



DRA

*Division of Ratepayer Advocates
California Public Utilities Commission*

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April 19, 2011

Honorable Lois Wolk
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 905 (Wolk) – Support

Dear Senator Wolk:

DRA (Division of Ratepayer Advocates) is an independent consumer advocacy Division at 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 Senate Bill (SB) 905, which would better protect consumers from unauthorized charges being placed on their home telephone and wireless bills. This unauthorized activity known as "cramming" was banned by the Legislature in 1998, but continues to be very problematic for consumers- especially for the elderly, low-income and Limited-English consumers.

SB 905 would strengthen existing law and the recent actions taken by the CPUC late last year (R.00-02-004) to (i) make service providers more accountable for all of the charges on their customer's monthly service bills (ii) enhance service provider complaint reporting requirements and (iii) improve upon the CPUC's ability to detect, enforce and levy fines for cramming violations.

Simply put, California consumers continue to be victimized by cramming despite the existence of limited CPUC rules governing cramming and the purported self policing "safeguards" implemented by service providers and billing agents. This is evident in the thousands of cramming complaints still registered each month by California consumers to their service providers and the CPUC, the plethora of Class Action Law Suits filed on this issue, and the recent investigations and actions taken at the Federal and State levels to prosecute violators.

We look 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) 703-2381.

Respectfully,

Joseph P. Como, Acting Director
Division of Ratepayer Advocates

By
Matthew Marcus
Legislative Director