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DRA Applauds CPUC Vote to Deny SDG&E De-Energization Plan

SAN FRANCISCO, September 14, 2009 – The Division of Ratepayer Advocates (DRA), an independent consumer advocacy division of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), applauds the CPUC’s decision Thursday to deny San Diego Gas and Electric Company’s (SDG&E) application to proactively shut off power to certain areas within its service territory during the fire season without any liability for costs or negative impacts caused by the shut-off.

By a vote of 4-1, the CPUC voted to support an Alternate Decision by Administrative Law Judge Timothy Kenney, which denies the application “without prejudice.” The decision also adopted a recommendation by DRA and the CPUC’s Consumer Protection and Safety Division requiring SDG&E to engage in a collaborative dispute resolution process with interested stakeholders and allowing SDG&E to file its own proposed fire prevention program if a consensus is not reached.

SDG&E’s proposal could have resulted in serious negative impacts on the health and safety of ratepayers residing in the affected areas by severely impacting communications and evacuation efforts during high fire risk conditions.

“The Commissioners made it clear in their public comments and their votes that the record did not support SDG&E’s claims, and that interrupting electricity would have done much more harm than good to the public interest,” said DRA Director Dana Appling, who also emphasized that this decision was the right result because, “as a monopoly, SDG&E has a public service obligation to all of its ratepayers and cannot pick and choose to whom it will provide safe and reliable electric service.”



Although the decision by the CPUC denies SDG&E's proactive fire prevention shut-off plan, SDG&E continues to have the authority to shut off power in emergency situations when necessary to protect public safety.

For more information on DRA, please visit www.dra.ca.gov.

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