

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



January 3, 2020

Advice Letter 5535-G

Ronald van der Leeden
Director, Regulatory Affairs
Southern California Gas
555 W. Fifth Street, GT14D6
Los Angeles, CA 90013-1011

SUBJECT: Implementation of Emergency Disaster Relief Program for Saddleridge and Sandalwood Wildfire Residential Customer and Non-Residential Customer Protections Pursuant to Decision (D.) 19-07-015

Dear Mr. van der Leeden:

Advice Letter 5535-G is effective as of October 25, 2019.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward Randolph".

Edward Randolph
Deputy Executive Director for Energy and Climate Policy/
Director, Energy Division



Ronald van der Leeden
Director
Regulatory Affairs

555 W. Fifth Street, GT14D6
Los Angeles, CA 90013-1011
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October 25, 2019

Advice No. 5535
(U 904 G)

Public Utilities Commission of the State of California

Subject: Implementation of Emergency Disaster Relief Program for Saddleridge and Sandalwood Wildfire Residential Customer and Non-Residential Customer Protections Pursuant to Decision (D.) 19-07-015

Purpose

Pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission or CPUC) Decision (D.) 19-07-015, Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) hereby submits this Advice Letter (AL) to notify the Commission of our implementation of emergency customer protections for residential and small businesses impacted by the Saddleridge fire in Los Angeles county and the Sandalwood fire in Riverside county.

Background

In D.19-07-015, the Commission established a permanent set of minimum emergency disaster customer protection measures that the utilities are mandated to implement in the event of a declared emergency. Pursuant to D.19-07-015 Ordering Paragraph (OP) 2, utilities are required to submit an AL in the event the Governor of California or a President of the United States declares a state of emergency because a disaster has either resulted in the loss or disruption of the delivery or receipt of utility service and/or resulted in the degradation of the quality of utility service.

On October 7, 2019, several wildfires erupted across the State and causing damage and destruction of property Governor Gavin Newsom issued an emergency proclamation for Los Angeles and Riverside counties due to the effects of the Saddleridge and Sandalwood fires in Los Angeles and Riverside counties on October 11, 2019. Pursuant to D.19-07-015, SoCalGas will provide residential and small business customers affected by the Saddleridge and Sandalwood fires customer protections where the fires have either: 1) resulted in the loss or disruption of the delivery or receipt of natural gas service; and/or 2) resulted in the degradation of the quality of natural gas service.

Eligibility Requirements for Emergency Customer Protections

SoCalGas will work with the appropriate local fire and County agencies to identify and verify homes and small businesses that were destroyed or damaged as a result of the Saddleridge and Sandalwood wildfires. SoCalGas' will conduct field verifications to validate the information and place each home or small business in one of the two following eligible categories:

- Homes or small businesses destroyed by the fire – These homes and small businesses will be considered a total loss and the account will be flagged in SoCalGas' Customer Information System as eligible for protections outlined in the Resolutions. These accounts will remain flagged until these customers establish a replacement residence or small business through October 12, 2020, or as otherwise specified or extended by order of the Commission.
- Homes or small businesses damaged by the fire – These homes or small businesses are not considered a total loss but suffered damage due to the fire. The accounts will also be flagged in SoCalGas' Customer Information System and will be eligible for protections outlined in the Resolutions.

Description of Adopted Consumer Protections

In the following section, SoCalGas describes the implementation of each of the residential and non-residential customer protections identified in D.19-07-015. Unless otherwise noted, each of these customer protections are applicable to both residential and small business customers and are effective through October 12, 2020.

OP 1 of D.19-07-015 directs the utilities to:

(1) waive deposit requirements for affected residential customers seeking to reestablish service for one year and expedite move in and move out service requests;

SoCalGas will waive any deposit that would otherwise be collected to activate new service, one time per eligible customer, after the initial fire-related cessation of service. SoCalGas will waive the deposit requirement for eligible customers requesting to reestablish service through October 12, 2020, at either the same or a new location.

When eligible customers notify SoCalGas that they are relocating to another residence due to damage to their home, SoCalGas will attempt to activate service to residential customers on the requested day.

(2) stop estimated usage for billing attributed to the time period when the home/unit was unoccupied as result of the emergency;

SoCalGas will make an attempt to use actual reads to bill all customers within the wildfire zones. SoCalGas has installed advanced meter modules to collect reads for most meters in its service territory. All customers within the wildfire zones with communicating

advanced meter devices will be billed using the actual reads from the meter. Only if an actual read is not available will SoCalGas need to estimate a customer's usage. SoCalGas will review the system estimates of bills to confirm its reasonableness. If necessary SoCalGas will make necessary corrections so that the estimated usage reflects reduced consumption during the period of time the home or unit may have been unoccupied as a result of the fires or resulting fire-related impact.

(3) discontinue billing;

SoCalGas will close eligible customers' accounts as of October 10, 2019 for customers whose residential or non-residential unit is destroyed or damaged and uninhabitable. SoCalGas will review residential customer accounts for possible bill forgiveness. SoCalGas will also fully refund any existing deposit on the account after forgiving any bills.

(4) prorate any monthly access charge or minimum charges;

SoCalGas does not assess any monthly access or minimum charges on residential accounts. SoCalGas will close eligible customers' account as of October 10, 2019 to prevent additional charges from being assessed on the directly affected customers.

(5) implement payment plan options for residential customers;

SoCalGas will review the accounts of residential eligible customers to forgive outstanding balances when SoCalGas issues the closing bills for customers whose residences are physically destroyed or damaged by the fires. SoCalGas will extend the payment plan options as directed for any amounts that do not qualify for bill forgiveness.

For other eligible customers with service who request additional grace period for payment, SoCalGas will offer payment plan options as directed for any amount up to the total outstanding balance on the account.

Any eligible customer offered a payment plan will not be precluded from paying off an arrearage more quickly.

(6) suspend disconnection for nonpayment and associated fees, waive deposit and late fee requirements for residential customers;

SoCalGas will suspend all collections activity for all customers directly affected by the wildfires through October 12, 2020. SoCalGas will not disconnect service at the new residences of customers whose homes were damaged or destroyed by the wildfires through October 12, 2020. SoCalGas does not charge late fees to residential customers. SoCalGas will not request a new or additional deposit from affected customers that may otherwise result from late payment.

SoCalGas does not currently assess a disconnection charge. In addition, eligible customers disconnected due to the fires will not be charged a reconnection charge.

(7) support low-income residential customers, in disaster impacted zip codes which may include all zip codes in a county depending on circumstances, by

- (a) freezing all standard and high-usage reviews for the California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) program eligibility until at least the end of the year and potentially longer, as warranted;**

CARE customers directly affected by the wildfires will not be subject to eligibility verification until October 12, 2020, unless further extended by SoCalGas or the Commission. High-usage reviews are not applicable to SoCalGas CARE Program.

- (b) contacting all community outreach contractors, the community based organizations who assist in enrolling hard-to-reach low-income customers into CARE, to help better inform customers of these eligibility changes;**

SoCalGas works with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and outreach agencies located throughout the SoCalGas service territory and employs various types of outreach strategies, such as local community event participation, walk-in enrollment, and program material distribution to enroll customers. SoCalGas will employ the services of CBOs and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) to reach eligible customers in the areas impacted by the wildfires.

CBO and FBOs serve as trusted sources of information on SoCalGas' Customer Assistance Programs and will provide the community in the areas impacted by the wildfires with information on enrollment and of these eligibility changes.

- (c) partnering with the program administrator of the customer funded emergency assistance program for low-income customers and increase the assistance limit amount for the next 12 months for impacted customers; and**

SoCalGas' Gas Assistance Fund administered by United Way of Greater Los Angeles has increased the limit amount to \$200 for eligible impacted customers.

- (d) indicate how the energy savings assistance program can be deployed to assist impacted customers;**

SoCalGas' ESA Program will leverage the outreach efforts described above and below to provide information about the program's benefits to customers impacted by the wildfires.

(8) suspend all CARE and FERA program removals to avoid unintentional loss of the discounted rate during the period for which the customer is protected under these customer protections;

CARE customers directly affected by the wildfires will not be subject to eligibility verification until October 12, 2020, unless further extended by SoCalGas or the Commission. FERA Program is not applicable for SoCalGas.

(9) discontinue generating all recertification and verification requests that require customers to provide their current income information.

CARE customers directly affected by the wildfires will not be required to return recertification and verification requests until after CARE customers directly affected by the wildfires will not be subject to eligibility verification until October 12, 2020, unless further extended by SoCalGas or the Commission.

Communications Plan

SoCalGas will communicate the availability of emergency customer protections to customers in the impacted service territory using one or more communication channels that may include (but is not limited to) community outreach, web pages, outbound emails, media advisories, social media posts, outbound dialing, and SMS text messaging. The communications channels used will be determined by various factors including size of impacted area, location, number of impacted residents, types of structures, remaining infrastructure, etc. SoCalGas will direct the customers to SoCalGas' Customer Contact Center, 800-427-2200 and to the SoCalGas website for further assistance. A complete explanation of the protections available will be located on SoCalGas' website at <https://www.socalgas.com/billing-support>.

Emergency Customer Protections Memorandum Account

SoCalGas will record costs associated with the protections described herein in the Emergency Customer Protections Memorandum Account (ECPMA). The costs recorded to this memorandum account will be incurred beginning October 11, 2019, which is the start date of the Governor's emergency proclamation. Pursuant to the Resolutions, SoCalGas will seek recovery of these costs in a General Rate Case or other appropriate ratemaking proceeding.

Protest

In accordance with GO-96 B, General Rule 6.2, this information-only AL is not subject to protest.

Effective Date

This submittal is subject to Energy Division disposition and should be classified as Tier 1 (effective after approval) pursuant to OP 1 of D.19-07-015. Therefore, SoCalGas respectfully requests that this submittal be approved and made effective October 25, 2019.

Notice

A copy of this AL is being sent to SoCalGas' GO 96-B service list and the Commission's service list in R.18-03-011. Address change requests to the GO 96-B service list should be directed via e-mail to tariffs@socalgas.com or call 213-244-2837. For changes to all other service lists, please contact the Commission's Process Office at 415-703-2021 or via e-mail at Process_Office@cpuc.ca.gov.

Ronald van der Leeden
Director – Regulatory Affairs

Attachments



ADVICE LETTER SUMMARY

ENERGY UTILITY



MUST BE COMPLETED BY UTILITY (Attach additional pages as needed)

Company name/CPUC Utility No.:

Utility type:

ELC GAS WATER
 PLC HEAT

Contact Person:

Phone #:
E-mail:
E-mail Disposition Notice to:

EXPLANATION OF UTILITY TYPE

ELC = Electric GAS = Gas WATER = Water
PLC = Pipeline HEAT = Heat

(Date Submitted / Received Stamp by CPUC)

Advice Letter (AL) #:

Tier Designation:

Subject of AL:

Keywords (choose from CPUC listing):

AL Type: Monthly Quarterly Annual One-Time Other:

If AL submitted in compliance with a Commission order, indicate relevant Decision/Resolution #:

Does AL replace a withdrawn or rejected AL? If so, identify the prior AL:

Summarize differences between the AL and the prior withdrawn or rejected AL:

Confidential treatment requested? Yes No

If yes, specification of confidential information:

Confidential information will be made available to appropriate parties who execute a nondisclosure agreement. Name and contact information to request nondisclosure agreement/ access to confidential information:

Resolution required? Yes No

Requested effective date:

No. of tariff sheets:

Estimated system annual revenue effect (%):

Estimated system average rate effect (%):

When rates are affected by AL, include attachment in AL showing average rate effects on customer classes (residential, small commercial, large C/I, agricultural, lighting).

Tariff schedules affected:

Service affected and changes proposed¹:

Pending advice letters that revise the same tariff sheets:

¹Discuss in AL if more space is needed.

Protests and all other correspondence regarding this AL are due no later than 20 days after the date of this submittal, unless otherwise authorized by the Commission, and shall be sent to:

CPUC, Energy Division
Attention: Tariff Unit
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102
Email: EDTariffUnit@cpuc.ca.gov

Name:
Title:
Utility Name:
Address:
City: State:
Telephone (xxx) xxx-xxxx:
Facsimile (xxx) xxx-xxxx:
Email:

Name:
Title:
Utility Name:
Address:
City: State:
Telephone (xxx) xxx-xxxx:
Facsimile (xxx) xxx-xxxx:
Email: