CPUC Welcomes New Commissioner, Genevieve Shiroma

On the Friday of her first week on the job, newly appointed Commissioner to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), Genevieve Shiroma, picked up a fat blue book from a desk in her Sacramento office that represents just some of what she was planning to read over the next few days.

“Here is the law that the CPUC is responsible for enforcing,” she said of the 508-page California Public Utilities Code. “I’m going to plow through it because everything we do leads to this. It’s the source and it’s daunting.”

For anyone who knows Commissioner Shiroma, appointed in January by Governor Gavin Newsom to fill the CPUC seat that had been held by Carla J. Peterman, there’s no question that she is more than up to the task. She didn’t spend 40 years in public service in the demanding positions she has held by shying away from challenges. A one-time neighborhood activist who helped lead a successful 10-year battle to force Union Pacific Railroad to clean its contaminated railyards in Sacramento’s Curtis Park neighborhood, where she still lives, the affable but tough Commissioner Shiroma is an experienced and respected arbiter of big, complicated issues.

She had been a member of the Agricultural Labor Relations Board since 1999, where some epic legal battles were waged over the years between farmworkers and the state’s big agricultural powers. She had been the board chair for a good portion of that time when she stepped down to be sworn into her CPUC role on January 31, 2019. She also spent 20 years as an elected member of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, the capital city’s municipally owned utility, better known as SMUD, and was chosen by voters five different times. And she has been appointed to state positions by four Governors -- Jerry Brown, Gray Davis, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Gavin Newsom.

“When Governor Newsom appointed me, neither he nor the Governor’s office told me what to do and I really admire that,” she said. “He appreciated my background and my experience. I’ve had quite a bit of experience on contentious issues and navigating through them by the rule of law. That’s what you have to do and that’s what this Commission does.”

CPUC & CalRecycle Partner on Clean Energy Recycling Program

California is a global leader in solar energy, electric vehicles, and batteries for energy storage, but the state has yet to build a robust program for managing the afterlife of all the hardware that comes along with those innovations.

That’s about to change, however, thanks to a recently launched partnership between the CPUC and the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) that aims to attack the recycling issue on multiple fronts.

“With the introduction of LCD TV screens, a wave of toxic e-waste was created that we shipped overseas for handling,” said CPUC President Michael Picker. “The lack of environmental laws allowed dumping, which resulted in widespread contamination and health issues. Also, as our own record of innovation on clean energy has given California considerable momentum toward decarbonization, we need to make sure we are vigilant when it comes to managing the afterlife of all of this equipment.”

California is a global leader in solar energy, electric vehicles, and batteries for energy storage, but the state has yet to build a robust program for managing the afterlife of all the hardware that comes along with those innovations.

Continued on page 2
Commissioner Shiroma: continued from page 1

high school when she raised money to help orphans in other countries by selling bakery goods.

Her drive to help make the world a better place through public service comes from two primary experiences, she explained: her upbringing as the daughter of farmworkers in the Acampo-Lodi area of San Joaquin County who struggled to support four kids, and from a speech she heard Governor Brown deliver in the 1970s at UC Davis, where she graduated with a degree in materials science and engineering.

“He came and he talked about all the big issues his administration was working on to make California better,” she recalled. “That really appealed to me. I said that’s what I want to do. Public service is a high calling and it’s something I value very much. People say that all the time, but through all my experiences, starting as a neighborhood activist until now, that’s always been what makes me tick.”

Although she arrives at the CPUC as the agency is wrestling with such difficult issues as the growing wildfire threat and Pacific Gas and Electric Company’s bankruptcy, to name just two, Commissioner Shiroma said she never hesitated when Governor Newsom asked if she wanted to be on the CPUC.

“I’ve been here barely a week,” she said, “and the people I’ve encountered at the CPUC are all smart, they’re seasoned, they care, they are dedicated to the mission of the agency, they look at these challenges strategically, they comport with the law, and they work very hard to get things right. There is an all-hands-on-deck core culture that is very apparent here and it’s all being managed in the end to look out for people. That’s what the CPUC does. But I also know that in many of the decisions that are made, there are ‘winners’ and ‘losers.’ Whomever ‘wins’ is happy. Whomever ‘loses’ is not. But that’s the job and I certainly don’t shy away from that.”

Clean Energy Recycling: continued from page 1

comes to repurposing and reusing some of the recyclable materials that have made this possible.”

A five-page Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the two agencies in January 2019 is concise and straight-forward. It lays out a series of roles and responsibilities, shared priorities, and a plan to enlist other state agencies to make sure retired photovoltaic panels, electric vehicle batteries, energy storage batteries, and related equipment are properly collected, handled, and recycled.

“The falling cost of PV panels, batteries, and related components in recent years has driven consumer adoption of solar energy, storage, and electric vehicles,” the agreement says. “Although the useful life of these materials can be decades long, inevitably there will be a need to dispose of these materials . . .”

The CPUC is one of several state agencies that have successfully promoted California’s use of sustainable energy through the state’s Million Solar Roofs Initiative, by investing in electric vehicle infrastructure and other programs.

Now, along with CalRecycle and other agencies, it’s time to “develop consistent approaches to ensure appropriate collection, handling, and reuse or recycling of end-of-life PV panels, EV batteries, and related energy technology equipment,” as the MOU states.

Specifically, the two signing agencies have agreed to:

• Explore how end of life materials can be recycled in a way that minimizes harm to the environment and public health.
• Explore whether financially sustainable mechanisms exist to incentivize and facilitate the reuse or recycling and proper management of these technologies when they reach the end of their useful life.
• Explore solutions to adequately address PV panels, vehicle and storage batteries and associated components that are already installed and future technologies when they eventually reach the end of their useful life.
• Support and develop programs to divert energy technologies from waste streams to support safety objectives and resource management, including reuse of materials.

Working with CalRecycle is part of a pattern of recent MOUs the CPUC has executed over the past few years as the CPUC is working more closely with CAL FIRE and the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, for instance, in dealing with the growing wildfire threat and emergency preparedness.

Some of the early actions called for in the CPUC-CalRecycle MOU include: convening a staff-level working group to plot strategy; identifying all relevant legislative and regulatory proceedings before the CPUC, CalRecycle, the California Energy Commission, the Air Resources Board, and the Department of Toxic Substances Control that may affect the management of used materials; a joint public workshop on the issue; publication of policy paper; a public hearing; and a plan by the end of the year for next steps.

“California leads the way in moving toward sustainable energy sources, and we must also lead the way in determining proper end-of-life management for the materials that get us there,” CalRecycle Director Scott Smithline said. “This agreement will help CalRecycle and the CPUC get out in front of this issue and develop strategies today for the challenges we know tomorrow will bring.”
CPUC Co-Hosts State’s First Wildfire Technology Innovation Summit

There are many safety initiatives underway at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) as it works to assure Californians’ access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. Safety-related articles will be featured again in future issues.

International experts and practitioners on the front-lines of every aspect of wildfire prevention and mitigation will gather in Sacramento in March to explore new ways of thinking about wildfire management.

The Wildfire Technology Innovation Summit, co-hosted by the CPUC, seeks to rapidly leverage, accelerate, and elevate ongoing efforts, in addition to identify new methods to reduce the impacts of wildfire disasters.

Wildfire safety has become an all-consuming priority for the state as the threat from devastating wildfires has grown in California and throughout the Western U.S. due to the persistent effects of climate change, particularly in the form of drought, record high temperatures, more building and development, and arid winds driving record-breaking fire damage and tragedy.

“We cannot accept devastating wildfires as the new normal,” CPUC President Michael Picker said. “California is the global leader in technology and innovation, and right now we must also be a leader in game-changing solutions to get ahead of this problem.”

Taking that lead, CPUC Deputy Executive Director Elizaveta Malashenko convened experts from the CPUC; the California Office of Emergency Services; California State University, Sacramento; IBM; and UC San Diego to create a pioneering forum for shifting the paradigm on wildfire protection.

While the organizing impetus for the Summit is around utility-caused fires, the Steering Committee expects the value of the discussion to extend far beyond just those fires that are related to utility lines or facilities that come under the CPUC’s regulatory purview.

Caroline Thomas Jacobs, Chief of Response Headquarters Operations for the California Office of Emergency Services, agrees. “Because California is a fire-prone state and we continue to see more devastating fires, it is critical that we gather government responders, technology innovators, and scientific researchers to evolve our use of emerging technologies that enable us to more quickly and effectively respond to and recover from wildfires.”

Although just one in 10 California wildfires is attributed to utility equipment, the threat has always been present when transmission lines or other utility infrastructure come into contact with trees or other vegetation. Emerging factors such as climate change, ex-urban residential development, and complexities related to forest management practices are all forcing renewed focus on causes, impacts, and community responses.

“There is nothing new about trees and wires,” Deputy Executive Director Malashenko said during recent testimony before the state Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy. “What is new is the conditions surrounding them. If we look at just the wires, we will not get to the timely prevention and dramatically improved responses to wildfire needed to protect our communities.”

Stepping outside of historic processes, engaging new stakeholders from every level of business and government, and encouraging innovative concepts from around the world, the upcoming inter-agency Summit gathers thought-leaders and practitioners to launch ongoing international collaboration for finding new ways of reducing wildfire devastation wherever it threatens.

The Summit focuses on predictive, analytical, and operational technologies to find practical solutions to overwhelming needs without untenable utility rate increases, shutdowns, or delays in response times.

Scheduled for March 20-21, 2019 on the Sacramento State campus, the Summit will challenge many long-standing practices at every level such as schedule-driven annual tree-trimming versus alternatives like risk-driven maintenance. According to the tentative agenda, the morning session on the first day will set the stage and provide context with briefings on scientific trends, operational experience, and lessons learned.

The afternoon features tracks on forecasting threats and improving situational awareness. Participants will consider possibilities such as a statewide Fire-Threat Potential Index or early detection tools developed with data collected on risk factors such as moisture in vegetation growing in fire-prone areas. Other panels will examine tools needed for real-time use of signals to help communities better respond to emergent situations.

To stimulate creative thinking and ground the Summit in solid science, the Summit offers several 10-minute “lightning presentations” on a number of topics, including forecasting, early detection, mapping, advanced analytics, and modeling.

Day two of the Summit will open with a deep dive into lessons learned from Australian programs in which utilities work with multiple levels of government and communities to address that country’s extensive bushfires. Participants will have the opportunity to rethink practices in California and other areas and learn about.

Continued on page 4
Wildfire Summit: continued from page 3

Australia’s success training citizens to shelter-in-place as a life-saving alternative to evacuation.

Other panels will examine aerial monitoring (e.g., drones) for not only fire detection but perhaps also vegetation management prioritization or real-time evacuation patterns. Participants will consider computing tools such as big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence that could be adapted for preventing and reacting to wildfire.

Finally, the Summit will close with options to kickstart integrating the collected science, wisdom, experience, and knowledge into strong policies and strategic operations for preventing and reducing the impact of wildfires.

“We intend to approach this growing challenge as broadly and with as much urgency as possible,” Deputy Executive Director Malashenko reiterated. “I’m hopeful that we’ll learn things at the Summit we can quickly and efficiently use to reduce the threat all of us face from wildfires.”

Registration and draft agenda for the March 20–21, 2019 Wildfire Technology Innovation Summit are available on the Summit’s website.

The cost to attend the summit is $125 ($50 for students).

Get to Know Us: Meet Adeniyi Ayoade

Adeniyi Ayoade (Ah-den'-ny) credits much of his success as an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) at the CPUC to the adaptive skills he honed attending six different schools. He had to figure out cultures and rules very quickly while traveling with his father, who was a school inspector.

“I believe this taught me to be curious and made me a fast learner,” Adeniyi asserts. “It both presaged and supported my many different jobs and, ultimately, the myriad subjects faced as a CPUC ALJ.”

Adeniyi attended the University of Ibadan (formerly a College of the University of London established while Nigeria was a colony of Great Britain) and Nigerian Law School. He launched his career as an attorney in Nigeria’s Human Rights Legal Offices of Gani Fawehinmi, who was well-respected internationally for his human rights advocacy. Adeniyi later worked at the African Immigration Law Center in London and received the diversity immigrant visa that brought him to the U.S.

Early in his career in the States, Adeniyi worked on Security and Exchange Commission regulatory issues. In 2000, after passing the California Bar exam, he spent a couple of years as a sole practitioner in family and immigration law before joining the State Compensation Insurance Fund to defend the State in workers compensation cases.

During this time, Adeniyi married and began changing his focus to his children who are now 9, 11, and 13. He became active in Girl and Boy Scouts, playing his guitar, and spending more time at kids’ soccer games than in his own recreational leagues where he has passionately played since childhood.

“While I am a very good striker, the kids don’t listen to me,” Adeniyi laughs. “They listen to their coaches. So, that’s what we do.”

Professionally, Adeniyi embarked on yet another subject matter shift, becoming staff counsel for the California Gambling Control Commission where he presented cases before the state Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH).

Adeniyi describes OAH as a court full of ALJs handling multiple agency disputes cases. At that time, there was a push to move all state ALJs to OAH because the Administration thought that judges not affiliated with a particular agency might be more impartial.

This idea intrigued Adeniyi and he served as an OAH ALJ for six years, enjoying the wide-ranging subject matters, mediation opportunities, and dispute resolution issues.

Adeniyi also became active in American Inns of Court, inspired by traditional English Inns of Court, which promote legal excellence, civility, professionalism, and ethics on a national level. He especially enjoys the “pupillage teams” or mentoring opportunities afforded AIC members.

In 2015, his continued interest in highly varied subject matters brought Adeniyi to the CPUC, where he works on electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, water, railroad, rail transit, passenger transportation, rate analysis, investigations, and California Environmental Quality Act issues.

“I’ve had eight to 18 cases at any given time,” Adeniyi states, “delivering as many as one decision a month, especially at the onset.” As he speaks, it is obvious he loves the challenge and has found a way to remain calm even as he passionately pursues his profession.

He relates that early in his career, he was assigned a buddy who gave him a sign for his wall that read “Everything is perfect.”

“To me, it meant to take a deep breath,” he explains. “Walk away, clear your head. Reboot. Reset. Things will work out, often on their own, if you just let them.”

Then comes his king-sized laugh. “Except when Manchester United is playing! As an ALJ you cannot take sides, but when Manchester is playing football, I am a loyal partisan.”
A1901003 • 04-Jan-2019 • Comcast Phone of California, LLC
Application of Comcast Phone of California LLC (U5698C) to
expand its existing Certificate of Public Convenience and
Necessity to provide limited facilities-based telecommunication
service in the service territory of Ponderosa Telephone Co.
ID=257687765

A1901004 • 08-Jan-2019 • Los Angeles World Airports
Application of the Los Angeles World Airports for an Order
authorizing Construction of a grade separated structure for
commuter rail tracks over the following crossings: Sepulveda
Boulevard, Century Boulevard, 98th Street, 96th Street, Airport
Boulevard and Aviation Boulevard. http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/
SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=258116652

A1802015 • 09-Jan-2019 • ALJ/HYMES/CPUC
Proposed Decision approving settlement between Pacific Gas
and Electric Company and the Public Advocates Office. PG&E
is authorized cost recovery of the balance in the Diablo Canyon
Seismic Studies Balancing Account for a revenue requirement
of $4.741 million. Pursuant to the terms of the settlement, the
recovery of $162,123 in PG&E's Energy Resource Recovery Ac-
cFormat=All&DocID=257867633

A1901005 • 09-Jan-2019 • City of San Luis Obispo
Application of the City of San Luis Obispo, herein sometimes
referred to as 'City' for an order authorizing the Construction
of the Railroad Safety Trail Overpass Grade Separation Project
(MP 247.80) over the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) in the City
ormat=All&DocID=257913982

R1901006 • 10-Jan-2019 • CPUC
Order Instituting Rulemaking to Implement Public Utilities
Code Section 451.2 Regarding Criteria and Methodology for
http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?docformat=All&doc
id=252777509

A1811009 • 14-Jan-2019 • ALJ/KLINE/CPUC
Proposed Decision granting the Trigger Application of South-
ern California Edison Company. http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/
SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=257687850

I1704021 • 14-Jan-2019 • ALJ/AYOADE/CPUC
Presiding Officer's Decision finding that Southern California
when it failed to render bills based on a monthly duration,
but instead issued 13.57 million bills with 34-60 billing days
between 2014 and 2016, and failed to prorate 153,358 of these
bills. Any party to this adjudicatory proceeding may file and
serve an Appeal of the Presiding Officer's Decision within 30
days of the date of issuance of this decision. Any Commissioner
may request review of the Presiding Officer's Decision by filing
and serving a Request for Review within 30 days of the date of
issuance. Any party may file and serve a Response to an Appeal
or Request for Review no later than 15 days after the date the
Appeal or Request for Review was filed. Replies to Responses
Format=All&DocID=257711445

R1211005 • 16-Jan-2019 • CMMR/RECHTSCHAFFEN/CPUC
Decision granting Petition for Modification of Decision (D.)
16-06-055 and D.16-12-055. The first petition seeks to modify
the method for determining the eligibility for a Self-Generation
Incentive Program project. The second petition seeks approval
for a modification of the Performance-Based Incentive Buy-
out payment structure and schedule for the California Solar
Initiative General Market Program. http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/
SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=258310707

A1507009 • 02-July-2015 (reopened on Jan. 17, 2019) • Charter
Communications, Inc.
In the matter of Joint Application of Charter Communications,
Inc.; Charter Fiberlink CA-CCO, LLC (U6878C); Time Warner
Cable Inc.; Time Warner Cable Information Services (Califor-
nia), LLC (U6874C) ; Advance/Newhouse Partnership; Bright
House Networks, LLC; and Bright House Networks Information
Services (California), LLC (U6955C) Pursuant to California
Public Utilities Code Section 854 for Expedited Approval of the
Transfer of Control of both Time Warner Cable Information
ll&DocID=259972603 and http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.as
px?DocFormat=All&DocID=259972268

A1411016 • 18-Jan-2019 • ALJ/DEANGELIS/CPUC
Proposed Decision denying Intervenor Compensation Claim
of Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy.
Opening comments are due no later than February 7, 2019. Re-
ply comments are due 5 days after the last day for filing opening
All&DocID=259972179

A1411016 • 26-Nov-2014 (reopened on Jan. 18, 2019) • Southern
California Edison Company
Application of Southern California Edison Company (U338E)
for Approval of the Results of Its 2013 Local Capacity Require-
docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&Doc
ID=259972179 and http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?Do
cFormat=All&DocID=259972512

A1705022 • 31-May-2017 (reopened on Jan. 18, 2019) • Califor-
nia Water Service Company
Application of California Water Service Company (U60W) for
Continued on page 6

R1302008 • 22-Jan-2019 • CMMR/RECHTSCHAFFEN/CPUC Proposed Decision regarding biomethane tasks in Senate Bill 840. Opening comments, which shall not exceed 15 pages, are due no later than February 11, 2019. Reply comments, which shall not exceed 5 pages, are due 5 days after the last day for filing opening comments. http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=259972085

R1807003 • 22-Jan-2019 • ALJs/MASON/ATAMTURK/CPUC Proposed Decision accepting Draft 2018 Renewables Portfolio Standard Procurement Plans. Opening comments, which shall not exceed 15 pages, are due no later than February 11, 2019. Reply comments, which shall not exceed 5 pages, are due 5 days after the last day for filing opening comments. http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=259972644

R1210012 • 22-Jan-2019 • CMMR/GUZMAN ACEVES/CPUC Decision revising the California Advanced Services Fund Broadband Adoption Account Provisions. Opening comments, which shall not exceed 15 pages, are due no later than February 11, 2019. Reply comments, which shall not exceed 5 pages, are due 5 days after the last day for filing opening comments. http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=259972757


A1901010 • 23-Jan-2019 • San Diego Gas & Electric Company In the Matter of the Application of SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY (U902M), for Authority to Expand its Short-Term Borrowing Authorization to an Aggregate Amount not to Exceed $575,000,000 in Addition to that Amount Otherwise Authorized by Public Utilities Code Section 823(c). http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=259972349


R1410003 - ALTERNATE • 1-Feb-2019 • CMMR/RANDOLPH/CPUC Alternate Proposed Decision of Commissioner Randolph denying Intervenor Compensation Claim of Clean Coalition. Opening comments are due no later than February 21, 2019. Reply comments are due 5 days after the last day for filing opening comments. http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=262406023

About this publication

This monthly newsletter is to keep you informed of proposals by the CPUC’s Commissioners and Administrative Law Judges, as well as utility applications, and other issues and work of note. We also include a list summarizing the filings at the CPUC in the previous month.

We want to hear from you! If you have topics you’d like us to cover or if you’d like to make comment on our proceedings or work, please contact us at outreach@cpuc.ca.gov or call (855) 421-0400. You can find information about events we are having at www.cpuc.ca.gov/Events.

Prior editions of this newsletter are available on the CPUC’s website at www.cpuc.ca.gov/newsletter.