

**PUBLIC ADVOCATES OFFICE**

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
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**PRESS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NEW REPORT FINDS PUBLIC ADVOCATES OFFICE SAVED CALIFORNIA RATEPAYERS MORE THAN \$3 BILLION IN AVOIDED RATE INCREASES IN 2020**

SAN FRANCISCO, January 11, 2021 – California ratepayers saved more than three billion dollars in avoided utility rate increases in 2020, and \$44 billion over the last decade, according to a report released today by the Public Advocates Office, the independent consumer advocate at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). In a year that already posed many challenges to families in our state, these savings protected many from paying higher bills across industry areas - energy, water, and communications.

“The impacts of COVID-19 and the increasing frequency of wildfires have made our advocacy that much more important for Californians,” said Elizabeth Echols, Director of the Public Advocates Office. “From a child being able to attend school with reliable Internet at home to helping prevent utility-caused wildfires, we will continue to strive for a California where every individual and family has access to affordable, safe, and reliable utility services.”

The Public Advocates Office strives to ensure affordable, safe, and reliable utility services while advancing the state’s environmental goals. In addition to ensuring customer’s monthly bills are more affordable, highlights of our other work include:

- **Reducing the impacts of power shutoffs** by leading the effort to require wireless telephone phone companies to install 72-hour backup power, so customers can call 911 and their loved ones during emergencies.
- **Making water more affordable for millions of Californians** by successfully advocating to eliminate an unfair charge on monthly water bills.
- **Helping to alleviate the impacts of COVID-19** by 1) reducing the likelihood of disconnections by successfully advocating to provide debt forgiveness to many low-income families, and 2) successfully advocating to accelerate the distribution of utility bill credits (Climate Credits).
- **Reducing intensity and frequency of wildfires** by making recommendations to strengthen utility wildfire safety practices and plans.
- **Calling for additional electric vehicle charging stations to be installed more equitably**, especially in disadvantaged communities (areas in the state that most suffer from a combination of economic, health, and environmental burdens).

The Public Advocates Office 2020 Annual Report can be found [here](#).

For more information on the Public Advocates Office, please visit [www.publicadvocates.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.publicadvocates.cpuc.ca.gov).

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