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September 12, 2003

Advice No. 3291 (U 904 G)

Public Utilities Commission of the State of California

# <u>Subject</u>: Request to Discontinue Providing a Paper Bill to Customers Enrolled in Electronic Billing

Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) hereby submits for filing revisions to its tariff schedules, applicable throughout its service territory, as shown on Attachment B.

#### Purpose

This filing submits revision to Rule Nos.1, 12, and 18 to request that SoCalGas be allowed to discontinue mailing paper bills to customers who enroll in electronic billing. SoCalGas is also modifying its gas tariffs to conform to the conditions outlined in Resolution E-3711 adopted by the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on August 21, 2003 regarding electronic billing presentation and payment.

#### **Background**

SoCalGas has been offering an electronic billing and payment program on its web site since 1998, and has continued to send the paper bills to customers. Resolution E-3711 issued on August 21, 2003, approved the advice letters of Southern California Edison Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company and Southwest Gas Corporation to offer an electronic billing and payment program, and eliminate the mailed hard copy of the paper bills with certain modifications.

SoCalGas is requesting the same authority provided the other utilities in Resolution E-3711. More specifically, SoCalGas is modifying its Rule No. 1, Definitions, to add the definition of "Electronic billing". In addition, SoCalGas is modifying Rule No. 12, Payment of Bills to: (1) add language to identify all acceptable bill payment methods, (2) state when a customer uses an alternative payment method, such as a bill aggregator or financial institution, other payment providers may charge a fee for payment methods other than those offered by the Utility, and (3) add a new Section E, Electronic Payment Option, to define its electronic billing program, to state that responsibility for handling complaints about the bill still resides with the Utility, and to provide notice that the Utility will not release confidential information to a third party without the customer's consent. Furthermore, SoCalGas is modifying Rule No. 18, Notices, to accommodate electronic mailing of notices to those customers who have selected the electronic billing option.

# Protest

Anyone may protest this Advice Letter to the Commission. The protest must state the grounds upon which it is based, including such items as financial and service impact, and should be submitted expeditiously. The protest must be made in writing and must be received within 20 days of the date this Advice Letter. There is no restriction on who may file a protest. The address for mailing or delivering a protest to the Commission is:

Energy Division - IMC Branch California Public Utilities Commission 505 Van Ness Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor San Francisco, CA 94102

Copies of the protest should also be sent via e-mail to the attention of both Jerry Royer (<u>jir@cpuc.ca.gov</u>) and to Honesto Gatchalian (<u>inj@cpuc.ca.gov</u>) of the Energy Division. A copy of the protest should also be sent via both e-mail <u>and</u> facsimile to the address shown below on the same date it is mailed or delivered to the Commission.

Attn: Sid Newsom Tariff Manager - GT14D6 555 West Fifth Street Los Angeles, CA 90013-1011 Facsimile No. (213) 244-4957 E-mail: snewsom@SempraUtilities.com

## Effective Date

SoCalGas requests that the tariff sheets filed herein be effective for service on regular notice, October 22, 2003, which is 40 days after the date of filing.

## <u>Notice</u>

In accordance with Section III.G of General Order No. 96-A, a copy of this advice letter is being sent to the parties listed on Attachment A.

J. STEVE RAHON Director Tariffs and Regulatory Accounts

Attachments

ATTACHMENT A

Advice No. 3291

(See Attached Service List)

#### Advice Letter Distribution List - Advice 3291

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## ATTACHMENT B Advice No. 3291

Cal. P.U.C. Sheet No.	Title of Sheet	Cancelling Cal. P.U.C. Sheet No.
Revised 36916-G Revised 36917-G	Rule No. 01, DEFINITIONS, Sheet 5 Rule No. 01, DEFINITIONS, Sheet 6	Revised 36316-G* Revised 33483-G
Revised 36918-G	Rule No. 01, DEFINITIONS, Sheet 7	Revised 33484-G
Revised 36919-G	Rule No. 01, DEFINITIONS, Sheet 8	Revised 33485-G
Revised 36920-G Original 36921-G	Rule No. 12, PAYMENT OF BILLS, Sheet 1 Rule No. 12, PAYMENT OF BILLS, Sheet 2	Revised 28817-G* Revised 28817-G*
Revised 36922-G	Rule No. 18, NOTICES, Sheet 1	Revised 24627-G
Revised 36923-G	TABLE OF CONTENTS	Revised 36780-G
Revised 36924-G	TABLE OF CONTENTS	Revised 36915-G

Revised CAL. P.U.C. SHEET NO. Revised CAL. P.U.C. SHEET NO.

36916-G\* 36707-G\*

Sheet 5

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# Rule No. 01 DEFINITIONS

#### (Continued)

Electric Generation: Use of natural gas to generate electricity, either directly or indirectly, including natural gas used for cogeneration or solar electric generation projects.

Electric Generation Startup and Igniter Fuel: Electric generation natural gas use where no alternate fuel capability exists for: (1) heating the boiler system adequately during start-up to enable efficient oil burning to meet pollution standards; and (2) insuring continuous-ignition and flame-stabilization within the boiler.

<u>Electronic Billing</u>: An option that customers can elect whereby the Utility provides billing information to the customer by means of a computer network such as the Internet or in a form to be used by a computer or similar electronic device to destinations mutually agreed upon between Utility and the customer, such as the Utility's web page, or a home banking, bill aggregator or financial institution website.

Electronic Bulletin Board (EBB): Southern California Gas' Internet based electronic gas transactions and information management computer system. Current trademarked name is SoCalGas' Envoy.

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI): The sending and receiving of data and/or funds in a structured electronic format, commonly involving information technology and telecommunications technology.

Energy Service Provider (ESP): Individuals, companies or consortiums that arrange for natural gas procurement related activities (procurement, interstate transportation and balancing) on behalf of core customers. See Rule No. 32.

Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR): Operation which includes the use of natural gas to pressure, cycle, or inject a substance into a well for the purpose of increasing oil production from that well, specifically including natural gas used for cogeneration to promote these operations.

Enterprise: Business corporation, partnership, or sole ownership established for the purpose of engaging in a single business or commerce.

Equivalent Margin: Margin embedded in the Commission's rate design. Margin is the amount of revenue the Commission allows a utility to recover over a one-year period without consideration of fuel costs, Gas Exploration and Development Adjustments and Conservation Cost Adjustments.

Exchange Gas: Natural gas which is produced by a customer and redelivered under a natural gas exchange agreement by Utility to that same customer at a different location.

Facility: Individual meter with the exception of meters combined for the Utility's operating convenience in accordance with Rule No. 17. Customers who have had more than one meter installed for their own convenience at their own request shall be treated as a separate facility with respect to each meter.

Feedstock Usage: Natural gas used as raw material for its chemical properties in creating an end product.

(TO BE INSERTED BY UTILITY) ADVICE LETTER NO. 3291 DECISION NO. 5H17

(Continued)

(TO BE INSERTED BY CAL. PUC)		
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CAL. P.U.C. SHEET NO. Revised CAL. P.U.C. SHEET NO.

36917-G\* 36708-G

# Rule No. 01 DEFINITIONS

Sheet 6

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# (Continued)

Force Majeure: Unanticipated events or conditions beyond the reasonable control of the party claiming Force Majeure which could not have been prevented by the exercise of due diligence. Force Majeure as it applies to the Tariff Rate Schedules specifically does not include required maintenance of customer's facilities, plant closures, economic conditions or variations in agricultural crop production.

Franchise Fees: Financial obligation collected from the customers by the Utility and remitted in whole to a city or a county government for the Utility's nonexclusive right to install and maintain equipment on that government's highway and street property, or public rights of way.

Full Requirements Service: Full requirements service is an option for core subscription customers and firm intrastate transmission customers. Full requirements customers choose to have all of their fossil fuel requirements satisfied by natural gas. Full requirements customers may choose to procure their supplies from the Utility; transport their own supplies; or any combination of the two. Such customers are not subject to use-or-pay charges except to the extent that unauthorized alternate fuel use or bypass occurs. Full requirements customers are prohibited from using alternate fuels or bypass pipeline service except: (1) in the event of curtailment, (2) to test alternate fuel systems, or (3) where Utility has provided prior written authorization for the use of alternate fuels or bypass. Any fuel produced on-site by the customer can be used by the producer without penalty.

Gas Engine Water Pumping: Natural gas engine used for water pumping in agricultural or agriculturalrelated operations for the growing of crops or the raising of fowl or animals within SoCalGas' service territory. In addition, any natural gas engine used for municipal water pumping for countercyclical or agricultural use.

Gas Service Provider (GSP): Supplier of natural gas to core or noncore customers including, but not limited to Energy Service Provider (ESP or Aggregator), Contracted Marketer, Agent or its equivalent title for SoCalGas, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, or San Diego Gas & Electric Company.

Gas Service Provider No Longer Offering Gas Service In California: GSP will be considered no longer offering gas service in California if the GSP does not provide natural gas to any customer facility on the system of SoCalGas, Pacific Gas & Electric Company or San Diego Gas & Electric Company, excluding those customers that serve as their own GSP.

Gas Supply: Supply of gas procured by Utility on behalf of its procurement customers and to meet its operational needs.

(TO BE INSERTED BY UTILITY) 3291 ADVICE LETTER NO. DECISION NO. 6H13

(Continued)

(TO BE INSERTED BY CAL. PUC)		
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36918-G\* 36709-G

# Rule No. 01 DEFINITIONS

Sheet 7

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#### (Continued)

Heating Value: Number of Btus liberated by the complete combustion at constant pressure of one cubic foot of natural gas at a base temperature of sixty degrees Fahrenheit (60°F) and a pressure base of fourteen and seventy-three hundredths (14.73) psia, with air at the same temperature and pressure as the natural gas, after the products of combustion are cooled to the initial temperature of the natural gas, and after the water vapor of the combustion is condensed to the liquid state. The Heating Value of the natural gas shall be corrected for the water vapor content of the natural gas being delivered except that, if such content is seven (7) pounds or less per one million (1,000,000) cubic feet, the natural gas shall be considered to be dry.

Housing Project: Building or group of buildings located on a single premises and containing more than one family dwelling unit.

Hub: Also California Energy Hub, refers to SoCalGas' area natural gas hub. Encompasses the various delivery points in California or at the California border at which some portion of a Hub Transaction may be effectuated by utilizing SoCalGas' facilities or some interconnection therewith.

Hub Delivery Point: Point on the Hub where SoCalGas shall deliver natural gas to any service user or for service user's account. Hub Transaction may require more than one delivery point.

Hub Displacement Delivery: Delivery or redelivery to a service user on an interruptible basis of natural gas received by SoCalGas pursuant to a "Wheeling Transaction" or a "Parking Transaction", when such redelivery occurs at a delivery point where either party has access to an interstate pipeline, but not a delivery point located on or interconnected with the pipeline facilities of SoCalGas as the ultimate delivery point. Displacement delivery is made in the direction contrary to the physical flow of gas in a pipeline facility.

Hub Receipt Point: Point on or off the Hub where SoCalGas shall receive natural gas from service user or for a service user's account in connection with a Hub Transaction. Hub Transaction may require more than one receipt point.

Hub Transaction: Either an interruptible Parking or Loaning-storage type transaction or a Wheeling transmission type transaction or other transactions approved and implemented from time to time.

Individually Metered Service: Service whereby each single family dwelling unit, each dwelling unit within a multi-family structure, or nonresidential occupancy, is separately metered and billed by the utility.

Industrial Use: Service to customers engaged primarily in a process which creates or changes raw or unfinished materials into another form or product.

(TO BE INSERTED BY UTILITY) 3291 ADVICE LETTER NO. DECISION NO. 7H12

(Continued)

(TO BE INSERTED BY CAL. PUC)		
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36919-G\* 36710-G

## Rule No. 01 DEFINITIONS

Sheet 8

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#### (Continued)

Interstate Transition Cost Surcharge (ITCS): Volumetric surcharge on the Utility's noncore intrastate transmission service to recover costs for certain interstate pipeline demand charges resulting from the transition to an unbundled interstate capacity market pursuant to the CPUC's Capacity Brokering Rules set forth in Decision Nos. 91-11-025 and 92-07-025. ITCS is applicable to all noncore service except for enhanced oil recovery and that service provided by the Utility under fixed-rate contracts (including long-term contracts in effect on or before the implementation date of the CPUC's Capacity Brokering Rules).

Late Payment Charge: Charge that is added to offset the expenses created by late customer payments.

- Life-Support Device: Medical device using Utility-supplied natural gas for its operation that is regularly required to sustain, restore, or supplant a vital function of a person residing in a residential unit. Term does not include apparatus or appliances used in a hospital or medical clinic, nor does it include therapeutic devices such as pool or tank heaters, saunas, or hot tubs.
- Loaning Transaction: Utility advances or loans natural gas which is returned by service user delivering back to Utility an equivalent or greater natural gas quantity at the time(s) and locations(s) specified in the Hub Transaction.
- Low-Income Ratepayer Assistance (LIRA) Program: See California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) Program above.
- Mailed: Notice or other communication to the customer will be considered "mailed" when received into the customer's electronic mail box via electronic data interchange or when it is enclosed in a sealed envelope, properly addressed, and deposited in any authorized United States Postal Service receptacle, postage prepaid.
- Main Extension: Length of main and its related facilities required to transport natural gas from the existing facilities to the point of connection with the service piping.
- Marketer: Third party which accesses one or more interstate or intrastate pipeline systems for the purpose of transporting natural gas to Utility System on Marketer's own behalf or on the behalf of designated end-use customers.
- <u>Master-Metered Service</u>: Service whereby the Utility installs a meter to register the consumption of two or more occupancies.
- Maximum Daily Quantity (MDQ): Maximum daily quantity of natural gas that can be nominated for delivery to a customer's premises not served by an automated meter when the Utility institutes an excess nominations period. For noncore customers and core customers not served under core aggregation this is based on the equipment at the customer's facility. For ESP's the maximum daily quantity is equal to their DCQ.

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(TO BE INSERTED BY CAL. PUC)		
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# Rule No. 12 PAYMENT OF BILLS

Sheet 1

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A. Bills for gas service will be based upon the measured quantity of gas delivered to the customer, except as provided in Rule No. 14(e), and as noted in Section D. below. Such bills will be rendered at regular intervals and are due and payable upon presentation. Payment shall be made at the office of the Utility or, at the Utility's option, to duly authorized collectors of the Utility.

Payments for service or any type of billing may be made using the following options: cash, check, auto debit, debit card, branch office, alternate payment location, pay by phone or electronically, as defined in Rule No. 1. Customers choosing to use an alternative payment method, such as a bill aggregator or financial institution, may be charged a fee by the third party.

- B. Removal bills, special bills, bills rendered on vacation of premises, or bills rendered to persons discontinuing the service shall be paid on presentation. Bills for connection or reconnection of service and payments for deposits or for reinstatement of deposits as required under rules of the Utility shall be paid before service will be connected or reconnected.
- C. The Utility may demand and collect a \$7.50 fee when a customer's payment is returned unpaid by the bank.
- D. LevelPay Payment Option

This Payment Option (formerly known as Level Pay Plan) is available to customers, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Eligible customers include the following facilities:
  - a. Residential meter that is individually metered;
  - b. Residential master-meter, excluding submetering facilities, that use less than 3,000 therms per year; and
  - c. Core commercial and core industrial meters that use less than 3,000 therms per year.
- 2. Eligibility requirements include:
  - a. Customer has no outstanding arrears on their account at the time their Plan starts, or agrees to amoritize the arrears amount.
  - b. In the event that a customer has been involuntarily removed from LevelPay for non-payment, customer has made payment of all past due amounts.
- 3. Participation is subject to approval by the Utility.
- 4. Eligible customers may join in any month.
- 5. Participating customer may voluntarily withdraw from the program.

(Continued)

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Original CAL. P.U.C. SHEET NO. 36921-G Revised CAL. P.U.C. SHEET NO. 28817-G\*

# Rule No. 12 PAYMENT OF BILLS

Sheet 2

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#### (Continued)

D. LevelPay Payment Option (Continued)

- 6. For customers participating in this payment option,
  - a. Anticipated bills for a twelve-month period will be apportioned among twelve months, regardless of the actual consumption during that month;
  - b. Customer accounts are periodically reviewed and adjusted as appropriate;
  - c. The twelfth billing will be the settlement month, at which time bills for actual use will be balanced against the amounts billed; and
  - d. Any over- or under- billings will be resolved on the settlement month.

E. Electronic Payment Option

At the mutual option of the customer and the Utility, the customer may elect to receive, view and pay regular bills for service electronically and no longer receive the paper bills. All legal and mandated notices, and all charges that would have appeared on the paper bill, will be transmitted with the electronic bill transmittal. Even if the Utility allows bill payment using a bill aggregator or by credit/debit card, responsibility for handling complaints about the bill still resides with the Utility. All notices for termination of service for non-payment will be delivered by U.S. Mail. Either party may discontinue electronic billing upon 30-day's notice. The Utility will not release confidential information, including financial information, to a third party without the customer's consent. The customer's consent shall be provided either in writing or electronically.

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24627-G

# Rule No. 18 NOTICES

Sheet 1

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Any notice the Company may give to any customer supplied with gas by said Company under and pursuant to the effective rules and regulations of the Company may be given by 1) written notice, either a) delivered at the address hereinafter described in this rule and regulation, or b) properly enclosed in a sealed envelope and deposited in any United States Post Office in the territory served by the Company, postage prepaid, addressed to the customer at the customer's place of address specified in the customer's application for service of gas, or in the customer's contract in case such customer has a contract for gas service, or c) at such address as may be subsequently given in writing therefor by the customer to the Company at its local district office, OR 2) when electronically delivered to and/or received by the customer or customer's designee via electronic data interchange, e-mail, or other electronic means; provided, however, that discontinuance-of-service notices shall not be provided by electronic delivery, and should continue to be governed solely by Rule No. 9.

Any notice from any customer to the Company under any of the Company's schedules of rates, or under and pursuant to the effective rules and regulations of the Company may be given to the Company by himself in person, or by an authorized agent at its local office in the district where service is rendered to the customer, or by written notice properly enclosed in a sealed envelope and addressed to the Company's local district office, postage prepaid, and deposited in any United States Post Office in the territory served by the Company.

(TO BE INSERTED BY CAL. PUC)		
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(Continued)

ISSUED BY Lee Schavrien Vice President **Regulatory Affairs** 

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36923-G\*

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#### **GENERAL**

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(TO BE INSERTED BY CAL. PUC)		
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