

Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB)

FIRST QUARTER REPORT – 2026

June 10, 2026

Services provided by CAB staff to consumers in Q1-2026



**California Public
Utilities Commission**

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About The Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB)

The Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) is part of the External Affairs Division of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). CAB assists consumers who need support with their utility services.

CAB delivers the following assistance:

- Resolves consumer questions or complaints about regulated utility services (telecommunications, natural gas, electricity, and water)
- Resolves application appeals for California LifeLine¹ (a discounted phone program for income-qualified and other eligible consumers)
- Administers Limited English Proficiency (LEP) programs that assist consumers with telecommunications and energy issues
- Provides consumer contact data and analysis to CPUC decision-makers in support of shaping policies and enforcement against fraud and abuse
- Produces public reporting to stakeholders about the utility-related issues experienced by consumers

¹ <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/consumer-support/financial-assistance-savings-and-discounts/lifeline>

About This Report

This quarterly report highlights the services provided by the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) to consumers who have issues with utility services regulated by the CPUC. These utilities include telecommunications, electricity, natural gas, water, and transportation services.

All consumer questions and complaints received by CAB are referred to as **consumer contacts**. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this report is based on inquiries and complaints received by CAB from January through March 2026.

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Executive Summary

The California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) report for Q1-2026 highlights the vital support that CAB provides to utility consumers statewide. In this quarter, CAB continued its core mission of supporting utility consumers statewide by responding to **9,895** consumer contacts, including **2,692** complaints. CAB facilitated the return of **\$383,346** to consumers from utilities (including refunds and credit adjustments) across the CPUC-regulated utilities.

Energy and telecommunications issues remained the primary drivers of consumer contacts. Energy contacts jumped by a **quarter** compared to Q4-2025, centered around high bills, customer service challenges, alleged abusive marketing by Core Transport Agents (CTAs), and payment arrangement cases. Telecommunications contacts also increased by **over a third**, driven largely by customer service issues, service outages, and operational issues, including delayed orders and missed appointments.

Contacts related to vulnerable populations also increased. Environmental and Social Justice (ESJ) communities experienced disproportionately higher impacts, generating **2,331** contacts, a **31%** increase from Q4-2025. CTA complaints also rose by **66%**, with the highest concentrations in disadvantaged communities (40% of CTA contacts). Telecommunications outages, particularly those linked to cable theft, continued to affect ESJ communities at relatively higher rates.

CAB's TEAM and CHANGES programs also provided essential support for limited-English proficient, low-income, disabled, and senior consumers, resolving **1,634** CHANGES cases and **962** TEAM cases, and delivering **\$40,857** in telecommunications-related financial returns to consumers.

Q1-2026 CAB Service Highlights

- Received 9,895 questions and complaints from California utility consumers seeking assistance
- Assisted 2,692 consumers in resolving their complaints with their utility provider
- Facilitated \$383,000 in consumer refunds from utilities

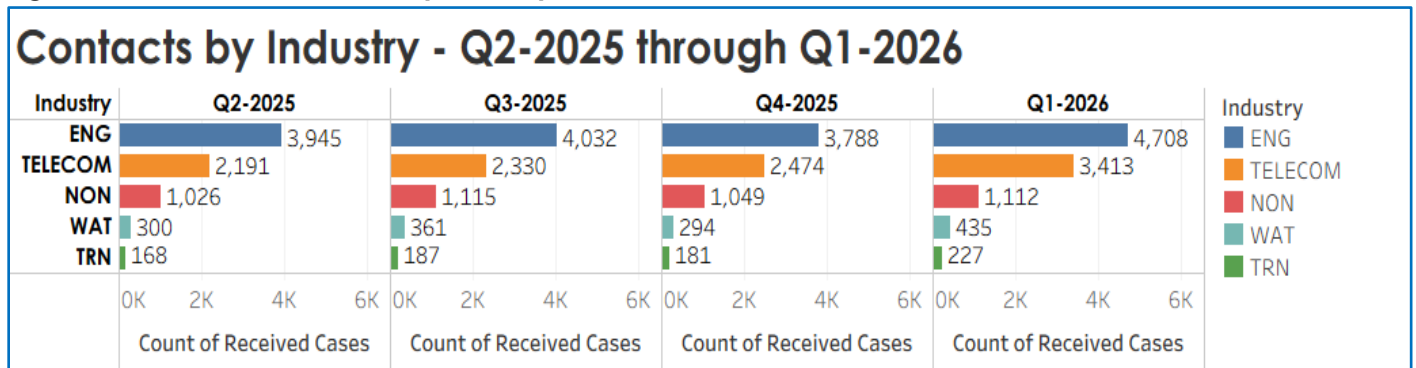
CAB Received 9,895 Total Consumer Contacts

In this report, total consumer contacts (**contacts**) include all questions and complaints received by CAB from January through March 2026.

Figure 1 displays the volume of contacts received by CAB across five industries over the last four quarters – energy (**ENG**), non-regulated industries² (**NON**), telecommunications (**TELECOM**), transportation (**TRN**), and water (**WAT**). These contacts are received via phone, mail, email, or a CPUC website complaint form. In Q1-2026, CAB received **9,895 contacts**. Most of the inquiries concerned energy and telecommunications services.

Consistent with the trend from the previous three quarters, CAB continues to receive more contacts about the energy industry than other industries, with **4,708** contacts, representing **almost half** of the quarterly total, and an increase of **24%** from the previous quarter. The telecommunications industry ranks second with **3,413** contacts, accounting for **just over one-third** of the total, and up **38%** from the previous quarter. Contacts related to non-regulated industries increased by **6%** from the last quarter, to **1,112**, or **11%** of the total. The water and transportation industries have continued previous quarterly trends, with relatively low shares of **4%** and **2%** of total contacts, respectively.

Figure 1: Consumer Contacts by Industry in the Last Four Quarters



² Concerns, disputes, and/or issues regarding utilities that the CPUC does not regulate.

CAB Resolved 2,692 Informal Complaints (ICs)

CAB’s Informal Complaint (IC) process provides consumers with an accessible and efficient way to resolve disputes with their utility providers and reduces the need for formal legal proceedings. An IC is a written consumer contact expressing dissatisfaction with, or a dispute with, an action or practice regulated by the CPUC through tariffs, rules, orders, or other authority.³ The process helps ensure consumer concerns are addressed promptly and fairly across CPUC-regulated industries.

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of ICs resolved by industry over the past four quarters. In Q1-2026, CAB resolved a total of **2,692 ICs**, with the majority concentrated in the energy and telecommunications sectors, which is consistent with the previous three quarters. The majority of cases in each quarter were concentrated in the energy sector, which accounted for **1,771 resolutions (66% of the total)** in **Q1-2026**. The telecommunications sector represented the second-largest share, with **803 resolutions (30%)**. Water-related contacts remained less frequent, with **118 resolutions (4%)**. As in the prior quarter, no transportation-related ICs were received.

Table 1: Informal Complaints Resolved by Industry in the Last Four Quarters

Industry	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Q1-2026	% of ICs Closed (Q1-2026 Only)
Energy	1,682	1,515	1,509	1,771	66%
Telecommunications	571	504	632	803	30%
Water	89	106	117	118	4%
Transportation	-	1	-	-	-
Total	2,342	2,126	2,258	2,692	100%

³ CAB focuses on ICs. The CPUC also has a Formal Complaint (FC) process. An FC is a written legal document that claims that a utility regulated by the CPUC has violated state laws or the CPUC’s orders or rules. An FC describes these violations, the injury suffered due to them, and the resolution requested from the CPUC. FCs are overseen by an Administrative Law Judge in a formal proceeding.

CAB Facilitated the Return of \$383,346 to Consumers

Table 2 details the total monetary returns disbursed across all IC cases, categorized by industry and quarter. Notably, CAB cases resulted in utilities returning **\$383,346** to consumers who submitted complaints through the IC process. This underscores the effectiveness of the complaint resolution process.

A substantial proportion of these returns originated from service providers in the energy and telecommunications sectors. Energy providers remain the predominant source, having issued nearly **\$202,000** in consumer returns in Q1-2026. However, this was a decrease from the previous quarter, partly attributable to a single **\$580,000** refund issued in Q4-2025. Telecommunications providers are consistently the second largest source of returns, at approximately **\$162,000**.

Water-related consumer returns remain relatively low compared to energy and telecommunications, at approximately **\$19,000**, down **24%** from the last quarter. There were no returns in the transportation sector.

Table 2: Quarterly Total Consumer Returns⁴ by Industry

Industry	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Q1-2026
Energy	\$328,085	\$328,300	\$1,479,886	\$201,996
Telecommunications	\$122,072	\$102,283	\$145,900	\$162,772
Water	\$22,095	\$27,426	\$24,518	\$18,578
Transportation	\$10	\$95	\$55	-
Total	\$472,262	\$458,104	\$1,650,359	\$383,346

Success Story

In February 2026, a business consumer filed a CPUC complaint regarding estimated billing since their move-in date of 01/17/25. They expressed concerns that charges reflected previous tenant usage from a different business type and noted the site had been vacant during the early months of service. The IC submitted by CAB requested a meter test, which revealed a communication error and led to meter replacement. In accordance with Tariff Rule 17.A, billing from 01/17/25 to 08/03/25 was recalculated based on actual usage following the replacement, resulting in a reversal of nearly \$62,000 in charges and associated late-fee adjustments.

⁴ This table only accounts for returns through CAB’s IC process. Cases where a phone contact was transferred to a utility for expedited resolution are not reflected here.

Table 3 presents the median amounts returned to consumers across various industries: energy at **\$306**, telecommunications at **\$156**, and water at **\$682**. Most of the returns came from the telecommunications industry (**389**), but these returns were lower in dollar amounts than those in either the energy or water sectors. The water industry had the fewest returns, but the highest median amount returned.

Table 3: Consumer Return Statistics by Industry (Q1-2026)

Industry	Median Return Amount	Count of Returns	Minimum Return Amount	Maximum Return Amount
Water	\$682	17	\$35	\$6,276
Energy	\$306	176	\$0.33	\$61,513
Telecommunications	\$156	389	\$0.30	\$25,404
Transportation	-	-	-	-

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Programs – TEAM & CHANGES

CAB oversees the Telecommunications Education and Assistance in Multiple-Languages (TEAM) and Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electric Services (CHANGES) programs. These programs support limited-English proficient (LEP) consumers who need help managing their utility services. The programs offer support through individually tailored case assistance (including billing issues), educational classes, and outreach.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) who participate in the programs helped LEP consumers recover **\$40,857** from their telecommunications providers in Q1-2026, and CBOs completed **1,634** CHANGES cases and **962** TEAM cases.

Energy Utilities Recap with Q1-2026 Highlights

This section reviews all energy-related consumer contacts that CAB received this quarter.

- CAB received **4,708** energy-related contacts in Q1-2026, with the 10 utilities with the most contacts accounting for **91%** of total contacts, driven primarily by high bill concerns, followed by customer service issues outside the CPUC’s jurisdiction and abusive marketing allegations, particularly among Core Transport Agent (CTA) customers
- Southern California Edison generated the highest volume of contacts (**36%**), followed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (**25%**), reflecting the concentration among large investor-owned utilities.
- Seven of the 10 energy utilities with the most contacts met the 20-business-day response expectation; Southern California Gas Company, SFE Energy Inc., and StateWise Energy exceeded this timeframe
- CTAs accounted for **23%** of energy contacts.

Energy Consumer Contacts

In Q1-2026, CAB received **4,708** energy-related contacts. The 10 energy utilities with the most contacts accounted for **4,275** contacts, or **91%** of the total. Most contacts originated from customers of the investor-owned utilities (IOUs), including Southern California Edison (SCE), which represented **36%** of all energy contacts, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) at **25%**, Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) at **6%**, and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) also at **6%**. Core Transport Agents (CTAs) also accounted for a significant share of Q1-2026 energy contacts, representing **23%** of all energy-related contacts. The highest-volume CTAs included SFE Energy Inc. with **180** contacts, AAA Natural Gas with **164** contacts, Big Tree Energy CA, LLC with **149** contacts, and Wave Energy LLC with **132** contacts. Many of these CTA-related contacts were related to alleged abusive marketing practices. Further details are provided in the [Core Transport Agents and Abusive Marketing Complaints](#) section later in this report.

Table 4 summarizes the 10 energy utilities with the most contacts by contact count and corresponding percentage of total contacts.

Table 4: Energy Utilities with Most Contacts as a % of Total Contacts (Q1-2026)

Energy Utility	Total	% of Total ⁵
Southern California Edison Company	1,693	36%
Pacific Gas & Electric Company	1,187	25%
Southern California Gas Company	294	6%
San Diego Gas & Electric Company	289	6%
SFE Energy Inc.	180	4%
AAA Natural Gas	164	3%
Big Tree Energy CA, LLC	149	3%
Wave Energy LLC	132	3%
United Energy Trading LLC dba Collective Energy	94	2%
StateWise Energy California LLC	93	2%
10 Energy Utilities With Most Contacts	4,275	90%
Total Energy Contacts (All Energy Utilities)	4,708	100%

Table 5 highlights the 10 energy utilities with the most contacts by the number of Informal Complaints (ICs) received. The table is ranked by the average number of business days each utility takes to address those complaints. When CAB forwards an IC to a utility, the utility is expected to respond to CAB **within 20 business days**.

Q1-2026, energy utilities responded to **1,771** consumer ICs. SoCalGas and SFE Energy recorded the longest average response times, at **26** and **22** business days, respectively. By comparison, SCE and PG&E, which handled the largest volume of ICs (**666** and **489**, respectively), maintained shorter average response times of **11** and **10** business days, respectively. Big Tree Energy CA responded the fastest - within **4** days, but the volume of ICs it resolved represents only a small share of total IC responses.

⁵ Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 5: 10 Energy Utilities with Most Contacts by IC Utility Responses, and Average Response Times (Q1-2026)

Utility Name	Avg. Utility Response Business Days	Count of Utility Responses
Southern California Gas Company	26	113
SFE Energy Inc.	22	44
StateWise Energy California LLC	21	28
San Diego Gas & Electric	20	165
Mirabito Natural Gas, LLC dba Evergreen Gas & Electric	15	27
Southern California Edison	11	666
Pacific Gas and Electric Company	10	489
Wave Energy LLC	6	43
AAA Natural Gas	6	51
Big Tree Energy CA, LLC	4	45

Most Frequent Contacts by Subcategory

When CAB reports data on consumer contacts, each case is categorized by the main reason for the contact, referred to as the “**primary subcategory**.” For example, if a consumer calls about a high bill and difficulty reaching customer service, “High Bill” would be selected as the primary subcategory, which falls under the broader “Billing” category.

CAB’s Consumer Information Management System (CIMS) allows staff to assign a primary subcategory to each contact and capture additional issues through related subcategories, referred to as “attributes.” These attributes help identify the full range of concerns a consumer raises in a single contact. For example, “Non-jurisdictional (NJ) Customer Service” may be added as an attribute to a contact whose primary subcategory is “High Bill.” **Because a single contact may include multiple subcategories, the total number of subcategory selections may exceed the total number of individual consumer contacts.** This approach provides a more complete view of consumer concerns and allows CAB to analyze both the primary issue and related issues raised within the same contact.

Table 6 presents the most frequently selected energy subcategories for this quarter. The Top 10 subcategories accounted for **6,023** subcategory selections, representing **70%** of all energy-related subcategory selections during Q1-2026. The most prevalent subcategory was “High Bill,” with **1,818** selections accounting for **21%** of all energy-related subcategory selections. The next most common subcategories were “NJ Customer Service” (**1,149**) and “Abusive Marketing” (**896**), representing **13%** and **10%** of the subcategory counts, respectively.

Table 6: Top 10 Subcategories for All Energy Consumer Contacts (Q1-2026)

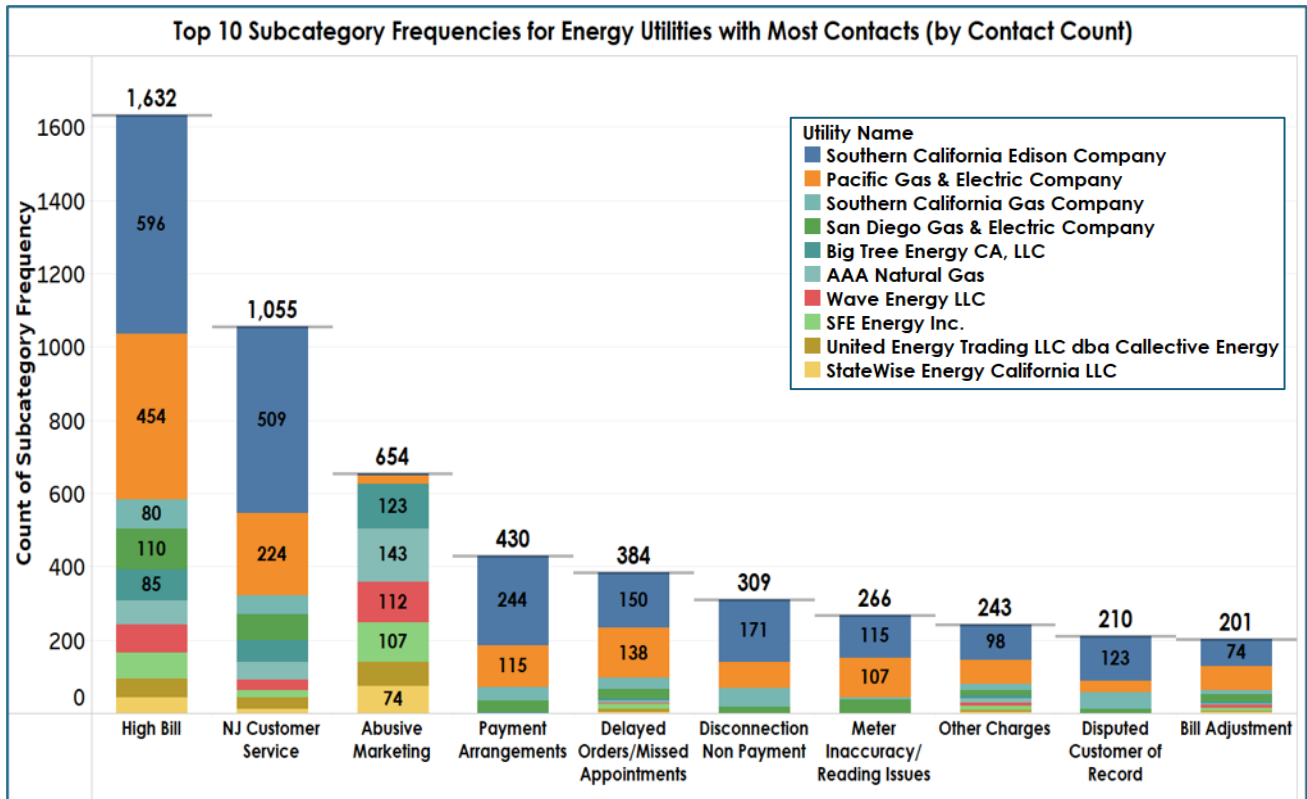
Subcategory	Count of Subcategory Selection	% of Total
High Bill	1,818	21%
NJ Customer Service	1,149	13%
Abusive Marketing	896	10%
Payment Arrangements	440	5%
Delayed Orders/Missed Appointments	416	5%
Disconnection Non-Payment	320	4%
Other Charges	284	3%
Meter Inaccuracy/Reading Issues	275	3%
Disputed Customer of Record	215	3%
Bill Adjustment	210	2%
Total Top 10 Subcategories	6,023	69%
Total of All Subcategory Counts	8,551	100%

Figure 2 highlights the most frequently reported issues among the 10 energy utilities with the most contacts in Q1-2026.

SCE and PG&E collectively accounted for **more than half** of the top 10 energy subcategory selections, with SCE recording the highest overall volume of all energy contacts and leading in nine of the top 10 subcategories. SCE’s highest-volume subcategories were “High Bill” (**596 contacts**), followed by “NJ Customer Service” (**509**), “Payment Arrangements” (**244**), and “Disconnection Non-Payment” (**171**). The “NJ Customer Service” subcategory captures customer service issues that are generally outside the CPUC’s jurisdiction, such as difficulty reaching representatives, excessive call transfers, or unsatisfactory customer interactions. Although all major utilities received contacts across multiple categories, the largest investor-owned utilities (IOUs) accounted for the majority of contacts, generally consistent with their large customer bases and the complexity of their billing, metering, and service operations.

The “Abusive Marketing” subcategory (**654**) was predominantly driven by Core Transport Agent (CTA) customers, with significant contributions from providers such as AAA Natural Gas, Big Tree Energy, and Wave Energy. These contacts generally involved allegations of misleading marketing practices, including insufficient disclosures, unauthorized enrollment or service modifications, unclear information, and potentially deceptive pricing representations.

Figure 2: Top 10 Subcategory Frequencies for Energy Utilities with Most Contacts (by Contact Count)



To conclude, energy-related contacts in Q1-2026 were driven primarily by high bill concerns, non-jurisdictional customer service issues, and complaints from CTA customers involving alleged misleading or aggressive marketing practices. The largest IOUs, especially SCE and PG&E, continued to account for most energy contacts, which is generally consistent with their large customer bases and broad service territories. CTAs, while representing a smaller segment of the energy market, generated a disproportionately high share of alleged abusive marketing-related contacts.

Most utilities met CAB’s 20-business-day response expectations during Q1-2026, with the largest IOUs maintaining relatively prompt response times despite high contact volumes. However, several smaller utilities exceeded the expected response timeframe. CAB will continue to monitor billing clarity, customer service responsiveness, CTA marketing conduct, and the timeliness of informal complaint responses to ensure consumers receive consistent, reliable, and timely support across energy providers.

Telecommunications Utilities Recap with Q1-2026 Highlights

This section reviews telecommunications and California LifeLine consumer contacts received by CAB in Q1 2026.

- CAB received **3,413** telecommunications contacts in Q1-2026, with the 10 utilities with the most contacts accounting for **73%** of total contacts, driven primarily by customer service issues, outages, and service delays
- AT&T California generated the highest volume of contacts (**39%**)
- Four of the telecommunications utilities with the highest five IC volumes met the 20-business-day response expectation; AT&T California exceeded the timeframe while handling the highest volume of cases
- CAB received **937** California LifeLine contacts in Q1-2026, a **27%** increase from Q4-2025, driven by a shift toward written contacts
- California LifeLine contacts were driven primarily by annual recertification issues, particularly missing or ineligible documentation, followed by consumer inquiries about applying for new devices or issues with existing devices

Telecommunications Consumer Contacts

Table 7 presents total telecommunications contacts and utility-specific contact volumes for Q1- 2026 for the 10 companies with the most contacts, including their share of overall contacts. In Q1-2026, CAB received **3,413** telecommunications-related contacts. The telecommunication companies with the top 10 number of contacts accounted for **2,494** contacts, or **73%** of the total, indicating that a substantial portion of consumer concerns remain concentrated among a relatively small group of providers.

AT&T California remained the largest contributor, with **1,318** contacts (**39%** of total) in Q1-2026, consistent with its position as the state's largest wireline provider and corresponding customer base. Frontier California Inc. follows with **307** contacts (**9%**). The remaining utilities each contributed between **2%** and **5%** of total contacts, reflecting a gradual distribution of contacts beyond the largest providers.

Table 7: Total Telecommunication Contacts & Telecommunications Utilities by Consumer Contact Count (Q1-2026)

Top 10 Telecommunications Utilities by Contacts	Total	% of Total
AT&T California	1,318	39%
Frontier California Inc.	307	9%
T-Mobile West LLC	173	5%
Cellco Partnership	157	5%
Charter Fiberlink CA-CCO, LLC	146	4%
AT&T Mobility Wireless Operations Holdings Inc.	118	3%
Comcast Phone of California, LLC	101	3%
Verizon Value, Inc.	60	2%
TruConnect Communications, Inc.	57	2%
Comcast, LLC	57	2%
Total Top 10 Telecommunications Contacts	2,494	73%⁶
Total - All Telecommunications Contacts	3,413	100%

Table 8 highlights the telecommunications utilities with the five highest number of Informal Complaints (ICs) received in Q1-2026 and ranks these providers by the average number of business days taken to address the ICs. When CAB forwards an IC to a utility, the utility is expected to respond to CAB within **20** business days.

In Q1-2026, telecommunications utilities responded to **676** ICs. AT&T California handled the highest volume, with **422** responses, and reported an average response time of **26** business days, exceeding the 20-day expectation. Frontier California Inc. recorded the fastest average turnaround time at **14** business days, followed by T-Mobile West LLC at **16** business days, and Cellco Partnership at **17** business days. AT&T Mobility Wireless Operations Holdings Inc. averaged **19** business days. Overall, four of the utilities with the five highest ICs met the 20-business-day response expectation, reflecting generally timely performance among major providers. AT&T California, while exceeding the standard, also handled a much higher volume of responses than other companies.

⁶ Percentages are calculated using the underlying contact counts and rounded to the nearest whole percent. Individual rounded percentages may not sum exactly to the total due to rounding.

Table 8: Telecommunications Utilities with Highest Contacts by Contact Count and Utility Response Times (Q1-2026)

Utility Name	Average Utility Response (Business Days)	Count of Utility Responses
AT&T California	26	422
AT&T Mobility Wireless Operations Holdings Inc.	19	68
Cellco Partnership	17	52
T-Mobile West LLC	16	62
Frontier California Inc.	14	72
Total		676

Most Frequent Contacts by Subcategories

When CAB reports consumer contact data, each case is categorized by its main reason for contact, referred to as the “primary subcategory.” For example, if a consumer reports both a high bill and difficulty reaching customer service, “High Bill” would be recorded as the primary subcategory under the broader Billing category.

CAB’s Consumer Information Management System (CIMS) allows staff to assign one primary subcategory to each contact, along with additional subcategories, called “attributes”, to capture other issues raised during the same interaction. For example, “Non-jurisdictional (NJ) Customer Service” would be recorded as an attribute. Because multiple subcategories can be assigned to a single contact, the total number of subcategory selections may exceed the total number of individual consumer contacts. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of consumer concerns.

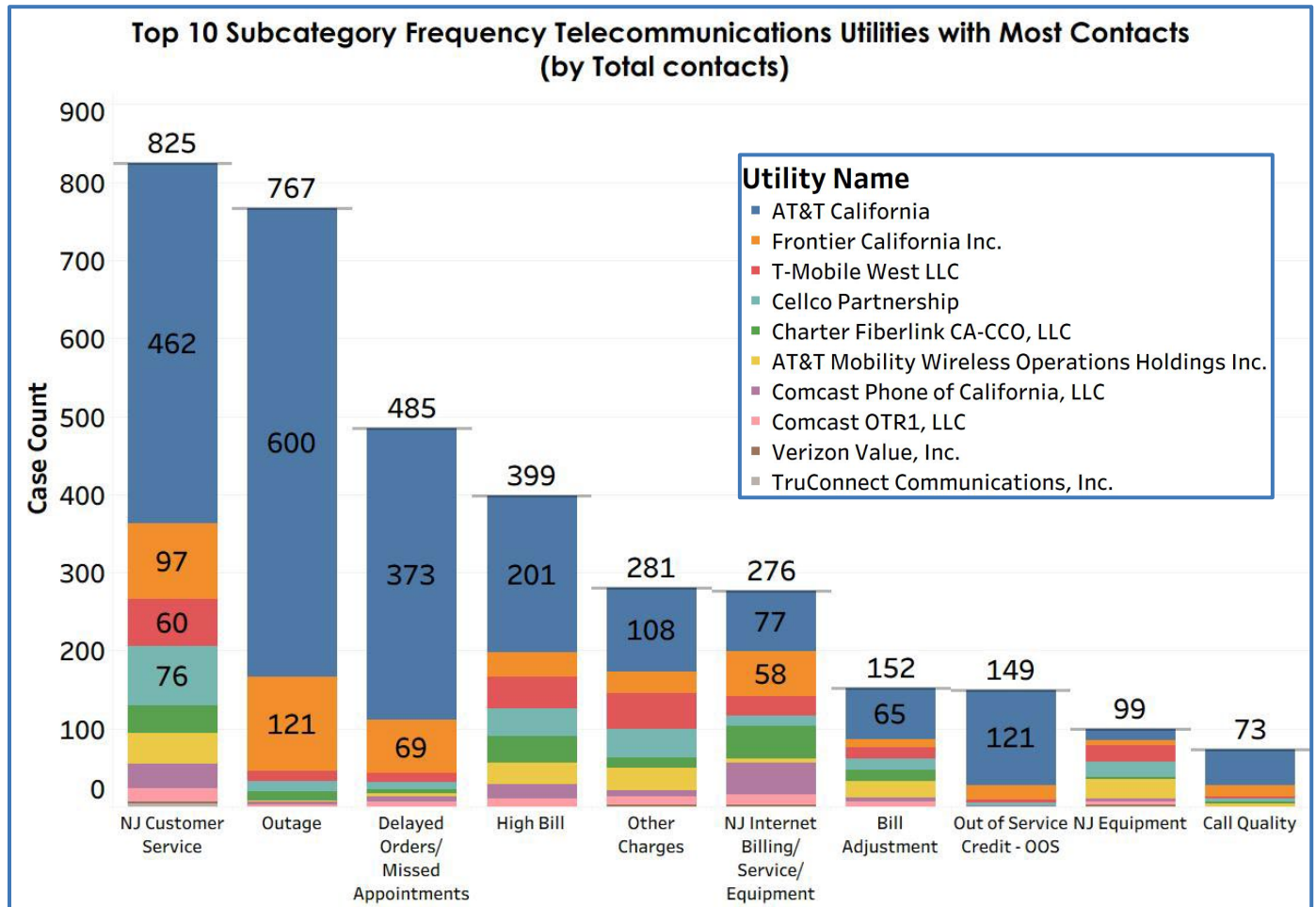
Figure 3 presents the most frequently selected telecommunications subcategories (excluding California LifeLine) for consumer contacts associated with utilities with the 10 most ICs in Q1-2026. It reflects total volumes by subcategory and highlights the primary drivers of consumer concerns.

The leading subcategory was “NJ Customer Service,”⁷ with **825** contacts, highlighting persistent customer service challenges across providers. “Outage” ranked second with **767** contacts, indicating disruptions, particularly affecting AT&T California’s landline services. “Delayed Orders/Missed Appointments” ranked third with **485** contacts, followed by “High Bill” with **399** contacts, reflecting ongoing billing and service-

⁷ Non-Jurisdiction (NJ) Customer Service cases are customer service-related issues, such as being transferred from one person to another multiple times during a single phone call, not being able to reach the correct department or someone who could address the issue, and utility representative challenges.

delivery issues. Additional subcategories, such as “Other Charges”⁸ (281 contacts) and “NJ Internet Billing/Service/Equipment”⁹ (276 contacts), further underscore concerns related to billing and internet services. Across these subcategories, AT&T California accounted for a significant share of contacts, particularly in customer service, outages, and service delays, as well as in requests for credits related to those issues, consistent with previous trends.

Figure 3: Top 10 Subcategory Frequency Telecommunications Utilities with Most Contacts (by Total contacts)¹⁰



⁸ Roaming, 411, returned check charges, transfer charges, activation fee, closed account charges (i.e., consumer terminated service with utility and is still receiving bills even though account balance was \$0 at termination). This includes pre-paid cards.

⁹ A service that connects you to the web. Any complaint that involves charges for internet service and related service concerns or equipment such as modems, routers, etc.

¹⁰ The figure excludes California LifeLine.

California LifeLine

CAB assists consumers with California LifeLine-related inquiries, reviews appeals filed by consumers who were disqualified from the program by the Third-Party Administrator (TPA), and helps resolve billing issues.

Figure 4 summarizes California LifeLine contacts received Q2-2025 through Q1-2026. In Q1-2026, CAB received **937** California LifeLine contacts, a **27%** increase from Q4-2025. Written contacts increased to **613** (up **70%** from the previous quarter), while phone contacts decreased to **324** (down **15%**). Overall, written contacts accounted for most California LifeLine inquiries in Q1-2026, reflecting a shift from phone to written communication compared to the previous quarter.

Figure 4: California LifeLine Contacts Received Through Q1-2026

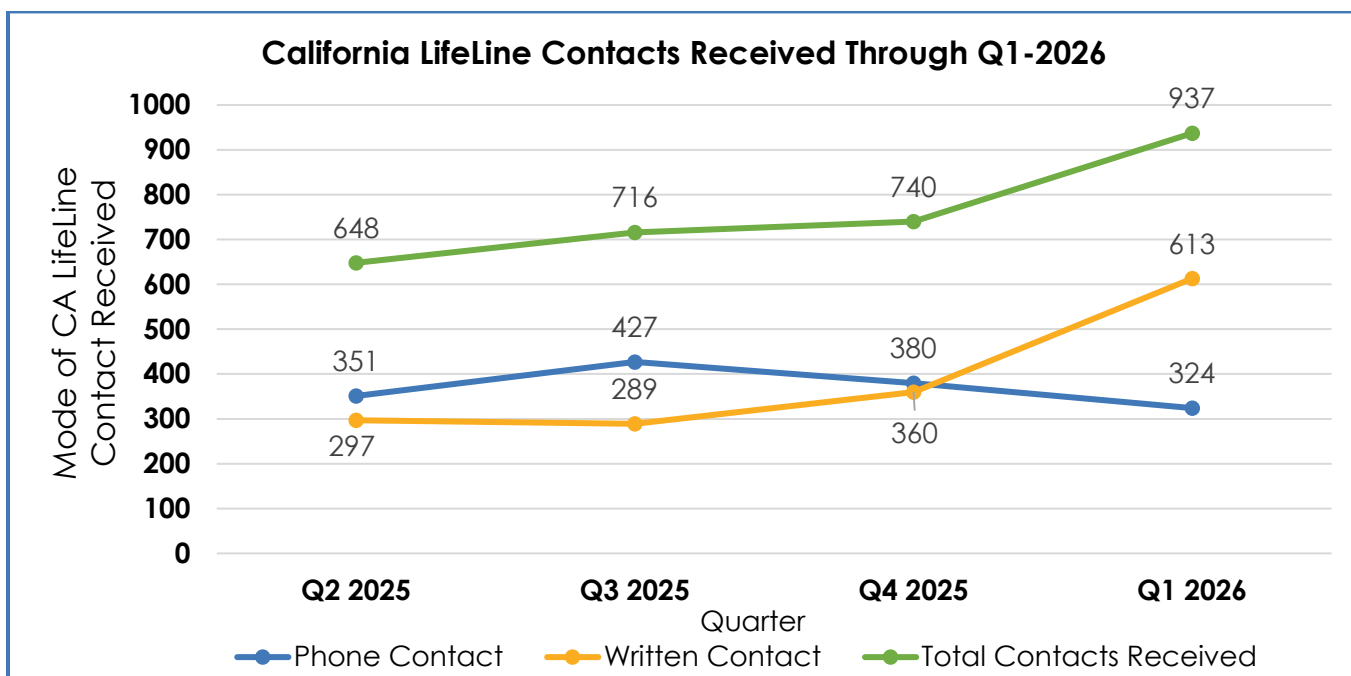
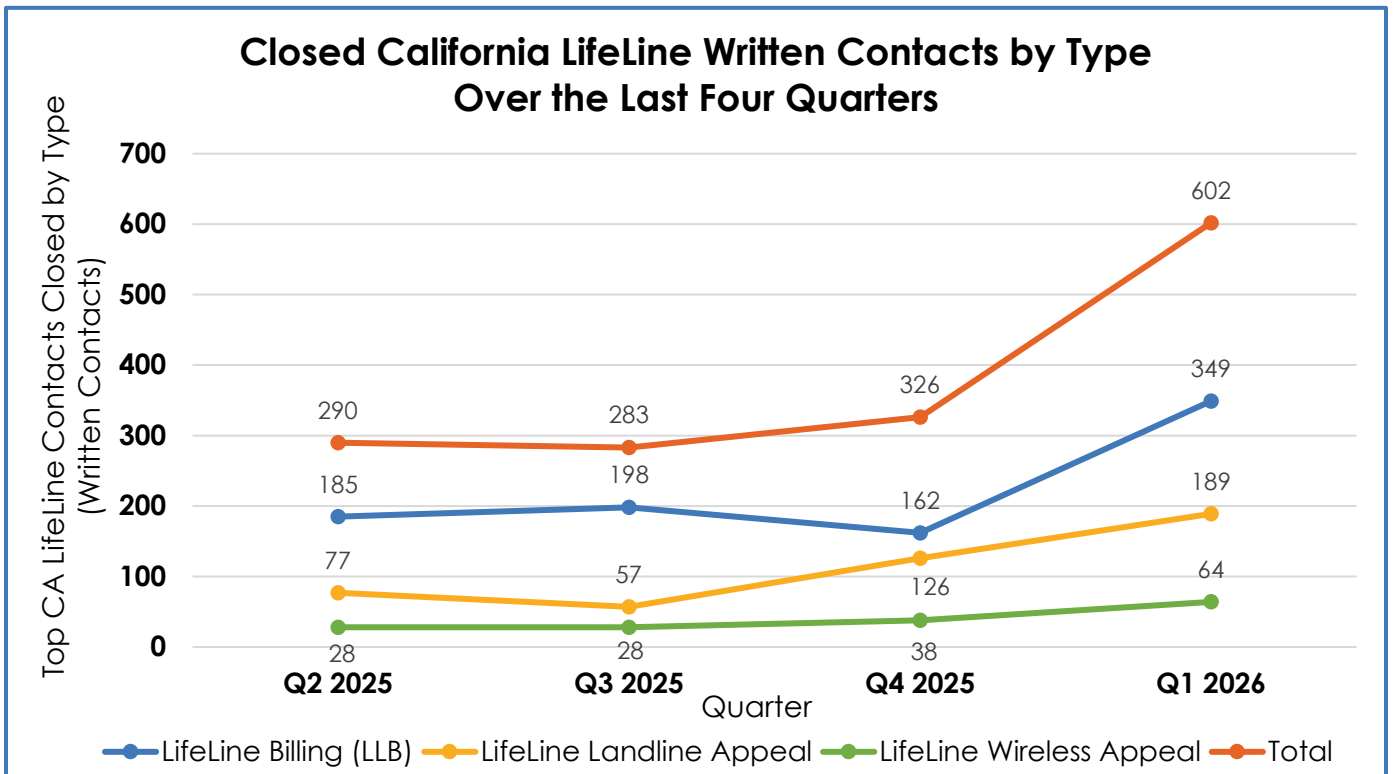


Figure 5 summarizes the top California LifeLine contact types closed (written contacts) over the last four quarters, highlighting recent trends and changes from Q4-2025 to Q1-2026.

In Q1-2026, California LifeLine Billing (LLB) was the largest category, with **349** closed contacts, a **115%** increase from Q4-2025. California LifeLine Landline Appeals followed with **189** contacts, up **50%** from the previous quarter, while California LifeLine Wireless Appeals totaled **64** contacts, a **68%** increase from the prior quarter. Overall, California LifeLine written contacts completed increased by **85%** in Q1-2026, with billing-related issues accounting for the largest share, followed by landline and wireless appeals.

Figure 5: Closed California LifeLine Written Contacts by Type Over the Last Four Quarters



Most Frequent Types of California LifeLine contacts

Figure 6 illustrates the Top 10 California LifeLine subcategories for Q1-2026, showing monthly contact volumes for January, February, and March. The figure highlights how key California LifeLine issues fluctuate over the quarter and identifies the primary drivers of consumer contacts.

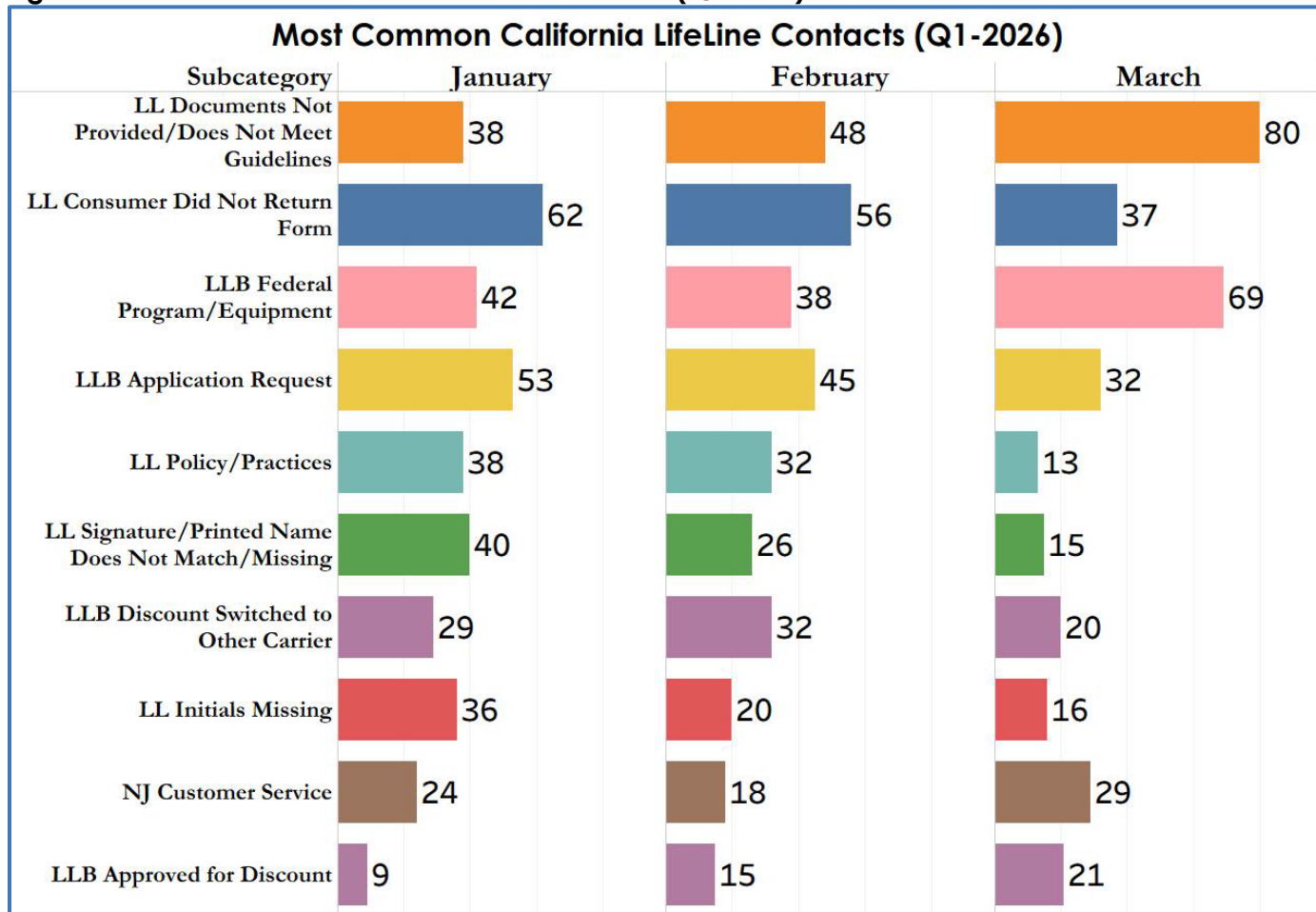
“LL Documents Not Provided/Does Not Meet Guidelines” emerged as the leading issue in Q1-2026, increasing steadily from 38 contacts in January to 48 in February and 80 in March, driven by growing challenges in the California LifeLine annual recertification process, with missing or ineligible documentation being a particular issue. “LL Consumer Did Not Return Form”¹¹ remained a significant issue but declined over the quarter, from 62 in January to 37 in March. “LLB Federal Program/Equipment”¹² showed a notable increase in March (69 contacts), following relatively lower volumes in January (42) and February (38), driven by consumer inquiries about the process of applying for a new device and issues with existing devices. “LLB

¹¹ LL Consumer Did Not Return Form refers to contacts where consumers were denied California LifeLine benefits because the required form was not received by the California LifeLine Program Administrator or was submitted after the deadline. These contacts typically occur when consumers receive a denial notice indicating there is no record of their form submission or that it was returned after the due date.

¹² Consumer attempting to secure a free/discounted phone or accessories, i.e., SIM card, charger, through their service provider, or has not received replacement equipment.

Application Request¹³ decreased over the quarter, suggesting a tapering down in application-related inquiries after the start of the year. Other notable subcategories, including “LL Policy/Practices,”¹⁴ “LL Signature/Printed Name Does Not Match/Missing,” and “LL Initials Missing,” which generally trended downward over the quarter, while “NJ Customer Service” increased slightly in March. Overall, California LifeLine contacts in Q1-2026 were driven primarily by annual recertification issues and inquiries related to California LifeLine discounted phones.

Figure 6: Most Common California LifeLine Contacts (Q1-2026)



¹³ Consumer claims to have requested a new California LifeLine Application Form from their service provider but has not received it.

¹⁴ Dissatisfaction with California LifeLine-mandated policies or procedures, which are not an appeal or a direct complaint about a service provider.

Environmental and Social Justice (ESJ) Consumer Contacts for Q1-2026

ESJ Overview

The CPUC's mission is to ensure that **all Californians** can access safe, clean, and affordable utility services and infrastructure. The CPUC has created an **Environmental and Social Justice (ESJ) Action Plan** to serve as both a commitment to furthering these principles and a framework to integrate ESJ considerations throughout the agency's work. The ESJ Action Plan **defines ESJ Communities** as including:¹⁵

- Low-income or communities of color that have been underrepresented in the policy setting or decision-making process
- Subject to a disproportionate impact from one or more environmental hazards
- Likely to experience disparate implementation of environmental regulations and socio-economic investments in their communities
- Disadvantaged Communities (DACs): defined as census tracts that score in the top **25%** of CalEnviroScreen 3.0, along with those that score within the highest **5%** of CalEnviroScreen 3.0's Pollution Burden but do not receive an overall CalEnviroScreen score
- All Tribal lands; low-income households;¹⁶ and low-income census tracts¹⁷

¹⁵ <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/news-and-outreach/documents/news-office/key-issues/esj/esj-action-plan-v2jw.pdf>, See pp. 11-12.

¹⁶ Household incomes below 80 percent of the area median income.

¹⁷ Census tracts with household incomes less than 80 percent of the area or state median income.

Table 9 is a quick reference guide to the terminology used throughout this section. CAB uses zip codes instead of census tracts to report on ESJ and focuses primarily on the zip codes that fall into the **ESJ 75th-100th Percentile**, or **ESJ Quartile 1**, which represents the most **disadvantaged communities (DACs)**.

Table 9: ESJ/CAB Terminology Conversion Table

ESJ Designation by Zip Code	ESJ Quartile	Classification
ESJ 75 th - 100 th percentile	Quartile 1	Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)
ESJ 50 th - 74 th percentile	Quartile 2	-
ESJ 25 th - 49 th percentile	Quartile 3	-
ESJ 0 - 24 th percentile	Quartile 4	-

Energy and Telecommunications ESJ Highlights

- CAB received **2,331** ESJ Quartile 1 (75th-100th percentile) contacts from energy, telecommunications, and water consumers
- CAB received **1,084** contacts regarding CTAs, of which **40%** originated from ESJ zip codes
- A total of **1,185** telecommunications outage complaints were received over the past 12 months, and some consumers are experiencing extended delays in having their services restored; **38%** of the complaints originated from disadvantaged communities

Telecommunications, Energy, and Water ESJ Contacts

Table 10 shows an increase in energy ESJ consumer contacts for Q1-2026. Also, contacts related to water and telecommunications both grew compared to the previous quarter. Specifically, energy contacts from ESJ zip codes rose by **27%**, telecommunications contacts increased by **38%**, and water-related contacts grew by **32%**. Overall, the total number of contacts increased by **31%** between Q1-2026 and the previous quarter.

Table 10: Energy and Telecommunications ESJ Contacts (ESJ 75th – 100th percentile)

Industry	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Q1-2026
Energy	1,084	986	1,029	1,302
Telecommunications	283	668	652	901
Water	97	108	97	128
Total	1,464	1,762	1,778	2,331

Top Complaints from Consumers in DACs

Disconnection Non-Payment (DNP) Contacts

Table 11 shows that overall, “Disconnection Non-Payment” (DNP) contacts have trended upward over the past year, despite a 27% decrease in Q1-2026 compared to the previous quarter. Over the last 12 months, **37%** of all DNP contacts across these industries originated from consumers residing in DACs. Specifically, DAC contacts comprised **38%**, **30%**, and **38%** of total energy, telecommunications, and water DNP contacts, respectively. To underscore this trend, Table 13 shows that **37%** of total DNP contacts across these three industries are in DACs compared to **63%** in non-ESJ zip codes.

Table 11: Disconnection Non-Payment Contacts by Industry and Percentage of DAC Contacts

Industry	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Q1-2026	Total DNP contacts	Total DAC DNP Contacts	% DAC contacts
Energy	471	416	531	321	1,739	655	38%
Telecommunications	45	37	40	49	171	52	30%
Water	39	47	27	65	178	67	38%
Total	555	500	598	435	2,088	774	37%

Table 12 shows how consumer contacts from DACs are distributed by industry. Most of these contacts originate from energy providers. Q1-2026 DNP contacts are lower than the previous three quarters.

Table 12: Disconnection Non-Payment ESJ Contacts by Industry

Industry	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Q1-2026	Total DAC DNP Contacts
Energy	194	145	200	116	655
Telecommunications	17	15	6	14	52
Water	15	18	13	21	67
Total	226	178	219	151	774

Table 13 shows the DNP contacts received by CAB for energy IOUs, with the most contacts during the first three months of 2026. Q1-2026 contacts are the lowest of all four quarters. These numbers are reflected in the energy DNP contacts shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Disconnection Contacts for Energy IOUs by Month, Q1-2026

Utility Name	Jan.-26	Feb.-26	Mar.-26	Q1-2026 Total
Pacific Gas and Electric Company	27	15	27	69
San Diego Gas & Electric	6	4	6	16
Southern California Edison	26	78	67	171
Southern California Gas Company	19	16	18	53
Total	78	113	118	309

Table 14 explains the decrease in DNP contacts as the number of actual disconnections was lower in January and February than in March. This is explained in part by the cap on disconnections placed on the investor-owned utilities (IOUs).¹⁸ In other words, only a portion of the companies’ customer bases can be disconnected in a calendar year. The number of disconnections can fluctuate monthly, but at the end of the year, the percentage of disconnections equals the percentage cap set for each IOU. January and February represent months of adjusting disconnection totals by reducing the disconnections that could occur during the coldest months of the year. Since the disconnection data was available as counts of disconnections by zip code, CAB was able to determine the percentage of disconnections that occurred in ESJ zip codes.

Table 14: Total Disconnections by IOU for Q1-2026 by Month with Percentage of ESJ Disconnections

Company	Jan. 2026	Feb. 2026	Mar. 2026	Total Disconnects	ESJ Disconnects	% ESJ
Pacific Gas and Electric Company	88	6,076	12,126	18,290	6,415	35%
Southern California Edison	4,309	16,967	22,827	44,103	20,049	45%
San Diego Gas & Electric	0	48	3,709	3,757	396	11%
Southern California Gas Co.	3,084	3,168	3,949	10,201	5,529	54%
Total	7,481	26,259	42,611	76,351	32,389	42%

¹⁸ In Decision (D.) 20-06-003, the CPUC established the following residential disconnection rate caps for the following energy utilities (together, the Large Utilities): 3.5 percent Pacific Gas and Electric Company, 3 percent San Diego Gas & Electric, 4 percent Southern California Edison, and 2 percent Southern California Gas Company. In Decision (D.) 24-11-005 the caps were extended until a final decision is made about disconnection caps.

ESJ Energy Contacts

Core Transport Agents (CTA) and Alleged Abusive Marketing Complaints

CTAs are non-utility natural gas suppliers that purchase natural gas for residential and small-commercial end-use customers. California consumers can elect to receive natural gas supply from many such providers in the state. If consumers choose this option, they pay the CTA for the natural gas supplied and they pay the utility for delivering it through one of its distribution pipelines. Depending on the consumer’s billing option, they may receive bills from the utility, the CTA, or both. The CPUC does not regulate the rates that CTAs charge their customers, but CTAs must register with the CPUC to conduct business in California. As a result, the CPUC has the authority to suspend or revoke the registration of a non-compliant CTA, thereby enabling it to effectively address consumer complaints against CTAs.

Table 16 shows the number of CTA contacts CAB received each quarter over the previous four quarters. During Q1-2025, CAB received 1,086 CTA contacts, and in Q1-2026, CAB received **1,084** contacts. The number of ESJ contacts also increased by **62%** between Q4-2025 and Q1-2026. However, because of the increase in total contacts, the overall percentage of ESJ contacts remained relatively stable at around **40%**.

Table 16: CTA Contacts by Quarter

Contacts	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Q1-2026
Count of CTA Contacts	678	664	652	1,084
Count ESJ Contacts	253	248	265	430
Percentage ESJ Contacts	37%	37%	41%	40%

Table 17 shows that the percentage of alleged “Abusive Marketing” contacts in ESJ zip codes is slightly higher than the rate of alleged abusive marketing contacts in non-ESJ zip codes. This data indicates that most contacts are generated from non-ESJ zip codes, representing a change from previous years, when ESJ zip codes dominated CTA contacts.

Table 17: CTA Contacts and Alleged Abusive Marketing Contacts by Quarter

Contacts	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Q1-2026
Count of CTA Contacts	678	664	652	1,084
Count of Alleged Abusive Marketing Contacts	482	503	497	775
% of Alleged Abusive Marketing Contacts	71%	76%	76%	71%
Count ESJ Contacts	253	248	265	430
Count of Alleged Abusive Marketing Contacts	165	171	183	281
% of ESJ Alleged Abusive Marketing Contacts	65%	69%	69%	65%

In **Table 18**, the CTAs with the 10 most contacts account for **97% (1,047)** of all CTA-related contacts; **72%** of those contacts are related to alleged abusive marketing. The table ranks the utilities by the total number of contacts received.

Table 18: CTAs by Contacts, and Total Alleged Abusive Marketing Complaints (Q1-2026)

Utility Name	Total Contacts	Total Alleged Abusive Marketing Contacts	% of all Contacts Due to Alleged Abusive Marketing
SFE Energy Inc.	180	93	52%
AAA Natural Gas	164	138	84%
Big Tree Energy CA, LLC	149	111	74%
Wave Energy LLC	132	102	77%
United Energy Trading LLC dba Collective Energy	94	58	62%
StateWise Energy California LLC	93	70	75%
Mirabito Natural Gas, LLC dba Evergreen Gas & Electric	91	77	85%
Vista Energy Marketing LP	68	44	65%
Spark Energy Gas LLC	49	33	67%
Peak Six Power and Gas LLC	27	23	85%
Total	1047	749	72%

Table 19 shows the companies by total contacts, percentage of ESJ contacts, and the percentage of ESJ contacts related to abusive marketing. The table ranks the utilities by the total number of contacts received; **39%** of CTA contacts originated from ESJ zip codes, and **68%** of those involved alleged abusive marketing.

Table 19: CTAs by Contacts, and Total Alleged Abusive Marketing Complaints in the Most Disadvantaged ESJ Communities (Q1-2026)

Utility Name	Total Contacts	Total ESJ Contacts	% ESJ Contacts	ESJ Alleged Abusive Marketing Contacts	% of ESJ Contacts Due to Alleged Abusive Marketing
SFE Energy Inc.	180	70	39%	38	54%
AAA Natural Gas	164	24	15%	18	75%
Big Tree Energy CA, LLC	149	74	50%	54	73%
Wave Energy LLC	132	53	40%	39	74%
United Energy Trading LLC dba Collective Energy	94	45	48%	28	62%
StateWise Energy California LLC	93	51	55%	39	76%
Mirabito Natural Gas, LLC dba Evergreen Gas & Electric	91	35	38%	27	77%
Vista Energy Marketing LP	68	32	47%	19	59%
Spark Energy Gas LLC	49	24	49%	14	58%
Peak Six Power and Gas LLC	27	5	19%	5	100%
Total	1,047	413	39%	281	68%

ESJ Telecommunications Contacts

Telecommunications Outage Complaints

CAB received more telecommunications wireline outage complaints each quarter, with Q1-2026 recording the highest total since CAB began monitoring these incidents. While cable theft is on the rise across various zip codes, including those not classified as Disadvantaged Communities, not all outages are related to this issue. Customers who have experienced outages report long wait times and missed appointments; however, many of these outages are subject to a 24-hour restoration standard and do not stem from cable theft-related complaints. Additionally, many customers report outages lasting more than 30 days, highlighting ongoing challenges with service reliability.

Table 20 shows the total outage contacts received from telecommunications consumers over the last four quarters. AT&T surpasses all other carriers in outage complaints each quarter and exceeds the next highest carrier by **954 contacts** over the last year. AT&T’s outage complaints are disproportionately high in zip codes

in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods (DACs) compared to those in other disadvantaged communities; 35% of AT&T’s outage complaints affected consumers in ESJ zip codes.

Table 20: Wireline Telecommunications Companies Outage Complaints & ESJ Contacts Percentage

Utility Name	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Q1-2026	Total	Total ESJ Contacts Q1-2026	% ESJ Contacts Q1-2026
AT&T California	154	204	325	502	1,185	174	35%
Frontier California, Inc.	29	54	55	93	231	23	25%
Total	183	258	380	595	1,416	197	33%

Table 21 shows that disadvantaged communities experience most cable theft-related outages, with 29% of outage contacts in ESJ zip codes related to cable theft. This is consistent with earlier CAB analyses¹⁹ that show most cable theft-caused outages occurred in ESJ zip codes. However, the complaint data now indicates that while the number of cable thefts is increasing in ESJ, they are also spreading into non-ESJ zip codes, thereby lowering the overall percentage of cable theft-related complaints in ESJ zip codes.

Table 21: AT&T and Frontier Total Outage Contacts Related to Cable Theft in ESJ Zip Codes

Utility Name	DAC Contacts	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Q1-2026	Total	% Cable Theft (Q1-2026)
AT&T California	Outage Contacts	73	98	112	174	457	
	Cable Theft	24	36	25	48	133	29%
Frontier California Inc.	Outage Contacts	5	9	19	22	55	
	Cable Theft	1	1	1	4	7	13%

Table 22 demonstrates that cable theft continues to be a problem in AT&T’s and Frontier’s territories, and related outages increased sharply for both companies in this quarter. CAB recorded a 162% increase in AT&T cable theft contacts per quarter between Q2-2025 and Q1-2026. Frontier also experienced an increase in contacts regarding cable theft. Cable theft-related outage contacts accounted for 20% and 17% of all service outage contacts this quarter for AT&T California and Frontier California Inc., respectively.

¹⁹ Previous CAB Quarterly reports can be accessed here: [Consumer Affairs Branch](#)

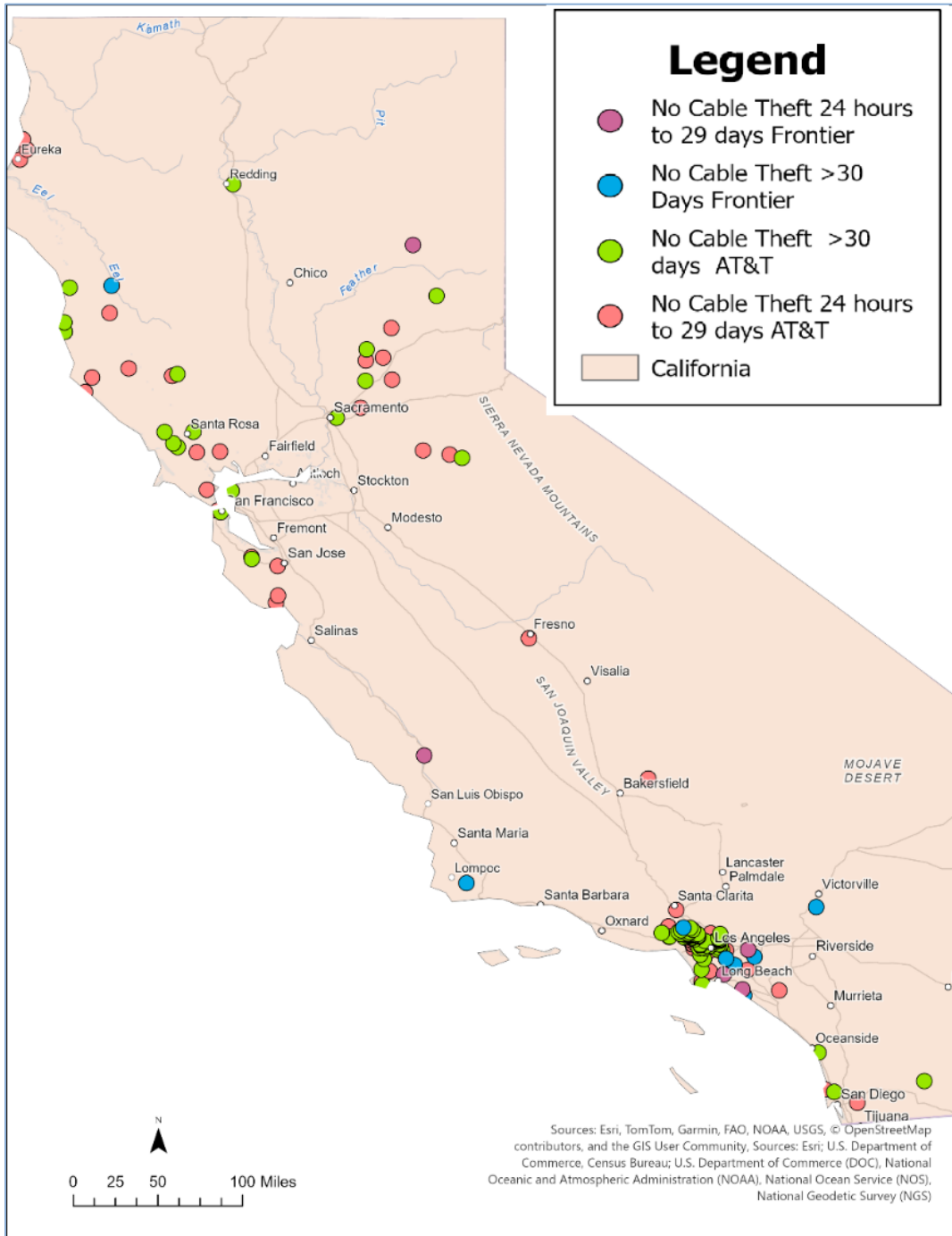
Table 22: AT&T and Frontier Total Outage Contacts and Outage Contacts Related to Cable Theft

Utility Name	All Contacts	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Q1-2026	Total	% Cable Theft Q1-2026
AT&T California	Outage Contacts	154	204	325	502	1185	
	Cable Theft	29	58	75	76	238	20%
Frontier California, Inc.	Outage Contacts	29	53	55	93	230	
	Cable Theft	1	12	8	19	40	17%

The CPUC’s General Order (GO) 133-E POTS and VoIP Outage Repair Standard requires telephone corporations to restore outage tickets within 24 hours. There are exemptions to this rule, including cable theft and vandalism.

During Q1-2026, CAB referred 183 informal complaints to AT&T California and Frontier California, both of which received customer complaints about outages and prolonged waits for service restoration that fall outside of these exemptions. **Figure 9** shows the geographic distribution of complaints. While the Los Angeles Area has a dense cluster of repair delays, Northern California, particularly in rural zip codes, also experiences moderate clustering of complaints. The figure breaks these delays into two categories: repair delays from over 24 hours to 29 days and outages lasting more than 30 days.

Figure 9: Outage and Delayed Order/Missed Appointment Complaints by Outage Intervals Q1-2026



TEAM and CHANGES

In addition to handling consumer contacts, CAB oversees two important programs: the Telecommunications Education and Assistance in Multiple Languages ([TEAM](#)) and the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electric Services ([CHANGES](#)). These programs assist Limited English Proficiency (LEP) consumers with telecommunications and energy issues, respectively.

TEAM and CHANGES support LEP utility consumers statewide through **24** community-based organizations (CBOs) that offer services in their preferred language and with cultural sensitivity. CHANGES CBOs are specifically trained to support consumers through the program's three service components: individual case assistance, education, and outreach.

The most common type of individual case assistance helps clients address financial challenges in paying for services or resolving disputes with their providers.

CBOs also offer education classes on a range of topics to help consumers manage their utility services. Classes are provided either on CBO premises or in nearby facilities within the same community.

Outreach is conducted by promoting the program at community events and through various media. The most recent TEAM and CHANGES contract was awarded to the non-profit organization, the International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA), from July 2024 to June 2027.²⁰ TEAM is authorized to receive an annual budget of up to **\$1.6 million**, and CHANGES is authorized for up to **\$1.75 million** annually. Of the \$1.75 million for CHANGES, **\$1.68 million** is allotted to the contract, and the remainder is for the evaluation, as ordered by the 2021 CARE/FERA/ESA Decision.

²⁰ The full list of CBO's can be accessed here: [TEAM & CHANGES CBO Roster](#)

The Top Issues for TEAM and CHANGES Clients

CHANGES

In Q1-2026, CHANGES community-based organizations (CBOs) successfully resolved **1,634** client cases, which is a **63%** increase from the prior quarter.

Table 25 illustrates that the top 10 case issues accounted for all (**100%**) of the resolved cases during this period; **44%** of these cases were from consumers relating to “Needs Referral for Assistance Programs,” and **36%** attributed to “Unable to Pay Balance Due”. The third-most-reported issue was “High Bill,” accounting for **5%** of cases.

Table 25: CHANGES Client Issues (Q1-2026)

Top 10 Case Issues		
Case Issue Type	Case Count	% of Total Top 10 Issues
Needs Referral for Assistance Programs	722	44%
Unable to Pay Balance Due	589	36%
High Bill	78	5%
Other Payment Assistance (church, private company, etc.)	68	4%
Electric Aggregation	59	4%
Assist with Changes to Account	45	3%
Gas Aggregation	29	2%
New Account Set-Up	25	2%
Customer Service Problem	12	>1%
Pending Disconnection	7	>1%
Total (Top 10 by Issue Type)	1,634	100%

TEAM

TEAM CBOs successfully closed **962** client cases, a **22% increase** from the previous quarter, during the reporting period, securing **\$40,857** in consumer returns by resolving telecommunications-related disputes.

Table 26 presents a detailed breakdown of the top 10 case issues, collectively accounting for **99%** of all resolved TEAM cases. Of these, **27%** of clients sought help with their “High Bill,” **18%** received “Assistance with Changes to Account,” and **17%** received “Cramming” support. Additionally, **7%** of contacts were from clients who needed to be placed on the “Do Not Call List.” The remaining issues within the top 10 categories each represented between **4%** and **7%** of total client contacts.

Table 26: TEAM Client Issues (Q1-2026)

Top 10 Case Issues		
Case Issue Type	Case Count	% of Total Top 10 Issues
High Bill	207	27%
Assisted With Changes to Account	140	18%
Cramming	131	17%
Do Not Call List	56	7%
Assist with Phone Activation	50	7%
Over billing	40	5%
WirePro	37	5%
LifeLine Enrollment	36	5%
LifeLine Recertification	31	4%
Assisted Client with Paying Bill	30	4%
Total for Closed Cases (Top 10 by Issue Type)	758	99%*

* Does not equal 100% due to rounding