

Submitted by staff
at committee meeting
Item 2

Stephanie Pintar

From: Rachel Martinez
Sent: Friday, September 21, 2012 1:07 PM
To: Stephanie Pintar; Dave Stoldt
Subject: Cal Am Bill Complaints

Dave and Steph,

Please see the email below from the PUC Public Advisors Office regarding water bill complaints. It appears that MPWMD has limited ways to get involved in the issue. Bottom line is that customers need to follow the complaint/dispute process already in place. I did send the weblink for the Herald's page of coverage on the issue to Judy from the PAO as she wanted to know a little bit more about what was happening.

Hope this helps with the meeting next week. Good luck.

-Rachel

From: Cooper, Judy [<mailto:judy.cooper@cpuc.ca.gov>]
Sent: Thursday, August 30, 2012 12:58 PM
To: Rachel Martinez
Subject: RE: Inquiry on local agency options for filing a complaint

Dear Ms. Martinez: Thank you for your email. If customers have not had any success with their disputed bills after contacting CAW, they should contact the CPUC immediately. We have an online complaint form for all customers to use for informal complaints. Once the form is filed, it is automatically docketed and your complaint is reviewed. I would first advise customers to identify what their problems are. If CAW has not responded or addressed the matter, the customers need to contact CPUC. DRA also reviews service quality issues and this will be addressed in the current rate case proceedings.

When the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) has completed their review of the customer complaint, the customer receives a letter from CAB. If the customer is not satisfied with the overall response from the CPUC, the customer can file a formal complaint with the CPUC. This complaint form is available on line at the same site that an informal complaint is filed. Make sure all compelling reasons for the complaint are filed, and the customer should identify all issues and if there are any violations to the tariffs in the rates, rules and conditions of service, those should also be identified. Also identify the experience with the utility. After this is filed with the CPUCs Docket Office, the formal complaint is reviewed by an assigned Administrative Law Judge who will determine if the complaint deems necessary for acceptance and will also later determine if a hearing is necessary. This can be addressed separately from the current general rate case proceeding.

I really do think that each customer should file an informal complaint first. I intend to advise DRA of your email. Let me know if you should have any additional questions.

Judy Cooper
Assistant Public Advisor

From: Rachel Martinez [<mailto:rachel@mpwmd.net>]
Sent: Thursday, August 30, 2012 12:35 PM
To: Public.advisor
Subject: Inquiry on local agency options for filing a complaint

Good afternoon,

This email is a follow-up to a phone conversation with LaToya.

I work for the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD). The water purveyor in this area is California American Water (CAW). Over the last year, and more so recently, there have been a number of CAW customers who have come forward with complaints about unexplained high water bills that would return to normal the following month. A number of these customers have tried to file appeals with CAW, but are unsuccessful or are still left paying a high adjusted rate. I've been asked by a few members of our Board of Directors to see what options, if any, MPWMD has in filing a complaint with the PUC on behalf of the consumers. I've reviewed the informal and formal complaint procedures – they appear to be for specific customer appeals. What options does the MPWMD have for filing a complaint – would we have to file a consolidated complaint on behalf of specific customers, or could we file a general complaint requesting some type of investigation into these kinds of cases. Would this even be the best avenue to approach the issue? Would the current rate-setting case be the more appropriate avenue?

I believe the Division of Ratepayer Advocates has already been contacted by a CAW customer and may be looking into the issue. I'm just looking for information on what our options are in getting involved so that I can report back to my board members. Any information or guidance is appreciated.

Thank you.

Respectfully,
Rachel M. Martinez
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