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PRESS RELEASE

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**DRA Releases Report On California Energy Utility  
Service Disconnections: 19 Percent More Low Income Households  
Disconnected In Past Year**

SAN FRANCISCO, November 19, 2009 – The Division of Ratepayer Advocates (DRA), an independent consumer advocacy division of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), today released its [\*Status Report on Energy Utility Service Disconnections\*](#), which finds a troubling trend of increased disconnections of low income utility customers throughout the state.

DRA's report compares utility service disconnection data from 2006 through August 2009. The data covers nearly 12 million California households served by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, and Southern California Gas. DRA finds that disconnections of low income customers increased 19 percent last year while disconnections of non-low income households overall have remained constant. A third of all California households are considered low income.

“Disconnecting more low income customers in this difficult economy creates undue health and safety risks,” said DRA's Director Dana Appling. “The vast majority of these customers pay their past-due bills, just hours or days too late to avoid the disconnection.”

DRA's report raises the question of whether some disconnections are preventable. DRA advocates that CPUC action -- not just voluntary utility efforts -- is needed to reverse the trend of increased disconnections. DRA's report also explains how new metering technology deployment by the utilities (Smart Meters) could further increase service disconnections.

DRA is awaiting more comprehensive data from utilities on the volume and amount of unpaid customer bills in order to continue analysis of disconnection and payment trends.



DRA's [Status Report on Energy Utility Service Disconnections](#) is available on DRA's website. You can also receive a copy by emailing Tom Hall at [tbh@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:tbh@cpuc.ca.gov).

For more information on DRA, please visit [www.dra.ca.gov](http://www.dra.ca.gov).

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