Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB)

YEAR IN REVIEW– 2025

April 8, 2026

Services provided by CAB staff to consumers in 2025

California Public Utilities Commission

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About The Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB)

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

CAB delivers the following services:

- Resolves consumer questions or complaints about regulated utility services (telecommunications, natural gas, electricity, and water)
- Resolves application appeals for California LifeLine (a discounted phone program for low-income 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

About This Report

This yearly 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 December 2025.

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Executive Summary

The California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) 2025 Year in Review highlights a continued critical role in assisting utility consumers across the state. In 2025, CAB continued its core mission of supporting utility consumers statewide, responding to **32,684** consumer contacts and resolving **8,996** informal complaints. CAB facilitated **$3.7 million** in financial returns from utilities to consumers, including refunds and credit adjustments, across CPUC-regulated utilities. Energy and telecommunications issues remained the primary drivers of consumer contacts, with energy concerns centered on high bills, customer service challenges, abusive marketing by Core Transport Agents (CTAs), and rising Disconnection Non-Payment (DNP) cases. Telecommunications contacts increased to **9,796**, driven largely by service outages and operational issues, including delayed orders, missed appointments, and inquiries about California LifeLine.

Notably, contacts related to vulnerable populations also increased significantly. Environmental and Social Justice (ESJ) communities experienced disproportionately higher impacts, generating **7,492** contacts, a **57%** increase from 2024. CTA complaints rose **72%**, with the highest concentrations in disadvantaged communities, among foreign-born consumers, and in areas where English is not spoken at home. Telecommunications outages, particularly those linked to cable theft, continued to affect ESJ communities at higher rates. CAB's TEAM and CHANGES programs also provided essential support for limited-English proficient, low-income, disabled, and senior consumers, resolving **4,675** CHANGES cases and **3,212** TEAM cases, and delivering $**102,672** in telecommunications-related financial returns to consumers.

2025 CAB Service Highlights

- Received 32,684 contacts from California utility consumers seeking assistance
- Assisted 8,996 consumers in resolving their complaints
- Facilitated $3.7 million in consumer returns from utilities

CAB Received 32,684 Consumer Contacts in 2025

In this report, total consumer contacts (contacts) include all questions and complaints received by CAB from January through December 2025.

Figure 1 illustrates the volume of contacts received by CAB across five industries - energy **(ENG)**, non-regulated industries **(NON)**[1], telecommunications **(TELECOM)**, transportation **(TRN)**, and water **(WAT),** over the past four quarters. Contacts were submitted through multiple channels, including phone, mail, email, and an online complaint form. In total, CAB received **32,684** contacts during the year, with the vast majority relating to energy and telecommunications services.

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

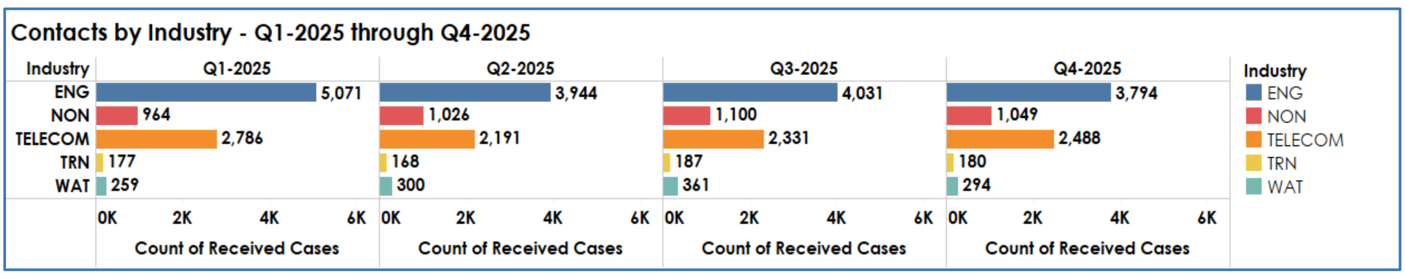
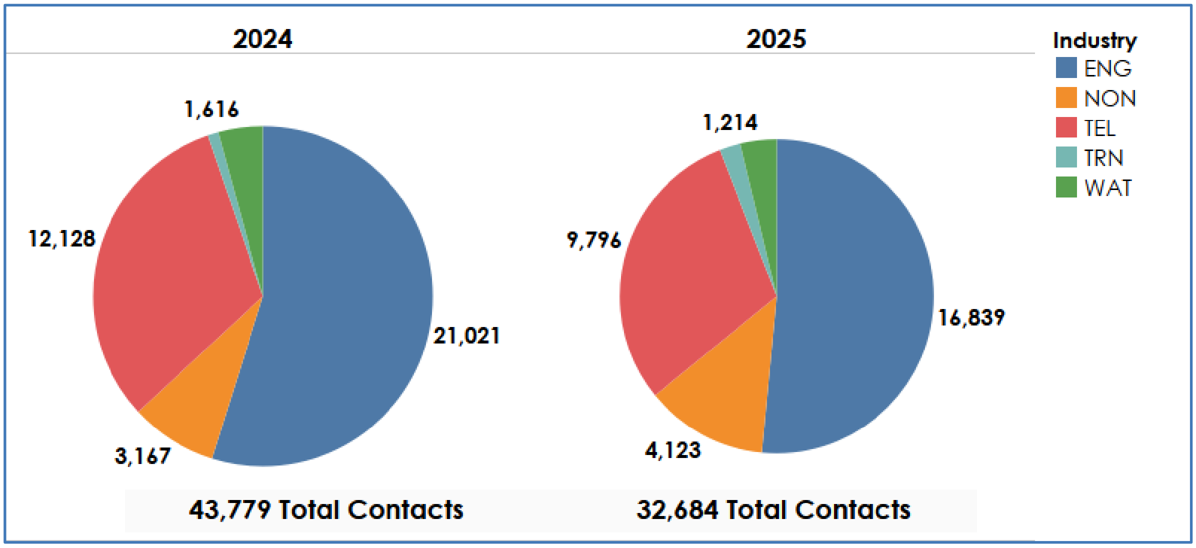


Figure 2 displays a full-year perspective compared to the prior year. Total contacts declined from **43,779** in 2024 to **32,684** in 2025, a year-over-year decrease of 11,095. Energy-related contacts remained dominant with **16,839** total contacts, accounting for just over half of all annual activity. Telecommunications followed this sector with **9,796**, Non-Regulated with **4,123**, Water with **1,214**, and Transportation with **712** total contacts.

[1] Consumer contacts related to concerns, disputes, and issues over things where the CPUC has no jurisdiction

Figure 2: Consumer Contacts by Industry (2024 v. 2025)



CAB Assisted 8,996 Consumers to Resolve Informal Complaints (ICs) in 2025

CAB's **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.[2] The process helps ensure that consumer concerns are addressed promptly and fairly across CPUC-regulated industries.

Table 1 displays the number of informal complaints received by each industry. Over the four quarters of 2025, a total of **8,996** informal complaints were resolved across all industries. This was a slight increase of **190, or 1%, from the 2024 yearly total**. Table 1 also shows that the energy industry accounts for most cases, with **6,344** complaints (**71%** of all ICs closed), followed by the telecommunications industry, with **2,258** complaints **(25%)**. The water industry and transportation sectors had much smaller shares, closing **393** complaints **(4%)** and one complaint, respectively, during the year. Overall, quarterly totals remained relatively stable, ranging from **2,126** to **2,342** cases, indicating a consistent trend in complaint resolution throughout 2025.

[2] CAB focuses on ICs. The CPUC also has a Formal Complaint (FC) process. An FC is a written legal document that alleges 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.

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

Industry	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Total Cases (2025)	% of ICs Closed (2025)
Energy	1,638	1,682	1,515	1,509	**6,344**	**71%**
Telecommunications	551	571	504	632	**2,258**	**25%**
Water	81	89	106	117	**393**	**4%**
Transportation	-	-	1	-	**1**	**<1%**
Total	**2,270**	**2,342**	**2,126**	**2,258**	**8,996**	**100%**

CAB Facilitated the Return of $3,718,797 to Consumers from Their Utilities in 2025

Table 2 presents consumer refund outcomes by industry in 2025, highlighting changes in total monetary returns and shifts in industry contributions when compared to the prior year. Overall, total consumer returns declined from **$5 million** in 2024 to **$3.7 million** in 2025, representing a **26%** decrease, largely due to a **$1.4 million** refund issued to a commercial consumer in Q2-2024 that elevated the prior year's total. Refunds in 2025 remained concentrated in the energy and telecommunications industries. The telecommunications industry recorded a modest decrease, with refunds falling from **$585,000** to **$518,000**, a **14%** reduction, but it remained the second-largest source of consumer returns. In contrast, the water industry experienced notable growth, with refunds nearly doubling from **$55,000** in 2024 to **$108,000** in 2025. Transportation-related refunds rose slightly from **$316** to **$358**.

Table 2: Annual Total Consumer Returns[3] by Industry

Industry	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Total of Returns
Energy	$328,273	$1,479,108	$469,286	$814,179	**$3,090,846**
Telecommunications	$102,663	$145,178	$150,636	$120,370	**$518,847**
Water	$27,426	$24,518	$7,700	$49,102	**$108,746**
Transportation	$95	$55	$15	$193	**$358**
Total	**$458,457**	**$1,648,859**	**$627,637**	**$983,844**	**$3,718,797**

Success Story

A consumer submitted a dispute to the CPUC regarding a water bill totaling **$24,976.** CAB contacted California American Water and determined that the unusually high charges resulted from the company estimating the customer's usage from June 13, 2024, through August 26, 2025. After completing an investigation and installing a smart meter to prevent future billing issues, the company issued an **$18,952** billing adjustment**.** The consumer was responsible only for the most recent three months of water usage, in accordance with Rule 18.

Table 3 presents the median monetary amounts returned to consumers in 2025 across four industries. The median return was highest in the energy sector at **$386**, followed by water at **$348**. Telecommunications cases yielded a median return of **$151**, while transportation cases resulted in a median return of **$28**. Although median refund amounts were highest in the energy and water sectors, the telecommunications industry accounted for the most individual returns, issuing **1,141** refunds during the year.

[3] 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: Consumer Return Statistics by Industry (2025)

Industry	Median Return Amount	Count of Returns	Minimum Return Amount	Maximum Return Amount
Energy	$386	710	$1	$813,924
Telecommunications	$151	1,141	$1	$25,296
Water	$348	77	$13	$18,952
Transportation	$28	8	$15	$140

Limited English Proficient (*LEP) Programs* – *TEAM & CHANGES*

Throughout the year, *Telecommunications Education and Assistance in Multiple-Languages (TEAM) Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) played a critical role in supporting limited English proficient (LEP) consumers, helping them recover* ***$102,672*** *from telecommunications providers. These efforts are carried out under the oversight of CAB, which administers the TEAM and Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electric Services (CHANGES) programs. Together, these programs provide essential support to LEP, disabled, seniors, and low-income consumers navigating utility services through individualized case assistance, such as resolving billing issues, along with educational workshops and targeted community outreach.*

Energy Utilities Recap with 2025 Highlights

This section reviews all energy-related consumer contacts that CAB received in 2025.

- CAB received **16,839 energy contacts** in 2025, up **4%** from 2024
- The Top 5 utilities accounted for **83%** of all energy contacts
- Core Transport Agents-related contacts made up **18%** of all energy contacts
- All Top 5 energy utilities with the highest IC volumes met the 20-business-day response requirement in 2025.

Energy Consumer Contacts

Table 4 lists the Top 5 energy utilities by contact count, along with their respective percentages of total contacts. In 2025, CAB received **16,839** energy-related contacts, with the Top 5 energy utilities accounting for **83%** of all energy contacts. Most contacts came from the large investor-owned utilities (IOUs): Southern California Edison (SCE), **37%**; Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), **29%**; San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), **7%**; and Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas), **6%**. Other notable contributors include Core Transport Agents (CTAs) such as Wave Energy LLC (**718 contacts**). Overall, **18%** of energy-related contacts received in 2025 came from CTA consumers, primarily regarding alleged abusive marketing practices.

Table 4: Top 5 Energy Utilities as a % of the Total Consumer Contact Count in 2024 and 2025

Top 5 Energy Utilities Contacts	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	2025 Total	% of 2025 Total	2024 Total	% Change 2024-25
Total Contacts (All Energy Utilities)	**5,070**	**3,944**	**4,031**	**3,794**	**16,839**	**100%**	**16,247**	**4%**
Top 5 Energy Utilities by Contacts								
Southern California Edison	1,791	1,526	1,473	1,444	6,234	**37%**	**7,615**	**-22%**
Pacific Gas and Electric Company	1,561	1,114	1,177	989	4,841	**29%**	**4,890**	**-1%**
San Diego Gas & Electric	226	302	287	371	1,186	**7%**	**833**	**30%**
Southern California Gas Company	229	194	308	234	965	**6%**	**715**	**26%**
Wave Energy LLC	243	147	166	162	718	**4%**	**213**	**70%**
Total Top 5 Energy Contacts	**4,050**	**3,283**	**3,411**	**3,200**	**13,944**	**83%**	**14,266**	**-2%**

Table 5 summarizes the Top 5 energy utilities by IC volume for 2024–2025 and ranks them by their 2025 average response times. These utilities accounted for **5,742** of the **6,344** IC responses submitted by all energy utilities, reflecting the large customer bases of the four IOUs in the group. All utilities must respond to CAB within **20 business days**.

Among the highest-volume utilities, SoCalGas and SDG&E recorded the longest average response times at **19** and **18** days, respectively. In contrast, SCE (**2,429** ICs) and PG&E (**1,983** ICs) accounted for roughly **80%** of ICs in this group and maintained average durations of **13** and **9** days, respectively. Wave Energy responded the fastest - within **5** days, but its workload represents only a small share of total IC responses.

Overall, the Top 5 utilities meet the required response timeframe, though performance varies. The data highlights strong responsiveness among the highest-volume utilities and identifies opportunities for improvement where response times approach the 20-day limit. CAB management continues to monitor these trends to ensure the timely resolution of consumer concerns.

Table 5: Top 5 Energy Utilities by Contact Count and Utility Response Times (2025)

Utility Name	2025 Avg. Utility Response (Business Days)	Count of Utility Responses
Wave Energy LLC	5	244
Pacific Gas and Electric Company	9	1,983
Southern California Edison	13	2,429
San Diego Gas & Electric	18	437
Southern California Gas Company	19	379

Most Frequent Contacts by Subcategory

When CAB reports consumer contact data, we categorize each case 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 a primary issue to be assigned to each contact. It provides more detailed reporting, including subcategories, to fully identify the reason for the contact. In addition to the primary subcategory, a contact may be assigned additional subcategories, referred to as "**attributes,**" to capture all issues raised during a single contact. In the example above, "NJ Customer

Service"[4] would be selected as an additional subcategory to the "High Bill" category. Because multiple subcategories can be applied to a single contact, the total count of subcategory selections often exceeds the total number of individual consumer contacts. This comprehensive approach enables CAB to conduct a more in-depth analysis of consumer concerns.

Table 6 shows the most frequently selected subcategories for energy-related contacts in 2025. The most frequently selected subcategory was "High Bill", which was applied **5,899** times (**20%**). The next most common subcategories were "NJ Customer Service" (**4,748**) and "Abusive Marketing" (**2,408**), which were applied **16%** and **8%** of the time, respectively. Overall, contact volumes declined from the first through the fourth quarter of 2025 across four of the five most frequently selected subcategories: "High Bill," "NJ Customer Service," "Abusive Marketing," and "Payment Arrangements." In contrast, consumer contacts related to "Disconnection Non-Payment" increased steadily over the year, peaking in the fourth quarter. More details on disconnection-related complaints are provided in the Disconnection Non-Payment (DNP) Contacts section later in this report.

Table 6: Top 5 Subcategories by Frequency for Energy Consumer Contacts by Quarter (2025)

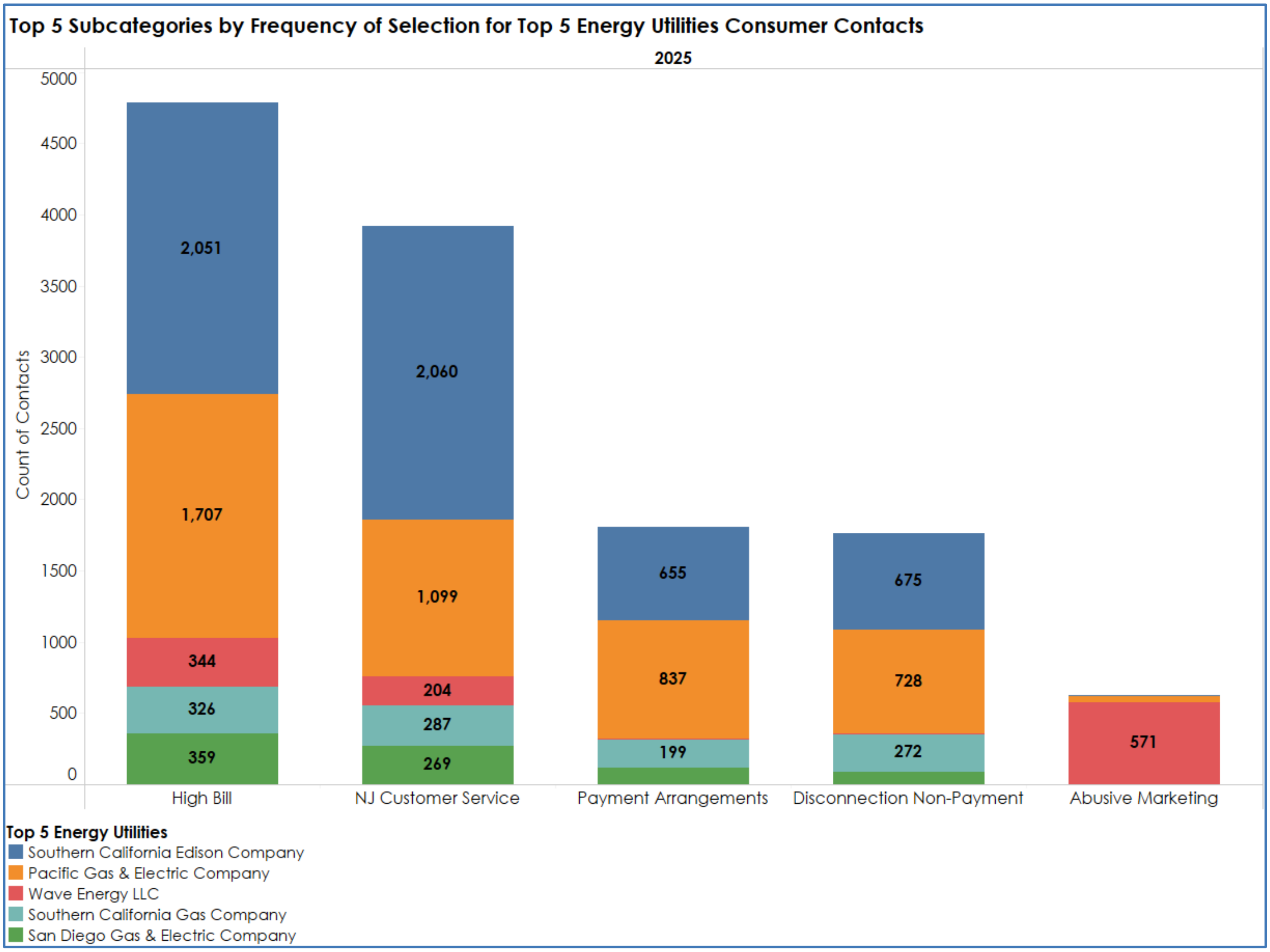
Subcategory	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	2025 Total
High Bill	1,913	1,411	1,364	1,211	**5,899**
NJ Customer Service	1,464	1,175	1,115	994	**4,748**
Abusive Marketing	794	529	546	539	**2,408**
Payment Arrangements	550	431	430	429	**1,840**
Disconnection Non-Payment	387	472	415	531	**1,805**
Total for Top 5 Subcategories by Frequency	**5,108**	**4,018**	**3,870**	**3,704**	**16,700**

Figure 3 shows the counts of the Top 5 most frequently selected subcategories for the Top 5 energy utilities in 2025. SCE had the highest counts, with "High Bill" (**2,051**) and "NJ Customer Service" (**2,060**), followed by PG&E, which had the most counts for "Payment Arrangements" (**837**) and "Disconnection Non-Payment" (**728**). These contacts reflect common consumer concerns, including high energy bills, customer service challenges, assistance with repaying overdue bills, and service disconnections due to non-payment. Most of the **571** "Abusive Marketing" contacts originated from Wave Energy LLC customers. This subcategory was dominated by complaints from CTA consumers who alleged that their provider misled them. Reported issues

[4] Non-Jurisdiction (NJ) Customer Service cases are customer service-related issues such as being transferred from one person to another multiple times on the same phone call, not being able to reach the correct department or someone to help with the issue, or utility representative challenges.

include failures to provide required disclosures and the addition of services or features without consumer consent.

Figure 3: Top 5 Subcategories by Frequency for the Top 5 Energy Utilities (by Consumer Contacts)



Telecommunications Utilities 2025 Annual Review & Quarterly Highlights

This section reviews all telecommunications utility-related consumer contacts that CAB received in 2025.

- CAB received **9,796** telecommunications contacts in 2025, up **9%** from 2024
- The Top 5 utilities accounted for **56%** of all telecommunications contacts
- All Top 5 telecommunications utilities with the highest IC volumes, except AT&T California, met the 20-business-day response requirement in 2025
- CAB received **3,103** California LifeLine contacts in 2025, down **4%** from 2024

Telecommunications Consumer Contacts

Table 7 presents total telecommunications contacts and the Top 5 utility-specific contact volumes in 2025, including their quarterly distributions, annual totals, share of overall contacts, and year-over-year changes from 2024. In 2025, CAB received **9,796** telecommunications-related contacts, a **9%** increase from **9,023** contacts in 2024. Quarterly volumes were highest in the first quarter, declined in the second quarter, and then gradually increased through the second half of the year. The Top 5 telecommunications utilities accounted for **5,516** contacts, or **56%** of the total, reflecting a **3%** decrease from 2024 and indicating a broader distribution of contacts across providers. Because the largest providers serve substantially more consumers, they also generate a proportionally higher volume of consumer contacts, so contact counts should be interpreted in the context of company size.

Table 7: Total Telecommunication Contacts & Top 5 Utilities by Contacts in 2025 (Quarterly and Year-Over-Year Change)

Telecommunications Contacts	Q1-2025	Q2- 2025	Q3-2025	Q4- 2025	2025 Total	2024 Total	% Change 2024-25
Total Telecommunications Contacts	2,786	2,191	2,331	2,488	**9,796**	**9,023**	**9%**
Top 5 Telecommunications Utilities by Contacts							
AT&T California	867	702	735	831	**3,135**	**3,054**	**3%**
Frontier California Inc.	274	190	230	205	**899**	**1,181**	**-24%**
Cellco Partnership[5]	172	145	139	114	**570**	**651**	**-12%**
T-Mobile West LLC	114	110	114	135	**473**	**479**	**-1%**
AT&T Mobility Wireless Operations Holdings Inc.	106	94	113	126	**439**	**351**	**25%**
Total for Top 5 Utilities by Contact	**1,533**	**1,241**	**1,331**	**1,411**	**5,516**	**5,716**	**-3%**

AT&T California remained the largest contributor with **3,135** contacts, representing **32%** of the total and a **3%** increase year over year, and it generated the highest volume in each quarter; as the state's largest wireline provider, higher contact volumes are expected based on its customer base. Frontier California Inc. declined to **899** contacts (**9%** of total), and a **24%** decrease from 2024, while Cellco Partnership totaled **570** contacts (**6%**), and down **12%** from 2024. T-Mobile West LLC remained relatively stable at **473** contacts (**5%**), down **1%** from 2024. In contrast, AT&T Mobility Wireless Operations Holdings Inc. increased to **439** contacts (**4%**), a **25%** increase compared to 2024. Overall, although total telecommunications contacts increased in 2025, changes varied by provider: some utilities experienced declines, while others saw spikes.

Table 8 highlights the Top 5 telecommunications utilities by the number of Informal Complaints (ICs) received this quarter and ranks these providers by the average number of business days taken to address them. When CAB forwards an IC, utilities are expected to respond to CAB within **20** business days.

[5] Cellco Partnership is also known as Verizon Wireless.

Table 8: Top 5 Telecommunications Utilities by Contact Count and Utility Response Times (2025)

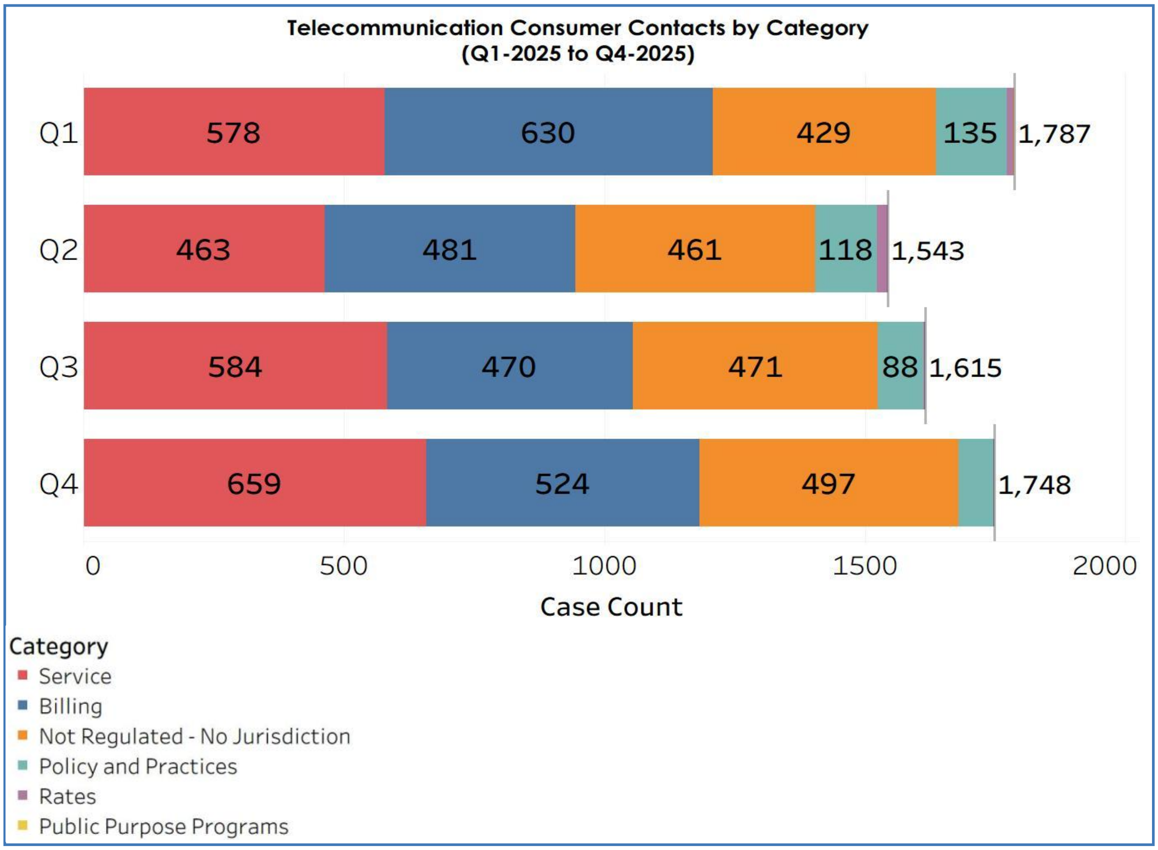
Utility Name	Average Utility Response (Business Days)	Count of Utility Responses
AT&T California	24	864
T-Mobile West LLC	17	192
Cellco Partnership	15	252
Frontier California Inc.	13	239
AT&T Mobility Wireless Operations Holdings Inc.	13	225

In 2025, telecommunications utilities responded to **2,258** ICs. AT&T California handled the highest volume, with **864** responses, and reported an average response time of **24** business days, exceeding the **20**-day expectation. Frontier California Inc. and AT&T Mobility Wireless Operations Holdings Inc. recorded the fastest average turnaround times at **13** business days, while Cellco Partnership and T-Mobile West LLC averaged **15** and **17** business days, respectively. Overall, **Table 8** highlights differences in response performance across major carriers.

Most Frequent Contacts by Category

Figure 4 shows the distribution of telecommunications consumer contacts by category in 2025. Across all quarters, contacts were primarily concentrated on “Service,” “Billing,” and “Not Regulated - No Jurisdiction.” “Service” remained the largest category overall and increased toward the end of the year. “Billing” stayed consistently high throughout the year, with a dip after the first quarter and a rebound in the fourth quarter. “Not Regulated - No Jurisdiction” remained steady throughout the year. “Policy and Practices” gradually declined, while “Rates” and “Public Purpose Programs” represented a small share of contacts in each quarter.

Figure 4: Telecommunications Consumer Contacts by Category (2025)



Most Frequent Contacts by Subcategories

Table 9 presents the most frequently selected telecommunications subcategories[6] (excluding California LifeLine) for consumer contacts associated with the Top 5 utilities in 2025. It includes their quarterly distribution, annual totals, and year-over-year changes compared to 2024.

[6] The data shows the main reason for each contact, and CAB's database also captures more detailed information by assigning a "primary subcategory," which reflects a specific reason for the contact and additional multiple subcategories (called attributes) as needed. Because multiple subcategories can be applied to a single contact, the total number of subcategory selections exceeds the total number of contacts. This approach enables CAB to fully understand the reason for each contact.

Table 9: Top 5 Subcategories by Frequency for Top 5 Telecommunications Utilities – 2025 Quarterly and Year-Over-Year Change[7]

Top 5 Subcategories by Frequency	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	2025 Total	2024 Total	% Change 2024-25
NJ Customer Service	495	428	466	460	**1,849**	**1,829**	**1%**
Outage	345	240	329	452	**1,366**	**1,147**	**19%**
Delayed Orders/Missed Appointments	282	202	262	336	**1,082**	**825**	**31%**
High Bill	279	184	183	174	**820**	**813**	**1%**
Other Charges	210	191	198	204	**803**	**604**	**33%**
Total for Top 5 Subcategories by Frequency	**1,611**	**1,245**	**1,438**	**1,626**	**5,920**	**5,218**	**13%**

The leading subcategory was "NJ Customer Service," with **1,849** contacts in 2025, a slight **1%** increase from 2024. This issue remained the most common throughout the year.

"Outage" ranked second, with **1,366** contacts, reflecting a **19%** increase year-over-year, particularly toward the end of 2025. Most "Outage" contacts were linked to AT&T California and were primarily driven by landline service issues, including disruptions caused by copper theft.[8]

"Delayed Orders/Missed Appointments" ranked third, with **1,082** contacts, representing a **31%** increase from 2024. This surge was particularly evident in the latter half of the year and was mainly associated with delays in AT&T California's landline services.

"Other Charges[9]" saw a **33%** increase, while "High Bill" remained relatively stable with a **1%** rise, though it reflected a general downward trend throughout the year.

Overall, the top five subcategories increased by **13%** compared to 2024, with contact volumes remaining steady in the middle of the year and trending upward toward year-end.

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[7] The table excludes California LifeLine.

[8] CAB has published a special report on the copper theft issue and how the outage has impacted the most disadvantaged communities in California: CPUC Consumer Affairs Branch, Telecommunications Outage Complaints Special ESJ Report, July 10, 2025

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

California LifeLine

CAB assists consumers with California LifeLine-related inquiries, reviews appeals filed by consumers disqualified from California Lifeline by the program's Third-Party Administrator (TPA) and helps resolve California LifeLine billing issues by referring cases to service providers for investigation and corrective actions.

Table 10 summarizes the top California LifeLine contact types closed in 2025, including quarterly data, annual totals, and comparisons with 2024. In 2025, CAB managed **3,103** California LifeLine contacts, representing a **4%** decrease from **3,223** in 2024. Written contacts numbered **1,606**, constituting **52%** of the total and dropping **20%** from the previous year. Phone contacts totaled **1,497**, making up **48%**, which is a **22%** rise compared to 2024. Quarterly contact volumes fell from Q1 to Q2 but then gradually rose in the latter half of the year. Despite the slight overall decline in total California LifeLine contacts, there was a notable shift in contact mode in 2025, with more consumers reaching out via phone than in the previous year.

Table 10: California LifeLine Contacts Received – 2025 Quarterly and Year-Over-Year Change

Mode of LifeLine Contacts Received	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	2025 Total	2024 Total	% Change 2024-2025
Phone Contact	339	351	427	380	**1,497**	**1,223**	**22%**
Written Contact	660	297	289	360	**1,606**	**2,000**	**-20%**
Total Contacts Received	**999**	**648**	**716**	**740**	**3,103**	**3,223**	**-4%**

Table 11 summarizes the top California LifeLine contact types that were closed in 2025, showing quarterly volumes, annual totals, and year-over-year changes from 2024. CAB closed **1,573** California LifeLine contacts during the year. California Lifeline Landline Appeals remained in the largest category, with **675** cases (**43**% of total), reflecting a slight **3%** decrease from 2024. California Lifeline Billing closely followed with **655** cases (**42%**), a **5%** year-over-year increase. In contrast, California Lifeline Wireless Appeals totaled **169** cases (**11%**), marking a **72%** decline from 2024. Overall, closed California LifeLine contacts remained heavily concentrated on appeals and billing issues.

Table 11: Top California LifeLine Contacts Closed by Type in 2025 (Quarterly and Year-Over-Year Change)

Top LifeLine Contacts Closed by Type	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	2025 Total	2024 Total	% Change 2024-2025
Lifeline Landline Appeal	415	77	57	126	**675**	**696**	**-3%**
LifeLine Billing (LLB)	110	185	198	162	**655**	**625**	**5%**
LifeLine Wireless Appeal	75	28	28	38	**169**	**612**	**-72%**

Most Frequent Types of California LifeLine contacts

Table 12 summarizes the Top 5 reported California LifeLine subcategories in 2025, including their quarterly distributions, annual totals, and year-over-year changes from 2024. The Top 5 subcategories totaled **2,628** contacts, a **31%** increase from 2024.

Table 12: Top 5 LifeLine Subcategory Frequency – 2025 Quarterly and Year-Over-Year Change

Top 5 Subcategories Frequency for LifeLine Contacts	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	2025 Total	2024 Total	% Change 2024-25
LLB Federal Program/Equipment	268	165	171	142	746	641	**16%**
LLB Application Request	148	176	141	133	598	249	**140%**
LLB Discount Switched to Other Carrier	94	120	215	141	570	89	**540%**
LL Consumer Did Not Return Form	257	41	37	80	415	764	**-46%**
NJ Customer Service	84	83	85	47	299	265	**13%**
Total Top 5 LifeLine Subcategories	**851**	**585**	**649**	**543**	**2,628**	**2,008**	**31%**

"LifeLine Billing (LLB) Federal Program/Equipment" was the leading issue, with **746** contacts, a **16%** year-over-year increase. These contacts were primarily associated with Verizon Value, Inc., TruConnect Communications, Inc., and Assurance Wireless USA, L.P., where consumers reported Federal program and equipment-related issues, particularly challenges in receiving or replacing LifeLine devices. LLB Application Request ranked second with **598** contacts, a **140%** increase from 2024, and was largely linked to AT&T California, reflecting enrollment and application processing challenges faced by consumers.

"LLB Discount Switched to Other Carrier" totaled **570** contacts, increasing **540%** percent year over year, and was driven predominantly by TruConnect Communications, Inc., involving unauthorized discount transfers or carrier switches. In contrast, "LL Consumer Did Not Return Form"[10] declined to **415** contacts, a **46%** decrease, while "NJ Customer Service"[11] increased modestly to **299** contacts, up **13%**. Overall, LifeLine contacts remained concentrated in "LLB Federal Program and Equipment", "LLB Application Request", and "LLB Discount Switched to Other Carrier" issues". The data also indicate a clear shift away from "Consumer Did Not Return Form" documentation-related issues and toward increased application requests and higher volumes of carrier switching activity, including potential unauthorized or disputed transfers.

[10] 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 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.

[11] 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.

Environmental Social Justice (ESJ) Consumer Contacts for 2025

ESJ Overview

The CPUC's mission is to ensure that **all Californians** can access safe, clean, and affordable utility services and infrastructure. The CPUC is committed to "Environmental Justice," which means the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to environmental laws, regulations, and policies. The CPUC has created an **Environmental and Social Justice (ESJ) Action Plan** to serve as both a commitment to advancing these principles and a framework for integrating ESJ considerations throughout the agency's work. The ESJ Action Plan **defines ESJ Communities** as including:

- 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;[12] and low-income census tracts.[13]

Table 13 is a quick reference guide to the terminology used throughout this section. CAB uses zip codes rather than census tracts to report on ESJ and focuses primarily on those that fall within the **ESJ 75th-100th Percentile**, or **ESJ Quartile 1**, which represents the most **disadvantaged communities** (**DACs**).

[12] Household incomes below 80 percent of the area median income.

[13] Census tracts with household incomes less than 80 percent area or state median income.

Table 13: ESJ/CAB Terminology Conversion Table

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

Energy and Telecommunications ESJ Highlights

- CAB received **7,492** ESJ Quartile 1 (the 75th-100th percentile) contacts from energy, telecommunications, and water consumers in 2025, representing a **57%** increase over 2024 ESJ contacts
- 2025 CAB received **3,081** CTA contacts, which amounts to a **72%** increase in CTA contacts from 2024, and surpassed the previous highest count (which was in 2024)
- **23%** of landline outage complaints in ESJ zip codes in AT&T and Frontier service territories are related to cable theft

Total Telecommunications, Energy, and Water ESJ Contacts

As shown in **Table 14**, during 2025, CAB received **7,492** consumer contacts in the 75th-100th ESJ percentiles, a **57%** increase from 2024[14]. In 2024, CAB received **4,781** ESJ contacts from consumers in the 75th-100th ESJ Percentiles, representing an **18%** increase over 2023. This year-over-year rise comes mostly from the Energy sector, with increases in contacts related to Disconnection Non-Payment and CTAs.

[14] 2024 CAB Year in Review Report

Table 14: Energy and Telecommunications ESJ Contacts (ESJ 75th – 100th percentile)

Industry	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	2025 Total
Energy	1,352	1,084	986	1,032	**4,454**
Telecommunications	758	583	668	655	**2,664**
Water	72	97	108	97	**374**
Total	**2,182**	**1,764**	**1,762**	**1,784**	**7,492**

ESJ Energy Contacts

Disconnection Non-Payment (DNP) Contacts

2025 Disconnection Non-Payment contacts surged to their highest level of **1,829** contacts since CAB began tracking this primary subcategory in 2009, as shown in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5: Annual Energy Disconnection Non-Payment Contacts

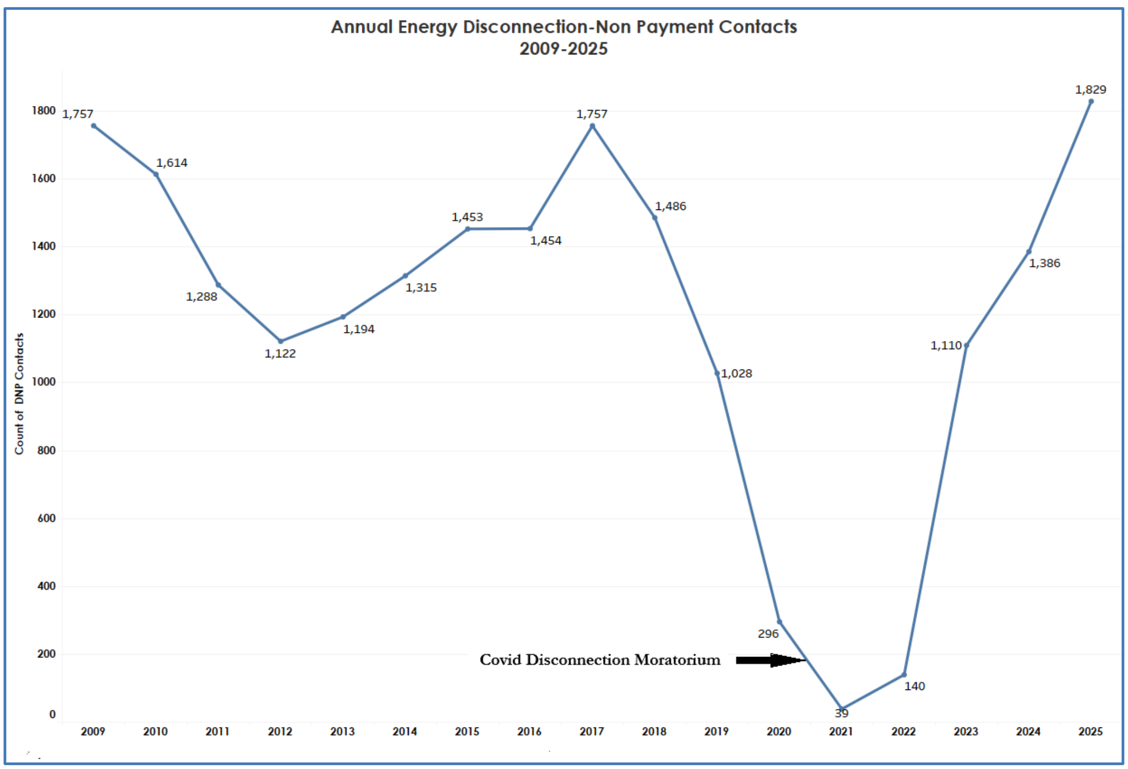


Table 15 shows that overall, "Disconnection Non-Payment" (DNP) contacts have seen an upward trend year-over-year, despite the decrease in DNP contacts between Q2-2025 and Q3-2025. Over the last 12 months, **39%** of all DNP contacts across these industries originated from consumers residing in DACs, underscoring that DACs continue to produce a disproportionate number of DNP contacts. Specifically, DAC contacts comprised **39%** and **53%** of total energy and water DNP contacts, respectively.

Table 15: Disconnection Non-Payment Contacts by Industry and Percentage of DAC Contacts

Industry	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Total DNP Contacts	Total ESJ Contacts	% of ESJ Contacts
Energy	390	475	426	538	1829	707	39%
Water	11	31	37	22	101	54	53%

Figure 6 shows that since the end of the COVID disconnect moratorium, DNP contacts across all ESJ Quartiles have increased.

Figure 6: Energy Disconnection Non-Payment by ESJ Percentiles 2009-2025

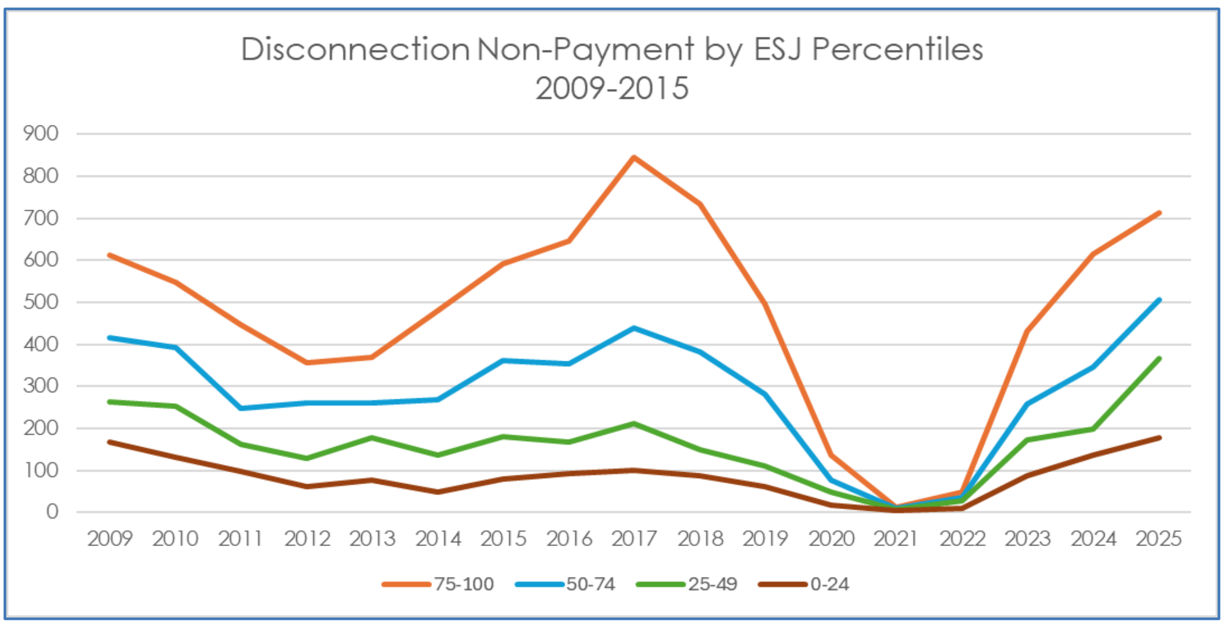
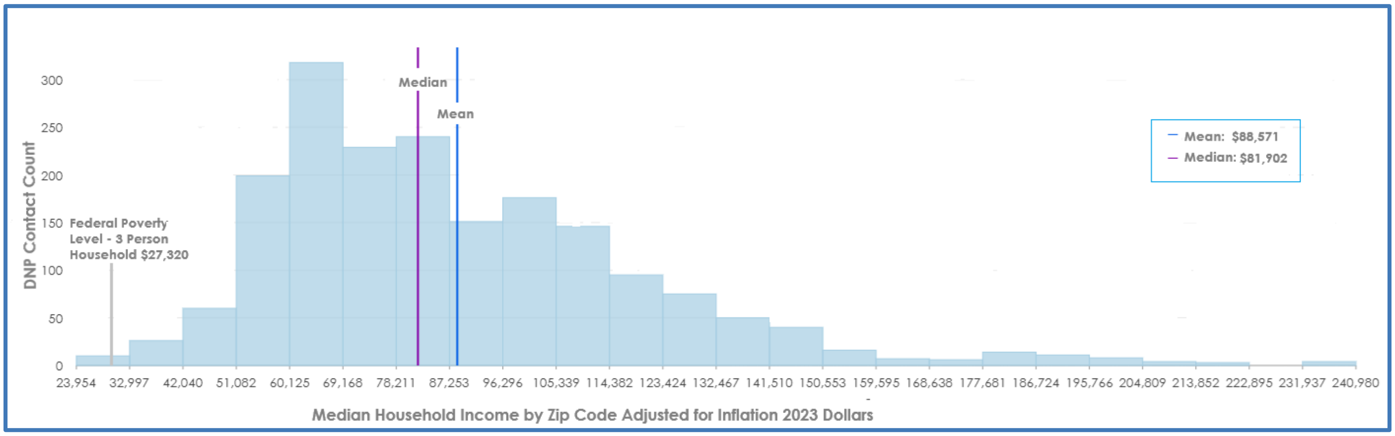


Figure 7 shows the histogram of Median Income for consumers experiencing Disconnection Non-Payment issues. The X-axis represents Median Household Income in defined ranges. The Y-axis represents the counts of contacts received where the Median Household Income for a contact's zip code falls within a defined range. Vertical lines represent the mean, median, and standard deviation.

Figure 7: Histogram of Consumer Contacts Median Household Income for Disconnection Non-Payment (2025 Contacts)



The Average Annual Median Household Income for Californians is **$96,334**, according to the most recent Census Bureau data. The median household income of consumers contacting CAB about DNP is **$88,671**, further illustrating that more affluent consumers are at risk of disconnection. In contrast, the Federal Poverty Level for a three-person household is **$27,320**.

Core Transport Agents (CTA) and Abusive Marketing Complaints

CAB received **3,081** consumer contacts in 2025, a **72%** increase over the previous "record" year of **1,787** contacts in 2024. **Figure 8** shows the number of CTA contacts received by CAB quarterly in 2025 and compares the totals with 2024 over a four-quarter calendar year.

Figure 8: CTA Contacts by Quarter

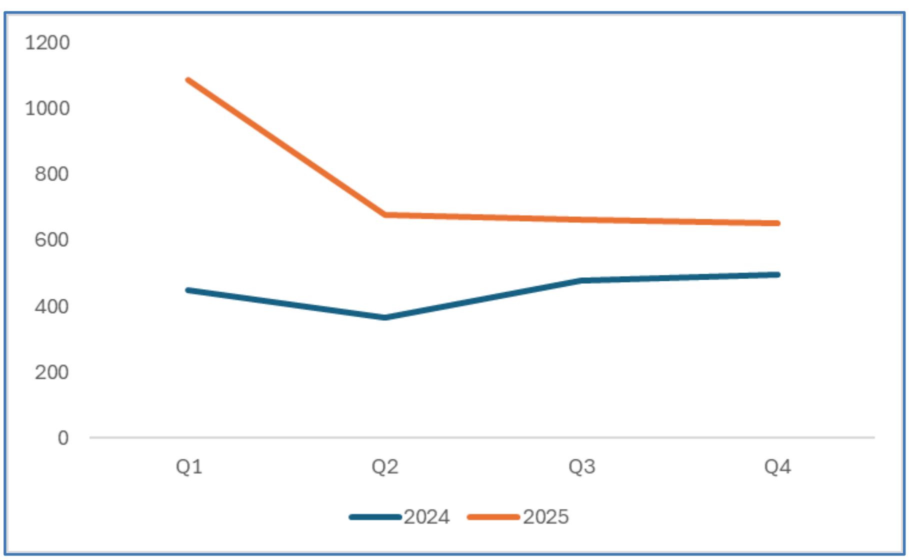


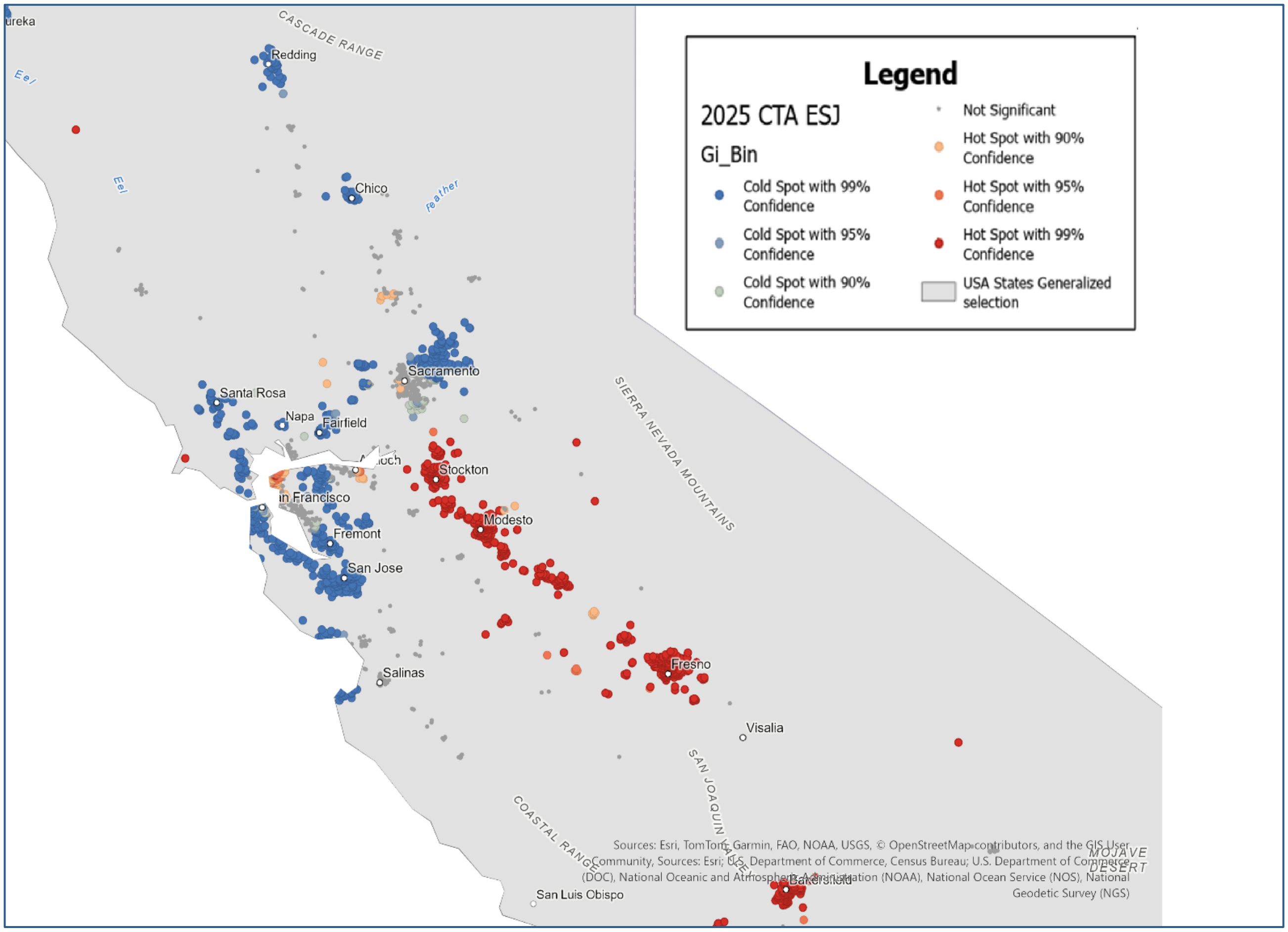
Table 16 shows complaint statistics for the Top 10 CTA companies, including those where consumers complained about abusive marketing to CAB in 2025**.** Wave Energy LLC, SFE Energy Inc., and United Energy Trading LLC dba Callective Energy have the most alleged abusive marketing complaints and a substantial marketing presence in the most vulnerable communities (DACs). StateWise Energy California LLC, Big Tree Energy CA, LLC, Vista Energy Marketing LP, AAA Natural Gas, and Spark Energy Gas LLC have fewer alleged complaints. Still, an even higher percentage of their total complaints come from the most vulnerable consumer group.

Table 16: Top 10 CTAs by Contacts, and Total Contacts Where Consumers Allege Abusive Marketing Tactics in the Most Disadvantaged ESJ Communities (2025)

Utility Name	Total CTA Contacts	Total Abusive Marketing Contacts	% of all Contacts Abusive Marketing	Total Contacts from ESJ Quartile 1	Abusive Marketing Contacts from ESJ Quartile 1	% of ESJ Quartile 1 Contacts Abusive Marketing
Wave Energy LLC	718	534	74%	688	517	75%
SFE Energy Inc.	554	379	68%	542	371	68%
United Energy Trading LLC dba Callective Energy	316	192	61%	300	184	61%
StateWise Energy California LLC	287	181	63%	277	177	64%
Big Tree Energy CA, LLC	271	196	72%	264	190	72%
AAA Natural Gas	239	199	83%	233	196	84%
Vista Energy Marketing LP	180	133	74%	173	131	76%
Spark Energy Gas LLC	178	132	74%	174	130	75%
Peak Six Power and Gas LLC	79	65	82%	73	61	84%
Greenwave Energy LLC	77	49	64%	73	46	63%
Total Top 10 CTA Contacts	**2,899**	**2,060**	**71%**	**2,797**	**2,003**	**72%**

Figure 9 displays the CTA contact data as clusters of consumer contacts coded with the "Abusive Marketing" subcategory represented as hot (red) spots. The hot spots indicate zip codes with a disproportionately high number of "Abusive Marketing" contacts, concentrated in or near ESJ Quartile 1 zip codes. In 2025, hotspots developed in the San Francisco Bay Area near and within Richmond.

Figure 9: Hotspot Map Showing ESJ Contacts Coded Abusive Marketing Footprint in 2025



Earlier CAB analyses showed that CTAs appeared to be targeting susceptible groups in ESJ zip codes. That practice continues as illustrated above, but further analysis shows that CTAs may be focusing on demographic groups in other geographic areas of the state, including zip codes with clusters of complaints, and higher percentages of foreign-born, non-English speakers, and senior citizens.

Of the 695 abusive marketing informal complaints closed in 2025, 525 (76%) were closed in favor of the consumer.

ESJ Telecommunications Contacts

Telecommunications Outage Complaints

Table 17 shows the total outage contacts received from telecommunications consumers over the last four quarters. Almost half (**42%**) of AT&T's outage complaints affected consumers in ESJ zip codes.

Table 17: Wireline Telecommunications Companies Outage Complaints & % of ESJ Contacts

Utility Name	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Total	Total ESJ Contacts	% ESJ Contacts
AT&T California	218	166	218	334	**936**	**389**	**42%**
Frontier California Inc.	67	32	58	58	**215**	**45**	**21%**
Grand Total	**285**	**198**	**276**	**392**	**1,151**	**434**	**63%**

Table 18 shows that cable theft continues to be a problem in AT&T and Frontier territories, and related outages increased sharply for both companies during 2025. Frontier also experienced a significant increase in cable theft contacts. Cable theft-related outage contacts accounted for **22%** and **17%** of all outage-related contacts this year for AT&T California and Frontier California Inc., respectively.

Table 18: AT&T and Frontier Total Outage Contacts and Outage Contacts Related to Cable Theft

Utility Name	All Contacts	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Q3-2025	Q4-2025	Total	% Cable Theft 2025
AT&T California	Outage Contacts	218	166	218	334	**936**	**-**
	Cable Theft	47	44	54	57	**202**	22%
Frontier California Inc.	Outage Contacts	67	32	58	58	**215**	-
	Cable Theft	11	4	12	10	**37**	17%

Disadvantaged communities experience the majority of cable theft-related outages, representing **23%** of all outage contacts in ESJ zip codes. AT&T accounts for **30%** of cable theft-related outages, while Frontier accounts for **17%.** This aligns with previous CAB analyses, which showed that most cable theft-induced outages occurred in ESJ zip codes.

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 Proficient (LEP) consumers, people with disabilities, seniors, and low-income 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.

Individual case assistance most frequently addresses clients' financial challenges in paying for services or resolving disputes with their providers. CBOs also offer education classes on a range of topics to help them 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 types. The current TEAM and CHANGES contract was awarded to the non-profit organization, the International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA), from July 2024 to June 2027.[15] 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 a program evaluation, as ordered by the CPUC's 2021 CARE/FERA/ESA Decision for its annual funding through 2026.

[15] The full list of CBO's can be accessed here: TEAM & CHANGES CBO Roster

The Top Issues for TEAM and CHANGES Clients

CHANGES

This year, CHANGES Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) successfully resolved **4,675** client cases, a **17%** decrease compared to the prior year.

As shown in Table **20**, the Top 10 case issue categories accounted for all (**100%**) of resolved cases during this period. Nearly half (**46%**) of these cases involved consumers who were "Unable to Pay Balance Due," while **33%** of contacts required "Referrals for Assistance Programs". The third most frequently reported issue was "High Bill", which accounted for **6%** of total cases.

Table 20: CHANGES Client Issues - Top 10 Case Issues (2025)

Case Issue Type	Case Count	% of Totals
Unable to Pay Balance Due	2160	46%
Need Referral for Assistance Programs	1531	33%
High Bill	256	6%
Electric Aggregation	162	3%
Assist with Changes to Account	127	3%
Gas Aggregation	124	3%
New Account Set-Up	113	2%
Other Payment Assistance (Church, Private Company, Etc.)	72	2%
Customer Service Problem	58	1%
Pending Disconnection	49	1%
Total (Top 10 by Issue Type)	**4,652**	**100%**

TEAM

During the reporting period, TEAM CBOs successfully closed **3,212** client cases, representing a **3% decrease** from the previous period. These case resolutions resulted in **$102,672** in consumer returns from telecommunications-related disputes.

Table 21 provides a detailed breakdown of the Top 10 case issues, which together account for **75%** of all resolved TEAM cases. The most common issue was requests for assistance with "Changes to Account" **(19%)**, followed by "High Bills" **(15%)** and "Phone Activation" **(8%)**. An additional **7%** of client contacts involved requests to add new internet or service plans. Each of the remaining issues within the top 10 categories comprised between **4%** and **5%** of total client contacts.

Table 21: TEAM Client Issues – Top 10 Case Issues (2025)

Case Issue Type	Case Count	% of Totals
Assisted With Changes to Account	614	19%
High Bills	493	15%
Assist with Phone Activation	242	8%
Add New Internet/Service Plan	232	7%
Poor Coverage / Drop calls / No Coverage	164	5%
Set Up New Account	140	4%
Cramming	139	4%
Do Not Call List	134	4%
Assisted Client with Paying Bill	128	4%
Lifeline Recertification	120	4%
Total for Closed Cases (Top 10 by Issue Type)	**2406**	**75%**