



California Public Utilities Commission

Legislative Bill Update – Office of Governmental Affairs

*Bills of Interest to the Low-Income Oversight Board: Legislative Subcommittee
Meeting – Wednesday April 12th, 2023*

The deadline for the Senate and Assembly policy committees to hear and report on introduced bills is Friday, April 28th. The deadline for the Senate and Assembly appropriations committees to hear and report on introduced bills is Friday, May 19th. Several bills of interest to the Low-Income Oversight Board (LIOB) are active and summarized below:

1. Assembly Bill 487 (Ting) - Low-income energy programs: assessment

Existing law requires the CPUC, at least once every 3 years, to conduct an assessment of the needs of low-income electricity and gas ratepayers to evaluate low-income program implementation and the effectiveness of weatherization services and energy efficiency measures in low-income households. This bill instead would require the CPUC to conduct the assessment biennially.

Status: *Referred to Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy.*

2. Assembly Bill 982 (Villapudua) - Public Utilities Public Purpose Programs Fund.

This bill would establish the Public Utilities Public Purpose Programs Fund, and would, upon appropriation, require the CPUC to allocate the moneys in the fund for purposes of funding programs funded through an electrical investor-owned utilities' (IOU) public purpose program rate component as of December 31, 2023, and other programs determined by the CPUC to provide public benefits, except the Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) program and the California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) program.

Status: *Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee.*

3. Assembly Bill 1231 (Santiago) – Telecommunications: combining lifeline, federal lifeline, and federal Affordable Connectivity Program subsidies.

This bill would require the CPUC to allow every wireline and wireless lifeline telephone service subscriber to combine lifeline subsidies with federal lifeline subsidies and federal Affordable Connectivity Program subsidies. The bill would prohibit the CPUC from disallowing any portion of payment to a telephone corporation providing lifeline telephone service based on the combination of those subsidies.

Status: *Referred to Assembly Committee on Communication and Conveyance.*

4. Senate Bill 48 (Becker) - Water and Energy Savings Act.

Existing law requires each utility to maintain records of the energy usage data of all buildings to which they provide service, as specified, and to deliver or otherwise provide that aggregated energy usage data for each

covered building to the owner. This bill would expand those requirements, beginning January 1, 2025, to include each utility that provides water service and its water usage data.

This bill would require the California Energy Commission (CEC) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), in consultation with the California Air Resources Board (CARB), CPUC, and Department of Housing and Community Development, on or before July 1, 2026, to jointly develop a strategy for using the energy and water usage data described above to track and manage the energy and water usage and emissions of greenhouse gases of covered buildings in order to achieve the state's goals, targets, and standards related to energy and water usage and emissions of greenhouse gases of covered buildings. The bill would authorize the CEC and SWRCB, upon appropriation, to jointly establish energy and water usage building performance standards consistent with the strategy. The bill would require the CEC and SWRCB to triennially evaluate the progress of the strategy in achieving improvements in energy and water efficiency and reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases and evaluate the impacts of the strategy on disadvantaged communities.

Status: Set for hearing on April 10th in Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications.

5. Senate Bill 57 (Gonzalez) - Utilities: disconnection of residential service

This bill would require electric and gas IOUs and POU's and water IOUs and POU's to postpone the disconnection of a customer's residential service for nonpayment of a delinquent account when the temperature will be 32 degrees Fahrenheit or cooler, or 95 degrees Fahrenheit or warmer, within the utility's service area during the 24 hours after that service disconnection would occur. The bill would require each of those utilities to notify its residential ratepayers of that requirement and to create an online reporting system available through its internet website, if it has one, that enables its residential ratepayers to report when their utility service has been disconnected in violation of that requirement. The bill would require the CPUC to establish a citation program to impose a penalty on an electric or gas IOU that violates that requirement, and require each POU to annually report to the CEC the number of residential service connections it disconnected for nonpayment of a delinquent account. The bill would authorize the SWRCB to enforce the requirement that a water corporation and local agency that owns a public water system postpone a disconnection of a customer's residential service.

Status: Set for hearing on April 18th in Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications.

6. Senate Bill 355 (Eggman) - Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Roofs Program.

The bill would expand specified requirements in the Solar on Multifamily Affordable Housing (SOMAH) Program to, among other things, include properties in which at least 66% of the households have incomes at or below 80% of the area median income, properties located in California Indian country, as defined, and rental housing properties owned by public housing agencies or authorities. The bill would extend the requirement that the CPUC award monetary incentives for those solar energy systems through December 31, 2034. If those multifamily residential properties are new construction, the bill would prohibit using moneys authorized through the program to meet specified regulatory requirements.

Existing law requires that low-income tenants who participate in the program receive credits on utility bills from the program. Existing law requires the CPUC to ensure that electrical IOUs' tariff structures affecting the low-income tenants participating in the program continue to provide a direct economic benefit from the qualifying solar energy system.

This bill would limit the applicability of the requirement that low-income tenants who participate in the program receive credits on utility bills to units that are separately metered. If the development has at least

45% of units reserved for tenants in extremely low-income households and is master-metered, the bill would specify that those direct economic benefits to low-income tenants may include providing housing.

Status: *Referred to Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications.*

7. Senate Bill 823 (Smallwood-Cuevas) - Electrical corporations: Discounted Electric Vehicle Charging Payment Card Program.

This bill would require the CPUC, in consultation with the CEC, CARB, and California Integrated Travel Project, to require each electric IOU, on or before July 1, 2024, to establish a Discounted Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Payment Card Program that would enable an eligible resident to use a publicly available (EV) charging station of a participating operator located anywhere in the state through a payment card developed by the electric IOU in order to pay a rate equivalent to the rate that would be paid by the eligible resident if they were using an at-home EV charging station at their residence.

The bill would require the CPUC, on or before April 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, to prepare and submit to the Governor and the Legislature a written report on the programs. The bill would require the LIOB to annually determine certain information and make recommendations related to the programs. The bill would require the CEC, on or before March 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, to prepare and submit to the CPUC a report that includes specified information relating to the programs. The bill would require the CPUC to include the LIOB's information and recommendations and the CEC report in the CPUC's annual written report.

Status: *Referred to Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications.*

8. Senate Bill 851 (Stern) - Self-generation incentive program.

Existing law requires the CPUC to administer, until January 1, 2026, a self-generation incentive program (SGIP) to increase the deployment of distributed generation resources and energy storage systems. Existing law requires CPUC to use funds that are appropriated by the Legislature, as provided, for the purpose of providing incentives to eligible residential customers who install behind-the-meter energy storage systems or solar photovoltaic systems paired with energy storage systems. Existing law requires the CPUC to allocate 70% of that funding for incentives to eligible low-income residential customers who install either new behind-the-meter solar photovoltaic systems paired with energy storage systems or new energy storage systems.

This bill instead would require, among other things, that the incentives described above for eligible residential customers be used in addition to the SGIP. The bill would require the CPUC to establish a system to equitably award incentives and set incentive levels. To ensure equitable access to those incentives for eligible residential customers, the bill would require the CPUC to establish new technology guidelines. The bill would also require the CPUC to establish a block grant structure and associated guidelines for California Indian tribes, community-based service providers, and community choice aggregators to apply on behalf of eligible low-income residential households.

Status: *Referred to Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications.*