Low Income Oversight Board Meeting

*Draft meeting notes*

Monday September 16, 2019, 9AM-3:30PM

Vista del Mar Middle School, Multi-Purpose Room

4885 Del Sol Blvd.

San Diego, CA 92154

# Opening Remarks – Welcomes and Introductions:

Board Chair Delgado-Olson opened the meeting, and announced the State Senate confirmation of California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Commissioner Shiroma on July 8th. The Chair also announced the departures of Board Members Toledo and Murphy-Roach, and of the Energy Division liaison, Zaida Amaya.

# Public Comment:

Multiple organizations spoke regarding the digital divide and the need to increase broadband access to low income customers.

# June 24th Meeting Minutes:

The Board approved the minutes from the June 24th meeting.

# Placeholder for Community Local Groups:

Marco Lizarraga of La Cooperativa Campesina spoke about his organization’s partnership with the Community Services Department’s (CSD) Low Income Weatherization Program (LIWP). Board Member Castaneda spoke about the difference of using Area Median Income vs. Federal Poverty Guidelines and Board Chair Delgado-Olson also recognized the work of the organization.

Anna Hasselblad of United Ways of California requested to submit a letter, regarding Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) support of increased broadband access for low income customers, to the Board, the IOUs, and the CPUC. The letter is attached here.

Sunne McPeak of the California Emerging Technology Fund spoke about the IOUs potential opportunity to conduct outreach to low income customers regarding energy efficiency and the connection with broadband access. Board Member Medina asked about the goals and targets; Ms. McPeak responded with the need to reach 500,000 more customers over the next 3-10 years to reach 90 percent of low income customers.

# Special Reports / Updates:

Due to a conflict with the Governor’s Office, Board Member Wimbley was not present; his CSD/LIWP and IOU Coordination Report was emailed to the Board on September 17th, 2019.

# Communications Division:

Caleb Jones of the CPUC’s Communications Division presented on the LifeLine program’s Boost Mobile, and iFoster Pilots program, providing discounted and/or free mobile phones and service to foster youth.

# CPUC Standing Reports:

Kevin Truong of the CPUC’s Water Division presented the Water Utilities update.

A revised CPUC Legislative Update was displayed at the meeting and on the Webex.

Kapil Kulkarni of the CPUC’s Energy Division presented the Energy Division update, including a brief summary of the August 27th IOU Public Workshop on Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) and California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) applications. In response to questions, he also provided attendance figures from the first workshop and instructions to receive notice of similar meetings related to a proceeding.

Action Item: Confirm “Relevant Proceedings” link on LIOB website is working.

# Subcommittee Reports and Updates:

The Legislative Committee met twice to review these bills, and voted to support Senate Bill (SB) 704 and Assembly Bill (AB) 386. During the joint Legislative and Energy Assistance Programs Committee meeting on August 7th, the Legislative Committee voted to oppose AB 1366 due to potential negative impacts on the Lifeline program. Both of the supported bills were sent to the Governor; the opposed bill was held in committee.

The other committees (Water and Climate Change, and Low Income Needs Assessment) did not meet.

# Single Administrator Discussion:

This item was placed on the agenda from the August 7th joint Low Income Energy Assistance Programs (LIEAP) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting. Commissioner Shiroma spoke about the background of the issue, clarified the guidance, and summarized the stakeholder feedback received so far from the public workshop. Board Chair Delgado-Olson spoke about the need to provide a formal in-depth committee-based process to incorporate all stakeholder feedback, and provide consensus-based recommendations. The Board Chair introduced a motion for the committee to develop recommendations by December so it can be voted on by the full Board.

Anna Solorio of CHOC stated that the Multi-Family Working Group was created from the last decision because the issue was contentious and complex. She believed that the guidance did not take the MFWG recommendations into account, and said the group’s report recommendations (due by the end of the year) should be incorporated into the IOU applications.

Dave Clark of Synergy recommended increasing the income guidelines and/or using AMI per the CSD LIWP program.

Chris Porter of CHOC emphasized continuation of the personal touch and ensuring the program doesn’t go too hi-tech.

Board Vice Chair Stamas mentioned Public Utilities Code 327 (b) – that any ESA bidder must have knowledge of local community, and also discussed the need for workforce development within the Multi-Family Whole Building (MFWB) program.

The motion passed by consensus. Board Chair Delgado-Olson and incoming Board Member Rendler were added to the LIEAP Subcommittee. This committee will likely have a joint meeting with the TAC.

# More Committee Updates:

Board Chair Delgado-Olson said the TAC had not met since prior to the previous joint meeting. He mentioned that the Board had decided at the June meeting in Compton to discuss regulatory barriers to direct contracting with social service agencies for the purpose of increasing CARE enrollment, and asked the IOUs to provide an update at the next Committee meeting.

Action Item: IOUs to present on direct contracting efforts at next TAC meeting.

Action Item Complete: Yes, item is on the October 8 TAC meeting agenda.

Board Chair Delgado-Olson also noticed common themes of (lack of) trust and difficulty of income verification in the IOU presentations. He said the purpose of the TAC is to have a more holistic view (not just the IOUs), including working with county and other municipal agencies that provide public assistance and means test their clients, and breaking down silos between the various programs that provide services to low income customers.

Board Member Castaneda said there was no update from the (Disadvantaged Communities) DAC Advisory Committee.

Board Vice Chair Stamas stated that Phase II of the Disconnections Order Instituting Rulemaking (OIR) will be important, in terms of bringing in innovative ideas.

# Joint IOU Reports:

Board Vice Chair Stamas asked SCG about interest on unspent funds. SCG responded via email on September 26th:

As of August 31, 2019, SoCalGas has accrued a total of $3,339,467 in interest on the unspent Energy Savings Assistance Program funds for 2019. This amount has been recorded in the Direct Assistance Program Balancing Account (DAPBA). The unspent funds accrue interest to ratepayers based on the average balance in the account at the 3-month commercial paper rate as indicated in SoCalGas’ Commission approved Preliminary Statement for the DAPBA. This interest is refunded to ratepayers through reduction of PPP surcharge rates. See links below:

*(-*[*https://www.socalgas.com/regulatory/tariffs/tm2/pdf/DAPBA.pdf*](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.socalgas.com%2fregulatory%2ftariffs%2ftm2%2fpdf%2fDAPBA.pdf&c=E,1,K321xX-VOI6Y7CVxHltJc5Uj3ATIFZoMKg63dnAkHdUOlaBMb_mbBFCs3wJBpVlRDRIdzMWDCkqQUnLpeEFvKu2tRQXsY4REzp3rbCP2b90erZ2F3yx1oj4,&typo=1) *; Section J.1. -* [*https://www.socalgas.com/regulatory/tariffs/tm2/pdf/PS-I.pdf*](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.socalgas.com%2fregulatory%2ftariffs%2ftm2%2fpdf%2fPS-I.pdf&c=E,1,7qDE4ICprpoakx_Agq1dzucdITG237CUXYxBx-I5oEyt4lB0t-eprQXgEef-n8EvPeNDwZmQlfYDfxxlLlqwQYl3xUByVF6IBDEzr7af3GCffiRzLi8Sbw,,&typo=1) *)*

Board Member Delgado-Olson asked where the interest on unspent funds are placed. Mary O’Drain of PG&E responded that, at a high level, it is added to the principal.

Commissioner Shiroma mentioned a Low Income simulator exercise at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) meeting she attended.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 11:50AM and returned at 12:50PM.

# IOU presentations:

Each of the IOUs presented on their draft post-2020 ESA/CARE program applications, followed by Q&A.

Anna Solorio of CHOC was pleased that stakeholder feedback from the August 27th public workshop was incorporated into the latest IOU presentations. She also stated that the program contains a strong Workforce Development history, including employees starting at minimum wage and increasing to $30 per hour. She was also concerned about the potential for public money to be invested in private property, in the case of non-deed restricted Multi-family properties as part of the ESA Multi-Family Whole Building program.

Anna Hasselblad of United Ways of California discussed the digital audits and the link to broadband, and how workforce development goals may fall short without broadband access.

Allie Cannington of CFILC/DON wanted to ensure that all materials are available to all communities (including those with disabilities), and pointed out that a majority of the Presidential candidates’ websites are not ADA-compliant.

Jeanne Clinton asked SCE about Multi-family buildings with high use (5% of market), and how to treat these buildings from a whole building perspective, from targeting individual customers vs entire buildings. SCE said they do not have this analysis but will be looking at energy intensity.

Commissioner Shiroma commented that SCG is playing catch-up on new treatments and wondered if there is coordination with SCE. Mark Aguirre of SCG said there is coordination among joint contractors, as well as information sharing on which homes have been treated. He also commented that SCG is not able to offer the most attractive measures (like refrigerators) – customers are often more interested in electric-saving measures.

Board Member Watts commented that customers should get gas measures first, then get a refrigerator. She said the customer acquisition cost is higher with the individual measure / fuel approach.

Board Member Medina said that customers are confused by kW and kWh, and that contractors need to point out the value of the service.

Commissioner Shiroma asked about the number of MF properties in the SDG&E territory; SDG&E clarified that it is a likely eligible population of 3,700 out of 11,000 total properties.

Board Member Stamas asked if there is a per home cost cap. Mark Aguirre of SCG clarified that there is a minor home repair cap of $1,000, but no other per household caps.

Board Chair Delgado-Olson reiterated that the Board is statutorily obligated to look after ratepayer-funded programs for electricity, gas, water, and Lifeline as it relates to outreach for CARE.

 Board Chair Delgado-Olson requested the IOUs inform the board how many households (total and low income) have connectivity and/or mobile devices and are able to receive notifications related to disaster relief, shutoffs, PSPS, etc. Holly Merrihew of SCE said that it is a different group within SCE. The IOUs stated that they are always asking for customers to sign up for notifications about wildfires, Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS), etc.

Board Chair Delgado-Olson also asked if Workforce Education and Training (WE&T) is being incorporated into applications. Mark Aguirre of SCG responded affirmatively. PG&E stated that there are lots of EE programs that LI will leverage for WE&T. SCE stated that they will apply to move EE WE&T to LI.

Commissioner Shiroma stated the need for the IOUs to have metrics and goals, and that the CPUC likes having metrics and goals.

At this point, the meeting was adjourned for the Mexican Independence Day celebration.

# Complete Meeting Audio:

ftp://ftp2.cpuc.ca.gov/AudioVisualFiles/LIOB\_09162019\_partI.wav  - Morning Session

ftp://ftp2.cpuc.ca.gov/AudioVisualFiles/LIOB\_09162019\_partII.wav - Afternoon Session