



DRA

*Division of Ratepayer Advocates
California Public Utilities Commission*

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JOSEPH P. COMO
Acting Director

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April 23, 2013

Honorable Jerry Hill
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5064
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 611 (Hill) – Support

Dear Senator Hill,

DRA (Division of Ratepayer Advocates) is the independent consumer advocate within the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). DRA's statutory mandate is to obtain the lowest possible rate for utility service consistent with reliable and safe service levels. DRA also advocates for customer and environmental protections in connection with utility service.

DRA supports your SB 611, which would make specified changes to both the CPUC and DRA to help each improve upon its ability respectively to ensure affordable, safe and reliable investor-owned utility services.

SB 611 would better position both the CPUC and DRA to more effectively achieve their statutory mandates to ensure IOU customers, especially low-income individuals and those most in need, have access to essential utility services in a more accountable and transparent manner. As a regulatory entity, it is essential that the CPUC be perceived as a fair and trustworthy governmental organization. SB 611 would help advance this effort by making specified operational changes, ensuring the agency is devoid of conflicts of interest and by preventing overlap between adjudicative and prosecutorial functions. These changes will help ensure better accountability at the CPUC and will streamline regulation of utility services.

SB 611 would also better situate DRA to more effectively and efficiently utilize its resources to advocate for affordable, safe and reliable IOU services. Specifically, this bill would clarify DRA's ability to petition for a writ of review and provide DRA with the personnel and budget resource controls it needs to fulfill its mission and operate independently in the interest of utility customers, while also reflecting current DRA budgetary and hiring practices.

For the reasons stated above, DRA supports your SB 611 and looks forward to working with you on this bill. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please call DRA's Deputy Director Matthew Marcus, at (916) 327-3455 or me at (415) 703-2381.

Respectfully,

Joseph P. Como, Acting Director
Division of Ratepayer Advocates

By
Matthew Marcus, Deputy Director
Division of Ratepayer Advocates