



DRA

*Division of Ratepayer Advocates
California Public Utilities Commission*

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Dana S. Appling, Director

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April 15, 2010

Honorable Jim Beall
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 5016
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1879 (Beall) - Support

Dear Assemblymember Beall:

The Division of Ratepayer Advocates (DRA) is the independent consumer advocacy division of 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 AB 1879, which would require the CPUC to reexamine if electric or gas investor-owned utility (IOU) small commercial customers should be responsible for costs resulting from utility metering or billing errors for up to 3-years.

IOUs' tariff rules currently allow IOU small commercial customer's to be charged for unbilled or undercharged costs resulting from utility metering or billing errors for up to 3-years. AB 1879 would require the CPUC to open a proceeding to reexamine the appropriateness of this backbilling rule. Given the proliferation of recent advanced metering infrastructure concerns - inaccurate readings, extremely high bills, potentially faulty meters, etc., it is important that we develop a balanced record before the CPUC on this issue with sufficient public participation to effectively determine if the current backbilling rules are in the best interest of small commercial customers.

DRA supports your bill's efforts to reexamine small commercial customer's exposure to unbilled or undercharged costs resulting from utility metering or billing errors and looks forward to working with you to pass this important legislation.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please call DRA's Legislative Director Matthew Marcus, at (916) 327-3455 or me at (415) 703-2544.

Respectfully,

Dana S. Appling, Director
Division of Ratepayer Advocates

The Voice of Consumers, Making a Difference!