



May 10, 2024

Honorable Jacqui Irwin  
California State Assembly  
1021 O Street, Suite 6220  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1999 (Irwin) – Oppose**

Dear Assemblymember Irwin:

The Public Advocates Office is the independent consumer advocate at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). We advocate for affordable, safe, and reliable utility services consistent with the state's climate and clean energy goals.

We appreciate your efforts to shine a light on the electric rates crisis faced by more than two million California investor-owned utility customers who are currently behind on their energy bills, and the increased financial burdens placed on all households.

However, we respectfully oppose AB 1999 because it would significantly limit the CPUC's ability to directly provide rate relief and promote the state's electrification goals in the near future. All tools such as a fixed charge, must be available to reduce rates, particularly for middle and low-income households.

The CPUC's May 9<sup>th</sup> fixed charge decision adopts a structure that is aligned with our proposal for rate relief, which was based on years of independent research by our office and other stakeholders. We are gratified that the CPUC did not adopt the high fixed charge proposals put forward by the investor-

owned utilities. Instead, the CPUC has established a reasonable fixed charge, similar to what customers of the publicly-owned Sacramento Municipal Utilities District (SMUD) pay, which will result in a meaningful reduction in rates.

The fixed charge is just one tool that will be needed to address the punishing bill volatility facing customers in hotter climates, while protecting lower-income households and promoting the state's progressive climate change objectives. We look forward to working with your office and your colleagues to develop a comprehensive suite of solutions that focuses on driving down overall utility costs and bills while ensuring costs are more fairly shared among households.

Sincerely,



Linda Serizawa  
Interim Director  
Public Advocates Office