



ORA

*Office of Ratepayer Advocates
California Public Utilities Commission*

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March 28, 2017

Honorable Ben Hueso
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4035
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 598 (Hueso) – Support

Dear Senator Hueso:

The Office of Ratepayer Advocates (ORA) is the independent consumer advocate within the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). ORA's mission is to advocate for the lowest possible rates for customers of California's regulated utilities consistent with safe, reliable service levels, and the state's environmental goals.

ORA supports SB 598, as introduced, which would require the CPUC to reduce residential customer gas and electric utility service disconnections for nonpayment.

Gas, electric, and other utility services are essential services. Unfortunately, many Californians face service shutoffs because they have difficulty paying their monthly bills. SB 598 would help ensure vulnerable customers are protected from disconnection.

ORA supports the intent of this bill to preserve access to critical services and to protect the health and safety of utility customers. We look forward to working with you to ensure customers remain connected to vital utility services and to explore other ways to prevent customer disconnections.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please call ORA's Governmental Affairs Manager, Matthew Marcus at 916-327-3455, or me at 415-703-2381.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Echols, Director
Office of Ratepayer Advocates