

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



Southern California Gas Company
GAS (Corp ID 904)
Status of Advice Letter 6186G
As of October 18, 2023

Subject: Implementation of Emergency Disaster Relief Program in Southern California Gas Company's Service Territory for Hurricane Hilary for Residential Customer and Non-Residential Customer Protections Pursuant to Decision (D.) 19-07-015

Division Assigned: Energy

Date Filed: 09-05-2023

Date to Calendar: 09-13-2023

Authorizing Documents: D1907015

Disposition:	Accepted
Effective Date:	08-19-2023

Resolution Required: No

Resolution Number: None

Commission Meeting Date: None

CPUC Contact Information:

edtariffunit@cpuc.ca.gov

AL Certificate Contact Information:

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(213) 244-2424

Tariffs@socalgas.com

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



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- Disposition of Filing (Accepted, Rejected, Withdrawn, etc.)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



Joseph Mock
Director
Regulatory Affairs

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September 5, 2023

Advice No. 6186-G
(U 904 G)

Public Utilities Commission of the State of California

Subject: Implementation of Emergency Disaster Relief Program in Southern California Gas Company's Service Territory for Hurricane Hilary 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 non-residential (small business)¹ customers arising from Hurricane Hilary that brought heavy rain, flooding, lightning, and gusty winds in SoCalGas' service territory, which include the counties of Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Tulare, and Ventura.

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

¹ In Decision (D.) 19-07-015, small businesses are "defined in accordance to the utilities' definition of 'small business' in their rules and tariffs." D.19-07-015 at 55, fn. 146. Accordingly, for the purposes of implementing these customer protections, small business customers include all customers taking service on a non-residential core rate schedule with an annual consumption of 10,000 therms of gas or less. See, e.g., SoCalGas' Rule No. 01 ("Small Nonresidential Service"), Rule No. 23, and Rate Schedule Nos. G-10, G-AC, G-EN, G-NGV, GT-NC, and GTTLS. Additionally, in D.10-10-032, a small business customer is defined as a non-residential customer with an annual consumption of 10,000 therms of gas or less. See D.10-10-032 at p. 1, fn. 1.

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.

Governor Gavin Newsom issued an emergency proclamation on August 19, 2023, due to the effects of extreme weather conditions and the effects of Hurricane Hilary.

Eligibility and Time Limits for Emergency Customer Protections

The emergency disaster relief program adopted in D.19-07-015 is intended to assist utility customers in keeping vital utility services and receiving financial support in the wake of a disaster. The mandated customer protections within this program shall remain in effect from the date of the Governor of California's state of emergency declaration or a Presidential state of emergency declaration, and shall conclude no sooner than twelve (12) months from the date of the original emergency declaration, or as appropriately determined by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.² Additionally, the Commission has 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.³

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.19-07-015.⁴ Unless otherwise noted, each of these customer protections are applicable to both residential and small business customers and are effective through August 19, 2024. Also, noted are certain protections that are now obsolete since the issuance of D.20-06-003.⁵

OP 1 and 2 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;

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

² D.19-07-015 at 2.

³ D.19-08-025 at 34. D.19-07-015 at 24-25, 63 (OP 1).

⁴ D.19-07-015, at 58-59 (Conclusions of Law 14).

⁵ 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 IOUs 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 attempt to use actual reads to bill all customers directly affected by Hurricane Hilary. SoCalGas has installed advanced meter modules to collect reads for most meters in its service territory. All directly affected customers 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 the estimated usage reflects reduced consumption during the period of time the home or unit may have been unoccupied, as a result of the damage caused by Hurricane Hilary.

(3) discontinue billing;

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

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

SoCalGas applies this relief to residential and non-residential (small business) customers whose property is destroyed or damaged and uninhabitable. SoCalGas does not assess access or minimum charges on residential accounts. SoCalGas will close eligible customers' accounts, as of a date to be determined, to prevent additional charges from being assessed for customers directly impacted by Hurricane Hilary.

(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 and uninhabitable by Hurricane Hilary. 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 remunerating an arrearage more quickly.

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

SoCalGas will suspend collections activity for all customers directly affected by Hurricane Hilary through August 19, 2024. SoCalGas does not charge late fees to residential customers. In compliance with D.20-06-003, SoCalGas does not require deposits or reconnection fees from residential customers.

(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 CARE program eligibility until, at least, the end of the year and potentially longer, as warranted;

CARE customers directly affected by Hurricane Hilary will not be subject to eligibility verification until August 19, 2024, 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 CBOs who assist in enrolling hard-to-reach low-income customers into CARE, to help better inform customers of these eligibility changes;

SoCalGas maintains relationships with community and faith-based organizations, commonly referred to as CBOs/FBOs or Community partners. These organizations represent various areas throughout the SoCalGas service territory to promote and build awareness to the communities they serve advocating for SoCalGas' Customer Assistance Programs.

SoCalGas will employ the services of CBOs, FBOs, and community outreach contractors to reach customers directly impacted by Hurricane Hilary, in disaster impacted zip codes which may include all zip codes in a county. CBOs, FBOs, and community outreach contractors serve as trusted sources of information on SoCalGas' Customer Assistance Programs and will provide the community in the areas impacted by Hurricane Hilary 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 GAF amounts for customers this 2023 program season from \$100 to \$400 until funds are depleted. If the eligible applicant is age 55+ or has an older adult (55+) living in the household, an additional \$100 is available for a maximum grant of up to \$500.

The maximum income guidelines have also been expanded to include more customers. The new guidelines expand eligibility criteria for customers whose income is up to 300% of federal poverty guidelines, compared to the previous criteria of up to 200%.

(d) indicate how the Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) can be deployed to assist impacted customers;

SoCalGas' ESAP will leverage the outreach efforts described above and below to provide information about the program's benefits to customers directly impacted by Hurricane Hilary.

(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; and

CARE customers directly affected by Hurricane Hilary will not be subject to program removal until August 19, 2024, unless further extended by SoCalGas or the Commission. The FERA program is not applicable to SoCalGas.

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

SoCalGas has discontinued generating recertification and verification requests to directly affected CARE customers. CARE customers directly affected by Hurricane Hilary will not be required to return recertification and verification requests. CARE customers directly affected by Hurricane Hilary will not be subject to eligibility recertification and verification until August 19, 2024, unless further extended by SoCalGas or the Commission.

Communications Plan

SoCalGas will communicate the availability of emergency customer protections to customers in its 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, social networking service for neighborhoods such as Nextdoor, outbound dialing, and SMS text messaging. The communication channels used will be determined by various factors, including size of impacted area, location, number of impacted residents, types of structures, remaining infrastructure, and others. SoCalGas will direct the customers to SoCalGas' Customer Contact Center, 800-427-2200 and to the SoCalGas website for further assistance. An explanation of the customer protections available is 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 commencing August 19, 2023, 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.

Protests

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 submitted electronically and must be received within 20 days after the date of this Advice Letter, which is September 25, 2023. Protests should be submitted to the attention of the Energy Division Tariff Unit at:

E-mail: EDTariffUnit@cpuc.ca.gov

In addition, protests and all other correspondence regarding this Advice Letter should also be sent electronically to the attention of:

Attn: Gary Lenart
Regulatory Tariff Manager
E-mail: GLenart@socalgas.com
E-mail: Tariffs@socalgas.com

Effective Date

This submittal is subject to Energy Division disposition and should be classified as Tier 1 (effective pending disposition) pursuant to General Order (GO) 96-B and OP 2 of D.19-07-015. Therefore, SoCalGas respectfully requests that this submittal be approved and made effective August 19, 2023, which is the start date of the Governor's emergency proclamation.

Notice

A copy of this Advice Letter is being sent to SoCalGas' General Order (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 213-244-2424. 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/ Joseph Mock
Joseph Mock
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: Zip:
Telephone (xxx) xxx-xxxx:
Facsimile (xxx) xxx-xxxx:
Email:

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