

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco CA 94102-3298



Southern California Gas Company
GAS (Corp ID 904)
Status of Advice Letter 5691G
As of March 23, 2021

Subject: Implementation of Emergency Disaster Relief Program in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties for Residential Customer and Non-Residential Customer Protections Pursuant to Decision (D.) 19-07-015

Division Assigned: Energy

Date Filed: 09-21-2020

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Disposition:	Accepted
Effective Date:	09-21-2020

Resolution Required: No

Resolution Number: None

Commission Meeting Date: None

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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
505 Van Ness Avenue
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To: Energy Company Filing Advice Letter

From: Energy Division PAL Coordinator

Subject: Your Advice Letter Filing

The Energy Division of the California Public Utilities Commission has processed your recent Advice Letter (AL) filing and is returning an AL status certificate for your records.

The AL status certificate indicates:

- Advice Letter Number
- Name of Filer
- CPUC Corporate ID number of Filer
- Subject of Filing
- Date Filed
- Disposition of Filing (Accepted, Rejected, Withdrawn, etc.)
- Effective Date of Filing
- Other Miscellaneous Information (e.g., Resolution, if applicable, etc.)

The Energy Division has made no changes to your copy of the Advice Letter Filing; please review your Advice Letter Filing with the information contained in the AL status certificate, and update your Advice Letter and tariff records accordingly.

All inquiries to the California Public Utilities Commission on the status of your Advice Letter Filing will be answered by Energy Division staff based on the information contained in the Energy Division's PAL database from which the AL status certificate is generated. If you have any questions on this matter please contact the:

Energy Division's Tariff Unit by e-mail to
edtariffunit@cpuc.ca.gov



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September 21, 2020

Advice No. 5691
(U 904 G)

Public Utilities Commission of the State of California

Subject: Implementation of Emergency Disaster Relief Program in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties for Residential Customer and Non-Residential Customer Protections Pursuant to Decision (D.) 19-07-015

Purpose

Pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission or CPUC) D.19-07-015 Ordering Paragraph (OP) 2, utilities are required to submit an Advice Letter (AL) in the event the Governor of California or a President of the United States declares a state of emergency when 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. Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) hereby submits an AL to notify the Commission of our implementation of emergency customer protections for residential and small businesses arising from the Bobcat Fire in Los Angeles County and the El Dorado Fire in San Bernardino County (Wildfires).

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 OP 2, utilities are required to submit an AL within 15 days if 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 September 5, 2020, the El Dorado Fire erupted in San Bernardino County causing damage and destruction of property. The following day, on September 6, 2020, the Bobcat Fire also erupted in Los Angeles County. On September 6, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued an emergency proclamation due to the effects of extreme weather conditions and wildfires, which affected the counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino.

At the time of this submittal, the Wildfires have not impacted SoCalGas' utility infrastructure, but have caused evacuations of customers in SoCalGas' service territory.

Eligibility and Time Limits for Emergency Customer Protections

D.19-07-015 directs SoCalGas to take all reasonable and necessary actions to implement the emergency residential and non-residential consumer protections to support the victims of devastating wildfires.¹ The Commission has also granted utilities the discretion to go beyond the mandated protections, where appropriate:

These customer protections are a floor, not a ceiling. As we stated in D.19-07-015 and D.19-08-025, we support and encourage the utilities and communications service providers to do more to help Californians in this time of need. The utilities and communications service providers have the discretion to add additional customer relief efforts that are unique to their customers' experience, or the specific type of damage a customer may suffer from as a result of COVID-19.²

While at the time of this submittal, there are no customers in SoCalGas' service territory who have reported a loss or disruption of the delivery or receipt of utility service, and/or the degradation of the quality of utility service, SoCalGas has implemented these protections to help Californians in this time of need.

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 September 6, 2021. Also noted are certain protections that are now obsolete since the issuance of D.20-06-003.³

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

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

In compliance with D.20-06-003 SoCalGas no longer collects deposits from residential customers. The relief offered by this customer protection is obsolete.

¹ D.19-07-015 at 3.

² Resolution (Res.) M-4842 at 4. See also D.19-08-025 at 34; D.19-07-015 at 2.

³ On June 16, 2020, the Commission issued D.20-06-003, adopting rules and policy changes for Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) designed to reduce the number of residential customer disconnections and to improve reconnection processes. D.20-06-003 (1) prohibits requiring residential customers to pay establishment of credit deposits for new service, (2) prohibits requiring residential customers to pay reconnection fees or re-establishment of service deposits for reestablishment of service, and (3) requires investor-owned utilities to offer 12-month payment plans.

(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. If an actual read is not available, SoCalGas will estimate a customer's usage. SoCalGas will review the system estimates to confirm the reasonableness of bills. 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 Wildfires or resulting fire-related impact.

(3) discontinue billing;

SoCalGas will close eligible customers' accounts 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.

- a) Bobcat Fire – close September 6, 2020
- b) El Dorado Fire – close September 6, 2020

As of this submittal, SoCalGas is not aware of any damaged or destroyed customer residences or non-residential units.

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

SoCalGas applies this relief to residential customers whose homes are destroyed or otherwise inhabitable. As of this submittal, SoCalGas is not aware of any damaged or destroyed customer residences. Further, SoCalGas does not assess monthly access or minimum charges on residential accounts. SoCalGas will close eligible customers' account as of a date to be determined to prevent additional charges from being assessed for customers directly impacted by the Wildfires.

(5) implement payment plan options for residential customers;

SoCalGas will review the accounts of residential eligible customers to forgive outstanding recent charges when SoCalGas issues the closing bills for customers whose residences are physically destroyed or damaged by the Wildfires. 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 September 6, 2021. SoCalGas does not charge late fees to residential customers. In compliance with D.20-06-003, SoCalGas does not require a deposit from residential customers.

SoCalGas does not currently assess a disconnection charge or 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 September 6, 2021, 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.

CBOs 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' Energy Savings Assistance 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 Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) program removals to avoid unintentional loss of the discounted rate during the period for which the customer is protected under these customer protections; and

CARE customers directly affected by the Wildfires will not be subject to program removal until September 6, 2021 unless further extended by SoCalGas or the Commission. The FERA Program is not applicable for SoCalGas.

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

SoCalGas has discontinued generating all recertification and verification requests. CARE customers directly affected by the Wildfires will not be required to return recertification and verification requests. CARE customers directly affected by the Wildfires will not be subject to eligibility recertification and verification until September 6, 2021, 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, and outbound dialing. 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 (ECPMA)

SoCalGas will record costs associated with the protections described herein in the ECPMA. The costs recorded to this memorandum account will be incurred beginning September 6, 2020, which is the start date of the Governor's emergency proclamation. Pursuant to Res. M-4833 and M-4835, SoCalGas will seek recovery of these costs in a General Rate Case or other appropriate ratemaking proceeding.

Protest

In accordance with General Order (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 September 21, 2020, which is the date submitted.

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.

/s/ Ronald van der Leeden
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
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Email: EDTariffUnit@cpuc.ca.gov

Name:
Title:
Utility Name:
Address:
City:
State: Zip:
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