



Division of Ratepayer Advocates
California Public Utilities Commission
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

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**DRA ADVOCACY BRINGS MORE CALIFORNIANS
RELIEF FROM ENERGY COSTS**

SAN FRANCISCO, November 19, 2008 – The Division of Ratepayer Advocates (DRA), an independent consumer advocacy division of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), today announced that its vigorous efforts on behalf of low income customers helped to expand and improve the California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE) bill discount program and the Low Income Energy Efficiency (LIEE) program.

On Thursday, November 6, 2008, the CPUC authorized Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, and Southern California Gas to spend \$1.1 billion in 2009 to reduce low income household energy bills through discounts and energy efficiency retrofits.

DRA strongly shaped the CPUC's decision by ensuring that:

- An additional 35,000 eligible households (for a total of 305,000) will be offered energy efficiency assessments and retrofits in 2009
- An additional 1 million eligible households (for a total of 4.7 million) will be offered the 20 percent CARE discount on energy bills
- Utilities will prioritize customers with high energy burdens (defined as those who spend more than 4 percent of income on energy) and high energy insecurity (defined as those chronically late on bills or in danger of being shut-off)
- Utilities will engage more community based organizations to enroll and serve eligible CARE and LIEE customers

- Utilities will inform all incoming customers about CARE as they sign-up for service
- Utilities will continue to provide customers with all-feasible energy efficiency measures

“This decision is another step in the right direction for California energy policy by including low income households as part of the climate change solution,” said Dana Appling, Director of DRA. “CARE and LIEE are at the heart of maintaining energy affordability for the one-third of all California households that are low income.”

In addition to expanding and improving CARE and LIEE services, DRA advocates for programs and policies that:

- Streamline and ease enrollment in all of California’s low income utility services
- Save money through improved coordination between CARE, LIEE, and other state and federal energy efficiency programs
- Require utilities to make “Green Collar Jobs” available to California’s low income community

Each of these initiatives will continue to be pursued through the implementation of California’s Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan, which sets a laudable goal of providing all eligible low income households energy efficiency services by 2020. DRA is proud to have been a primary contributor to this plan and looks forward to actively promoting progress toward this goal.

In addition, DRA makes available a Low Income Program Comparison, which illustrates the rules, administrative processes, costs, and benefits of all the CPUC’s low income programs in energy, communications, and water. DRA intends for this comparison to be a tool in providing seamless service to California’s low income families.

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

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