

August  
2017

# 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.

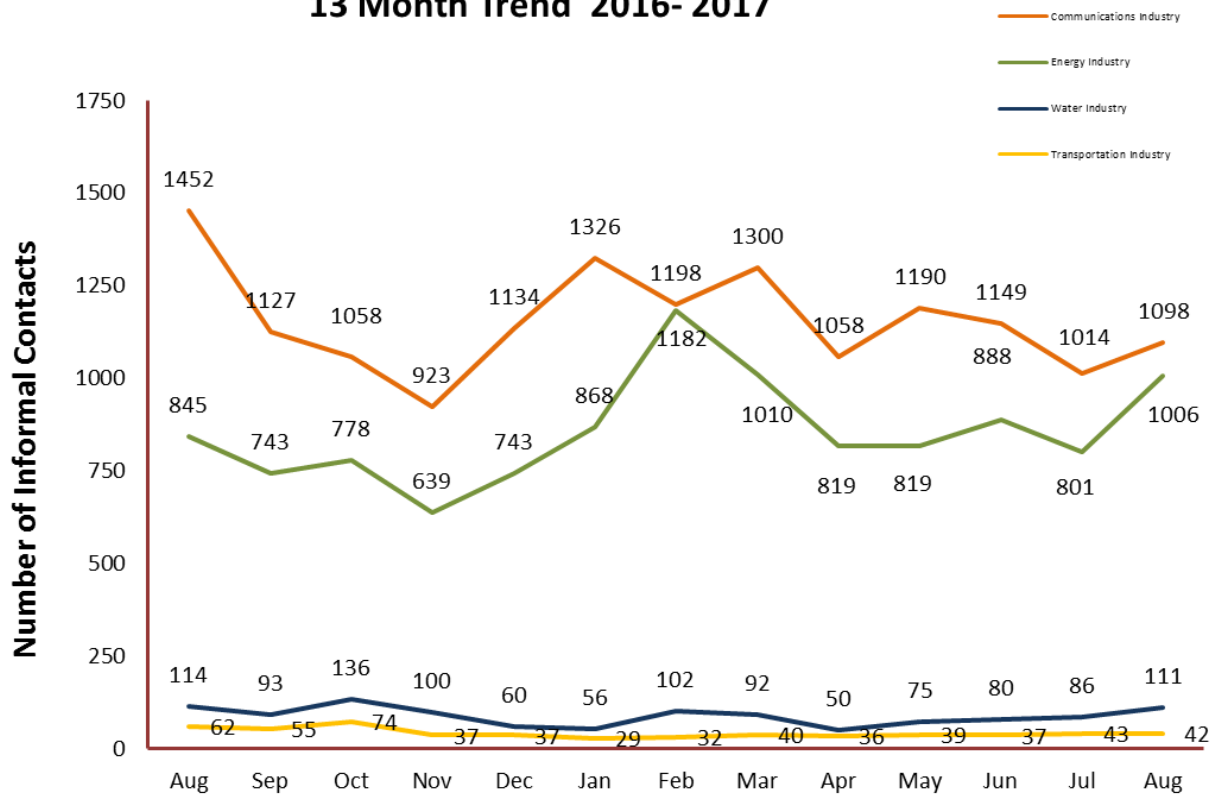
This report is based on contacts (informal complaints and questions) received by the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) and the Transportation Enforcement Branch (TEB) within CPED, and presents annual and monthly data for the communications, energy, water, and transportation industries. Page 2 presents annual trend data, and pages 3 through 6 report data by industry for the current month. For context, the report also includes comparable data from the previous month. Page 7 presents contact data specifically related to safety concerns, by industry. A glossary of terms used in this report can be found on page 8.

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

2,257 CONTACTS (August 2017)

**Consumer Contacts Received by Industry**  
**13 Month Trend 2016- 2017**



Overall, 2,257 total informal consumer contacts were received during August 2017 across the four regulated industries, an increase of approximately 16% from the 1,944 informal contacts received during July 2017; and a 6% increase from the prior 12-month average of 2,136.

**Communications:** 1,098 categorized informal contacts related to Communications were received during August 2017, which is an increase of 8.3% from the 1,014 contacts received during July 2017. The contacts received during August experienced a 5% decrease compared to the prior 12-month average of 1,161.

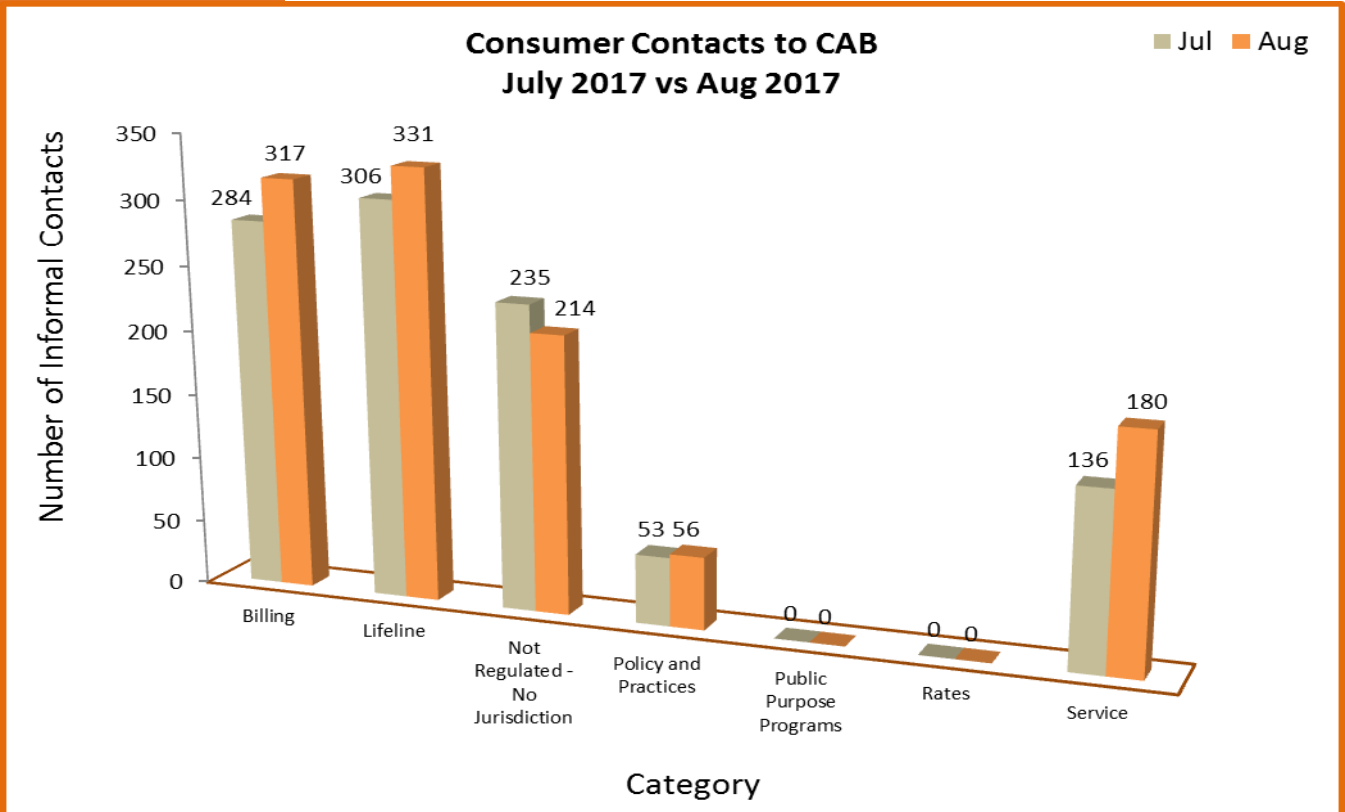
**Energy:** 1,006 categorized informal contacts related to Energy were received during August 2017, which is nearly a 26% Increase from contacts received during July 2017. Contacts received in August are 19% higher than the prior 12-month average of 845.

**Water:** 111 categorized informal contacts related to Water were received during August 2017. This is a 29% increase from the 86 contacts received in July 2017. Water contacts in August 2017 were on par the prior 12-month average of 87.

**Transportation:** The overall number of Transportation-related contacts received during August 2017 (42) is lower than in July 2017 (43) by just 2%. August is similarly lower than the prior 12 month average, which were also 43.

# Communications

1,098 CONTACTS (August 2017)

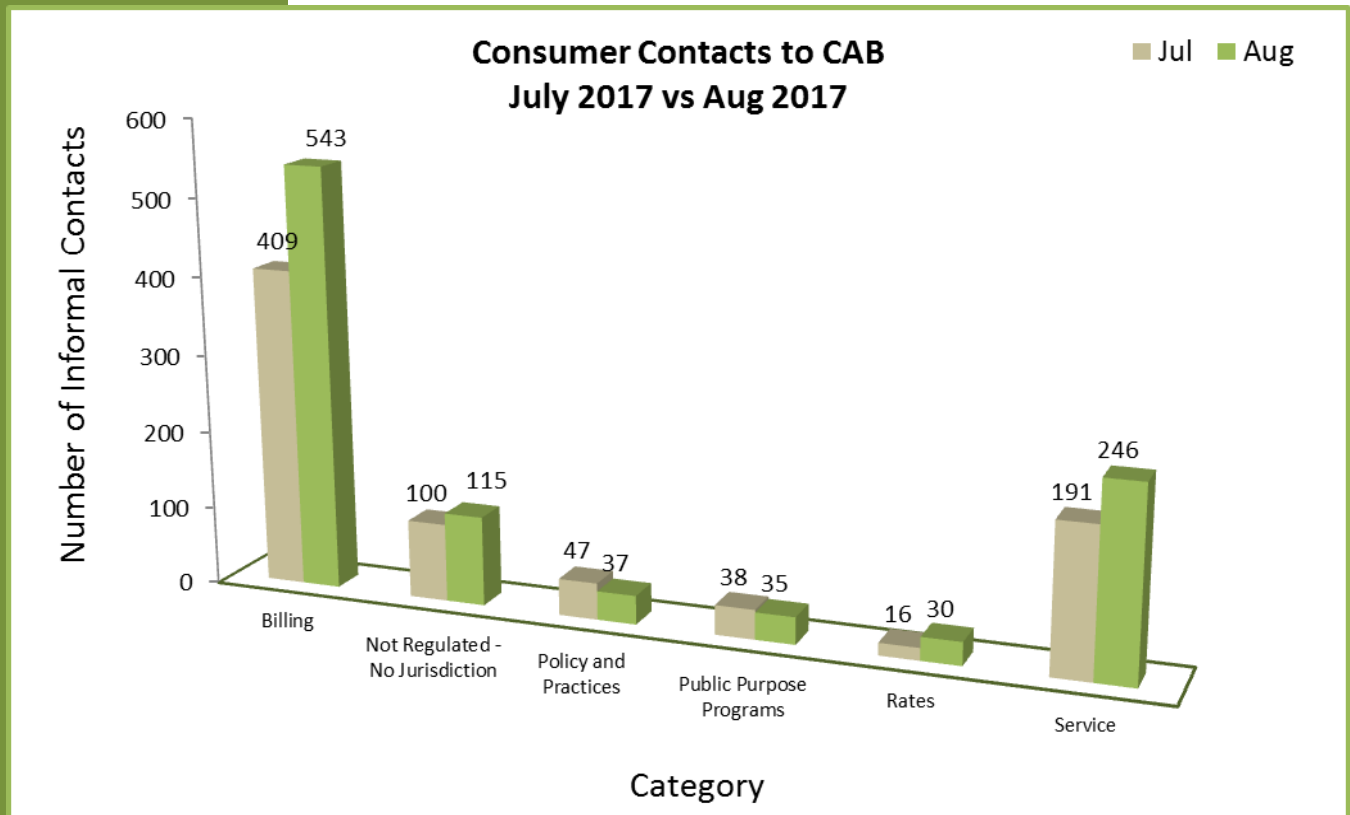


During August 2017, CAB received 1,098 Communications-related informal contacts, allocated into one of the defined categories of Billing, Lifeline, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service. This is an increase of approximately 8.3% from July's 1,014 contacts. While there were modest gains in the Billing, Lifeline and Service categories, no common driver of the mild increase was evident.

In addition to the 1,098 categorized contacts, CAB received 216 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

# Energy

1,006 CONTACTS (August 2017)

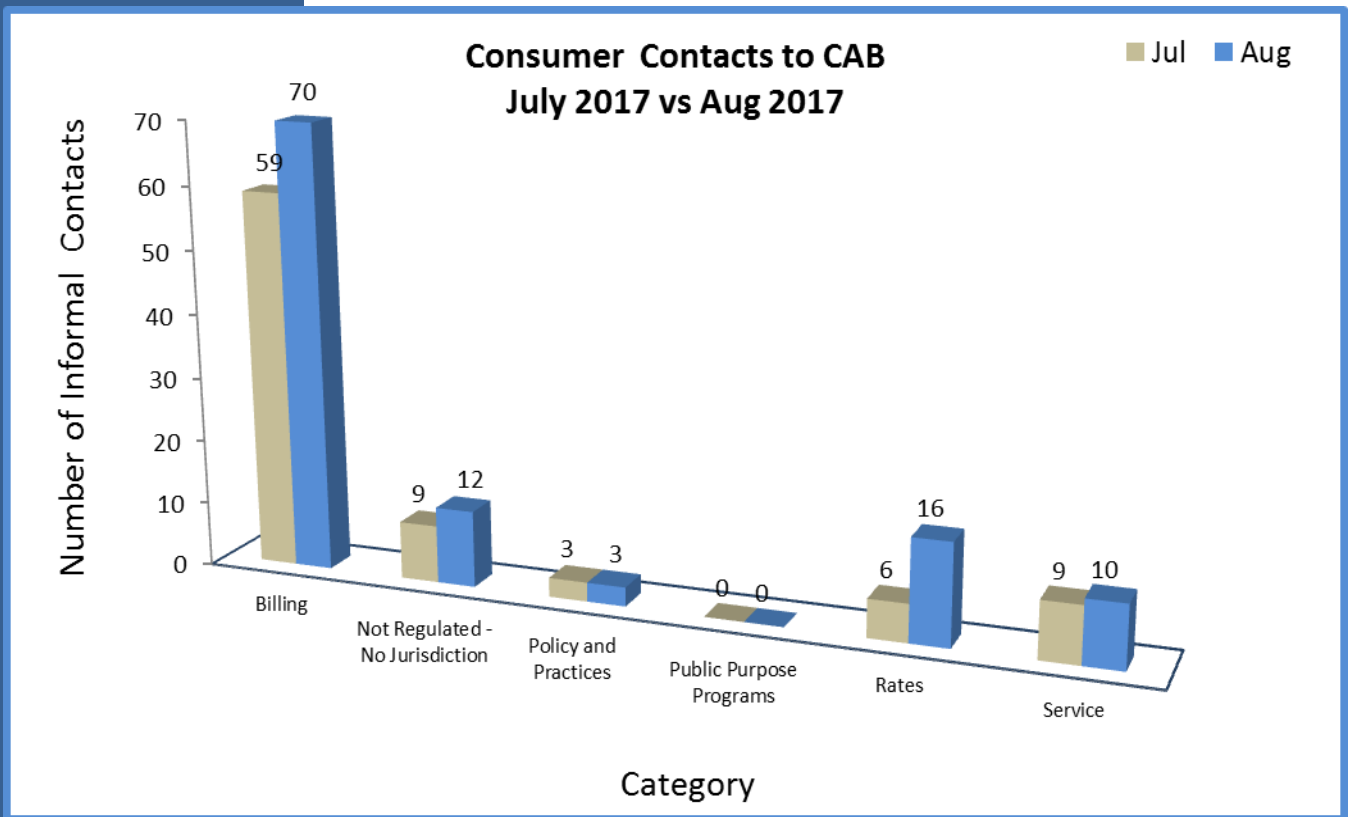


In August 2017, CAB received 1,006 Energy-related informal contacts allocated into one of the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service. August experienced a 25.6% increase in contacts. There is an increase in Billing, Rates and Service categories in August; however, there is no single event or specific company that can be attributed as a reason for the increase.

In addition to the 1,006 categorized contacts, CAB also received 81 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

# Water

111 CONTACTS (August 2017)

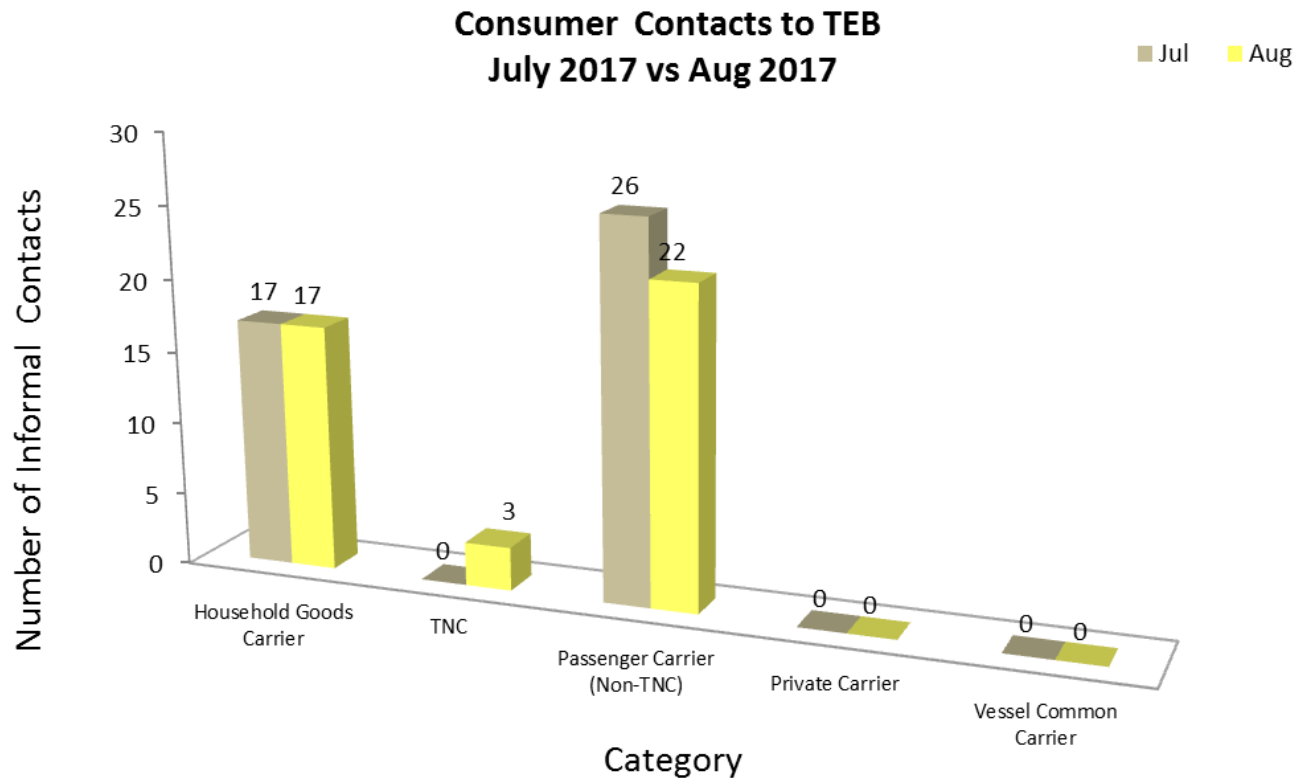


CAB received 111 Water-related informal contacts in August 2017, allocated into one of the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service. Consumer contacts significantly increased in the Billing and Rates categories from July. While this increase is attributed to the rise in contacts regarding High Bills and Rate protests across different utility entities, no singular issue emerged as a driver of that change.

In addition to the 86 categorized contacts, CAB received 27 uncategorized (misdirected and pending processing) contacts relating to water utilities in July 2017.

# Transportation

42 CONTACTS (August 2017)



In August 2017, TEB received 42 transportation complaints, an overall decrease of 2% vis-à-vis the 43 complaints received last month. Complaints received against household goods carriers (17) remained the same and complaints received against all other carriers (25) decreased by 4%.

The 17 household goods complaints consisted of: advertised or operated without active authority (8), operated on a suspended permit (7), and loss/damage claims (2).

Twenty two (22) complaints concerned limousines or buses that: advertised or operated without active authority (13), loss/damage claims (4), operated without insurance (2), sub-contracted without authority (2), and engaged in unsafe driving (1). TEB received three (3) complaints against TNCs alleging loss and damage.

# Safety Concerns Across Industries

During August 2017, CPED received 42 contacts identified as having a safety concern component across the four reported industries. The contacts presented below are a subset of those presented on pages 3-7 of this report. Safety contacts are classified by the type of safety concern.

<b>Communications</b>	<b>6</b>
Property Restoration	3
Utility Infrastructure	3
<b>Energy</b>	<b>14</b>
Company Practice	1
Consumer Property	2
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	1
Gas Leak	2
Property Restoration	1
Utility Infrastructure	7
<b>Water</b>	<b>1</b>
Water Quality	1
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>21</b>
Operating Without Active Authority	21

## Definitions for Safety-Related Contacts:

**Company Practice** includes service-related issues perceived to impact consumer safety such as lengthy appointment wait times for service restoration.

**Consumer Property** includes issues with consumer owned property such as unsafe appliances (heaters, stoves, etc.)

**EMF/Power Surges/Voltage fluctuations** include cases related to Electromagnetic Field (EMF) concerns (e.g. Smart Meters), consumer household power surges and electricity voltage fluctuations.

**Emergency Services/ Health Concerns** include immediate or perceived concerns due to potential outages or events, such as inability to reach 911 during phone outage, or failure of medical equipment during power outages.

**Gas Leak** includes any concerns related to gas leaks in the utility distribution system or in the consumer's premises.

**Operating Without Active Authority** involves operations without a valid permit or certificate, including operations with a suspended or revoked permit or certificate.

**Property Restoration** includes issues regarding ground hazards such as holes, trenches, tripping hazards, debris removal, tree trimming and street lighting.

**Security Concerns** includes issues perceived to impact consumer security such as phone line privacy issues, unlisted phone numbers, or utility personnel identification.

**Utility Infrastructure** includes issues regarding infrastructure that is faulty or in disrepair such as hanging cables, exposed wires, leaning utility poles, analog meters and transformers.

**Water Safety or Quality** includes immediate or perceived concerns relating to water quality such as color, odor or presence of chemicals in drinking water.

# Definitions

## Consumer Affairs Branch

The following definitions were compiled to assist with understanding consumer contacts information.

Type of Contacts Definitions	
Informal Consumer Contacts	Informal Contacts are consumers' communications received by CAB via phone calls, letters and electronic submissions (email/web form). Contacts can consist of complaints, questions, or feedback from consumers regarding the policies and practices of specific utilities or the CPUC. These contacts are reported as Categorized or Uncategorized.
Categorized Contacts	These are informal contacts which have sufficient information to be allocated into one the defined categories: Billing, Lifeline, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, and Service based on the primary (overarching) reason for the contact.
Uncategorized Contacts	These are contacts which are pending assignment, lack sufficient information to be processed (Unknown), or contacts in which the consumer intended to contact some other entity, and mistakenly contacted CAB (Misdirected).

Category Definitions	
Billing	Consumer contacts related to disputed items appearing on a consumer's utility bill, the appearance of the bill, or other utility charges.
LifeLine (Billing & Appeals)	Consumer contacts related to the Lifeline Program, which assists low income telecommunications customers. It includes items related to Lifeline Appeals or Lifeline Billing disputes.
Not Regulated – No Jurisdiction	Consumer contacts related to concerns, disputes, and issues where the CPUC does not have jurisdiction.
Policy and Practices	Consumer contacts related to utility and/or CPUC policies and practices.
Public Purpose Programs	Consumer contacts related to programs that assist utility consumers, including income-based and disability-based programs.
Rates	Consumer contacts related to rate design, rate protests and baseline rates.
Service	Consumer contacts related to the service provided to the consumer by the utility.
Uncategorized Definitions	
Misdirected	Consumer contacts intended for some other entity such as consumer attempting to contact their utility. CAB assists these consumers by redirecting them to the entity best able to address their concerns.
Pending Assignment	Category not identified due to case pending processing.
Unknown	Category not identified due to lack of information from consumer.