

Why can't the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) help me if my service is with a municipal utility?

What can I do if I have a problem with my electricity or gas?

Types of Electric and Gas Utilities in California

There are two categories of electric and gas companies in California. The first category is usually called "investor-owned utilities" or "IOUs." These are companies such as Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE), Southern California Gas (SoCal Gas), Sempra Energy and San Diego Electric and Gas (SDG&E). These utility companies provide electricity, gas and water service and are regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

The California Public Utilities Commission does not regulate municipal Utilities

The second category includes municipal utilities, owned by a local government such as Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) or Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). The CPUC has no jurisdiction over municipal utilities because the city or town they service and are regulated by locally elected governing boards forms them.

There is also a third Municipal Utility called a Public Utility District (PUD). A PUD is a special- purpose district or a jurisdiction established by a governmental body that provides for public utilities (such as electricity, natural gas, water, sanitary sewers/waste water treatment plants, municipal solid waste collection, and more recently, wholesale telecommunications) for the residents of that city or town. PUDs are often governed by a commission, which may be appointed or elected.

What Are Your Rights If You Are A Customer of a Municipal Utility?

Unfortunately, you cannot complain to the CPUC if you are facing a shut off or are trying to make payment arrangements. Each city has their own rules and you need to call the MUD or PUD office to find out what your rights are. You can also go to the Utility's web site and look up the rules. If you have a complaint and cannot resolve your complaint with the utility TURN recommends that you:

- Contact the Municipal Board of Directors. Voters elect the Board of Directors so that may give you some leverage. You can contact your geographic representative or attend board meetings and ask them to look into your complaint.
- If the Board of Directors is not responsive contact your local City council member and or the
- Mayor's office to lodge your complaint.
- Talk to neighbors and friends and organize a community meeting. Share stories and create a list of suggestions and or demands that can resolve the complaints you have with the municipal utility.
- Attend a City Council meeting with neighbors or supporters to lodge your complaint or to bring your demands.
- Contact the media. Bringing public attention to poor or unfair business practices can help you resolve your complaints.

Remember, have a list of suggestions on how your complaints can be resolved.

Below is a partial list of Electric and Gas Municipal Utilities in California For Your Information:

City of Alameda Municipal Utilities
City of Anaheim Public Utilities
City of Azusa Light and Water
City of Banning Public Utilities
City of Burbank Water & Power
City of Colton
Glendale Water & Power
City of Gridley
City of Healdsburg Electric & Water
City of Hercules Municipal (until April, 2014)
Imperial Irrigation District
Lassen Municipal Utility District
City of Lodi Water & Electric
City of Lompoc Utility
City of Long Beach Gas & Oil
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
Merced Irrigation District
Modesto Irrigation District
City of Vernon Light and Power

City of Moreno Valley
Northern California Power Agency
City of Palo Alto Utilities
City of Pasadena Water & Power
City of Pittsburg/Pittsburg Power Co.
City of Rancho Cucamonga
City of Redding
City of Riverside Public Utilities
Roseville Electric
Sacramento Municipal Utilities
Hetch Hetchy Water & Power
City of Santa Clara/Silicon Valley Power
City of Shasta Lake
South San Joaquin Irrigation District
Southern California Public Power
Truckee Donner Public Utility District
Turlock Irrigation District
City of Ukiah