



DRA

*Division of Ratepayer Advocates
California Public Utilities Commission*

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Dana S. Appling, Director

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April 12, 2010

Honorable Dean Florez
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 313
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 837 (Florez) - Support

Dear Senator Florez:

The Division of Ratepayer Advocates (DRA) is the independent consumer advocacy arm 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 SB 837, which would reduce service disconnections, address faulty equipment concerns and prevent the misuse of ratepayer information associated with advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), as specified.

DRA recognizes the benefits associated with AMI for electric utilities. By utilizing this technology, customer's can monitor their energy usage and make more informed choices about future use. Those that conserve or use less power during peak times can lower their monthly energy bills and help protect the environment. At the same time, problems with AMI have been proliferating - inaccurate readings, extremely high bills, potentially faulty meters, etc. SB 837 would begin the dialogue to create the accountability needed to address these and other AMI-related problems.

SB 837 would establish AMI testing and technology standards to address the varied concerns related to faulty meters, protect customer privacy by prohibiting specified entities from gathering and misusing personal energy usage data, and most important, limit the number of energy service disconnections in this economic downturn by codifying our November 2009, Status of Energy Utility Service Disconnections in California Report recommendations as well as other protections. By establishing these and other important ratepayer protections the benefits of AMI may be more achievable. We look forward to working with you to strengthen these and other consumer protections.

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