

September
2018

MONTHLY DATA REPORT



Consumer
Protection and
Enforcement
Division
California Public
Utilities Commission



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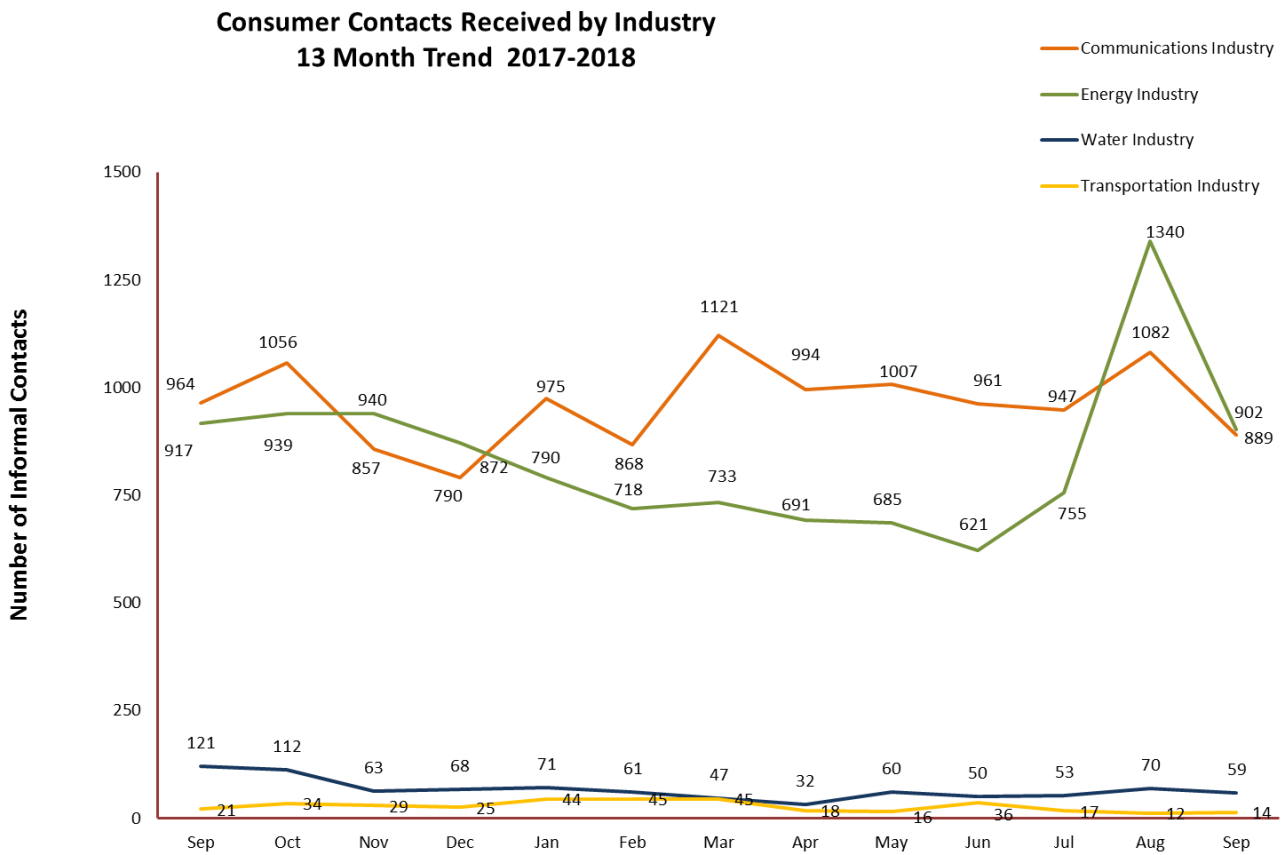
The Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division (CPED) serves the public interest and the mission of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) by assisting consumers in resolving their informal complaints against service providers under the Commission's jurisdiction. CPED is proud to be able to assist consumers with an informal complaint resolution process, with answers to questions, and with referral information. In assisting consumers, we are able to gain a useful picture of consumer issues and trends.

This report is based on contacts (informal complaints and questions) received by the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) and the Transportation Enforcement Branch (TEB) within CPED, and presents both annual and monthly data for the communications, energy, water, and transportation industries. Page 2 presents annual trend data, and Page 3 through Page 6 report data by industry for the current month. For context, the report also includes comparable data from the previous month. Page 7 presents contact data specifically related to safety concerns, by industry. A glossary of terms used in this report can be found on Page 8.

The Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division serves as the first line of support for consumers of CPUC-regulated services. CPED collects and resolves consumer informal complaints, enforces laws and regulations governing transportation carriers, and investigates allegations of utility waste, fraud, and abuse.

Overview

1,864 CONTACTS (September 2018)



Overall, 1,864 total informal consumer contacts were received during September 2018 across the four regulated industries. September shows a decrease of approximately 25.6% from the 2,504 informal contacts received during August 2018; and a 2.0% decrease from the prior 12-month average of 1,898.

Communications: 889 categorized informal contacts related to Communications were received during September 2018, which is a decrease of 17.8% from the 1,082 contacts received during August 2018. The contacts received during September shows to be 8.2% lower than the prior 12-month average of 969.

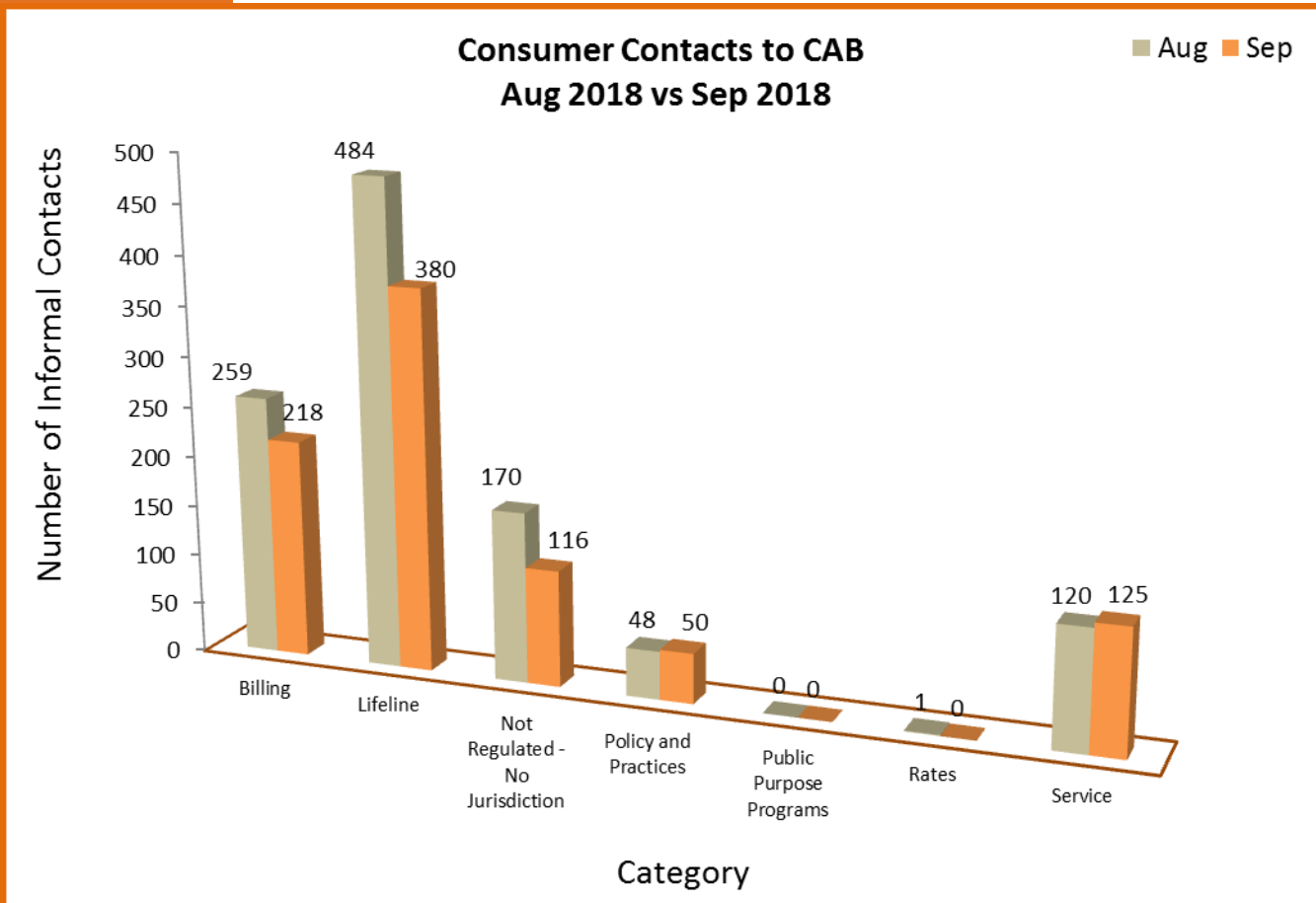
Energy: 902 categorized informal contacts related to Energy were received during September 2018, which is a decrease of 32.7% from 1,340 contacts received during August 2018. Contacts received in September 2018 are 8.2% higher than the prior 12-month average of 833.

Water: 59 categorized informal contacts related to Water were received during September 2018. This is a 15.7% decrease from the 70 contacts received in August 2018. Water contacts remain nominally below average, with September 2018 being 12% lower than the prior 12-month average of 67.

Transportation: 14 categorized contacts related to Transportation were received during September 2018. September 2018 Transportation contacts are 16.7% higher than the 12 contacts in August 2018 and 50.9% lower than the prior 12-month average of 28.5. (Note: Transportation is no longer processing Household Good Carriers and Private Carrier complaints as of July 1st 2018, pursuant Senate Bill 19 Hill-2017.)

Communications

889 CONTACTS (September 2018)



During September 2018, CAB received 889 Communications-related informal contacts, allocated into one of the defined categories of Billing, LifeLine, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

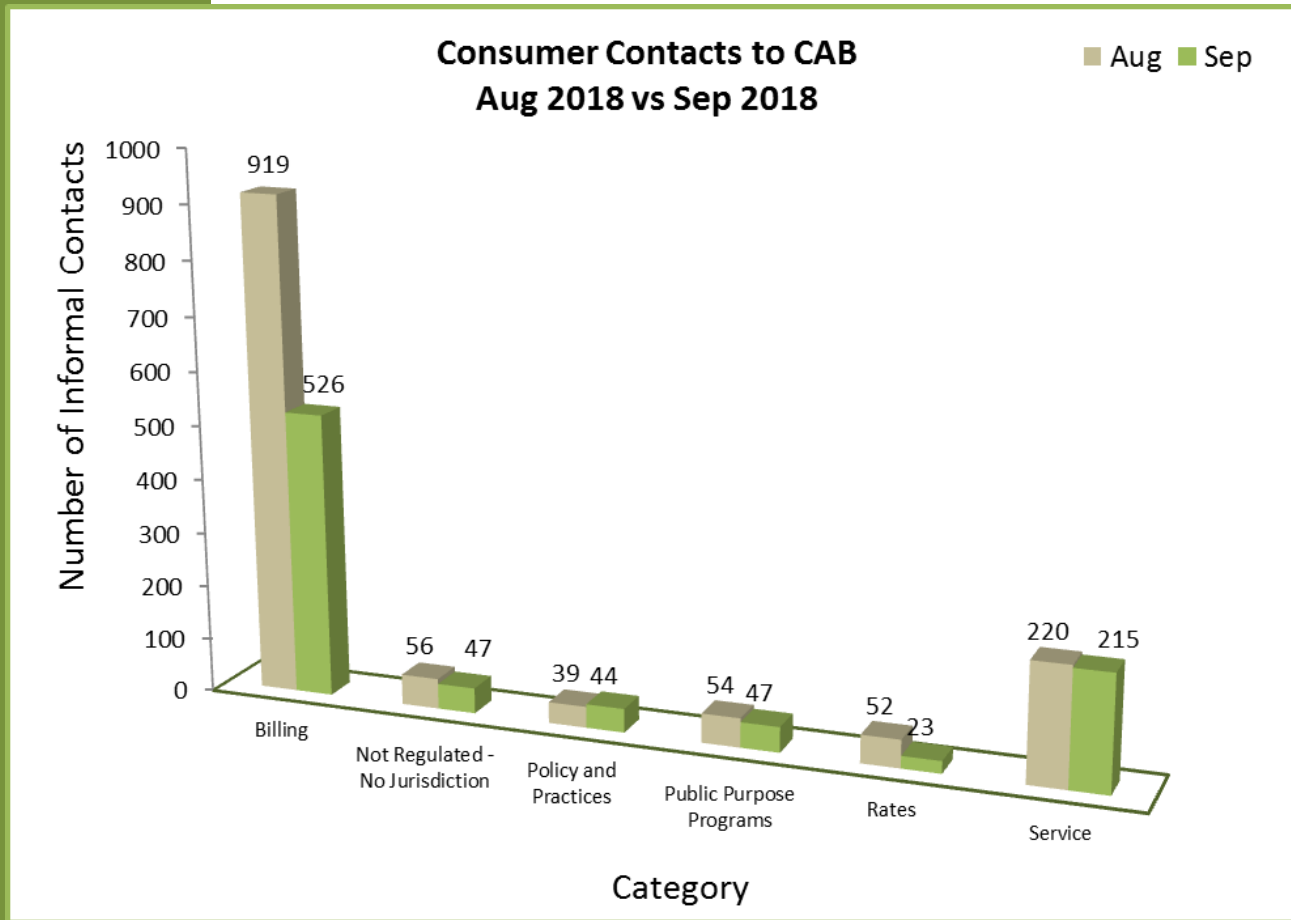
Billing category shows a 15.8% decrease in contacts from August to September. High Bill complaints decreased evenly amongst several carriers in September.

Lifeline contacts experienced a 21.5% decrease in contacts in September. Identity verification contacts as well as ones related to equipment issues decreased from the levels of those contacts in August.

In addition to the 889 categorized contacts, CAB received 118 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

Energy

902 CONTACTS (September 2018)



In September 2018, CAB received 902 Energy-related informal contacts allocated amongst the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

Energy Billing cases show a 42.8% decrease from August to September. August experienced an increase in high bill/ high usage charge complaints with San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). The spike in high bill complaints has since decreased for September but is still 17.0% higher than the prior 12-month average.

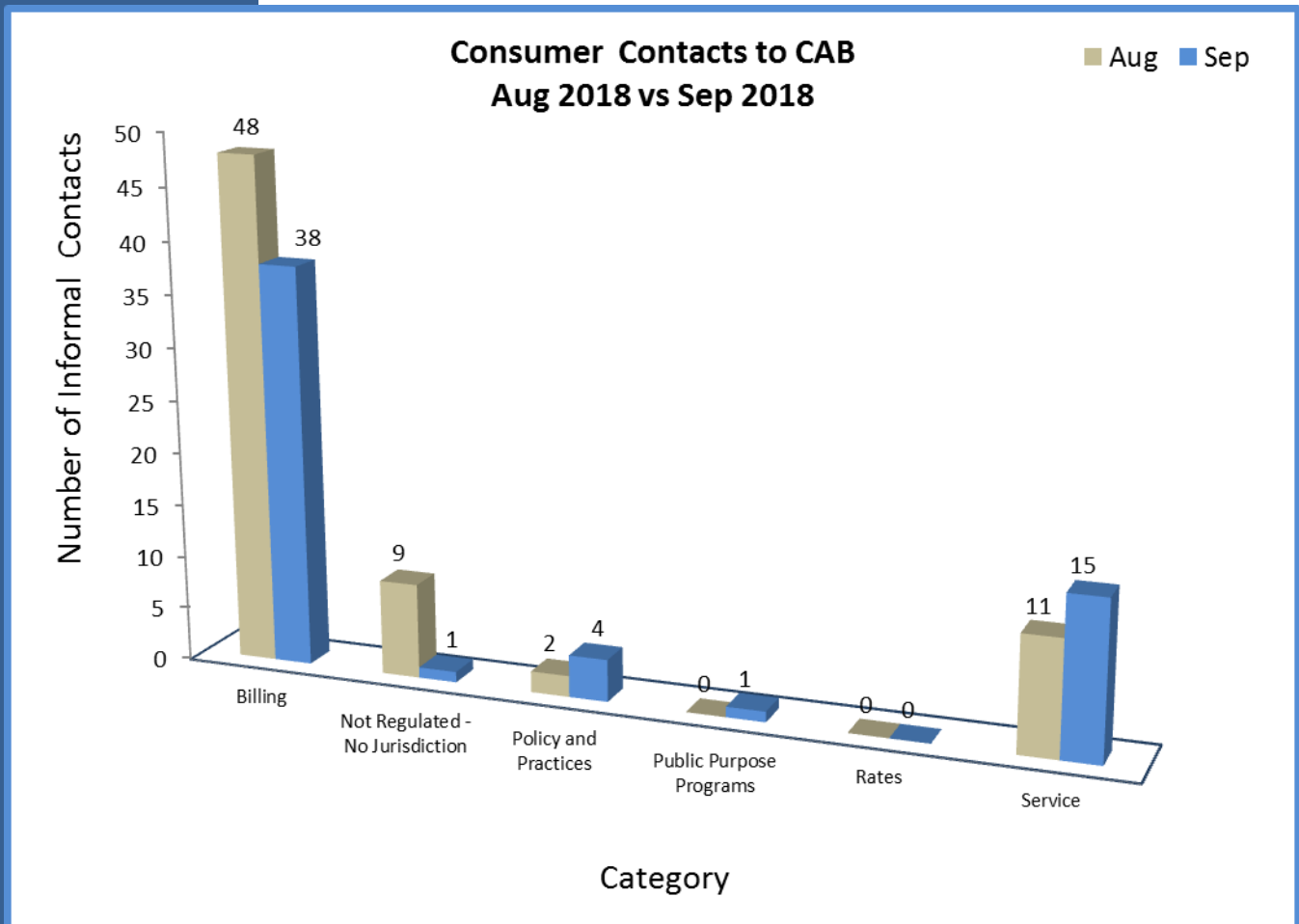
Rates-related contacts decreased by 55.8% from August to September. A decline in Baseline contacts for PG&E, SDG&E, and SCE, as well as in Rate protests related to SDG&E contributed to the decrease.

In addition to the 902 categorized contacts, CAB also received 45 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.



Water

59 CONTACTS (September 2018)



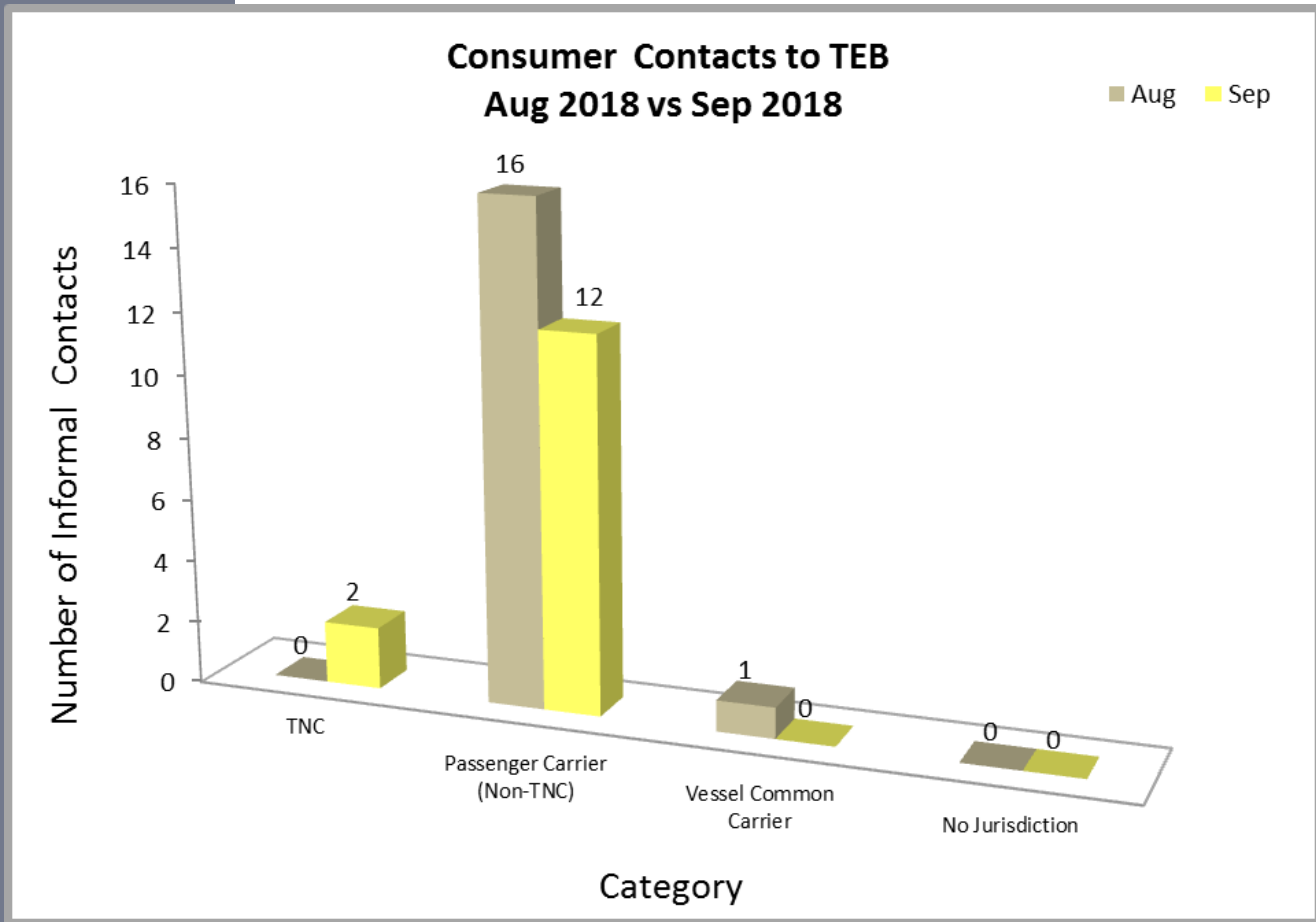
CAB received 59 Water-related informal contacts in September 2018, allocated into one of the six defined categories of Billing, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, or Service.

September shows 20.8% decrease in Billing-related contacts in September. A key factor in the decrease is the tapering of High Bill related contacts from several utilities in August.

In addition to the 59 categorized contacts, CAB also received 27 uncategorized (pending processing and misdirected) contacts.

Transportation

14 CONTACTS (September 2018)



In September 2018, TEB received 14 written complaints compared to 12 written complaints in the previous month of August, which is a minor increase of about 14%. Of the 14 complaints, two were TNC complaints for loss. Passenger carrier 12 complaints (limo, buses) were comprised of (7) operating or advertising without a permit, (4) for loss and damage, and (1) for safety issues.

Each of the complaints involved a specific carrier, so no trend or pattern could be attributed to the complaints relative to the over 9,000 carriers under CPUC jurisdiction.

Safety Concerns Across Industries

During September 2018, CPED received **31** contacts identified as having a safety component across the four reported industries. The contacts presented below are a subset of those presented on pages 3-6 of this report. Safety contacts are classified by the type of safety concern.

Communications	14
Emergency Services/Health Concerns	6
Property Restoration	1
Utility Infrastructure	7

Energy	16
Gas Leak	2
Property Restoration	5
Utility Infrastructure	9

Water	0
No Safety Contacts	

Transportation	1
Operating Without Active Authority	1

Definitions for Safety-Related Contacts:

Company Practice includes service-related issues perceived to impact consumer safety such as lengthy appointment wait times for service restoration.

Consumer Property includes issues with consumer owned property such as unsafe appliances (heaters, stoves, etc.)

EMF/Power Surges/Voltage fluctuations include cases related to Electromagnetic Field (EMF) concerns (e.g. Smart Meters), consumer household power surges and electricity voltage fluctuations.

Emergency Services/ Health Concerns include immediate or perceived concerns due to potential outages or events, such as inability to reach 911 during phone outage, or failure of medical equipment during power outages.

Gas Leak includes any concerns related to gas leaks in the utility distribution system or in the consumer's premises.

Operating Without Active Authority involves operations without a valid permit or certificate, including operations with a suspended or revoked permit or certificate.

Property Restoration includes issues regarding ground hazards such as holes, trenches, tripping hazards, debris removal, tree trimming and street lighting.

Security Concerns includes issues perceived to impact consumer security such as phone line privacy issues, unlisted phone numbers, or utility personnel identification.

Utility Infrastructure includes issues regarding infrastructure that is faulty or in disrepair such as hanging cables, exposed wires, leaning utility poles, analog meters and transformers.

Water Safety or Quality includes immediate or perceived concerns relating to water quality such as color, odor or presence of chemicals in drinking water.

Definitions

Consumer Affairs Branch

The following definitions were compiled to assist with understanding consumer contacts information.

Type of Contacts Definitions	
Informal Consumer Contacts	Informal Contacts are consumers' communications received by CAB via phone calls, letters and electronic submissions (email/web form). Contacts can consist of complaints, questions, or feedback from consumers regarding the policies and practices of specific utilities or the CPUC. These contacts are reported as Categorized or Uncategorized.
Categorized Contacts	These are informal contacts which have sufficient information to be allocated into one the defined categories: Billing, Lifeline, Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction, Policy and Practices, Public Purpose Programs, Rates, and Service based on the primary (overarching) reason for the contact.
Uncategorized Contacts	These are contacts which are pending assignment, lack sufficient information to be processed (Unknown), or contacts in which the consumer intended to contact some other entity, and mistakenly contacted CAB (Misdirected).

Category Definitions	
Billing	Consumer contacts related to disputed items appearing on a consumer's utility bill, the appearance of the bill, or other utility charges.
Lifeline (Billing & Appeals)	Consumer contacts related to the Lifeline Program, which assists low income telecommunications customers. It includes items related to Lifeline Appeals or Lifeline Billing disputes.
Not Regulated – No Jurisdiction	Consumer contacts related to concerns, disputes, and issues where the CPUC does not have jurisdiction.
Policy and Practices	Consumer contacts related to utility and/or CPUC policies and practices.
Public Purpose Programs	Consumer contacts related to programs that assist utility consumers, including income-based and disability-based programs.
Rates	Consumer contacts related to rate design, rate protests and baseline rates.
Service	Consumer contacts related to the service provided to the consumer by the utility.
Uncategorized Definitions	
Misdirected	Consumer contacts intended for some other entity such as consumer attempting to contact their utility. CAB assists these consumers by redirecting them to the entity best able to address their concerns.
Pending Assignment	Category not identified due to case pending processing.
Unknown	Category not identified due to lack of information from consumer.