



CPUC's Response to COVID-19: Electric and Gas Service Disconnection Suspension

**Energy Division
July 16, 2020**





CPUC Suspends Disconnections of Electric and Gas Service

- Res. M-4842 (approved on April 16, 2020) suspended service disconnections of residential and small business customers for non-payment.
- Applicable to all investor-owned electric and gas utilities
- Disconnection suspension is in effect until **April 16, 2021**.
- M-4842 provides additional emergency protections such as:
 - Flexible payment plans
 - Suspension of deposits for re-establishment of service
 - Increase CARE/FERA outreach and suspend program removals





Customers Currently Disconnected (as of June 30, 2020)

Utility	Residential	Non-Res
Southern California Edison	0	0
San Diego Gas & Electric	0	0
Southern California Gas	53	7
Pacific Gas & Electric	0	0

Utility	Residential	Non-Res
Southwest Gas	0	0
Pacificorp	0	0
Bear Valley Electric	0	0
Liberty Utility	0	0

For customers who had been disconnected prior to the moratorium, each utility has reached out directly to each customer to reconnect them.*

* SoCalGas customers that remain disconnected have been subject to multiple attempts to contact them (phone calls, letters and field visits)





Q&A





COVID-19 Impact on Consumers

Consumer Affairs Branch

July 16, 2020

Amy Chamarty, Program Manager



The CAB Universe



Communications

27%



LifeLine

23%



Water

3%



Energy

40%



COVID-19 Pandemic

- Mid-March: Widespread shelter-place-orders.
- March 17: Executive Director determined that all companies under CPUC jurisdiction should halt customer disconnections for non-payment because of the State of Emergency.
- March 20: CPUC temporarily suspended renewal requirements for the California Universal Telephone Service Program (LifeLine), California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE), and Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) programs.





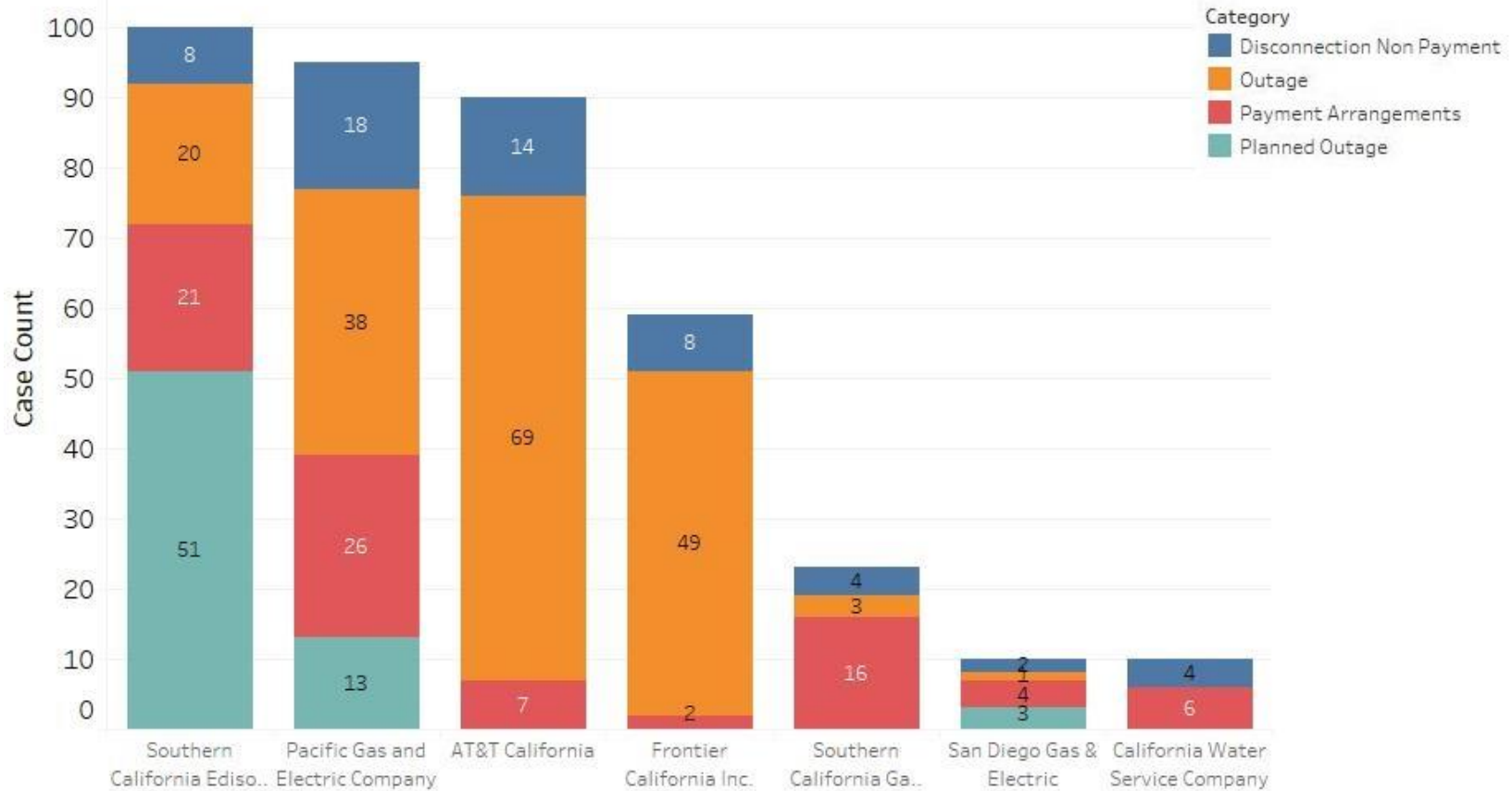
Consumers are Concerned About Outages and Maintaining Service

- More consumers have been at home and utility services are more important than ever.
- From March 15-June 13, approximately 300 consumers contacted CAB about service outages or planned outages (electric utilities) and another 300 contacted CAB about disconnections or payment arrangements.
- Consumers need phone service in case of emergency and to stay connected to family.
- Planned power outages were disruptive, raising concerns about replacing spoiled food.





Utilities that Received the Most COVID-19 Related Contacts by Category March 15, 2020 - June 13, 2020





TEAM and CHANGES Services Have Decreased

- Community Based Organization (CBO) offices closed during the shelter in place orders.
- The number of consumers provided with education services fell from 5,241 in March to 1,395 in April.
- Individual case assistance fell from 739 in March to just under 600 in April.





Consumer Protections are Working

- Disconnection and payment arrangement contacts are down compared to last year.
- From March 15 – June 13, 2020 we received about 300 contacts related to disconnections and payment arrangements.
- Last year during the same period, CAB received more than 1,000 customer contacts related to these issues.
- Utilities have been very responsive to re-connection and payment arrangement requests. This is echoed by the TEAM/CHANGES contractor.
- 79.59% of disconnection and payment arrangement cases were resolved in favor of the consumer.

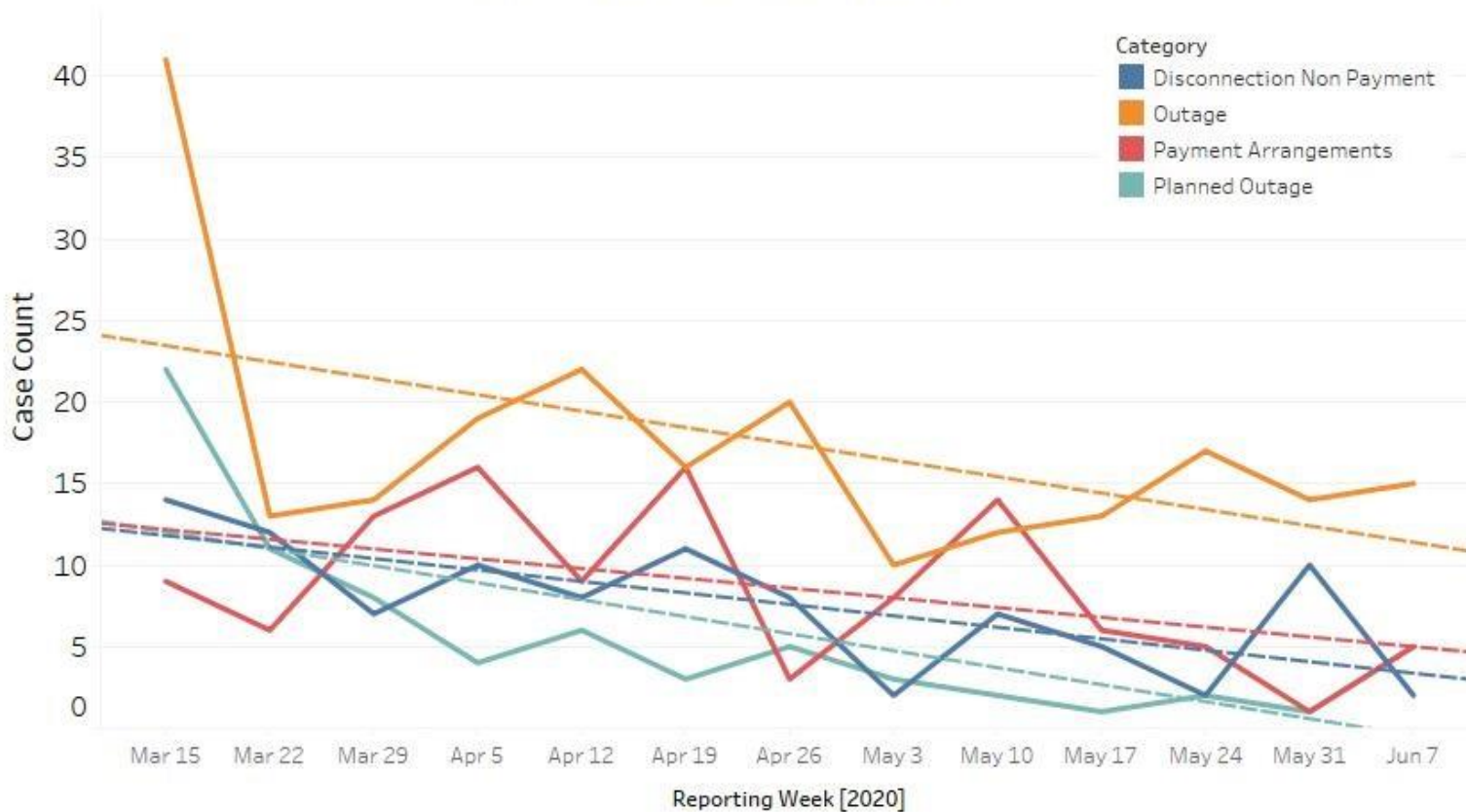




Contacts are Trending Down

All Disconnection Non-Payment, Payment Arrangements, Outage, and Planned Outage
Contacts

March 15, 2020 - June 13, 2020





Concerns About the Moratoriums Ending

Currently there are disconnection moratoriums and moratoriums on LifeLine and CARE renewals.

- Once these moratoriums end, CAB expects a surge in cases, including LifeLine appeals.
- We also anticipate increases in contacts when utility Public Safety Power Shut-offs resume.





Consumers are the Priority

- CAB staff transitioned into working from home while maintaining service levels.
- All disconnection and payment arrangement cases are prioritized. Staff are in constant communication with the utilities.
- CAB has helped 84 consumers get service re-connected and assisted 89 consumers with payment arrangements.
- We are focused on processing cases quickly to prepare for an upcoming surge.
- CAB staff have done a great job supporting consumers and processing cases.





Q&A





How to Contact CAB

- Online Complaints: www.cpuc.ca.gov/cab
- Phone: 1-800-649-7570
- Fax: 1-415-703-1158
- Mail:
California Public Utilities Commission
Consumer Affairs Branch
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

