

Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB)

SECOND QUARTER REPORT – 2025

August 29, 2025

Services provided by CAB staff to consumers in Q2-2025



**California Public
Utilities Commission**

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About The Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB)

CAB is part of the External Affairs Division of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and helps consumers who need support with their utility services.

CAB delivers the following services:

- Resolves consumer questions or complaints about their regulated utility services (telecommunications, natural gas, electricity, and water).
- Resolves application appeals for California LifeLine (a discounted phone program for low income and other eligible consumers¹).
- Administers Limited English Proficiency (LEP) programs that assist consumers with telecommunications and energy issues.
- Provides consumer contact data and analysis to CPUC decision-makers in support of shaping policies and enforcement against fraud and abuse.
- Produces public reporting to stakeholders about the utility-related issues experienced by consumers.

¹ <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/consumer-support/financial-assistance-savings-and-discounts/lifeline>

About This Report

This quarterly report highlights the services provided by the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) to consumers who have issues with utility services regulated by the CPUC. These utilities include telecommunications, electricity, natural gas, water, and transportation services.

All consumer questions and complaints received by CAB are called **consumer contacts**. Unless otherwise noted, the data presented in this report is based on inquiries and complaints received by CAB from April through June 2025.

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Q2-2025 CAB Service Highlights

- Received 7,105 contacts from consumers seeking assistance
- Assisted 2,559 consumers resolve complaints
- Facilitated \$1.65M consumer returns from utilities

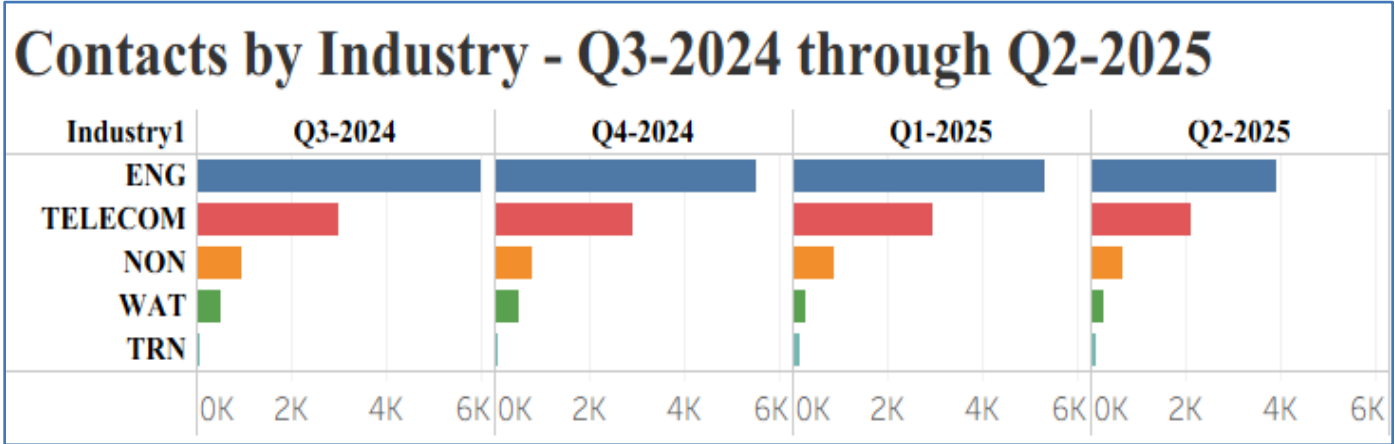
CAB Received 7,105 Consumer Contacts

In this report, total consumer contacts (contacts) include all questions and complaints received by CAB from April through June 2025.²

Figure 1 displays the volume of contacts received by CAB across five industries over the last four quarters – energy (**ENG**), non-regulated industries³ (**NON**), Telecommunications (**TELECOM**), transportation (**TRN**), and water (**WAT**). These contacts are received via phone, mail, email, or a website complaint form. In this quarter, CAB received **7,105 contacts**. Most of the inquiries concerned consumers’ energy and telecommunications services.

CAB continues to receive far more contacts about the energy industry this quarter compared to other industries, **3,908 contacts** or **55%** of the total. However, this figure reflects a **27%** decrease from the previous quarter. The telecommunications industry followed with **2,126 contacts**, accounting for **30%** of the total, showing a **29%** decline from the previous quarter. Contacts related to non-regulated industries also dropped by **22%** from the last quarter. In contrast, there was a **7%** increase in water-related contacts. Finally, transportation-related contacts decreased by **72%**.

Figure 1: Consumer Contacts by Industry and Quarter



² Excludes categories: “Unknown”, “Caller Not Online”, “Wrong Number”, or where the “Industry or Utility is Unknown”.

³ Concerns, disputes, and/or issues regarding utilities that the CPUC has no regulatory authority over.

CAB Assisted 2,559 Consumers to Resolve Informal Complaints (ICs).

CAB's IC process provides consumers with an accessible and efficient way to resolve disputes with their utility providers and reduces the need for formal legal proceedings. An IC is a written consumer contact expressing dissatisfaction with, or a dispute with, an action or practice regulated by the CPUC through tariffs, rules, orders, or other authority.⁴ The process helps ensure consumer concerns are addressed promptly and fairly across CPUC regulated industries.

Table 1 shows the distribution of ICs resolved by industry over the last four quarters. CAB successfully resolved **2,559** ICs this quarter. Continuing the trend from the previous three quarters, most of the cases were energy-related, **1,694**, representing **66%** of all resolutions. Additionally, CAB resolved **771** telecommunication cases, accounting for **30%** of all resolutions, the highest amount recorded for that industry in the past year. The total water industry ICs remained consistent, with **92** cases resolved. As with the prior quarter, no transportation ICs were resolved, reflecting the low volume observed for this industry throughout the past year.

While total cases resolved slightly increased compared to the previous quarter, the industry distribution remained consistent overall, with nearly all resolutions relating to energy and telecommunication services.

Table 1: Informal Complaints Resolved by Industry in the Last Four Quarters

Industry	Q3-2024	Q4-2024	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	% of Total ICs Closed (Q2-2025 only)
Energy	1,364	2,167	1,649	1,694	66%
Telecommunications	710	745	675	771	30%
Water	63	77	81	92	4%
Transportation	3	9	-	-	-
Total	2,140	2,998	2,405	2,559	100%

⁴ CAB focuses on ICs. The CPUC also has a Formal Complaint (FC) process. An FC is a written legal document which claims that a utility regulated by the CPUC has violated state laws or the CPUC's orders or rules. An FC describes these violations, the injury suffered due to them, and the resolution requested from the CPUC. FCs are overseen by an Administrative Law Judge in a formal proceeding.

CAB Facilitated the Return of \$1.65M to Consumers from Their Utilities in Q2-2025

Table 2 details the total monetary returns disbursed across all IC cases, categorized by industry and quarter. Notably, CAB cases resulted in utilities returning over **\$1.65M** to consumers who submitted complaints through the IC process. This considerable return underscores the effectiveness of the complaint resolution mechanism.

A substantial proportion of these returns originated from service providers in the energy and telecommunications sectors. Energy providers remain the predominant source, having issued almost **\$1.48M** in consumer returns this quarter, representing a significant increase compared to the previous quarter. Telecommunication providers constitute the second-largest source of returns, though they are much lower at **\$0.15M**.

Water-related consumer returns decreased slightly to \$24,518 in Q2, maintaining a consistent trend over the last three quarters. Returns related to the transportation sector remained comparatively low, with a quarterly total of \$55.

Table 2: Total Consumer Returns⁵ by Industry in the Last Four Quarters

Industry	Q3-2024	Q4-2024	Q1-2025	Q2-2025
Energy	\$461,944	\$328,085	\$328,300	\$1,479,886
Telecommunications	\$186,980	\$122,072	\$102,283	\$145,900
Water	\$12,706	\$22,095	\$27,426	\$24,518
Transportation	\$35	\$10	\$95	\$55
Total	\$661,665	\$472,262	\$458,104	\$1,650,359

⁵ This table only accounts for returns through CAB's IC process. Cases where a phone contact was transferred to a utility for expedited resolution are not reflected here.

Success story

The largest single return of **\$813,924** was issued by Southern California Edison (SCE). Between January 2022 and May 2025, a consumer that qualified as a “micro business” was incorrectly classified for billing purposes, which led to a total back-billed amount of **\$918,856**. A detailed investigation determined that the consumer should in fact have been classified as a “micro business”, which provides more beneficial billing provisions, similar to residential consumers. Once the account was reclassified, and pursuant to the application of Rule 17.D, SCE applied an adjustment of **\$813,924** to the affected consumer.

Table 3 highlights the average amounts returned to consumers in the following industries: **energy (\$6,883)**, **telecommunications (\$1,635)**, **water (\$491)**, and **transportation (\$28)**. Although water-related average returns were only the third highest by utility, significantly more water consumers received returns (**297**) than those in the other CPUC-regulated industries.

Table 3: Consumer Return Statistics by Industry (Q2-2025)

Industry	Avg. Return Amount	Count of Returns	Minimum Return Amount	Maximum Return Amount
Energy	\$6,883	215	\$0.72	\$813,924
Telecommunications	\$1,635	15	\$36	\$7,087
Water	\$491	297	\$1	\$14,304
Transportation	\$28	2	\$25	\$30
Total	N/A	529	N/A	N/A

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Programs – TEAM & CHANGES

Additionally, CAB oversees the TEAM (Telecommunications Education and Assistance in Multiple-Languages) and CHANGES (Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electric Services) programs. These programs support LEP consumers who need help managing their utility services. The programs offer support through individually tailored case assistance (including billing issues), educational classes, and outreach. TEAM CBOs helped LEP consumers recover **\$24,518** from their telecommunication providers this quarter.

Energy Utilities Recap with Q2-2025 Highlights

This section reviews all energy utility related consumer contacts that CAB received this quarter.

Energy Consumer Contacts

Table 4 lists the Top 10 energy utilities by contact count and corresponding percentage of total contacts. CAB received **3,908** contacts from consumers regarding their energy services this quarter. The Top 10 energy utilities with the most consumer contacts accounted for **94%** of all contacts from this industry. Most of the contacts were from large Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) - Southern California Edison (SCE), Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), Southern California Gas (SoCalGas), and San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) customers, accounting for **39%**, **28%**, **8%** and **5%** of the contacts, respectively.

Other providers featured in the Top 10 include Core Transport Agents (CTAs) such as Wave Energy LLC, SFE Energy, Inc., and StateWise Energy California LLC, with **147**, **142**, and **64** contacts, respectively. Overall, **19%** of energy-related contacts received this quarter were from CTA consumers, primarily regarding abusive marketing practices. There are more details about CTAs in the [Core Transport Agents and Abusive Marketing Complaints](#) section later in this report.

Table 4: Top 10 Energy Utilities by Consumer Contact Count (Q2-2025)

Energy Utility	Total	% of Total ⁶
Southern California Edison Company	1,526	39%
Pacific Gas & Electric Company	1,108	28%
Southern California Gas Company	300	8%
San Diego Gas & Electric Company	193	5%
Wave Energy LLC	147	4%
SFE Energy Inc.	142	4%
StateWise Energy California LLC	64	2%
AAA Natural Gas	64	2%
United Energy Trading LLC dba Collective Energy	59	2%
Big Tree Energy CA, LLC	55	1%
Total Top 10 Energy Utilities Contacts	3,658	94%
Total Energy Contacts (All Energy Utilities)	3,908	100%

⁶ Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 5 displays the energy utilities with the greatest number of Informal Complaints (ICs) this quarter and ranks them by the average number of business days each utility takes to address them. When CAB sends an IC to a utility, the expectation is that the utility will respond to CAB within **20** business days.

In this quarter, energy utilities responded to **1,387** ICs filed by consumers. SFE Energy Inc. and StateWise Energy California LLC had the longest average response time, at **18 business days**, followed by Southern California Gas Company, and San Diego Gas & Electric Company, which both averaged **16** business days. In contrast, PG&E and SCE, which received the largest number of ICs (**505** and **634**, respectively), had relatively shorter average response times of **8** and **12** business days, respectively.

Table 5: Top 10 Energy Utilities by Case Count and Utility Response Times (Q2-2025)

Utility Name	Avg. Utility Response Business Days	Count of Utility Responses
SFE Energy Inc.	18	55
StateWise Energy California LLC	18	27
San Diego Gas & Electric Company	16	102
Southern California Gas Company	16	93
Southern California Edison Company	12	634
Pacific Gas & Electric Company	8	505
United Energy Trading LLC dba Collective Energy	7	33
Big Tree Energy CA, LLC	7	24
Wave Energy LLC	6	72
AAA Natural Gas	4	29

Most Frequent Contacts by Subcategory

When CAB reports data on consumer contacts, we categorize each case by the main reason for the contact, referred to as the "primary subcategory." For example, if a consumer calls about a high bill and difficulty reaching customer service, "High Bill" would be selected as the primary subcategory under the broader "Billing" category.

CAB's Consumer Information Management System (CIMS) allows a primary issue to be assigned to each contact, but more detailed reporting, in the form of subcategories, is included to fully identify the reason for the contact. In addition to the primary subcategory, additional subcategories are referred to as "attributes" and

can be selected to capture all the issues a consumer raised in a single contact. In the example above, "NJ Customer Service"⁷ would be chosen as an additional subcategory to "High Bill".

Because multiple subcategories can be applied to a single contact, the total count of subcategory selections often exceeds the total number of individual consumer contacts. This comprehensive approach enables CAB to conduct a more in-depth analysis of consumer concerns.

Table 6 shows the most frequently selected subcategories this quarter. The most common subcategory was "High Bill", which was applied to **1,414** contacts (**20%** of all energy contacts). The next most common subcategories were "NJ Customer Service" (**1,166**) and "Abusive Marketing" (**526**), which were applied to **16%** and **7%** of contacts, respectively.

Table 6: Top 10 Subcategories by Frequency for All Energy Consumer Contacts (Q2-2025)

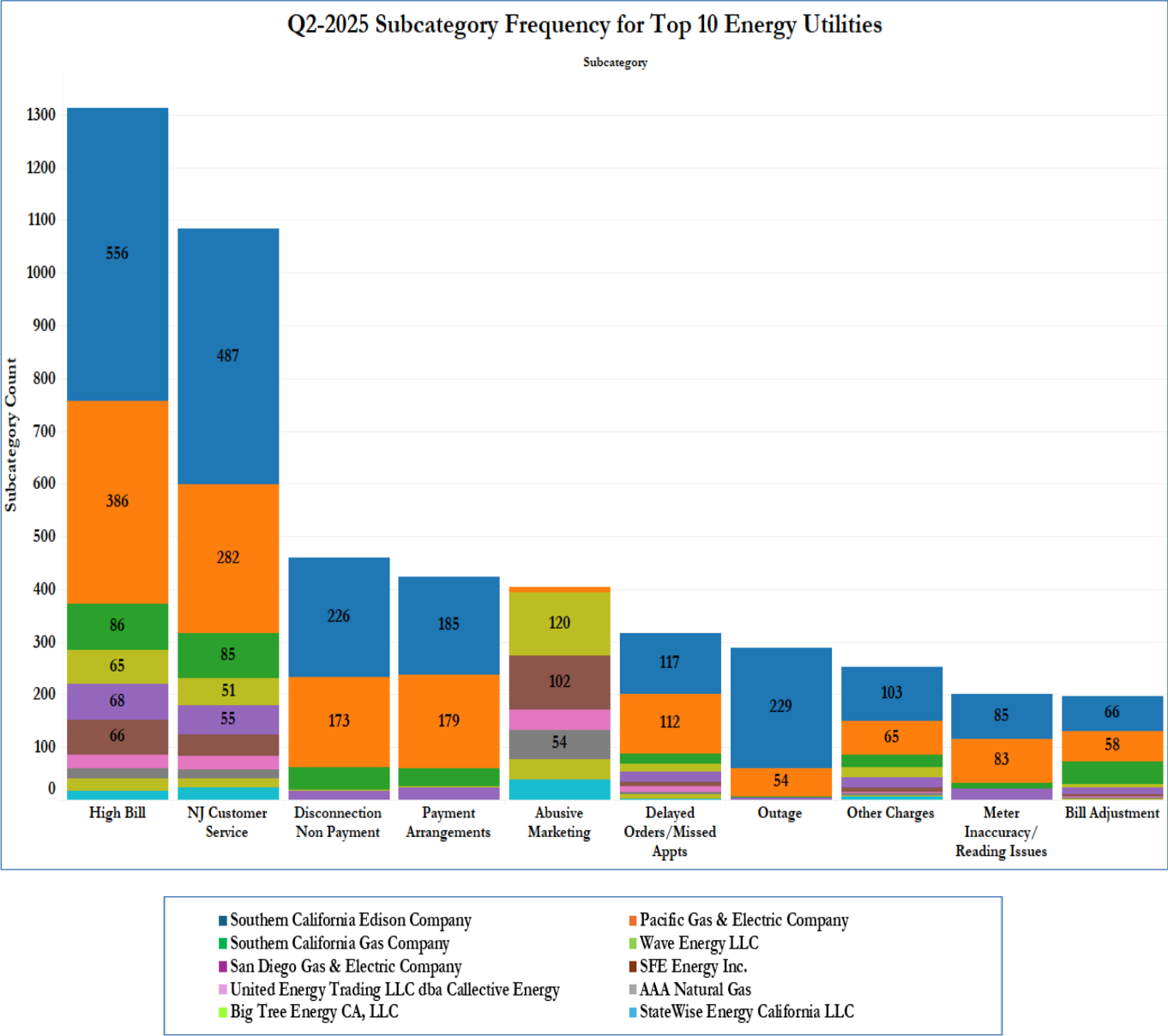
Subcategory	Count of Subcategory Selection	% of Total
High Bill	1,414	20%
NJ Customer Service	1,166	16%
Abusive Marketing	526	7%
Disconnection Non-Payment	472	7%
Payment Arrangements	432	6%
Delayed Orders/Missed Appointments	340	5%
Outage	293	4%
Other Charges	272	4%
Bill Adjustment	205	3%
Meter Inaccuracy/Reading Issues	201	3%

Figure 2 focuses on the energy utilities that received the highest number of consumer contacts this quarter and depicts the most frequently selected subcategories across those providers. The chart shows that nine out of the Top 10 subcategories were dominated by contacts received from SCE customers. Most of these SCE contacts were about "High Bill" (**556**), "NJ Customer Service" (**487**), "Outage" (**226**), and "Disconnection Non-payment" (**226**). These contacts reflect consumer concerns about high energy bills, power outages, and

⁷ Non-Jurisdiction (NJ) Customer Service cases are customer service-related issues such as being transferred from one person to another multiple times on the same phone call, not being able to reach the correct department or someone to help with the issue, or rude utility representatives.

assistance to restore disconnected service. “NJ Customer Service” refers to customer service-related issues that the CPUC does not regulate. These include, but are not limited to, complaints about rude utility representatives, excessive call transfers, or difficulty reaching someone to assist with the issue. Most of the 120 “Abusive Marketing” contacts originated from Wave Energy LLC customers. This subcategory primarily consists of complaints from CTA customers who report being misled. Examples include CTAs failing to provide proper disclosures or adding extra services or features without their consent, among other complaints.

Figure 2: Top 10 Subcategory Frequencies for Top 10 Energy Utilities (by Contact Number)



Telecommunications Utilities Recap with Q2-2025 Highlights

This section reviews all telecommunications utility-related consumer contacts that CAB received this quarter.

Telecommunications Consumer Contacts

Table 7 focuses on the utilities with the most consumer contacts (Top 10) and summarizes the total number and percentage of contacts received. In this quarter, CAB received **2,126** telecommunications-related contacts from consumers. The Top 10 telecommunications utilities by consumer contacts accounted for **80%** of all telecommunications contacts. This indicates that most consumers' concerns originate from a select group of service providers. Similar to previous periods, the highest number of telecommunications contacts received was related to AT&T California, totaling **703** contacts (**33%** of all telecommunications contacts). Frontier California Inc. had the next highest number of contacts, at **189** (**9%**), followed by Verizon Wireless with **142** contacts (**7%**).

Table 7: Top 10 Telecommunications Utilities by Consumer Contact Count (Q2-2025)

Telecommunications Utility	Total	% of Total ⁸
AT&T California	703	33%
Frontier California Inc.	189	9%
Verizon Wireless	142	7%
Charter Fiberlink CA-CCO, LLC	118	6%
T-Mobile West LLC	110	5%
TruConnect Communications, Inc.	100	5%
AT&T Mobility Wireless Operations Holdings Inc.	90	4%
Comcast Phone of California, LLC	89	4%
Assurance Wireless USA, L.P.	86	4%
Verizon Value, Inc.	64	3%
Total Top 10 Telecommunication Contacts	1,691	80%
Total Telecommunications Contacts	2,126	100%

⁸ Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Most Frequent Contacts by Category

Figure 3 displays this quarter’s telecommunications-related contacts received by category (main reason for contact). Overall, the consumer contacts were predominantly categorized as “Lifeline,” “Billing,” and “Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction”.

In terms of trends, “Lifeline”⁹ related contacts were consistently ranked highest across all three months, with **200** in April, peaking at **212** in May, and slightly declining to **205** in June. This indicates consistent interest in the LifeLine program, which helps low-income households stay connected by providing discounts on essential phone and internet services.

“Billing”¹⁰ contacts remained the second most reported category, with monthly counts ranging from **165** in April to **153** in June. This is mainly driven by increasing concerns about billing accuracy, unexpected charges, or discrepancies leading to high bills. Contacts categorized under “Not Regulated-No Jurisdiction”¹¹ were also significant, with **161** in April and declining to **130** in June. This trend highlights an ongoing need to improve public awareness and provide clearer guidance on the types of complaints and services regulated by the CPUC.

“Service”¹² related issues were the next highest category, and remained relatively stable from prior periods, with **143** contacts in April, **144** in May, and increasing to **179** in June. Contacts under this category were mainly driven by outage issues reported by AT&T customers and reflect continued service reliability concerns.

Contacts related to “Policy and Practices”¹³ issues remained moderate and consistent throughout the quarter, with **38** in April, **39** in May, and a slight dip to **31** in June. Contacts falling under this category were primarily driven by AT&T’s proceedings related to the Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) obligations in some areas of California.¹⁴ Issues related to “Rates”¹⁵ continued to generate the lowest volume of consumer contacts, with **1** contact in May.

⁹ The California LifeLine Program (California LifeLine) is a state program that provides discounted home phone and cell phone services to eligible households. For more information, please refer to: <https://www.californialifeline.com/en>

¹⁰ Relates to disputed items appearing on a consumer’s utility bill, the appearance of the bill, or other utility charges.

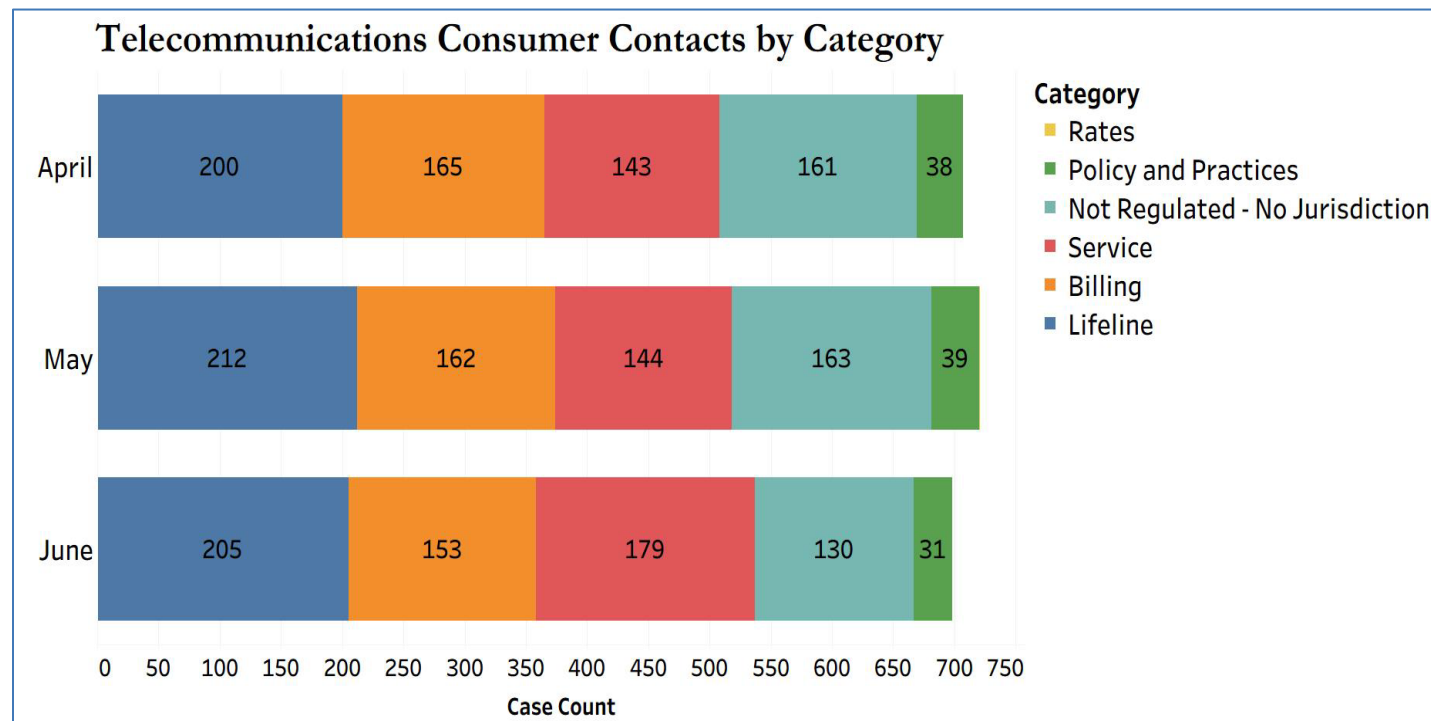
¹¹ Consumer contacts related to concerns, disputes, and issues over items where the CPUC has no jurisdiction.

¹² Consumer contacts related to the service provided to the consumer by the utility.

¹³ Consumer contacts related to utility policies and practices, and CPUC policies and practices.

¹⁴ Please refer to: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/att-colr-etc-proceedings>

¹⁵ Consumer contacts related to rate design, rate protests and baseline rates.

Figure 3: Telecommunications Consumer Contacts by Category (Q2-2025)

Main Reasons Why Consumers Contacted CAB About Telecommunications Utilities (Excluding Lifeline)

Explanation of CAB Consumer Issue Subcategories

The data above shows the broad category (reason) for a contact, and CAB’s Consumer Information Management System (CIMS) database also allows CAB to collect more nuanced information. Contacts can be grouped based on the “primary subcategory,” which reflects a more narrowly defined reason why the consumer contacted CAB. CIMS also allows multiple subcategories (called attributes) to be added to the contact. This helps provide a more detailed description and supports deeper analysis. Therefore, the total count of subcategory selections will exceed the total number of contacts because multiple subcategories can be applied to a single contact. This enables CAB to fully understand the reason for each contact.

Most Common Telecommunications-related Subcategories

Figure 4 highlights the most common subcategories for telecommunications-related consumer contacts received for the Top 10 utilities in this industry. Overall, these trends reflect persistent challenges around customer service, service delivery, and billing accuracy issues among the largest telecommunications utility providers.

“Non-Jurisdictional (NJ) Customer Service”¹⁶ was the leading subcategory, totaling **509** contacts, driven primarily by high volumes for AT&T California, with **200** contacts, and significant volumes from Verizon Wireless, Frontier California Inc., and T-Mobile West LLC.

“Outages”¹⁷ issues followed as the second most reported matter with **251** contacts. AT&T California alone contributed **185** contacts with this subcategory, suggesting ongoing concerns with service reliability. “NJ Internet Billing, Service, or Equipment Issues”¹⁸ followed by **227** contacts, which particularly affected consumers of Frontier California Inc., Charter Fiberlink CA-CCO, LLC, and Verizon Wireless.

The subcategory “High Bill”¹⁹ complaints were the reason for **224** contacts, and “Delayed Orders/Missed Appointments”²⁰ totaled **219** contacts, with AT&T California again leading in both subcategories. These contacts indicate ongoing concerns about billing transparency, unexpected charges, or plan changes, and the need for improved scheduling, service delivery, and communication. “Other Charges”²¹ also had **219** contacts, spread across multiple carriers.

¹⁶ Customer service-related issues such as being transferred from one person to another multiple times within one phone call, not being able to reach the correct department or someone to help with the issue, and rude utility representatives.

¹⁷ Outage cases are any disruption (planned or unplanned) unrelated to non-payment and include landlines and wireless service.

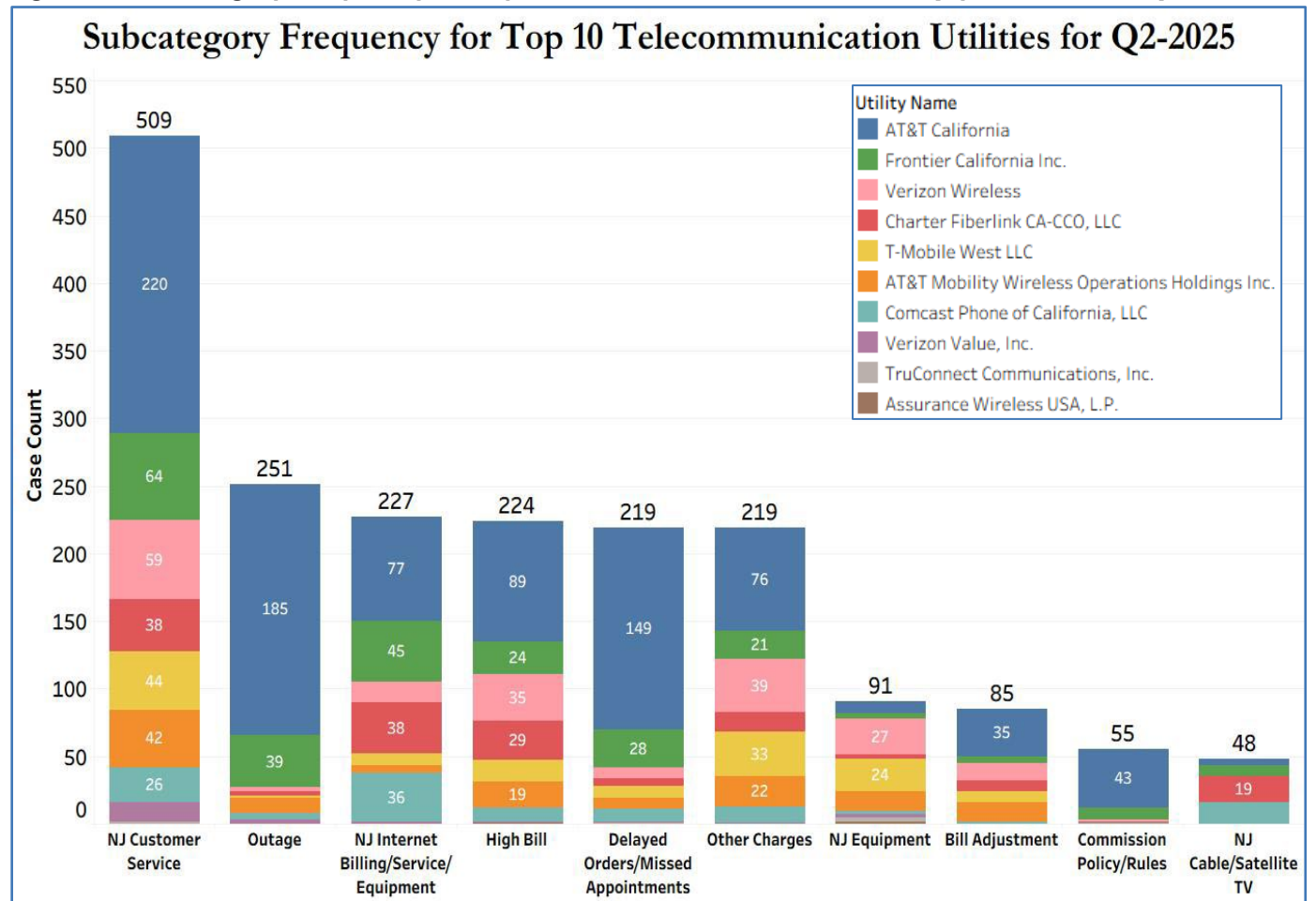
¹⁸ A service that connects you to the web. Any complaint that involves charges for internet service and related service concerns or equipment such as modems, routers etc.

¹⁹ “High Bill” cases are complaints regarding bills that are higher than normal, and consumers cannot think of possible reasons that could account for the level of use stated on their bill. This also includes duplicate billing issues. It may also include consumers that are disputing the validity of the usage increase stated on the bill.

²⁰ Related to field or non-field visit appointments missed by the utilities’ representative. Typically caused by delayed orders or a heavy workload. This also includes the utility not cancelling service per the consumer’s request.

²¹ Other charge cases relate to roaming, 411, returned check charges, transfer charges, activation fees, closed account charges (i.e. consumer terminated service with utility and is still receiving bills even though account balance was \$0 at termination). This includes pre-paid cards.

Figure 4: Subcategory Frequency for Top 10 Telecommunications Utilities (by Total contacts)



LifeLine

CAB has three dedicated specialists who assist consumers with inquiries and questions about the California LifeLine program. In addition to providing direct consumer support, CAB reviews appeals filed by consumers disqualified from Lifeline by the program’s Third-Party Administrator (TPA). CAB also facilitates the resolution of LifeLine billing issues by referring cases to service providers for investigation and implementation of any necessary actions.

Table 8 presents LifeLine contacts received by mode (written or phone), over the last four quarters. A contact refers to any instance when a consumer reaches out to CAB, and cases are created when a contact requires further investigation or resolution. This quarter, CAB received **617** LifeLine contacts, representing a quarterly decrease of **37%**. Phone contacts rose to **324**, up **9%** from the previous quarter, while written cases dropped sharply to **293**, marking a **57%** decrease.

Table 8: LifeLine Contacts Received (Q2-2025)

	2024		2025		
Mode of LifeLine Contact Received	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	% Change Q1-2025- to Q2-2025
Phone Contact	349	292	297	324	9%
Written Contact	330	518	675	293	-57%
Total Contacts Received	679	810	972	617	- 37%

Table 9 shows the top LifeLine written contact types closed over the last four quarters. Among the closed written cases, “LifeLine Landline Appeal”²² and “LifeLine Billing”²³ were the most common issues. “LifeLine Landline Appeal” cases significantly declined, dropping **81%**, from **396** cases in Q1-2025 to **74** cases this quarter. Meanwhile, “LifeLine Billing” cases remained identical at **175** cases over the same period. The drop in written LifeLine contacts this quarter is unsurprising, as it reflects seasonal trends in applications received (and related appeals), with typically larger volumes of applications received at the beginning and end of the year. CAB remains committed to tracking these pattern shifts to ensure LifeLine participants receive prompt and effective assistance.

²² LifeLine Landline Appeal cases involve appeals related to LifeLine services provided by landline carriers.

²³ LifeLine Billing cases involve billing complaints related to LifeLine services.

Table 9: Closed LifeLine Written Contacts by Type Over the Last Four Quarters

	2024		2025		
Top LifeLine Cases Closed by Type (Written Contacts)	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	% Change Q1-2025 to Q2-2025
LifeLine Landline Appeal	46	276	396	74	- 81%
LifeLine Billing	200	121	175	175	0%

Most Frequent Types of Lifeline Cases

Figure 5 highlights the most common types of LifeLine cases addressed by CAB. The most frequently reported LifeLine issue was “Lifeline Billing (LLB) Federal Program/Equipment”²⁴, with **50** cases in April, **58** in May, and **38** in June, totaling **146** cases for the quarter. This consistent volume of cases reflects consumers' ongoing challenges when receiving or replacing free or discounted phones from LifeLine providers.

This was followed by “Lifeline Billing (LLB) Application Request”²⁵ cases emerged as a considerable concern over the quarter, with **140** cases. It held steady at **43** cases in April and May, before climbing to **54** cases in June, which was also the highest monthly count for any subcategory in this quarter. This increase in cases suggests mounting difficulties among consumers in obtaining LifeLine application forms or successfully navigating the enrollment process through their service providers.

“Lifeline Billing (LLB) Discount Switched to Other Carrier”²⁶ cases ranked third overall, rising from **27** cases in April to **38** in May and holding relatively steady at **35** in June, a quarterly total of **100** cases. This trend underlines the concern that consumers report that their LifeLine discount was transferred to another provider, often fraudulently and resulting in lost benefits. “Non-Jurisdictional (NJ) Customer Service”²⁷ also remained a consistent concern with **20** cases reported in April, **28** in May, and **20** in June, totaling **68** cases in Q2.

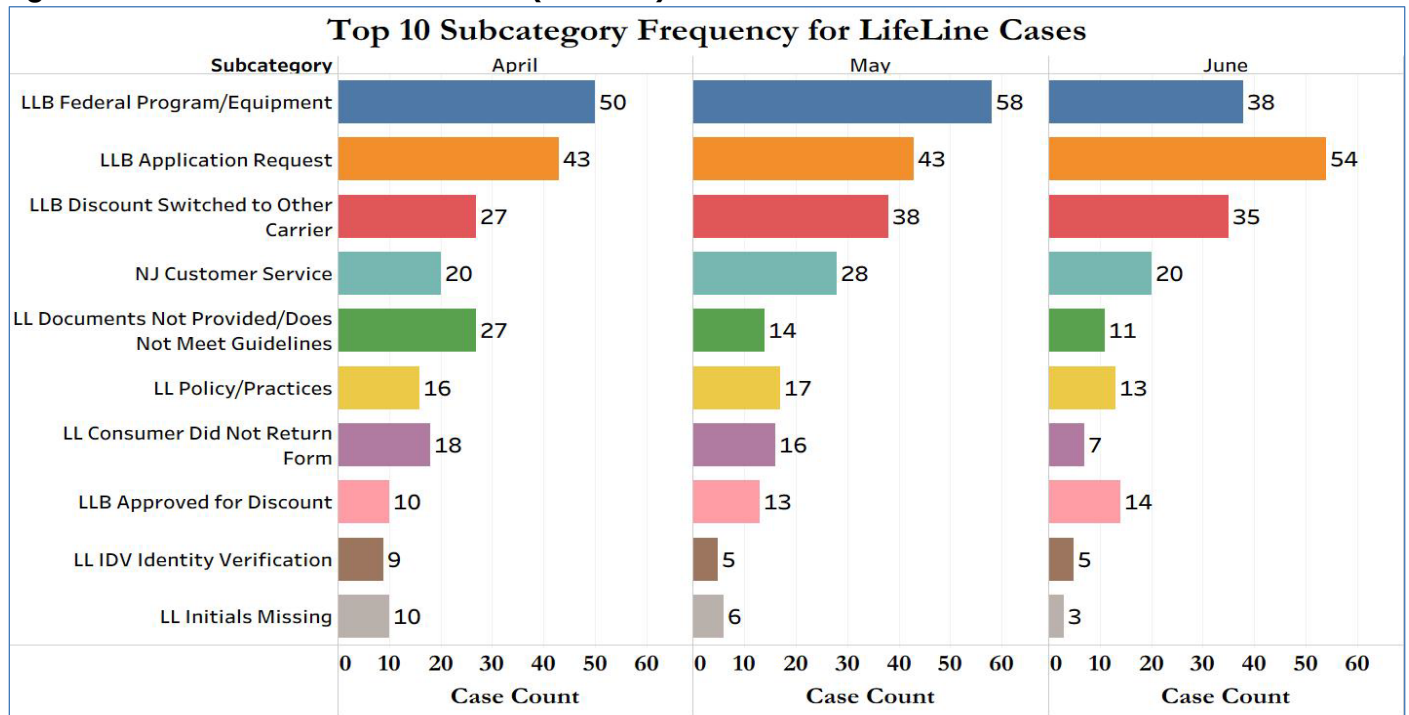
²⁴ Involves challenges consumers face in receiving or replacing free or discounted phones provided by LifeLine wireless carriers.

²⁵ When consumer claims to have requested a new LifeLine Application Form from their service provider but has not received it.

²⁶ Selected when consumer claims their LifeLine discount with one service provider has been ported out to another service provider with or without consent and is not receiving the discount.

²⁷ Customer service-related issues such as being transferred from one person to another multiple times within one phone call, not being able to reach the correct department or someone who could deal with the issue, and rude utility representatives.

Figure 5: Most Common LifeLine Cases (Q2-2025)



Environmental Social Justice (ESJ) Consumer Contacts for Q2-2025

ESJ Overview

The CPUC’s mission is to ensure that **all Californians** can access safe, clean, and affordable utility services and infrastructure. The CPUC is committed to “Environmental Justice,” which means the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to environmental laws, regulations, and policies. The CPUC has created the **Environmental and Social Justice (ESJ) Action Plan** to serve as both a commitment to furthering these principles and a framework to integrate ESJ considerations throughout the agency’s work. The ESJ Action Plan **defines ESJ Communities** as including:²⁸

- Low-income or communities of color that have been underrepresented in the policy setting or decision-making process;
- Subject to a disproportionate impact from one or more environmental hazards;
- Likely to experience disparate implementation of environmental regulations and socio-economic investments in their communities;
- Disadvantaged Communities (DACs): defined as census tracts that score in the top **25%** of CalEnviroScreen 3.0, along with those that score within the highest **5%** of CalEnviroScreen 3.0's Pollution Burden but do not receive an overall CalEnviroScreen score;
- All Tribal lands; low-income households;²⁹ and low-income census tracts.³⁰

Table 10 is a quick reference guide to the terminology used throughout this section. CAB uses zip codes instead of census tracts to report on ESJ and focuses primarily on the zip codes that fall into the ESJ 75th-100th Percentile, or ESJ Quartile 1, which represents the most disadvantaged communities.

Table 10: ESJ/CAB Terminology Conversion Table

ESJ Designation	ESJ Quartile	Also known as
ESJ 75 th - 100 th percentile	Quartile 1	Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)
ESJ 50 th - 74 th percentile	Quartile 2	
ESJ 25 th - 49 th percentile	Quartile 3	
ESJ 0 - 24 th percentile	Quartile 4	

²⁸ <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/news-and-outreach/documents/news-office/key-issues/esj/esj-action-plan-v2jw.pdf>, See pp. 11-12.

²⁹ Household incomes below 80 percent of the area median income.

³⁰ Census tracts with household incomes less than 80 percent area or state median income.

Energy and Telecommunications ESJ Highlights

- CAB received 1,737 ESJ contacts from energy, telecommunications, and water consumers in Quartile 1 (the 75th-100th percentile), representing a 24% increase over the last year.³¹
- A total of 1,296 telecommunications outage complaints were received in the last 12 months.
- During the first half of 2025, CAB received 1,765 CTA contacts, almost the same as for all of 2024.

Total Telecommunications, Energy, and Water ESJ Contacts

Table 11 shows a significant decline in ESJ contacts this quarter, except for the water industry, compared to the previous quarter. ESJ contacts come from consumers in the 75th-100th ESJ percentile (using CalEnviroScreen), classified as Disadvantaged Communities (DACs). Contacts from DACs decreased by **25%** for energy and **29%** for telecommunications, while water-related contacts increased by **23%**, leading to an overall decrease of **4%**.

Table 11: Energy and Telecommunications ESJ Contacts, Quartile 1 (ESJ 75th – 100th percentile)

	Q3-2024	Q4-2024	Q1-2025	Q2-2025
Energy (Quartile 1)	1,432	1,254	1,424	1,074
Telecom (Quartile 1)	621	638	792	565
Water (Quartile 1)	111	113	80	98
Total	2,164	2,005	2,296	1,737

³¹ ESJ contact counts are a little challenging because identifying and categorizing an ESJ contact depends on a valid California zip code entered into the case record. Many contacts, particularly phone contacts, do not contain usable zip code information.

Top Complaints from Consumers in Disadvantaged Communities

ESJ Energy Contacts

Table 12 lists the frequency of subcategories for energy customers (i.e., the number of times an issue was selected to describe a consumer contact³²) in the most disadvantaged communities. “High Bills”, “Disconnection Non-Payment”, and “Payment Arrangements” accounted for **40%** of subcategories listed by energy contacts in ESJ Quartile 1. This indicates that affordability is the primary issue affecting ESJ consumers. 314 ESJ energy customers were also unhappy with the utility's customer service, representing **16%** of all subcategories recorded..

Table 12: ESJ (Quartile 1) Energy Consumers - Subcategory Frequency (Q2-2025)

Top 10 Subcategories - Energy	Subcategory Frequency	Subcategory Frequency in %
High Bill	447	22%
NJ Customer Service	314	16%
Disconnection Non-Payment	195	10%
Abusive Marketing	190	10%
Payment Arrangements	168	8%
Delayed Orders/Missed Appointments	85	4%
Other Charges	84	4%
Bill Adjustment	58	3%
Disputed Customer of Record	54	3%
Early Termination Fee - ETF	38	2%
All other subcategories chosen	367	18%
Total Subcategories Chosen	2,000	100%

ESJ Telecommunications Contacts

Table 13 shows the subcategory frequency for telecommunications consumers in the most disadvantaged communities. Their number one issue is poor customer service from carriers, followed by service issues, including outages, delayed repairs, and missed appointments. This was followed by billing issues with “High Bill” and “Other Charges” as the next highest ranked concerns for DACs. Finally, three of the five remaining issues listed among their top 10 concerns were related to LifeLine.

³² Each contact can have multiple subcategories (also known as issue highlighted for the contact).

Table 13: ESJ (Quartile 1) Telecommunications Consumers - Subcategory Frequency (Q2-2025)

Top 10 Subcategories - Telecommunications	Count Subcategories Chosen	Subcategory Frequency in %
NJ Customer Service	168	17%
Outage	101	10%
Delayed Orders/Missed Appointments	82	8%
High Bill	77	8%
Other Charges	64	6%
LLB Application Request	50	5%
NJ Internet Billing/Service/Equipment	48	5%
LLB Federal Program/Equipment	43	4%
LLB Discount Switched to Other Carrier	41	4%
NJ Equipment	26	3%
All Other Subcategories	286	29%
Total Subcategories Chosen	986	100%

Disconnection Non-Payment (DNP) Contacts

Table 14 shows that overall, “Disconnection Non-Payment” (DNP) contacts have consistently increased across the previous three quarters for all three industries shown. Over the last twelve months, **46%** of all DNP contacts across these industries originated from consumers residing in DACs, underscoring that DACs continue to produce the most DNP contacts. Specifically, Quartile 1 contacts comprised **46%**, **40%** and **51%** of total energy, telecommunications, and water DNP contacts, respectively.

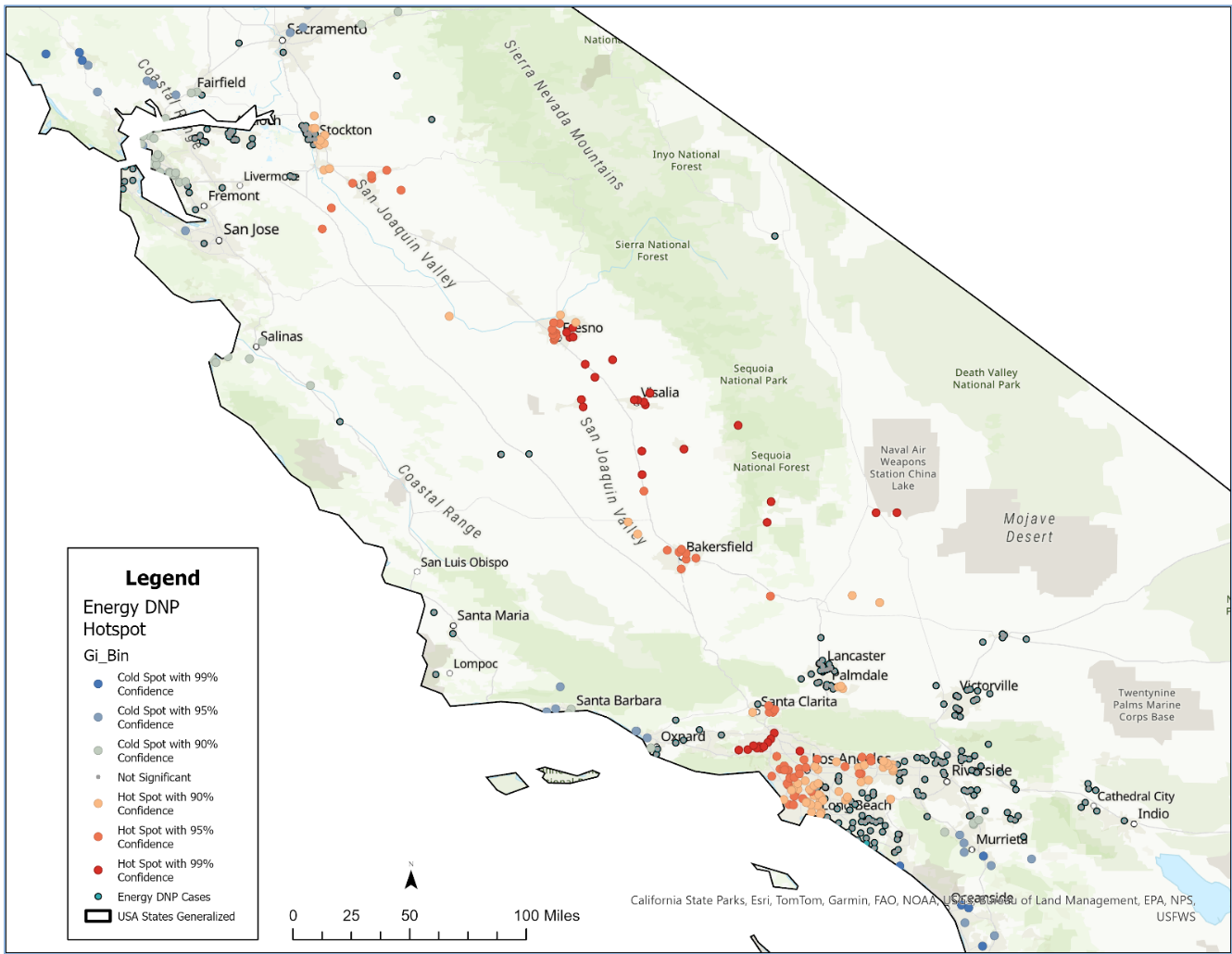
Table 14: Disconnection Non-Payment (DNP) Contacts in DACs by Industry (Q3-2024 to Q2-2025)

Industry	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	Total DNP contacts	Total DAC DNP Contacts	% DAC
Energy	357	419	406	456	1,638	750	46%
Telecommunications	26	16	34	45	121	49	40%
Water	20	25	21	36	102	52	51%
Total	403	460	461	537	1,861	851	46%

Figure 6 shows the geographic distribution and hotspot clusters in DACs where energy customers are trying to either prevent their services from being disconnected for nonpayment or have their service restored. Q2-2025 DAC hotspot clusters are represented by shaded red dots on the map. Small hotspots are spread across

the San Joaquin Valley, primarily in Stockton, Fresno, and Bakersfield, with the largest hotspot by area located in Northwestern Los Angeles.

Figure 6: ESJ Energy DNP Hotspot Map (Q2-2025)



Telecommunications Outage Complaints

Table 15 shows the total outage contacts received from telecommunications consumers over the last four quarters. AT&T consistently surpasses all other carriers in outage complaints each quarter and exceeds the next highest carrier by **557 contacts** over the last year. AT&T’s outage complaints are disproportionately high in zip codes in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods (the 75th to 100th ESJ percentiles, or ESJ Quartile 1) compared to the other less disadvantaged consumers, shown by ESJ quartiles 2-4 in the table below. Almost half, **49%**, of AT&T’s outage complaints affected consumers in ESJ Quartile 1. On top of suffering economic and environmental deprivation, they are receiving the least reliable telecommunications service in terms of outages.

Table 15: Telecommunications Companies with the Highest Outage Complaints & Associated ESJ Quartile Profile (Q3-2024 To Q2-2025)

Utility Name	Q3-2024	Q4-2024	Q1-2025	Q2-2025	Total ¹⁰	ESJ Quartile 1	ESJ Quartile 2	ESJ Quartile 3	ESJ Quartile 4
AT&T California	192	200	239	178	809	49%	15%	21%	14%
Frontier California Inc.	94	62	80	37	273	22%	27%	29%	22%
Charter Fiberlink CA-CCO, LLC	3	9	9	3	24	37%	21%	25%	17%
Comcast Phone of California, LLC	14	8	7	3	32	22%	22%	18%	38%
Citizens Telecommunications Co. of Ca.	11	1	1	0	13	12%	53%	6%	18%
Grand Total	314	280	336	221	1,151	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Core Transport Agents (CTA) and Abusive Marketing Complaints

CTAs are non-utility gas suppliers who purchase natural gas for residential and small commercial end-use customers. California consumers can elect to receive gas supply from one of many such providers in the state. If consumers choose this option, they will pay the CTA for gas supplied and the utility to deliver it from one of its distribution pipelines. Depending on the consumer's billing option, they may receive bills from the utility, the CTA, or both. The CPUC does not regulate the rates that CTAs charge their customers, but CTAs must register with the CPUC to conduct business in California. As a result, the CPUC has the authority to suspend or revoke the registration of a non-compliant CTA, which means it can effectively address consumer complaints against them.³³

Table 16 shows how many CTA contacts were received quarterly by CAB over the previous year. The CTA contacts total for 2024, at **1,788**, was the highest recorded in one year. However, the pace of CTA complaints has continued to rise. The first six months of 2025 are already close to exceeding last year's total, at **1,765** contacts.

³³ The CIMS database contains the subcategory "Abusive Marketing", which is defined as a practice that misleads a utility customer by not providing a promised service at the promised price, failing to provide proper disclosures, or adding extra services or features without the consumer's consent.

Table 16: All CTA Contacts (Q3-2024 to Q2-2025)

Quarter/Year	Q3-2024	Q4-2024	Q1-2025	Q2-2025
Count of CTA Contacts	479	496	1,087	678

Figure 7 reveals an interesting pattern in CTA behavior. Since 2020, CTA contacts have peaked during the year's first quarter. CTA cases are driven by “Abusive Marketing” complaints, and these first quarter peaks may indicate increased marketing efforts by the CTAs when the new year begins. During Q1-2025, “Abusive Marketing” complaints surged for all quartiles to unprecedented new levels, indicating that the CTAs may be implementing new and more aggressive marketing strategies. The drop-off in contacts during Q2-2025 in this chart echoes the intra-year trends in previous years and doesn’t necessarily indicate that the CTAs are backing off from aggressive marketing tactics. In fact, the level we have seen this quarter is still one of the highest quarterly totals recorded in the last five years.

Figure 7: CTA Contacts by Quarter and Year

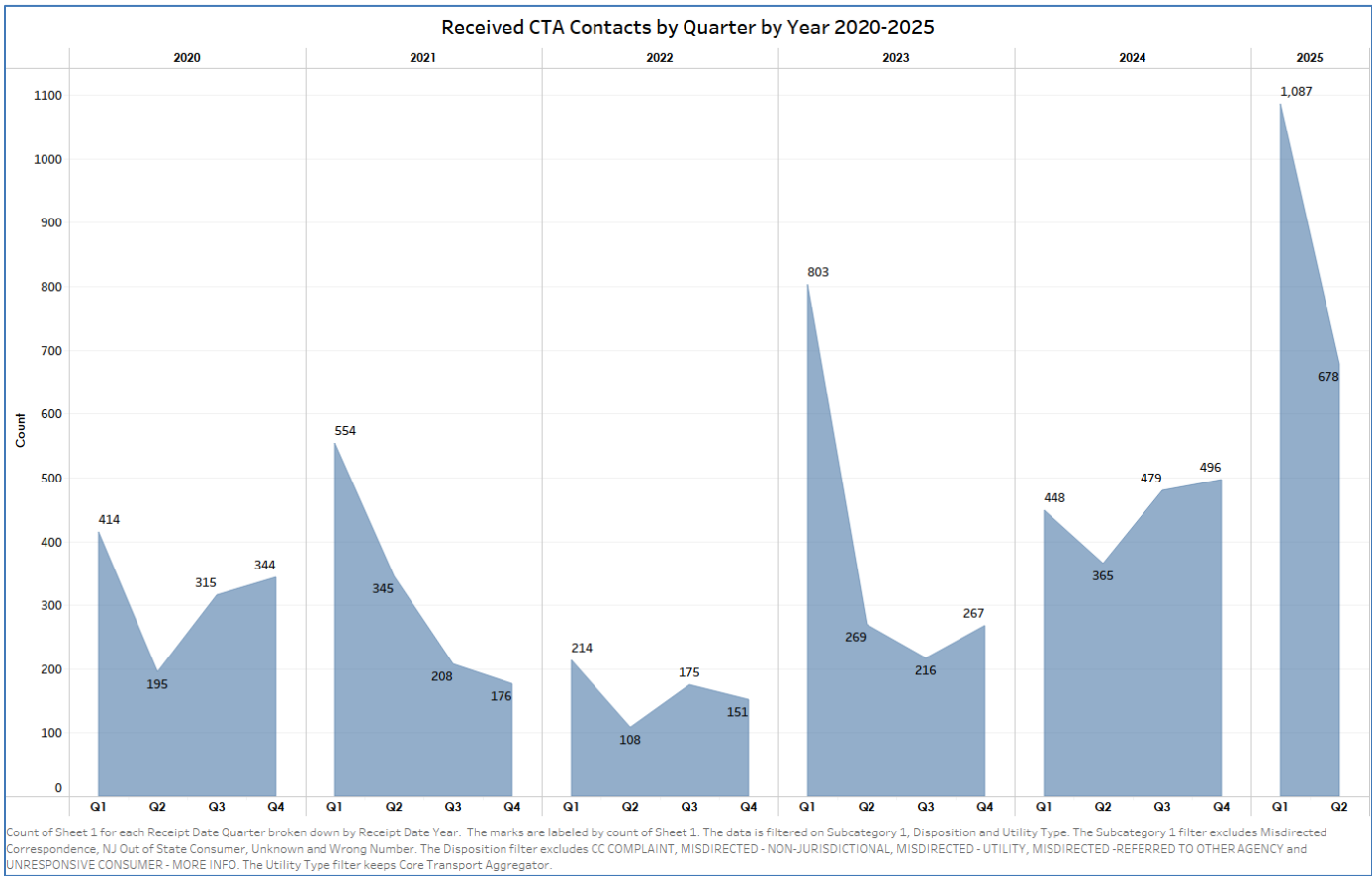


Table 17 shows that 10 CTA companies were responsible for 95% of the complaints about abusive marketing tactics reported to CAB during 2025. Wave Energy, SFE Energy Inc., AAA Natural Gas, and StateWise Energy California LLC have the most complaints and a substantial marketing presence in the most vulnerable

communities. Big Tree Energy CA, LLC; Vista Energy Marketing LP; and Spark Energy Gas LLC have fewer complaints, but a significant percentage of their total complaints come from the most vulnerable consumer group, ESJ Quartile 1.

Table 17: Top 10 CTAs by Contacts, and Total Abusive Marketing Complaints in the Most Disadvantaged ESJ Communities (Q2-2025)

Utility Name	Total Contacts	Total Abusive Marketing Contacts	% Abusive Marketing Contacts	ESJ Quartile 1 Total Contacts	% of Total Contacts from ESJ Quartile 1	ESJ Quartile 1 Abusive Marketing Contacts	% of ESJ Quartile 1 Contacts due to Abusive Marketing
Wave Energy LLC	147	114	78%	54	37%	37	69%
SFE Energy Inc.	142	94	66%	61	43%	41	67%
AAA Natural Gas	64	53	83%	14	22%	12	86%
StateWise Energy California LLC	64	37	58%	38	59%	23	61%
United Energy Trading LLC dba Collective Energy	59	38	64%	26	44%	17	65%
Big Tree Energy CA, LLC	55	37	67%	21	38%	13	62%
Vista Energy Marketing LP	40	30	75%	10	25%	6	60%
Spark Energy Gas LLC	38	30	79%	10	26%	8	80%
Peak Six Power and Gas LLC	18	16	89%	1	6%	1	100%
Greenwave Energy LLC ³⁴	17	11	65%	3	18%	1	33%
Total Top 10 CTA Count	644	460	71%	238	37%	159	67%

Figure 8 displays the CTA contact data as statistically significant clusters of "Abusive Marketing" contacts, represented as hot (red) and cold (blue) spots.³⁵ The hot spots indicate zip codes with a high number of

³⁴ Parent Company: United Energy Trading LLC.

³⁵ Hotspot analyses use vectors (points, lines, polygons) to identify locations of statistically significant hot spots and cold spots in the data by aggregating points of occurrence into polygons or converging points that are in proximity to one another based on a

“Abusive Marketing” contacts, where they are concentrated in or near ESJ Quartile 1 zip codes. This visualization reinforces what is shown in **Table 17** and also comports with our earlier analyses³⁶ showing prominent hotspots of Abusive Marketing complaints across a vast swathe of the **Central Valley**, particularly centered along the 99 Freeway “corridor” of **Stockton, Modesto, and Fresno**.

Figure 8: CTA “Abusive Marketing” Contacts mapped as Hot and Cold Spots in ESJ Communities

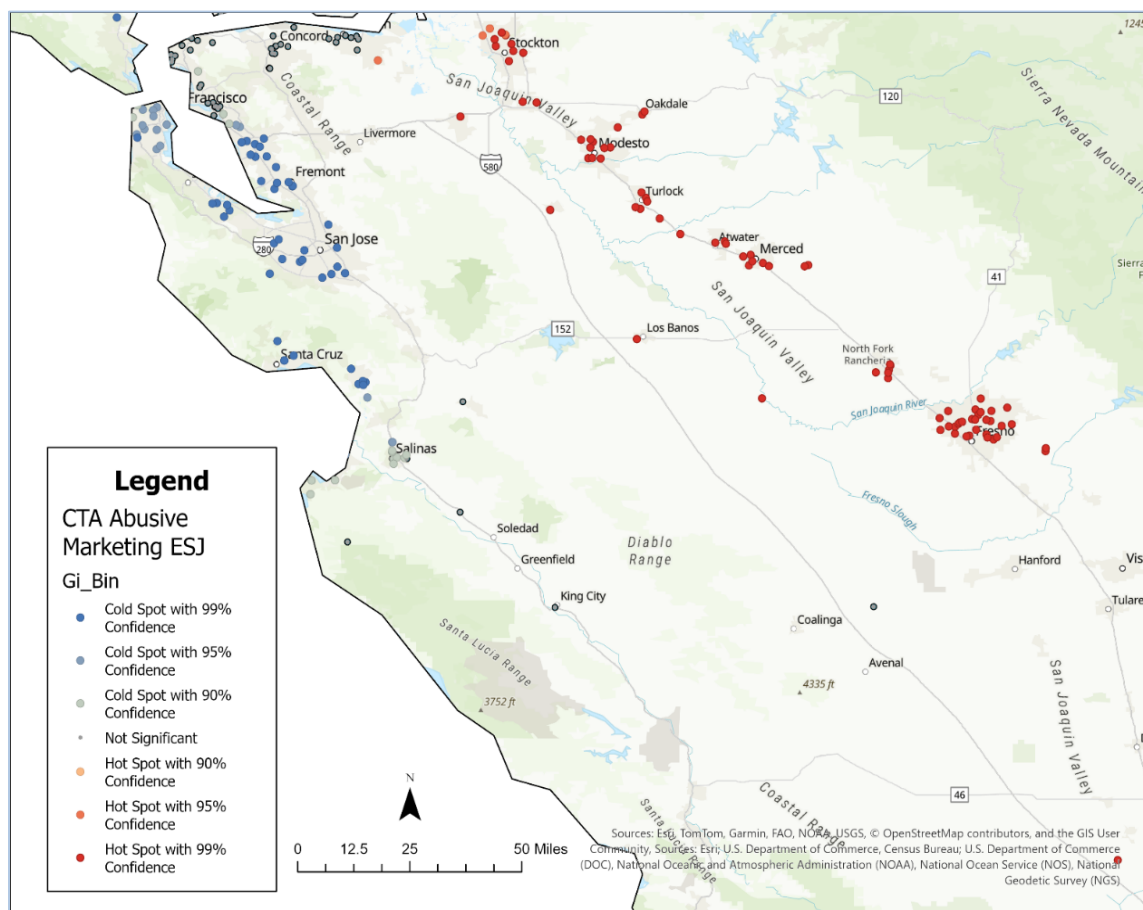


Table 18 shows the number of CTA related Informal Complaints (ICs) by their final disposition. Remarkably, **80%** of these ICs were resolved in favor of the consumer, indicating that, in most instances, consumers had valid concerns against their CTA companies. In contrast, the corresponding figure for all industries combined

calculated distance and found in a cluster. An area can be considered a hotspot if a higher-than-average occurrence of the event being analyzed is found in a cluster. A hot spot is an area that has a greater than average number of abusive marketing complaints, and cooler to cold spots occur with less than average occurrences. The higher above the average an area is with similar surrounding areas the ‘hotter’ the hotspot, and conversely the lower the average with similar surrounding areas, the cooler the cool spot

³⁶ Previous CAB Quarterly reports can be accessed here: [Consumer Affairs Branch](#)

was only **46%**. This means consumer complaints against CTAs were almost **1.74 times more likely** to be upheld than an average complaint handled by CAB, suggesting a trend of abusive practices within the CTA sector. SFE Energy Inc. and GreenWave Energy LLC have the highest percentages of ICs resolved in the consumer's favor.

Table 18: CTA Abusive Marketing Informal Complaints Closed by Company (Q2-2025)

Utility Name	Compromise	Consumer's Favor	Utility's Favor	Grand Total	% In Consumer Favor
Wave Energy LLC		42	13	55	76%
SFE Energy Inc.		36	4	40	90%
AAA Natural Gas		21	6	27	78%
StateWise Energy California LLC	1	14	3	18	78%
Big Tree Energy CA, LLC		13	4	17	76%
United Energy Trading LLC dba Collective Energy		12	4	16	75%
Vista Energy Marketing L.P.		10	2	12	83%
GreenWave Energy LLC (Parent Company: United Energy Trading LLC)		10		10	100%
Spark Energy Gas LLC		8	4	12	67%
Peak Six Power and Gas LLC		5	1	6	83%
National Gas & Electric LLC		2		2	100%
Just Energy Solutions Inc.		1		1	100%
Ambit California LLC			1	1	0%
Grand Total	1	174	42	217	80%

TEAM and CHANGES

In addition to handling consumer contacts, CAB oversees two important programs: the Telecommunications Education and Assistance in Multiple-Languages ([TEAM](#)) and Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electric Services ([CHANGES](#)) programs. These programs assist Limited English Proficient (LEP) consumers with telecommunications and energy issues, respectively.

TEAM and CHANGES support LEP utility consumers statewide through **25** Community-based Organizations (CBOs) that offer services in their preferred language, and with cultural sensitivity. CHANGES CBOs are specifically trained to support consumers through the program's three service components: individual case assistance, education, and outreach.

Individual case assistance responds most frequently to clients' financial challenges in paying for their services or resolving disputes with their providers.

CBOs also offer education classes on a range of topics to assist them in managing their utility services. Classes are provided either on CBO premises or in nearby facilities within the same community.

Outreach is conducted by promoting the program at community events and through various media types. The most recent TEAM and CHANGES contract was awarded to the non-profit organization International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA) from July 2024 to June 2027.³⁷ TEAM is authorized to receive an annual budget of up to **\$1.6M**, and CHANGES is authorized for up to **\$1.75M** annually. Of the \$1.75M for CHANGES, **\$1.68M** is allotted to the contract, and the remainder is for the evaluation, as ordered by the 2021 CARE/FERA/ESA Decision.

The Top Issues for TEAM and CHANGES Clients

CHANGES

In the second quarter, CHANGES Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) successfully resolved **606** client cases.

Table 19 illustrates that the Top 10 case issues accounted for nearly all resolved cases during this period. Notably, **76%** of these cases were related to financial hardship, with the most common issues being "Unable to Pay Balance" (**41% of cases**) and "Needs Referral for Assistance Programs" (**35%**). The third most reported issue was "High Bill," accounting for **5%** of cases. Clients also frequently requested assistance with "Electric Aggregation," "Gas Aggregation," and "New Account Set-Up."

³⁷ The full list of CBO's can be accessed here: [TEAM & CHANGES CBO Roster](#)

Table 19: CHANGES Client Issues (Q2-2025)

Top 10 Case Issues		
Case Issue Type	Case Count	% of Totals
Unable to Pay Balance Due	251	41%
Needs Referral for Assistance Programs	212	35%
High Bill	33	5%
Electric Aggregation	22	4%
Gas Aggregation	22	4%
New Account Set-Up	22	4%
Assist with Changes to Account	15	2%
Other Payment Assistance (e.g., church, private company)	14	2%
Customer Service Problems	8	1%
Pending Disconnection (received shut off notice)	2	>1%
Total (Top 10 by Issue Type)	601	99%
Q2-2025 Total Closed Cases	606	100% of cases

TEAM

TEAM CBOs successfully closed **920** client cases during the reporting period, securing **\$24,518** in consumer returns by resolving telecommunications-related disputes. Approximately **one-quarter** of these cases involved consumers seeking assistance making account changes.

Table 20 presents a detailed breakdown of the Top 10 case issues, collectively accounting for **78%** of all resolved TEAM cases. Of these, **25%** of clients sought help to “Assist with Changes to Account,” followed by **13%** for issues related to “High Bills” and **7%** to “Add New Internet Service Plan.” Additionally, **6%** of client contacts were due to “Poor Coverage/Dropped Calls/No Coverage.” The remaining issues within the Top 10 categories each represented between **3%** and **5%** of total client contacts.

Table 20: TEAM Client Issues (Q2-2025)

Top 10 Case Issues		
Case Issue Type	Case Count	% of Totals
Assisted With Changes to Account	227	25%
High Bill	121	13%
Add new internet service/plan	63	7%
Poor Coverage / Drop calls / No Coverage	58	6%
Set Up New Account	48	5%
Assisted Client with Paying Bill	48	5%
Assist with Phone Activation	47	5%
expired promotion	44	5%
Changed Billing Language	33	4%
Over billing	25	3%
Total for Closed Cases (Top 10 by Issue Type)	714	78%
Q2-2025 Closed Cases	920	100%