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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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A2505001

Application of Southern California
Gas Company (U904G) for Approval
of the Branch Offices Closure
Proposal.

Application 25-05-001

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE'S RULING
RESCHEDULING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HEARINGS,
DISMISSING UNIONS' MOTION, AND REMOVING
STATUS CONFERENCE FROM THE PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE**

This ruling reschedules the time and place for six Public Participation Hearings (PPHs) to provide an opportunity for the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) to hear directly from the public about the Application of Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) for Approval of the Branch Offices Closure Proposal. It directs SoCalGas to contact Tribal leaders regarding its Branch Offices Closure Proposal. It dismisses the October 14, 2025, motion filed by the Utility Workers Union of America, Local 132 and the International Chemical Workers Union Council, Locals 335, 478, and 995c (jointly, the Unions) (Unions Motion). It also removes the November 14, 2025, Status Conference from the procedural schedule.

1. Background

On May 2, 2025, SoCalGas filed Application (A.) 25-05-001 requesting approval from the Commission of a proposal to close its 43 remaining branch offices. Customers can currently go to a branch office to pay their utility bills, ask questions about their service, and seek other services in person.

In A.25-05-001, SoCalGas states that branch offices have seen a significant decline in customer usage in recent years, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic forced in-person services to shut down. SoCalGas states that only approximately two percent of payments are conducted at branch offices as of the filing of A.25-05-001. According to SoCalGas, customers now rely significantly on other payment channels such as online accounts, mail, or authorized payment locations.

SoCalGas estimates the cost of retaining its existing 43 branch offices was approximately \$18.8 million in 2024, and that the cost per bill payment at a branch office is, on average, \$13.34 per transaction, compared to costs as low as \$0.07 per transaction for online payments.¹

The assigned Commissioner issued a Scoping Memo and Ruling (Scoping Memo) establishing the schedule and scope of issues for A.25-05-001 on August 18, 2025.

On September 16, 2025, an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) ruling set several PPHs in October and November 2025. SoCalGas filed a motion seeking to modify public notice requirements for the PPHs on September 22, 2025. An ALJ ruling issued on September 24, 2025, removed the 2024 PPHs from the procedural schedule and found SoCalGas' September 16, 2025, motion moot, given the removal of the PPHs from the procedural schedule.

2. Places and Times of Public Participation Hearings

This ruling informs the service list of A.25-05-001 that six PPHs will be conducted in 2026 to hear public response to SoCalGas' Branch Offices Closure

¹ A.25-05-001 at 3-4.

Proposal. These PPHs enable the Commission to receive public feedback on how customers will be affected by SoCalGas' Branch Office Closures proposal.

The PPHs will be led by the assigned Commissioner and/or the assigned ALJ. Although other Commissioners may also attend, no decisions will be made at the PPHs.

Public officials wishing to speak at any of the PPHs listed below should provide their name, title, and governmental entity prior to speaking.

The Commission's court reporters will record the statements made in the PPHs in a transcript. The transcript of the PPH statements will be posted on the Commission's website on the Docket Card for this proceeding (A.25-05-001).

Below are the instructions to participate in the in-person and remote PPHs:

DATE	FORMAT	LOCATION
January 26, 2026 2:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.	In-person only	Glendale City Council Chambers 613 E. Broadway, 2nd Floor Glendale, CA 91206
February 2, 2026	In-person only	Santa Ana Council Chambers 22 Civic Center Plaza Santa Ana, CA 92701
February 6, 2026 2:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.	Virtual only	Phone Number: 800-857-1917 Passcode: 1673482# Dial *1 (star one) if you wish to comment Webcast: http://www.adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc/

2.1. Public Participation Hearing In-Person Directions

To make a public comment at the in-person PPHs, participants must sign up at the Commission's Public Advisor's Office table located at the entrance when they arrive. Speakers will be called based on the time they filed their

request to speak at the PPH(s) with the Commission's Public Advisor's Office table.

Depending on the number of speakers, the ALJ may limit comment time to ensure efficient and respectful PPHs that offer all speakers an opportunity to comment.

2.2. Public Participation Hearing Virtual Directions

For the virtual PPHs on February 6, 2026, members of the public may join the webcast and/or the phone line. The webcast will have English or Spanish subtitles that can be accessed by clicking the green button below the video screen. To provide oral comments at the virtual PPHs, participants must use the phone number option, and upon accessing the phone line, press "star one" (*1) to record their first and last name when prompted. This will alert the operator, who will queue the speakers and announce each speaker's name at the allotted time.

When it is time for comments, the ALJ will make an announcement. The phone line operator will allow public comments based on the order of names of participants received on the phone line.

Based on the number of speakers, the ALJ may limit speakers' time to conduct efficient and respectful PPHs and ensure that all speakers have an opportunity to comment.

2.3. Language Accessibility

If you need a language interpreter, please contact the Commission's Public Advisor's Office at least five business days before the PPH you expect to attend, using one of the following methods:

Phone: 1-866-849-8390 (toll-free)
1-415-703-2074 (local toll)
Email: Public.Advisor@cpuc.ca.gov

2.4. Additional Public Comment Opportunities

In addition to the scheduled PPHs, SoCalGas customers may submit written public comments at any time during the proceeding and read other public comments via the Commission's website at the Docket Card for this proceeding using the Public Comment tab at: apps.cpuc.ca.gov/p/A2505001.

3. Directives to Southern California Gas Company

No later than 15 days prior to the first scheduled PPH, SoCalGas shall provide the Commission's Public Advisor's Office with the name, title, and telephone number of at least one senior customer service representative who can be reached by customers during each PPH for individual service or billing issues; and at least one customer service representative capable and prepared to respond to specific questions about the SoCalGas' Branch Office Closures Proposal as provided in A.25-05-001. The contacts provided by SoCalGas will be provided by the Commission to the public during the PPHs.

3.1. Public Notice

Pursuant to Rule 13.1(b)-(c) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, SoCalGas must, at a minimum, conduct the directives listed below to ensure that customer notice regarding the PPHs is distributed in a comprehensive manner. SoCalGas shall:

1. Post notice of the PPHs in at least one newspaper in each geographic region in its service territory. In all geographic regions with a notable number of non-English speaking customers, post notice of the PPHs in a regional newspaper in each of the other dominant languages in those regions;
2. Include notice of the PPHs in mailed bills to customers that currently receive bills via the United States Postal Service not more than 30 days in advance of the first PPH. For customers where the requirement for notice cannot be provided not more than 30 days prior to the first PPH,

SoCalGas must send direct mailers not less than five days prior to the first PPH and not more than 30 days in advance of the first PPH;

3. Send email messages to all customers that have provided SoCalGas with an email address. The subject line of the supplemental email must clearly advise the recipient the email is providing notice of the PPHs to be held in this proceeding. The body of the email must include the same information as approved by the Commission's Public Advisor's Office and include the participation information for each PPH provided above. The email messages regarding the PPHs must be sent separately from a customer's electronic bill;
4. Post notice of its PPHs on SoCalGas' website and in a prominent location at every branch office and alternate payment locations, so all customers may easily access the notice and participation information; and
5. Publicize the PPHs on all social media platforms SoCalGas uses.

No later than 10 days after the publication of each of the notice forms described in this ruling, SoCalGas shall send an email to the Commission's Public Advisor's Office and the assigned ALJ verifying its compliance with the directives herein. This email shall state the dates when the referenced types of notices were sent to customers, the methods used, and the approximate number of customers notified by each method. SoCalGas shall also provide the dates and locations of publication and posting, and attach copies of its PPHs notices.

Each form of notice described above shall state that the PPHs are both in- person and remote. If SoCalGas' billing system does not allow for compliance with the monthly bill insert, direct mailing, and/or email notice directives adopted herein, it may file a motion no later than five days after the issuance of

this ruling requesting change(s) to the public notice requirements provided above.

3.2. Directions for Southern California Gas Company to Notice Tribal Leaders

To comply with Issue 6 of the Assigned Commissioner's Scoping Memo and Ruling dated August 18, 2025, SoCalGas shall identify all Tribal communities in its service area, using the list maintained by the California Native American Heritage Commission.² Within 10 days of this ruling, SoCalGas shall file and serve in this proceeding a Response to ALJ Ruling including:

- The list of Tribes identified;
- Confirmation that SoCalGas contacted each Tribal leader by email, letter, and phone call; and
- One example of the notice sent to Tribal communities.

Only the names of Tribes shall be included in SoCalGas' filing; no personal information related to the Tribal contact(s) shall be disclosed.

The notices sent to Tribal communities must, at a minimum, include the information provided in Section 2, above. SoCalGas' notice shall also state that the utility is willing to discuss the application with any Tribe in its service area, and provide the name, title, and contact information of the SoCalGas employee(s) that should be contacted to request a meeting.

The notice must also state that if a Tribe requests a meeting with SoCalGas, the Tribe may request the utility to provide a summary or transcript of the

² The Assigned Commissioner's Scoping Memo and Ruling asks in Issue 6:

If Southern California Gas Company anticipates selling land or property currently occupied by any branch office(s), how and when will notification and consultation with local Tribes and impacted communities be conducted, pursuant to California Pub. Util. Code § 851 and the California Public Utilities Commission's Tribal Land Transfer Policy?

meeting to Tribal participants for them to review and verify. The Tribal meetings may occur at dates, times, and locations that differ from the PPHs established in this ruling.

Should a Tribe request a meeting with SoCalGas, the utility must notify the assigned ALJ and the Commission's Office of the Tribal Advisor by email at cs8@cpuc.ca.gov and TribalAdvisor@cpuc.ca.gov within one business day of confirming the meeting date, time, and location.

Tribal participants may opt out of requesting a transcript or summary of any meeting with SoCalGas. If a summary or transcript is recorded and verified, SoCalGas must file it to the service list of A.25-05-001 and the Commission's Office of the Tribal Advisor no later than 30 days after the meeting occurs. SoCalGas shall attest that the Tribal participants consented to the preparation of the transcript or summary, verified its accuracy, and consented to the filing of the transcript or summary.

4. Unions' Motion

On October 14, 2025, the Unions requested the Commission require SoCalGas to work with the Unions to provide notice to customers and for the Commission to direct SoCalGas to open its branch offices as sites for customers to participate in the remote PPHs.

This ruling provides SoCalGas ample time to provide customers information about the in-person and remote PPHs set in this ruling through separate physical or email informational notices.

Further, it is the Commission's responsibility to: (1) identify appropriate locations for PPHs, and (2) work with the utility to ensure customers are aware of the locations and times for each PPH. As the Unions are parties to this

proceeding, it is not appropriate to authorize them to do separate outreach related to the Commission-led PPHs.

It is not appropriate for the Commission to direct SoCalGas to utilize its branch offices to host viewing sessions for the remote PPHs. Commission staff must attend each PPH session if an in-person gathering is expected and I find it is not reasonable for Commission staff to be at each of the 43 branch offices that SoCalGas is requesting to close.

For the reasons described above, the Unions' October 14, 2025, motion is dismissed.

5. Status Conference

The August 18, 2025, Scoping Memo set a Status Conference on November 14, 2025, for the parties to confer about the status of the arguments and determine the need for evidentiary hearing. Given the PPHs have been deferred until 2026, holding a Status Conference in November 2025 is unnecessary. Should a Status Conference be required later in the proceeding schedule, a new date will be established through an ALJ ruling after the PPHs are completed.

IT IS RULED that:

1. The Public Participation Hearings for Application 25-05-001 will occur at the times, places, and locations identified in Section 2 above.

2. Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) shall provide notice that includes all directives described in Section 3 of this ruling to its customers. SoCalGas' notice must include details of how customers may participate in the in-person and virtual Public Participation Hearings as provided in this ruling through billing inserts or email notifications that explicitly state that the notices relate to its proposal to close its 43 branch offices.

3. No later than five days after the date of this ruling, Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) shall provide drafts of its notices to the Commission's Public Advisor's Office. SoCalGas shall incorporate any edits provided by the Commission's Public Advisor's Office in the final notices issued to customers.

4. No later than 10 days after the publication or mailing of each of the notices directed in this ruling, Southern California Gas Company shall send an email verification to the Commission's Public Advisor's Office and the assigned Administrative Law Judge.

5. No later than 10 days after the issuance of this ruling, Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) shall file and serve a response to this Administrative Law Judge Ruling in Application (A.) 25-05-001 verifying its compliance with the Tribal community notification requirements identified in this ruling. Should separate meetings occur with Tribal leaders, and upon consent of sharing any transcripts, SoCalGas shall file and serve the conversations with Tribal leaders to the service list of A.25-05-001 no later than 30 days after the meeting occurs.

6. No later than 15 days prior to the first scheduled Public Participation Hearing (PPH), Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) shall provide the Commission's Public Advisor's Office with the name, title, and telephone number of at least one senior customer service representative who can be reached by customers during each PPH for individual service or billing issues and at least one customer service representative capable and prepared to respond to specific questions about the SoCalGas' Branch Office Closures proposal (Application 25-05-001).

7. Should Southern California Gas Company require changes to the public notice directives adopted in this ruling, it shall file a motion no later than five days after the issuance of this ruling requesting the California Public Utilities

Commission's permission to modify the public notice requirements provided in Section 3 above.

8. The November 14, 2025, Status Conference set in the August 18, 2025, Scoping Memo is removed from the procedural schedule.

9. The October 14, 2025, motion filed by the Utility Workers Union of America, Local 132 and the International Chemical Workers Union Council, Locals 335, 478, and 995c is dismissed.

10. Parties to Application 25-05-001 shall not comment at the Public Participation Hearings absent compelling circumstances.

Dated October 24, 2025, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ CAROLYN SISTO

Carolyn Sisto
Administrative Law Judge