Overview of the Consumer Affairs Branch

California Public Utilities Commission
Modernization Committee

December 16, 2015

Everything You Wanted Know About CAB

- Introduction
- Mission & History
- Quick Facts
- Structure
- Technology
- Data
- Processes
- Final Thoughts
- Q&A

CAB Mission & History

- CAB is responsible for answering consumers' inquiries and resolving consumers' informal complaints (non-docketed) against regulated utilities

- CPUC has resolved informal complaints as far back as 1920. The function was centralized into CAB in 1976. CAB combined with PAO in 2003 forming the Consumer Service and Information Division

Quick Facts

- Consumers can contact CAB using:
  - ✓ ***Phone***: state-wide toll-free number (800-649-7570) where calls are routed by subject matter and skillset to Representatives
  - ✓ ***Writing***: Via U.S. Mail, fax or an online web portal at: http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/cec/e_complaint/
- CAB is responsible for responding to appeals from consumers regarding eligibility for the California LifeLine Program
- CAB serves consumers in Spanish, Chinese and Taglog in-house and has access to the Language Assistance Line that provides real-time translation services in over 200 languages
- CAB has direct contact with utilities at the "Executive Office" level that allows for issue resolution at a higher level than through standard consumer assistance channels

CAB Structure 1 of 2

- CAB "Operations Unit" is:
  - Responsible for assisting consumers directly via our statewide 800 number and via written submissions
  - Comprised of offices in SF & LA with 27 Consumer Affairs Representatives
  - Comprised of subject matter experts that cover quality assurance, LifeLine, mobile home parks, water and the Special Assistance Line in addition to work on traditional consumer issues in communications, energy and water

CAB Structure 2 of 2

- CAB's "Analytical Unit" is responsible for:
  - Analyzing and reporting data to improve CAB processes/coding
  - Reporting data regularly:
    - Data posted on the CPUC webpage
    - Monthly in-house reports to Executive
    - LifeLine reports
- Providing customized data (internal/external to CPUC)
  - Internal DR form and process
  - External upon request (FCC, PRA via Legal Division)

CAB Technology

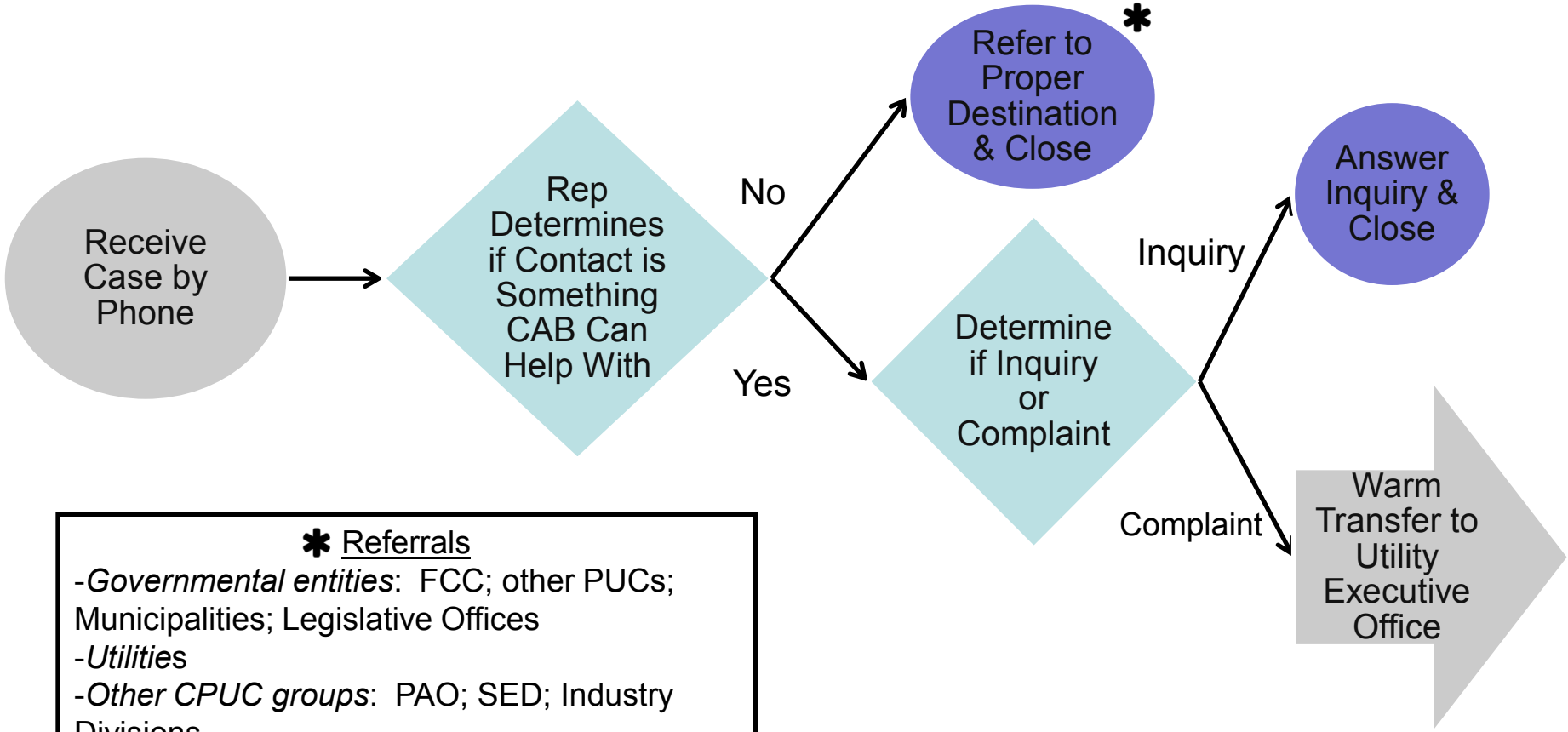
- Phone – Hosted IVR and call management system
  - Statewide toll free number
  - Call management includes routing to skill sets/languages
- Database – Consumer Information Management System
  - Paperless capture of all case details and attachments
  - Online complaint forms (https://appsssl.cpuc.ca.gov/cpucapplication/)
  - Web portal to utilities for 2-way communications
- CAB in-house administrators work with IT and vendors to maintain and upgrade systems

CAB Data Overview

Contacts Received By CAB in 2014

	Telco	Energy	Water	Other	Total
Phone Contacts	9,983	7,614	1,174	3,199	21,970
Written Contacts	8,894	2,880	316	1,458	13,548
Total Contacts	18,877	10,494	1,490	4,657	35,518

Phone Contact Process 1 of 2



✱ Referrals

-*Governmental entities*: FCC; other PUCs; Municipalities; Legislative Offices

-*Utilities*

-*Other CPUC groups*: PAO; SED; Industry Divisions

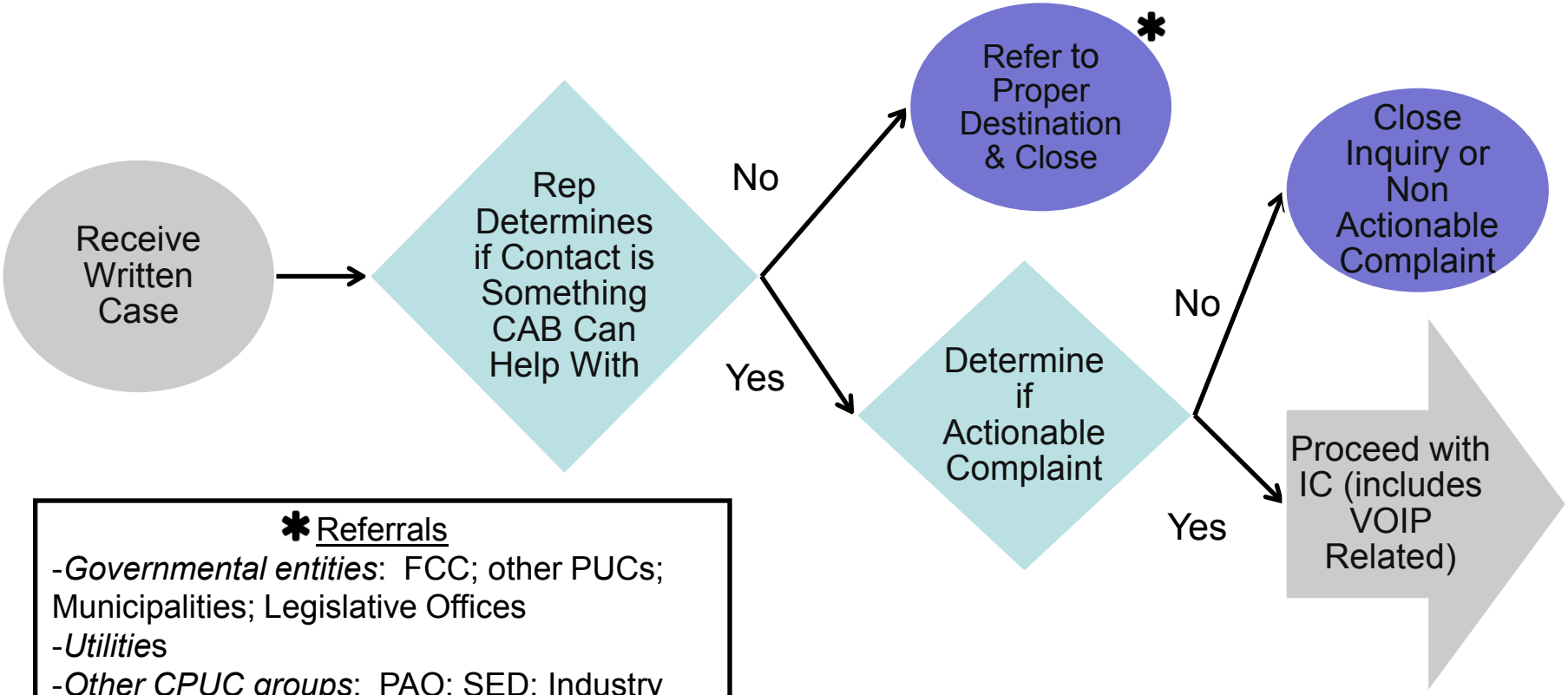
-*Western Propane Gas Association*

Phone Contact Process 2 of 2

Warm Transfer to Utility Executive Office

- Encourage consumer to write CAB if issue not resolved
- Introduce consumer to utility rep
- In some instances, CAB Rep participates in discussion
- Close the phone case

Written Contact Process 1 of 4



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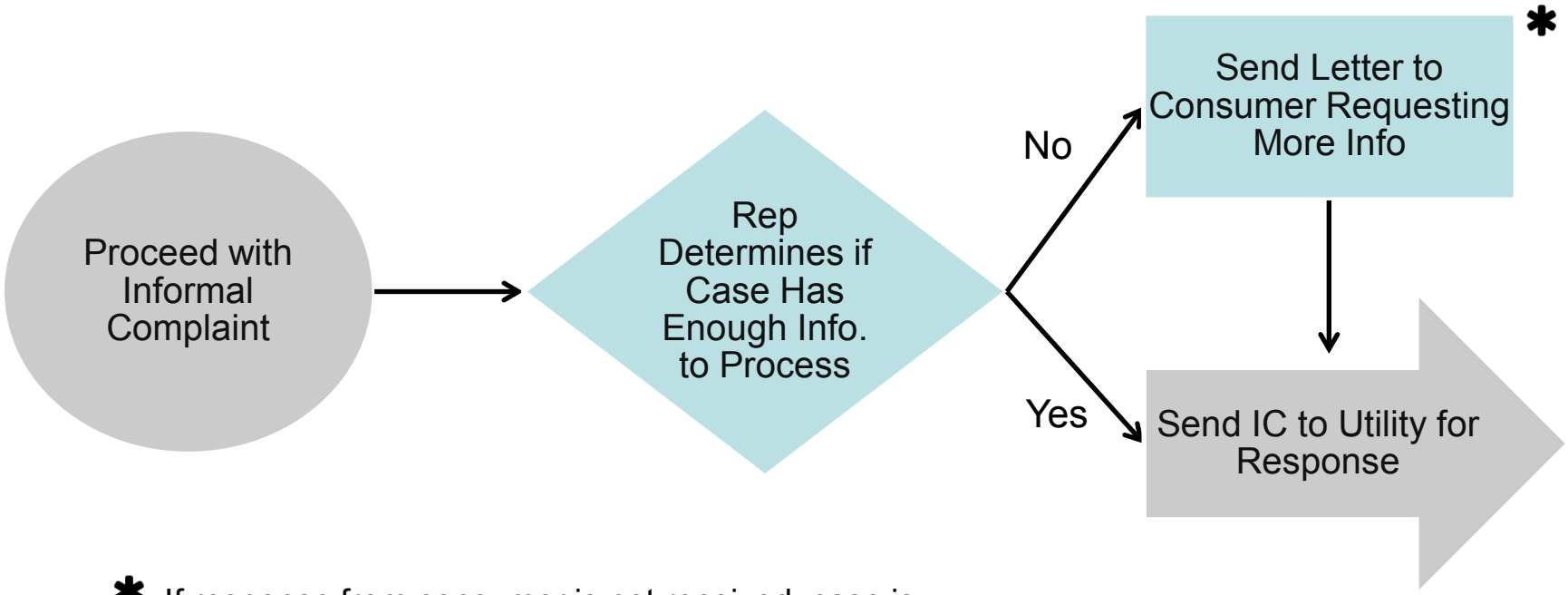
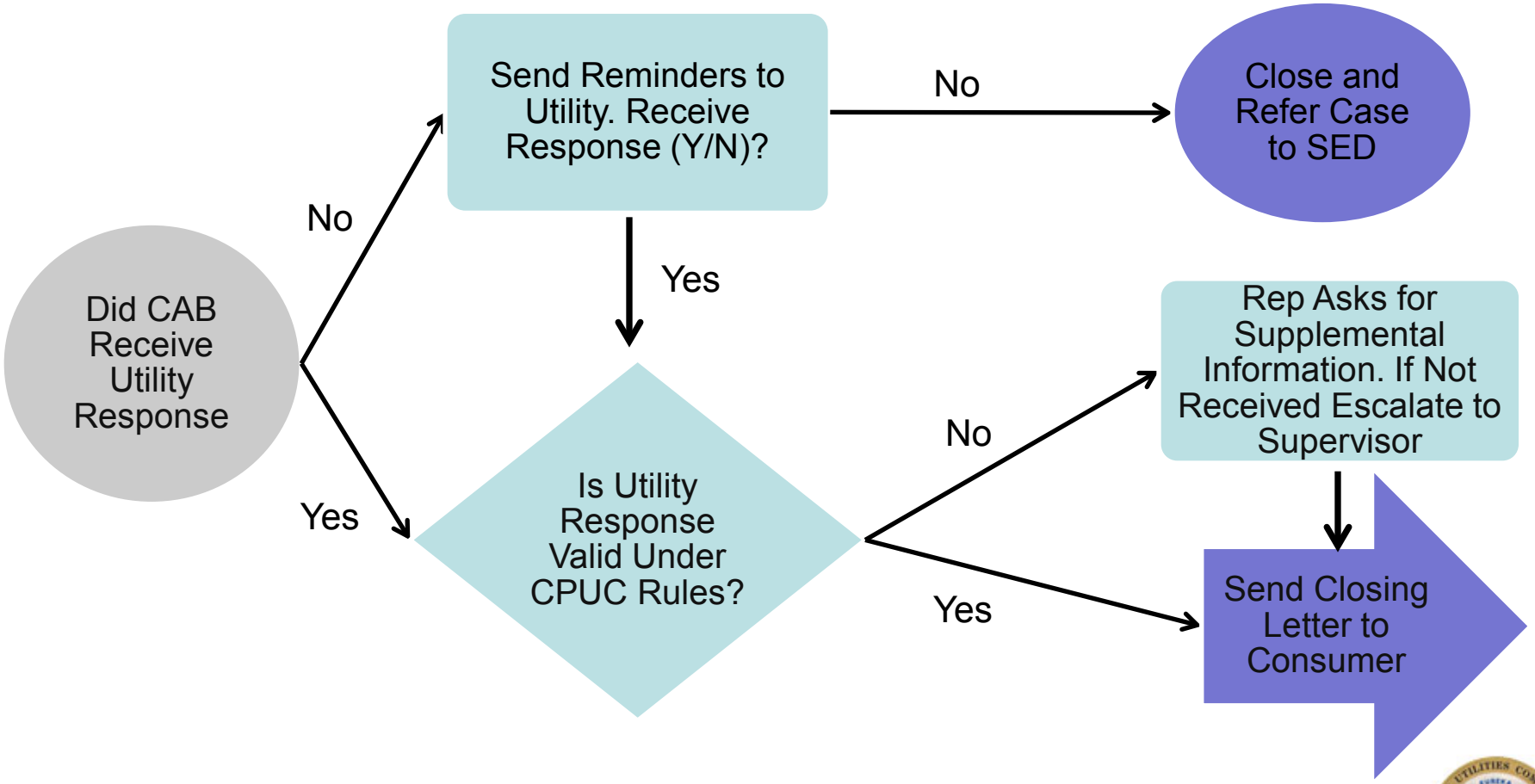
Written Contact Process 2 of 4



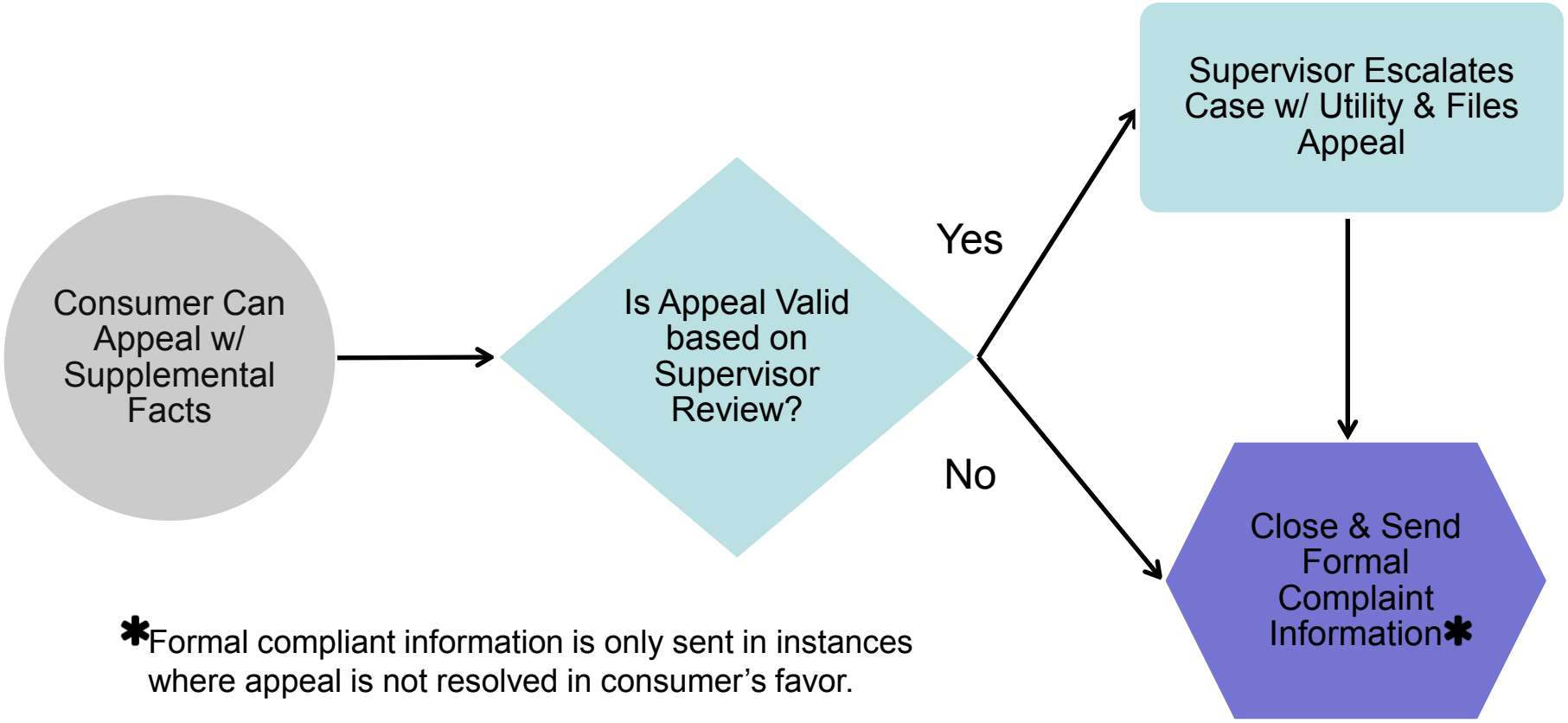
* If response from consumer is not received, case is automatically closed.

Written Contact Process 3 of 4



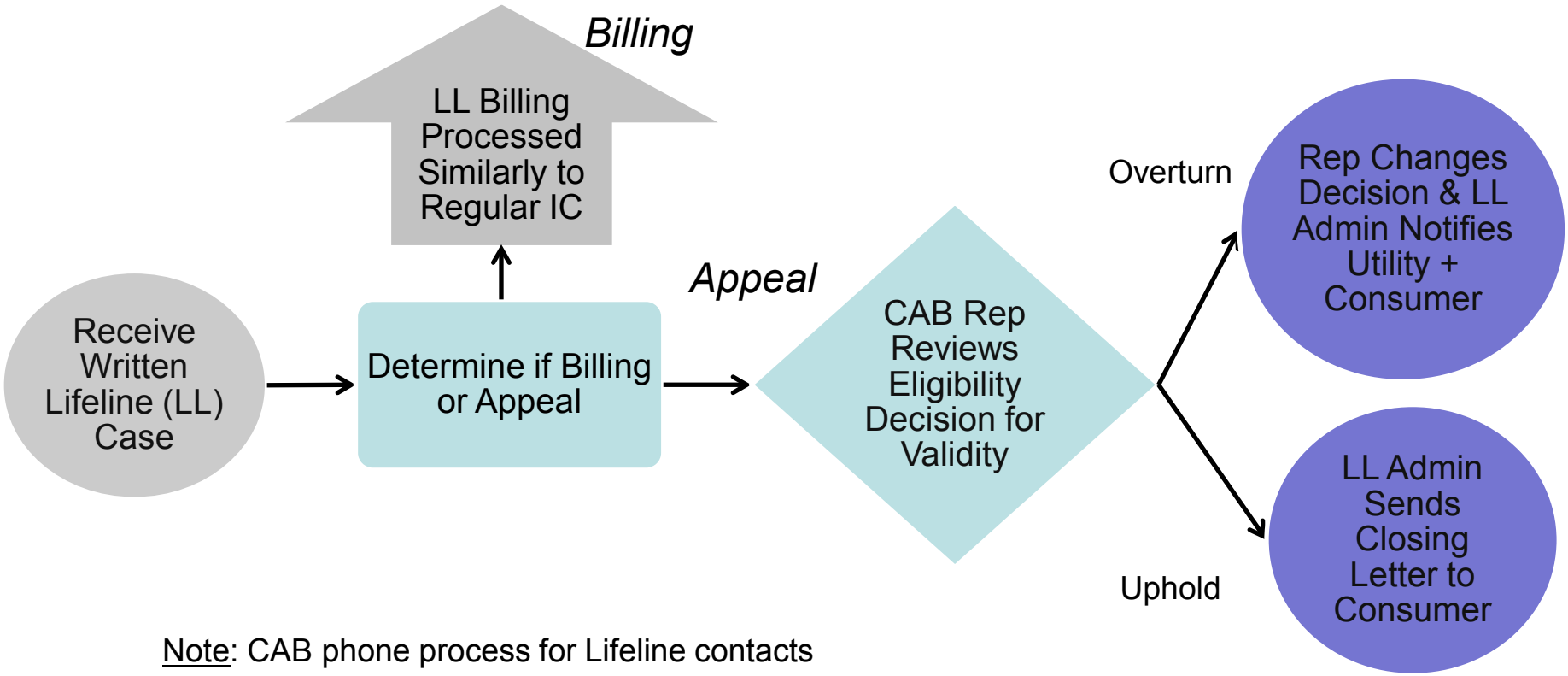
Written Contact Process 4 of 4

-Occurs Post Case Closure-



*Formal compliant information is only sent in instances where appeal is not resolved in consumer's favor.

Lifeline Written Process



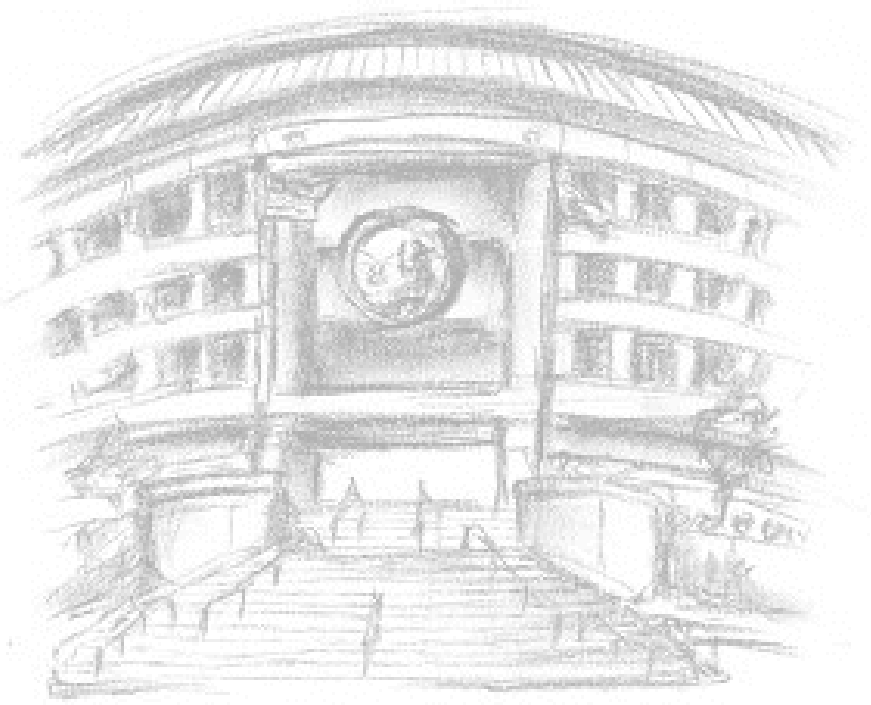
Note: CAB phone process for Lifeline contacts regarding billing issues is similar to the non-Lifeline phone process. For appeals to LifeLine eligibility determinations that are received by phone, the consumers is advised to write.

Some Final Thoughts

- CAB is the "front door" for consumers – It is critical to engage us early on changes to regulations and programs
  - CTA Example
  - MTS Example
- Will continue CAB's existing "liaisons" process with industry divisions
  - Promotes 2-way communication and coordination
- CAB appreciates training and information from CPUC experts
  - Excellent trainings in the past from ED, CD and WD

Q & A

Thank you!

Phillip Enis – Interim Director, CSID

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