



DRA

*Division of Ratepayer Advocates
California Public Utilities Commission*

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JOSEPH P. COMO
Acting Director

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March 21, 2013

Honorable Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Alex Padilla
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4038
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 743 (Steinberg/Padilla) – Support

Dear Senate President pro Tem Steinberg and Chairman Padilla,

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 743, which would authorize the CPUC to a limited increase in CARE rates for participants with electricity usage up to 130% of baseline quantities by the annual percentage increase of the Consumer Price Index from the prior year, but not to exceed 4% per year. The rate increases would also be subject to the limitation that the CARE rates not exceed 80% of the corresponding rates charged to residential customers not participating in the CARE program.

While the primary reason all customers' electricity rates are increasing is due to continued increases in the utilities' authorized revenue requirement, we support your bill's laudable efforts to ensure more affordable residential monthly energy bills while also protecting low-income customers who are the most in need. We look forward to working with you to implement necessary changes to make residential rates more understandable and equitable. Most importantly, SB 743 maintains consumer protections that will avoid rate shock.

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