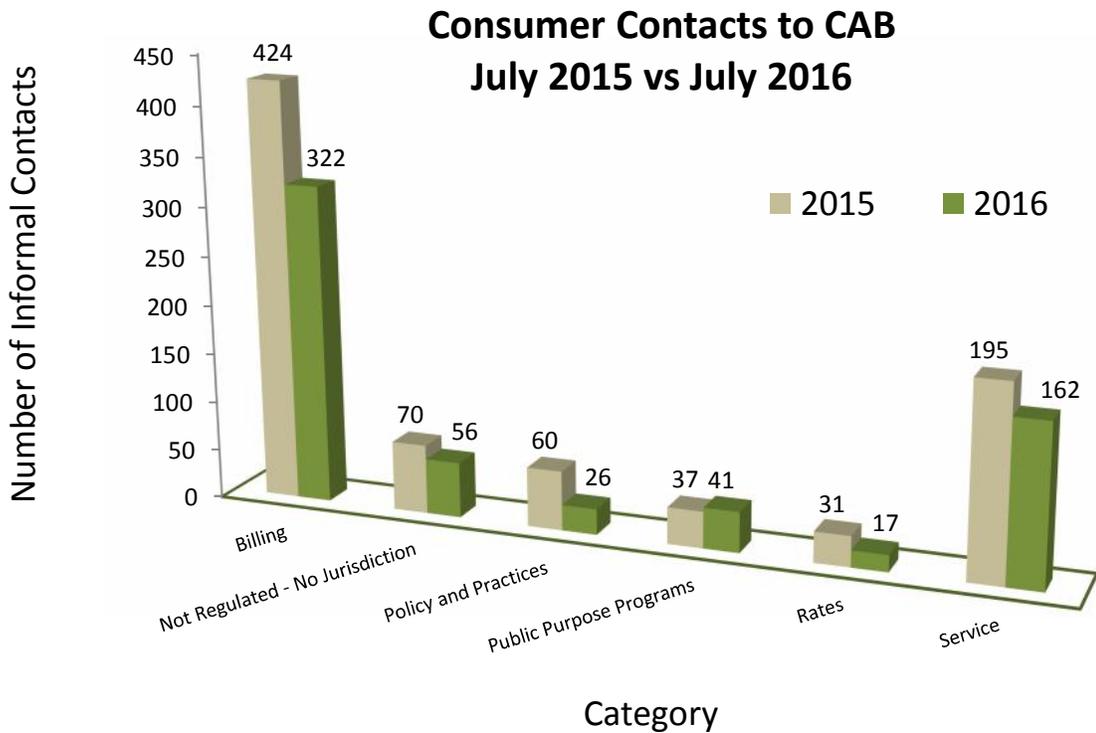
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<b>Communications Safety-related Contacts</b>	<b>6</b>
Company Practice	1
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	5

CAB received 6 communications related contacts identified as having a safety concern. Five of six contacts were related to consumers expressing concern about the effect of service outages regarding their ability to reach emergency services. Consumers contact CAB when a service outage prevents them from being able to call 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.

# Energy

624 CONTACTS (July 2016)



# Energy

In July 2016, CAB received 624 energy related contacts the fell into one of six categories: Billing, Not Regulated/No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service. There was a 15% decrease in contacts between June 2016 and July 2016, attributable in part to a decrease in billing-related contacts.

In addition to the 624 categorized contacts received in July 2016, displayed in the above graphs, CAB also received 54 uncategorized contacts which are pending assignment, lack sufficient information to be processed, or in which the consumer inadvertently contacted CAB when they were trying to instead reach their utility provider or another entity (Misdirected/Wrong Number). CAB assists these consumers by directing them to the entity that can best address their concerns.

## Safety

Energy Safety-related Contacts	16
Company Practices	3
Gas Leaks	1
Health Concerns	1
Utility Infrastructure	10
Voltage Fluctuation	1

CAB received 16 energy-related contacts identified as having a safety concern. Of those 3 were about company practices, 1 was in regards to gas leaks, 1 was about health concerns. There were 10 contacts about unsafe conditions involving utility infrastructure, and 1 contact concerning concerns about voltage fluctuations.

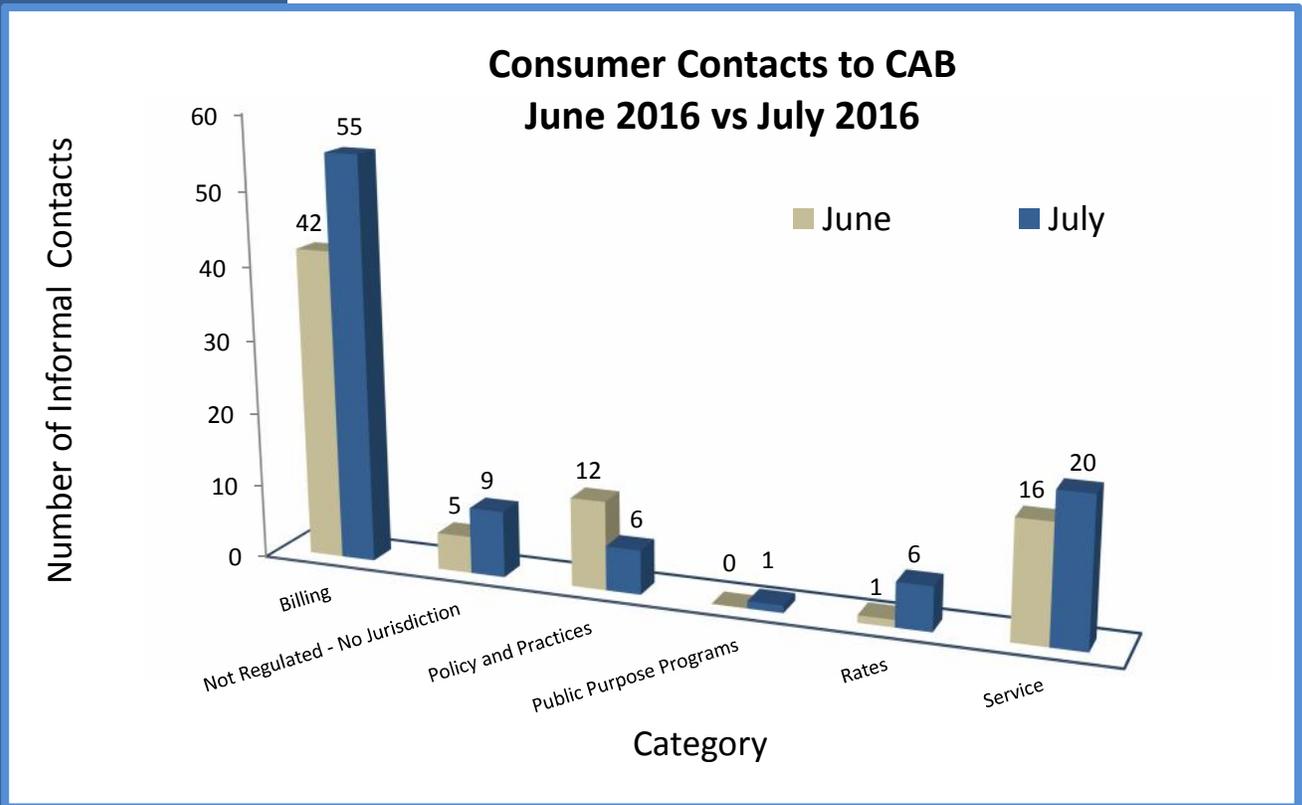
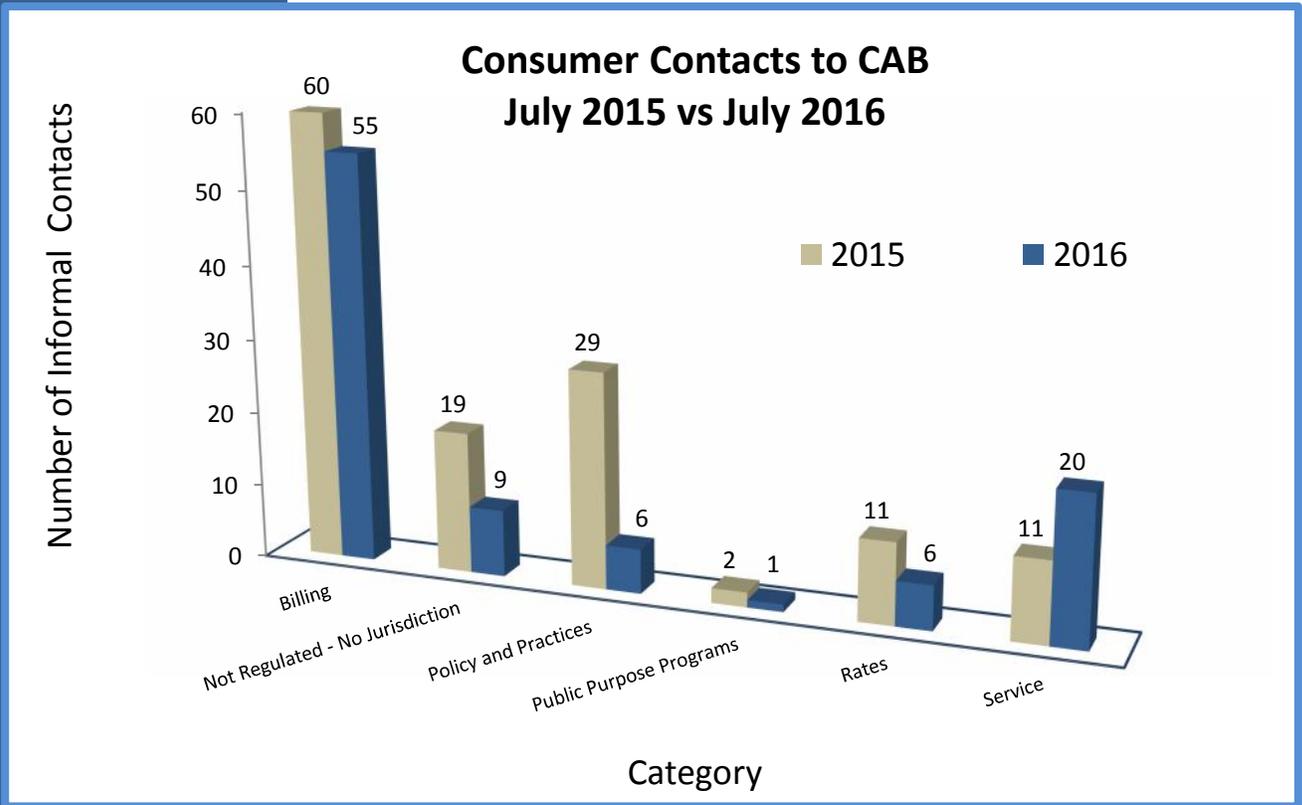
Safety complaints about company practices result when consumers feel that a company's way of conducting business or resolving issues results in unsafe conditions. Examples might be the window of time it takes a company to respond to service problems, or missed appointments for crucial repairs.

Complaints regarding utility infrastructure include issues regarding hanging cables, or unsafe poles. Other examples include infrastructure that is faulty or in disrepair, such as damaged or malfunctioning transformers.



# Water

97 CONTACTS (July 2016)



# Water

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CAB received 97 categorized water-related contacts in July 2016, which is a 28% increase from June 2016, when CAB received 76 contacts. Water related contacts for July 2016 decreased by 27 % compared with July 2015. Overall, contacts decreased compared to last summer, which may be attributable to a lifting of drought-related water restrictions. However, contacts increased compared to June 2016, which may be due to the completion of two water rate cases authorizing a rate increase.

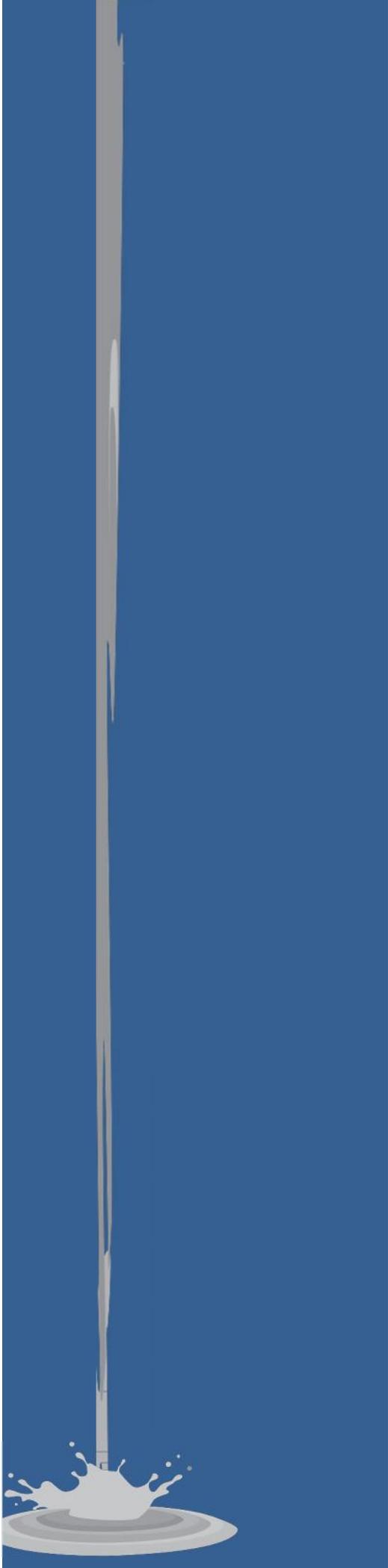
In addition to the 97 categorized contacts displayed in the above graph, CAB received 41 uncategorized contacts relating to water utilities in July 2016 that are pending assignment, lack sufficient information to be processed, or in which the consumer inadvertently contacted CAB when they were trying to instead reach their utility provider or another entity (Misdirected/Wrong Number). CAB assists these consumers by directing them to the entity that can best address their concerns.

## Safety

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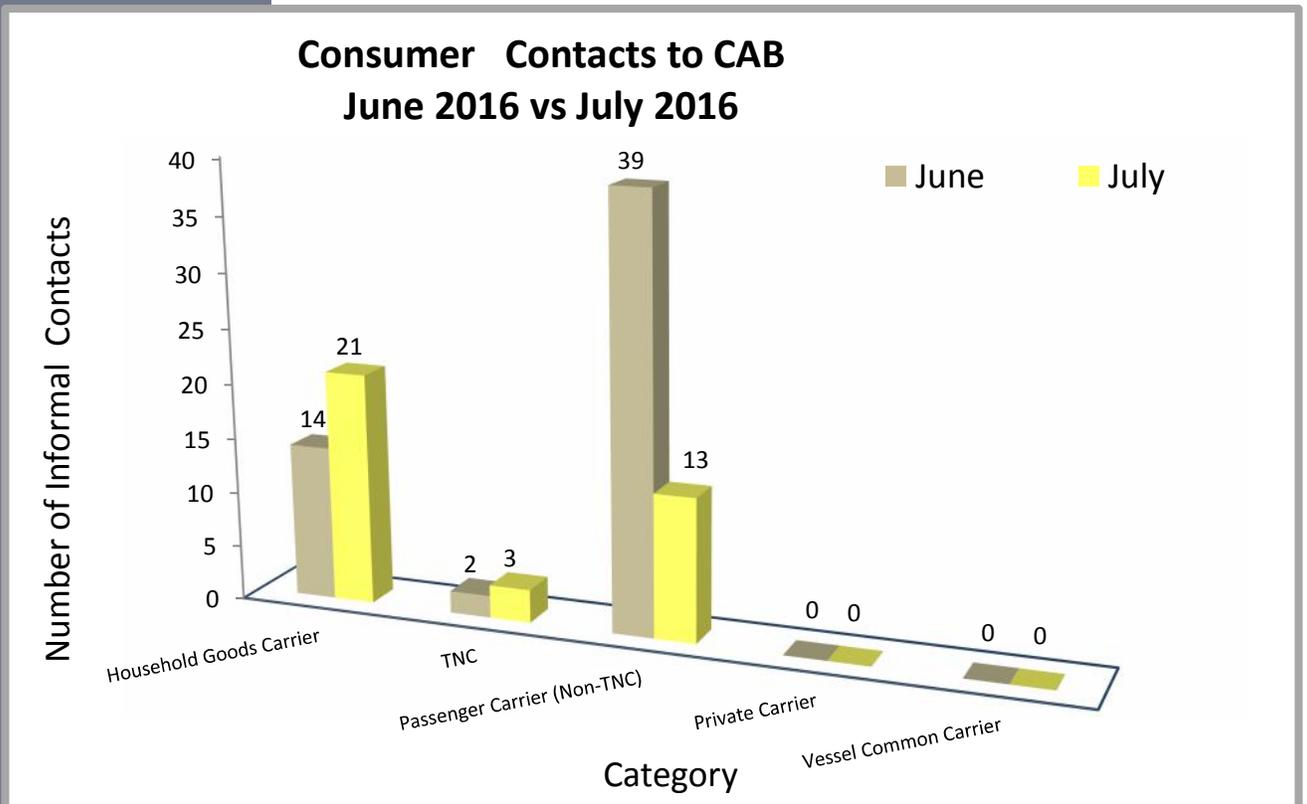
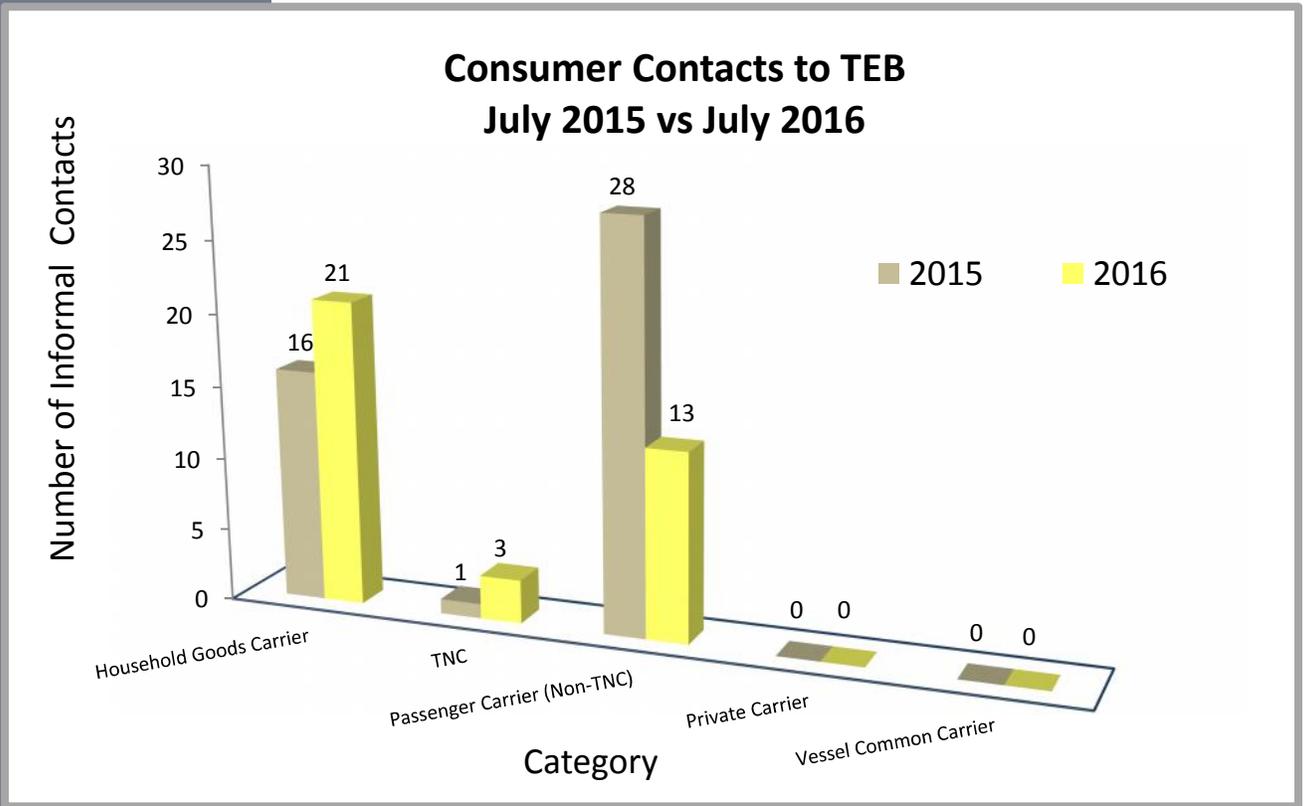
<b>Water Safety-related Contacts</b>	<b>0</b>
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CAB received no safety-related contacts in regards to a water provider in July 2016.



# Transportation

37 CONTACTS (July 2016)



# Transportation

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In July 2016, transportation contacts regarding passenger carriers (16) decreased by 25, or 61%, from June, while contacts regarding household goods carriers increased by seven (7), or 50%. Most informal complaints involved allegations of operating without active authority: 13 among household goods carriers and eight (8) among passenger carriers, including one TNC. The remaining household goods-related contacts (8) involved allegations of overcharges, false advertising, loss and damage. Five (5) passenger complaints (one against a TNC) involved allegations of loss or damage; and the remaining three passenger carrier complaints involved allegations of carrier's equipment list not being current and failure to maintain required workers' compensation insurance, filing a false revenue report, and operating as a taxi.

The decrease in passenger carrier complaints from June to July may be attributed to decreased patronage for school-related activities (e.g., proms).

TEB did not receive any contacts relating to vessel common carriers or private carriers during July 2016. 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.

Compared to July 2015 the overall number of transportation-related contacts was lower by approximately 20%; this decrease is primarily attributable to a lower number of contacts regarding passenger carriers.

## Safety

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<b>Transportation Safety-related Contacts</b>	<b>22</b>
Equipment List Not Current	1
Operating Without Active Authority	21

Out of the 22 transportation safety-related contacts TEB received in July 2016, 21 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 (EPN) Program; 4) a CHP inspection; 5) workers' compensation; and 6) a background check. Complaints regarding a carrier's failure to keep their equipment list current are referred to Enforcement for further investigation.