

February
2019

MONTHLY DATA REPORT



Consumer
Protection and
Enforcement
Division
California Public
Utilities Commission



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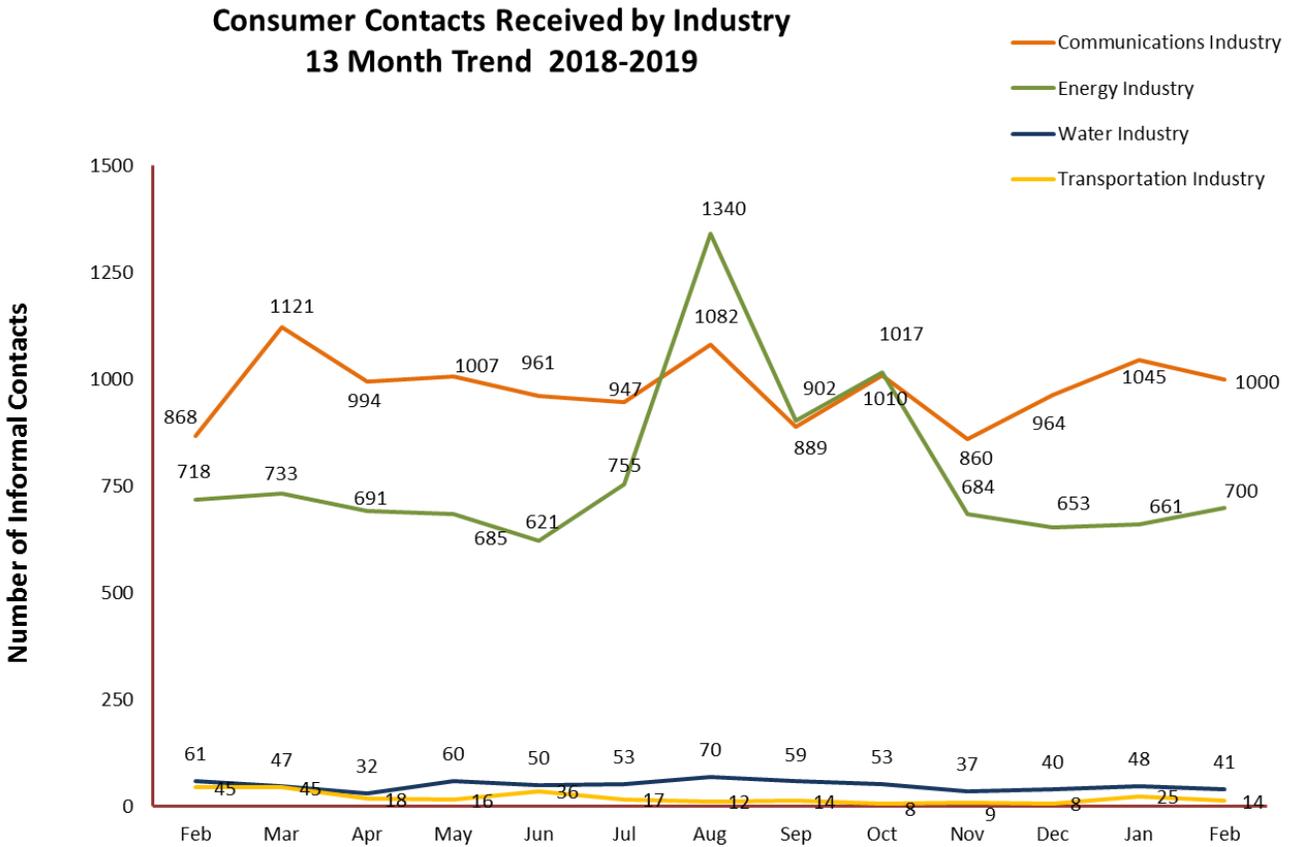
The Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division (CPED) serves the public interest and the mission of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) by assisting consumers in resolving their informal complaints against service providers under the Commission's jurisdiction. CPED is proud to be able to assist consumers with an informal complaint resolution process, with answers to questions, and with referral information. In assisting consumers, we are able to gain a useful picture of consumer issues and trends.

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

The Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division serves as the first line of support for consumers of CPUC-regulated services. CPED collects and resolves consumer informal complaints, enforces laws and regulations governing transportation carriers, and investigates allegations of utility waste, fraud, and abuse.

Overview

1,755 CONTACTS (February 2019)



Overall, 1,755 total informal consumer contacts were received during February across the four regulated industries. February shows a slight decrease of approximately 1.3% from the 1,779 informal contacts received during January; and a 4.6% decrease from the prior 12-month average of 1,839.

Communications: 1,000 categorized informal contacts related to Communications were received during February, which is a decrease of 4.3% from the 1,045 contacts received during January. The contacts received during February are 2.1% higher than the prior 12-month average of 979.

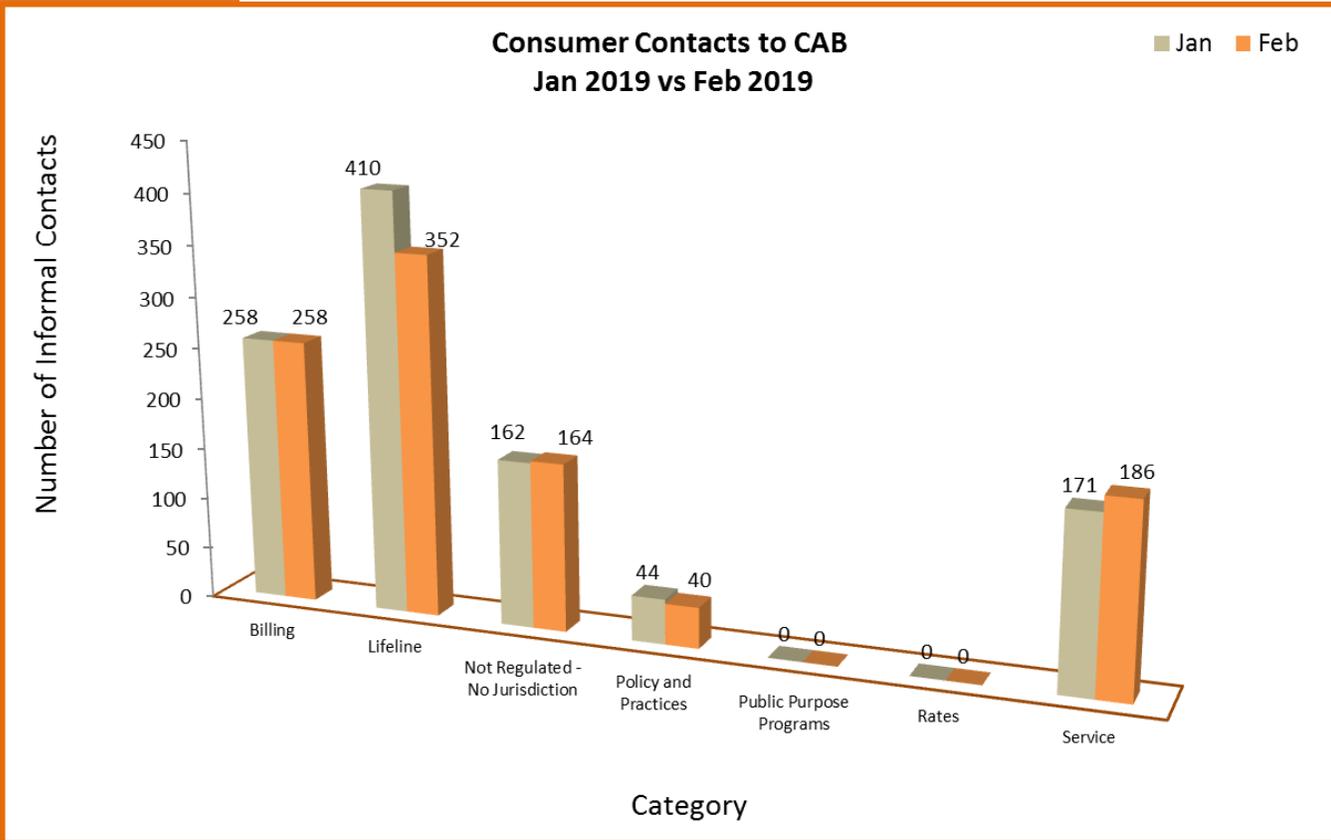
Energy: 700 categorized informal contacts related to Energy were received during February 2019, which is an increase of 5.9% from 661 contacts received during January. Contacts received in February are 11.2% lower than the prior 12-month average of 788.

Water: 41 categorized informal contacts related to Water were received during February. This is a 14.6% decrease from the 48 contacts received in January. Water contacts remain below average, with February being 19.3% lower than the prior 12-month average of 51.

Transportation: TEB received 14 categorized contacts in February 2019. Transportation contacts are 44% lower, by 11 contacts, than the 25 contacts in January 2019 and 33.6% lower than the prior 12-month average of 23. (Note: TEB no longer handles complaints regarding Household Good Carriers and Private Carriers as of July 1, 2018, pursuant Senate Bill 19 Hill-2017.)

Communications

1,000 CONTACTS (February 2019)



During February, CAB received 1,000 Communications-related informal contacts, allocated into one of the defined categories of Billing, LifeLine, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

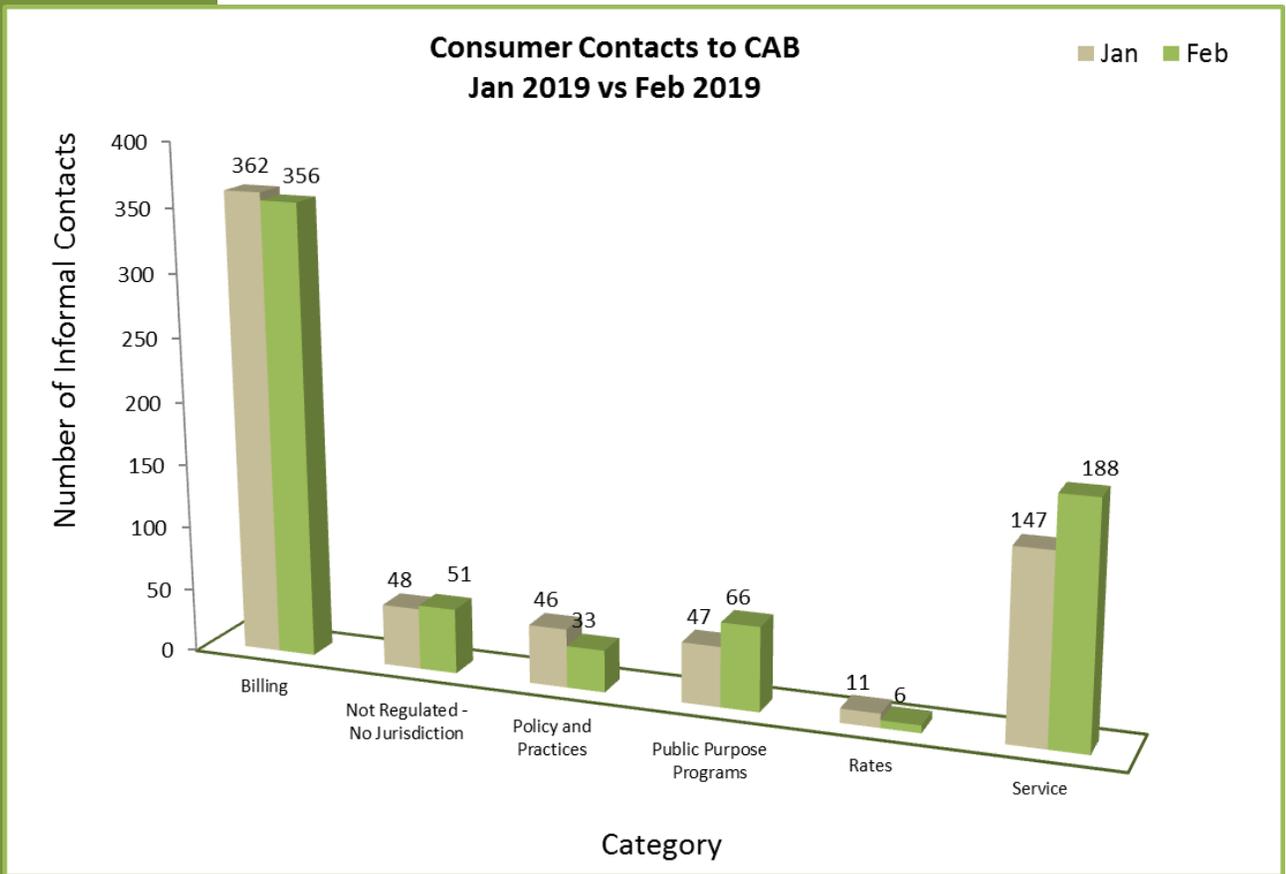
Lifeline related contacts decreased by 14.1% in February. New account activations as well as account renewals appear to be down in February, which contributed to the overall decrease in these consumer contacts for the month.

In addition, Service-related contacts increased by 8.8% in February. Outage complaints with AT&T California and Frontier California Inc. increased from January to February. Moreover, there was a slight increase in contacts related to Delayed Orders/Missed Appointments with AT&T California. and Frontier California Inc.

In addition to the 1,000 categorized contacts, CAB received 122 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

Energy

700 CONTACTS (February 2019)



In February, CAB received 700 Energy-related informal contacts allocated amongst the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

Policy and Practice related contacts decreased by 28.3% in February. The decrease was across several subcategories with no primary carrier as a prime contributor.

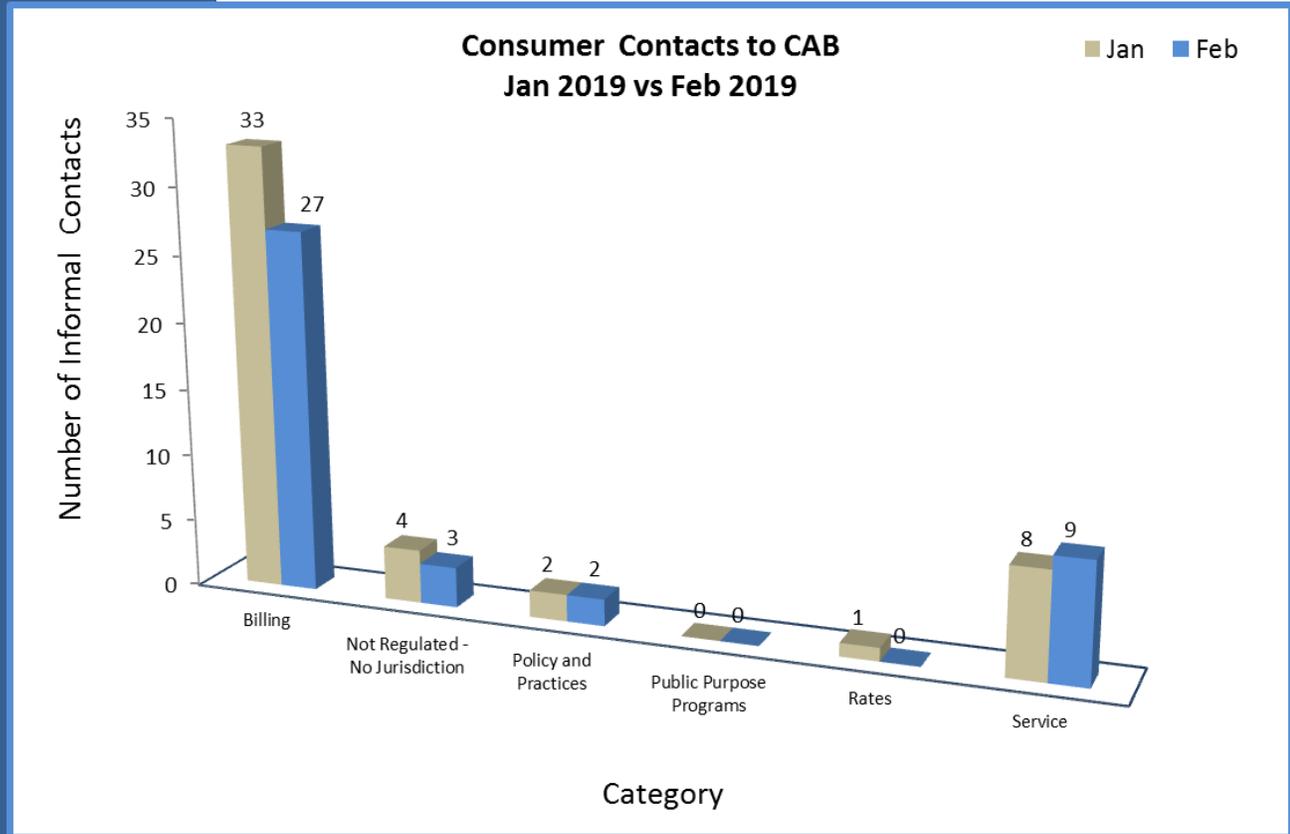
Also, Public Purpose Programs related contacts increased by 40.4% in February. The contacts related to Energy Efficiency Programs and Net Energy Metering with PG&E, SDG&E, and SoCal Gas were key factors in the increase.

In addition to the 700 categorized contacts, CAB also received 68 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.



Water

41 CONTACTS (February 2019)



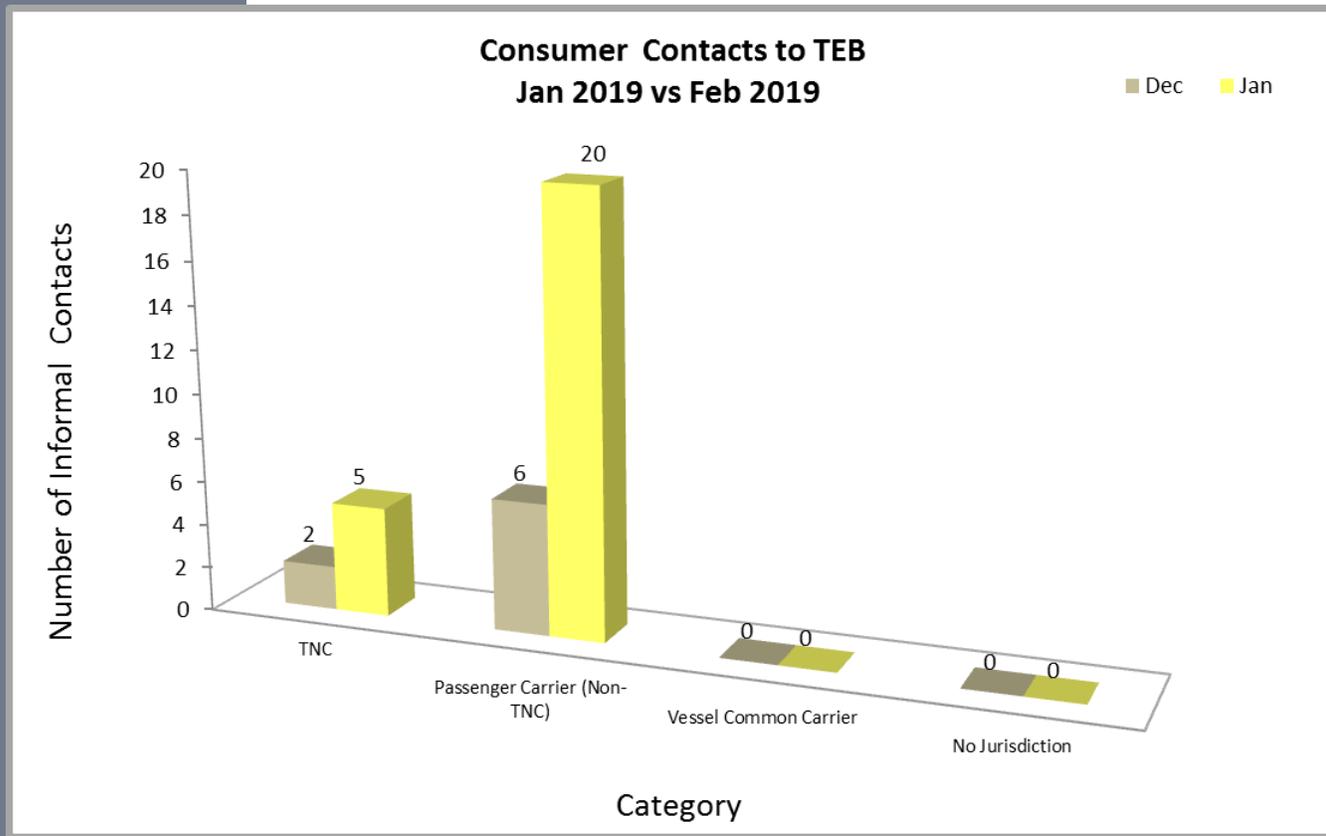
CAB received 41 Water-related informal contacts in February, allocated into one of the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

While there was a decrease of 14.6% (7 contacts) in informal contacts between January and February, there was no significant driver of the decrease in any category.

In addition to the 41 categorized contacts, CAB also received 14 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

Transportation

14 CONTACTS (February 2019)



TEB received 14 Transportation-related contacts in February, allocated into one of the 4 defined categories of Passenger Carrier (TNC), Passenger Carrier (Non-TNC), Vessel Common Carrier, and No Jurisdiction.

Passenger carrier complaints (TNC, limo, buses) consisted of (5) operating or advertising without a permit (safety issue), (3) operating on a suspended or revoked permit (safety issue), and (6) refund requests. CIU referred (8) complaints for enforcement action, resolved (3) complaints, and will likely complete the remaining (3) complaints within 30 days of receipt. CIU closed (12) complaints in February 2019: (12) within 30 days of receipt.

Each of the complaints involved a specific carrier, so no trend or pattern could be attributed to the complaints relative to the over 7,000 carriers under CPUC jurisdiction.

Safety Concerns Across Industries

During February 2019, CPED received **39** contacts identified as having a safety component across three of the four reported industries. The contacts presented below are a subset of those presented on pages 3-6 of this report. Safety contacts are classified by the type of safety concern.

Communications	16
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	10
Utility Infrastructure	6

Energy	15
Gas Leak	6
Property Restoration	1
Utility Infrastructure	8

Water	0
No Safety Contacts	

Transportation	8
Operating Without Active Authority	8

Definitions for Safety-Related Contacts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Definitions

Consumer Affairs Branch

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

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

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