



California Public Utilities Commission Committee on Finance and Administration



Report on Strategic Directive 06

Consumer Protection, Education, and Assistance

April 25, 2018

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Strategic Directive 06 – Consumer Education and Protection

The CPUC protects, educates, and assists consumers in their purchase and use of services from utilities and regulated entities. Within its jurisdictional authority, the CPUC will:

1. Ensure and assure the accuracy and accessibility of consumer information;
2. Identify consumer complaints and trends and prosecute violations of law or CPUC rules, including instances of waste, fraud, and abuse;
3. Assist consumers in filing, tracking, and resolving complaints;
4. Educate and assist consumers concerning the services they use.





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News and Outreach Office Consumer Responses

- Responded to inquiries about programs, policies, and actions:

Public Advisor	Approximately 14,000 - 11,000 comments - 3,000 requesting procedural help and/or assistance with other issues*
Local Government Liaisons	Approximately 150
News	Approximately 600 (reporters, consumers, utilities, analysts, etc.)

** Some receive an automated email response with information on how email will be handled (e.g., proceeding-related comments routed to decision-makers)*

- All inquiries will be categorized and tallied in 2018

- Maintain updated fact sheets and brochures for print and website
 - Approximately 50 fact sheets and brochures
 - Distributed thousands of materials to consumers throughout the state in 2017 at meetings and events
- Senior staff and/or subject matter experts review information provided to consumers to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness of responses.





Translation and Interpretation Services

Accessibility of Consumer Information Through **Translation and Interpretation Services**:

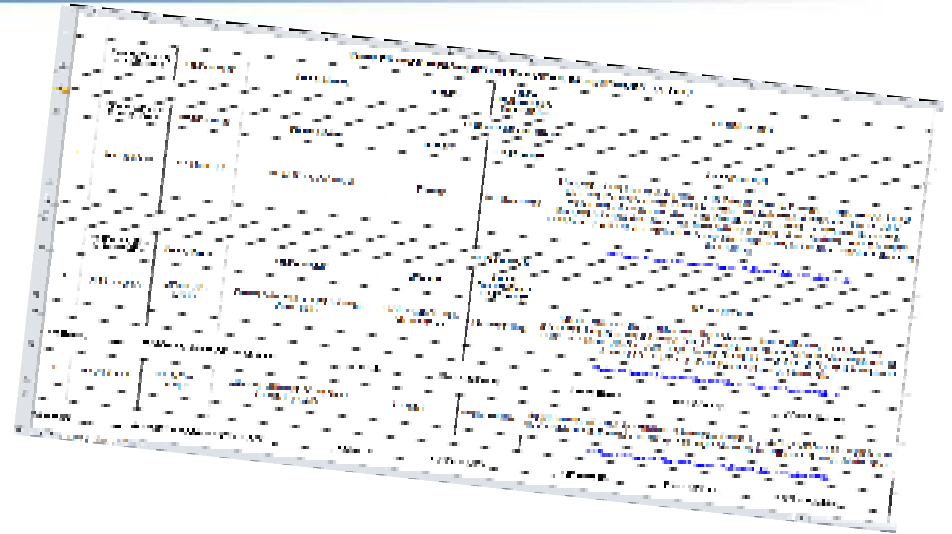
- Interpreters staffed 27 CPUC events and provided live interpretation at 16 of those events
- Contractor translated 19 documents (e.g., agendas, brochures, informational handouts)
 - Translations reviewed by certified bilingual CPUC staff to ensure accuracy
- CPUC website added feature to translate text into more than 90 languages





Accessibility and Accuracy Through SB 512

- **SB 512** states: Where *feasible and appropriate* ... the commission shall seek the participation of those who are likely to be affected’.
- Weekly discuss new filings and proposed decisions issued the prior week.



- Information on time-sensitive or high-interest topics is sent directly to interested/affected stakeholders by local liaison officers
 - Approximately 900 emails were sent as direct outreach
- All items go into monthly newsletter (left) distributed to regional organizations and local government contacts (mayors, city/county managers, clerks, public works, etc.)
 - Two newsletters in 2017
 - Newsletter is distributed to more than 1,000 officials statewide
 - Accuracy of newsletter is checked by Director, ALJs, and subject matter experts
- Work closely with ALJ Division to ensure that outreach is included in Scoping Memos
 - 2018: Work with ALJ Division to determine if there's a way to find out how parties were notified of the proceeding

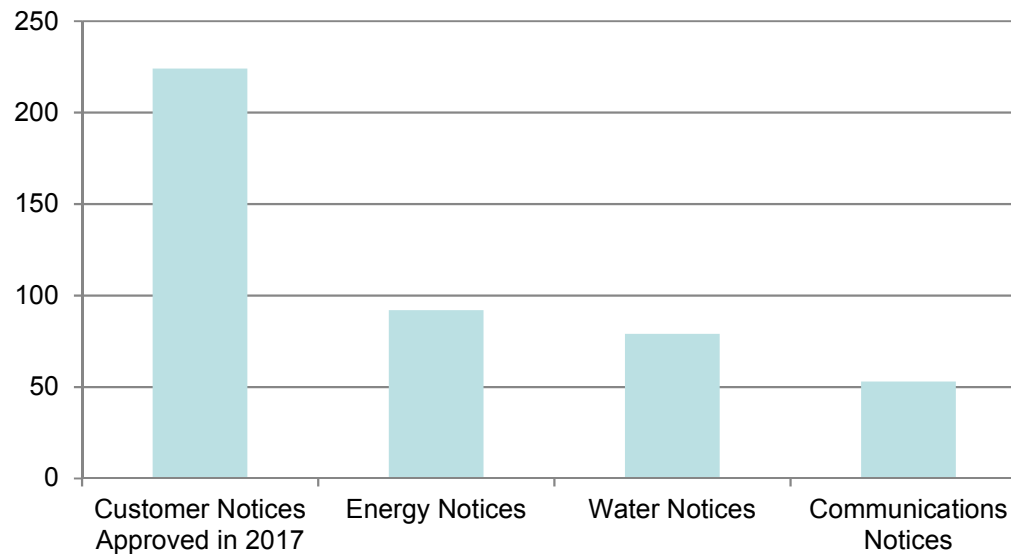




Utility Authored Customer Notices

Accuracy of Consumer Information Through **Utility Authored Customer Notices:**

- Edited and approved language of 224 utility authored customer notices to ensure that notices were clear and understandable while providing the required information
- Created a webpage to post approved notices





Consumer Information Through Media Relations, Social Media, and Website

Accuracy and Accessibility of Consumer Information Through Media Relations, Social Media, and Website:

- Prepared and disseminated press releases, media advisories, Information Alerts, blogs: 146 in 2017
 - Approved by Directors, subject matter experts, ALJ Division, Legal Division, Commissioner offices, as applicable
 - Disseminated to reporters, local government electeds/officials, stakeholder groups, other state agencies/sister agencies, consumer groups, community based organizations, utilities, etc.
- Responded to more than 600 inquiries to the News phone and email; Proactively pitched to reporters more than 50 events and numerous news stories.
 - All responses and pitches will be categorized and tallied in 2018
- Created, posted, and engaged on social media
 - 289 posts on Twitter in 2017
 - 262 posts on Facebook in 2017
 - Additional tracking in 2018 will include growth of followers, engagement performance, and reach (Engagement: Social media interactions such as likes, comments, shares, etc. Reach: How far our message has travelled, how many people might have seen it, and who those people are; can include follower count, impressions, web traffic, etc.)
- Created new webpages and updated existing content continuously.





Consumer Information Through Online Comment Form

Accuracy and Accessibility of Consumer Information Through **Online Comment Form**:

- Created an online comment form for consumers to provide feedback about the CPUC. Spreadsheet compilation of online comments updated weekly and posted to website.
 - 442 comments received in 2017
 - Comments requesting follow up are sent to appropriate Division
- Spreadsheet enhanced in 2018 to include “CPUC Action” tab to inform the public about how the CPUC handled each comment or complaint.





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Identifying Consumer Complaints and Trends

UEB analyzes a broad range of data to identify utility misconduct:

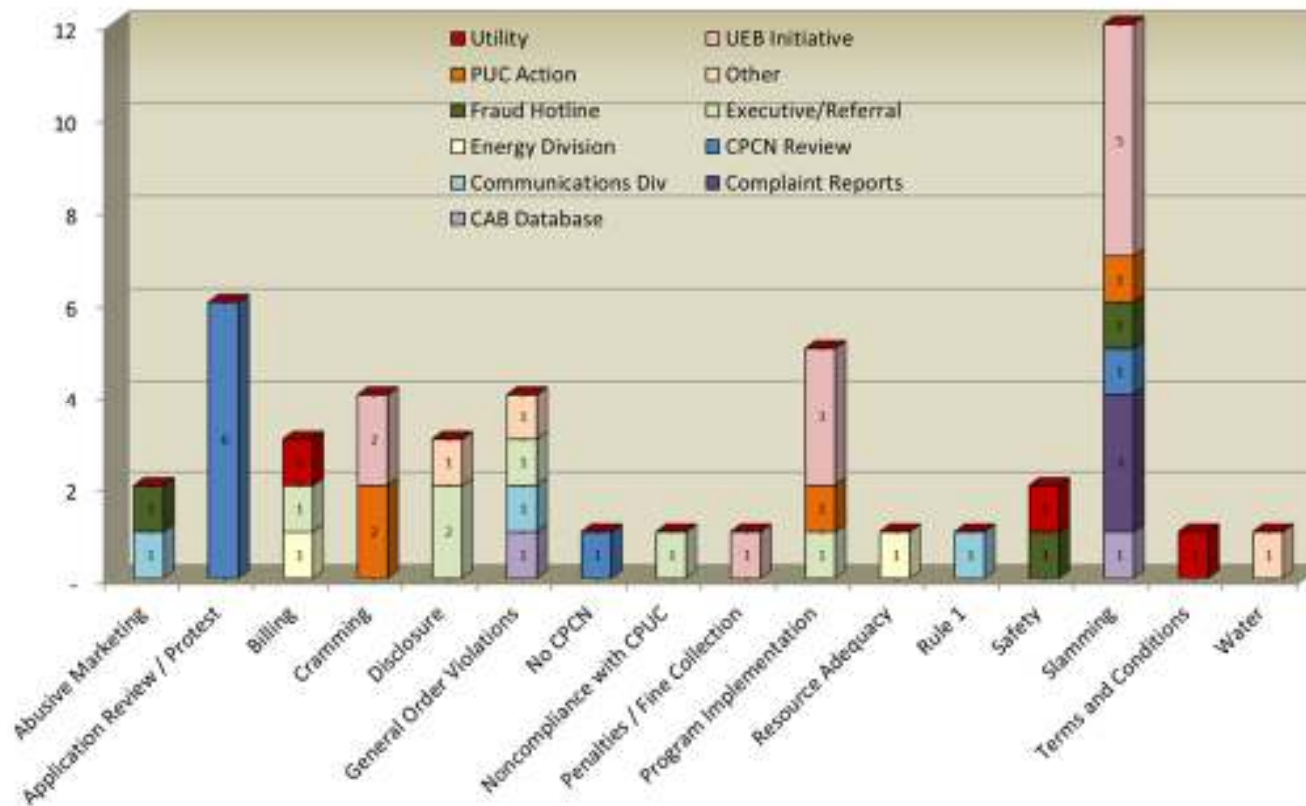
- Trends in CAB informal complaints
- Formal complaints filed at the Commission
- Industry-reported cramming & slamming complaints
- Telco applications for CA license (for fitness to operate)
- Referrals from divisions, other regulatory agencies, & legislators
- Monthly conference calls with other state & federal regulators
- Fraud/Whistleblower hotline complaints
- Utilities' mea culpa
- Media reports





Prosecuting Violations of Law or CPUC Rules

49 Ongoing UEB Investigations by Type and Source, as of 4/16/2018





Prosecuting Violations of Law or CPUC Rules (cont.)

CAB data plays a key role in investigations

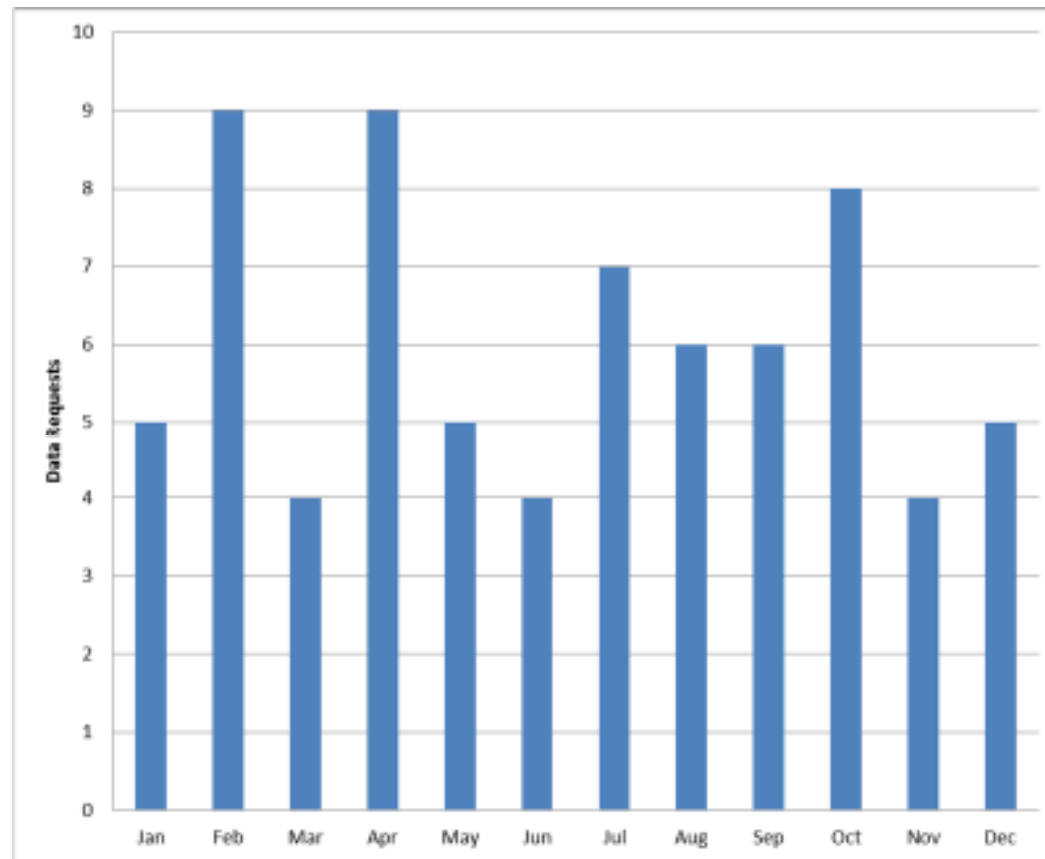
- *For example:*
 - Wireline carrier switched the phone service of over 150 customers without proper authorization
 - Wireline carrier failed to make 911 services accessible to its customers due to equipment outages
 - Wireline carrier failed to include required Commission contact information on customer bills
 - LifeLine wireless carrier violated the sign-up process for over 350 customers





Requests for CAB Data in 2017

Using CAB data to identify consumer complaints and trends





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How CPED Provides Consumer Assistance

Assisting consumers in filing, tracking, and resolving complaints

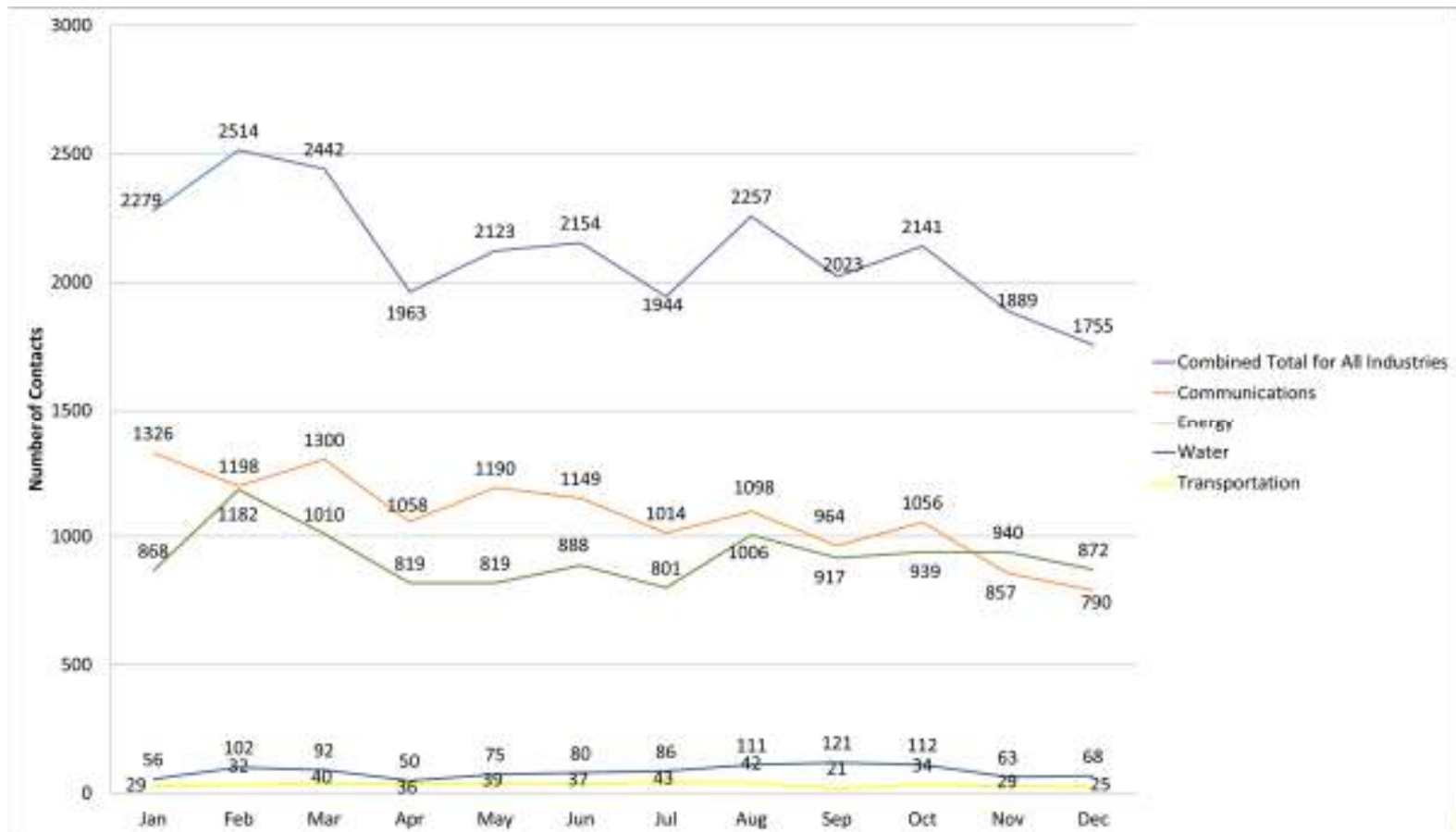
- How CAB and TEB assist consumers
 - Processes for assisting over the phone
 - Processes for assisting with “written” contacts (online, mail, fax)
- Data for assisting consumers with written contacts
 - Received
 - Closed
 - Process measurements
- Data for assisting consumers with phone contacts
 - Received
 - Closed
 - Process measurements





Total Consumer Contacts Received by CPED 2017 by Industry

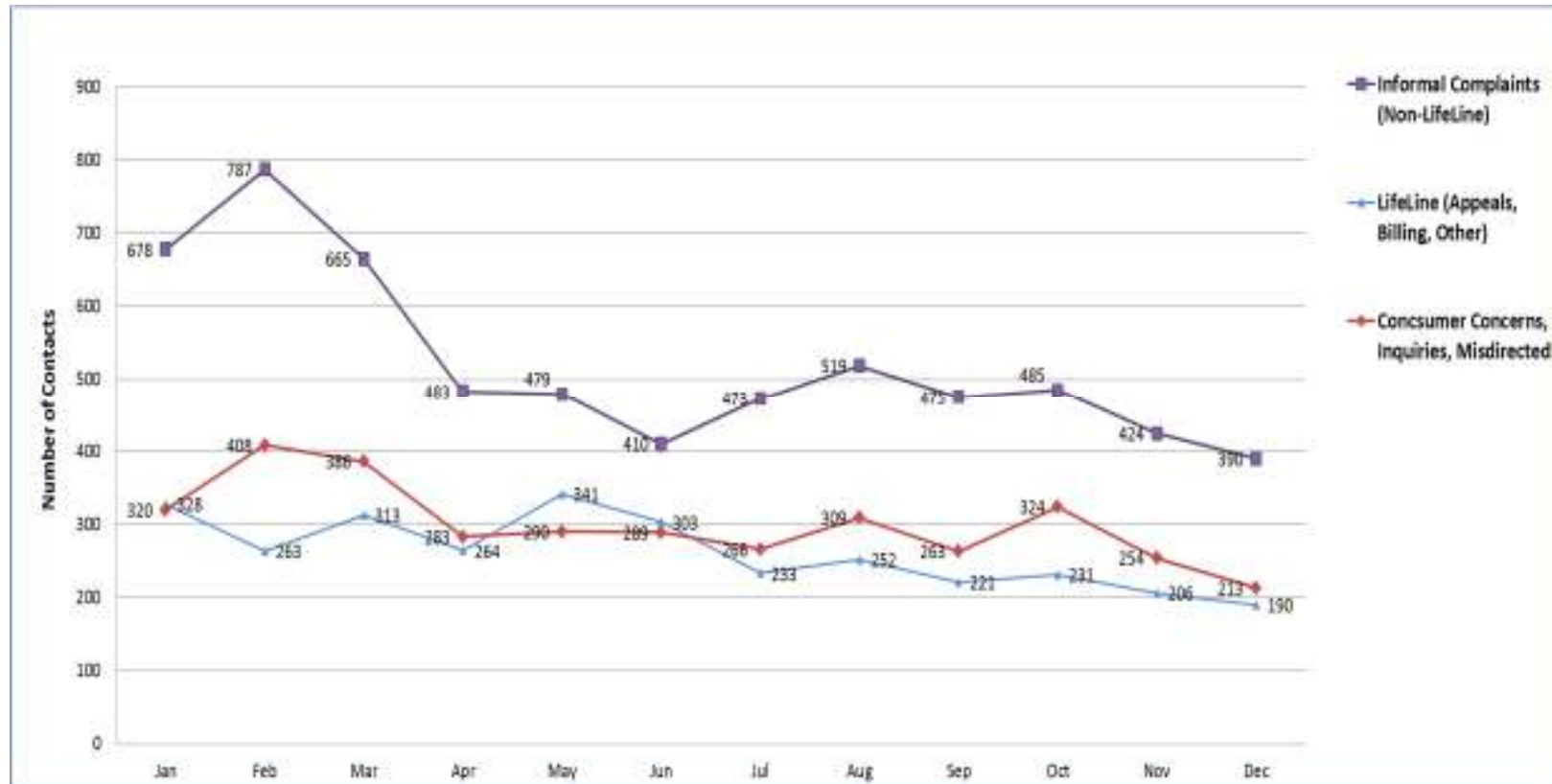
Assist consumers in filing, tracking, and resolving complaints





Written Contacts Received 2017

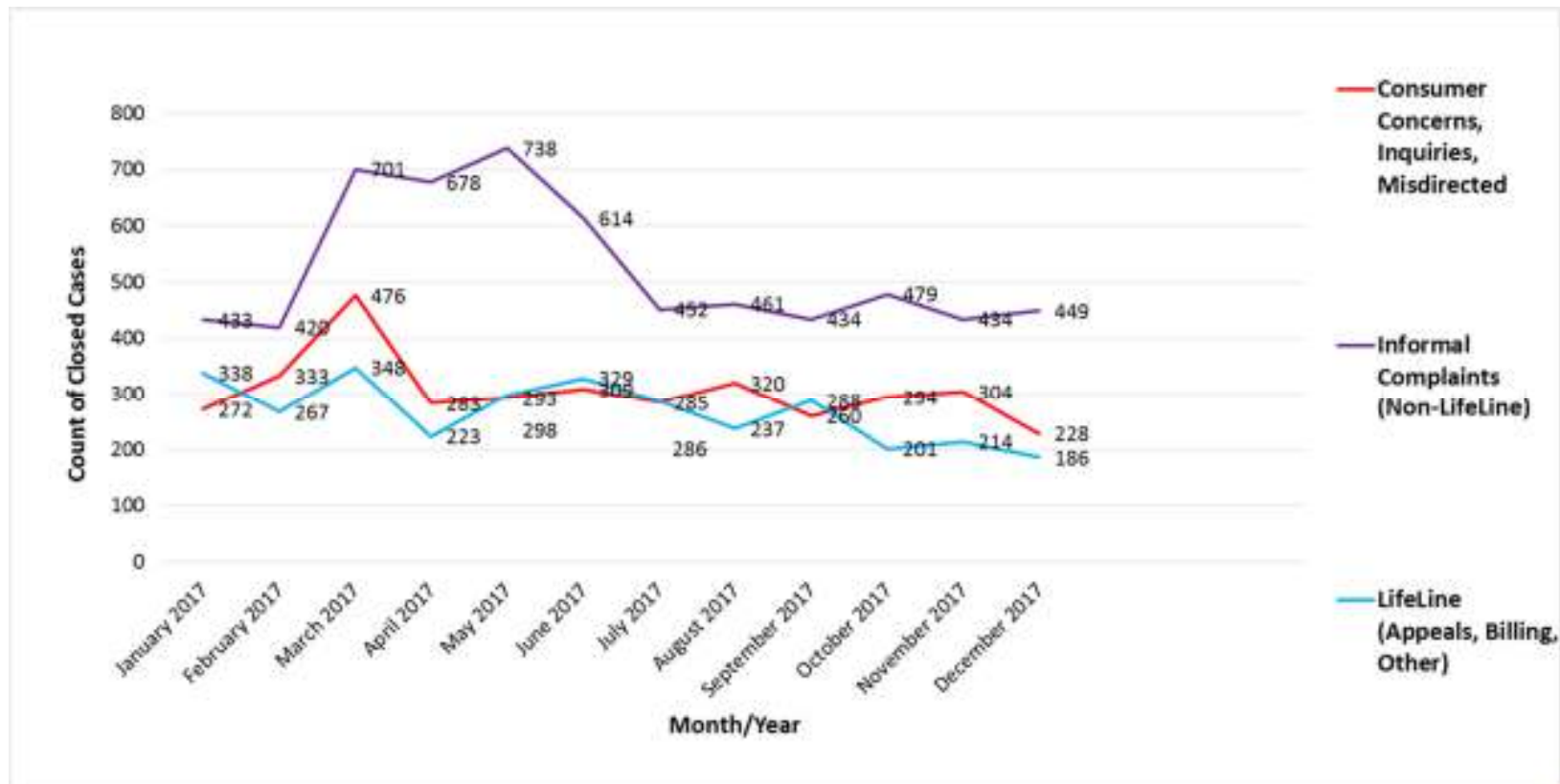
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Written Contacts Closed 2017

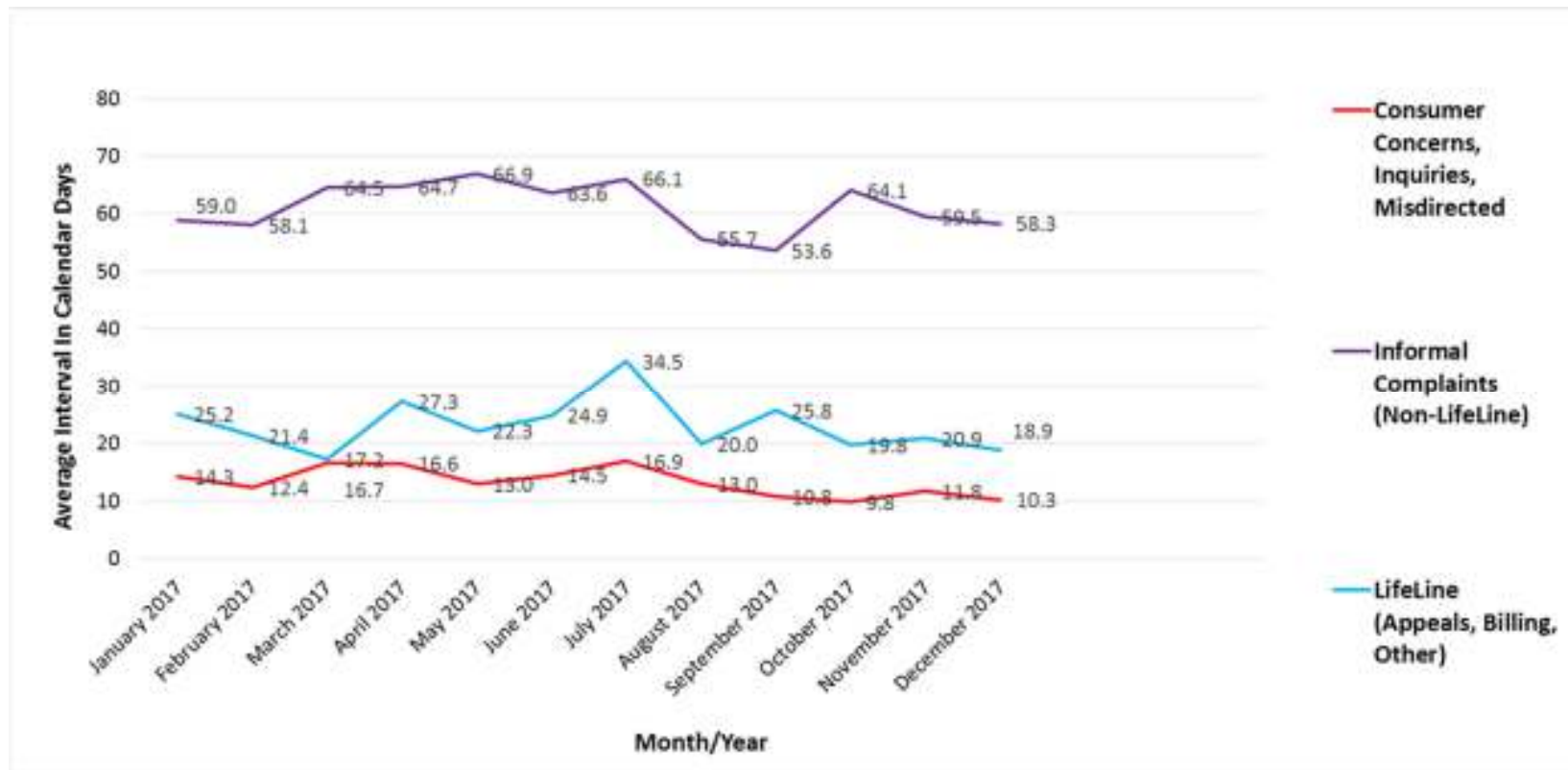
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Written Case Processing Intervals 2017

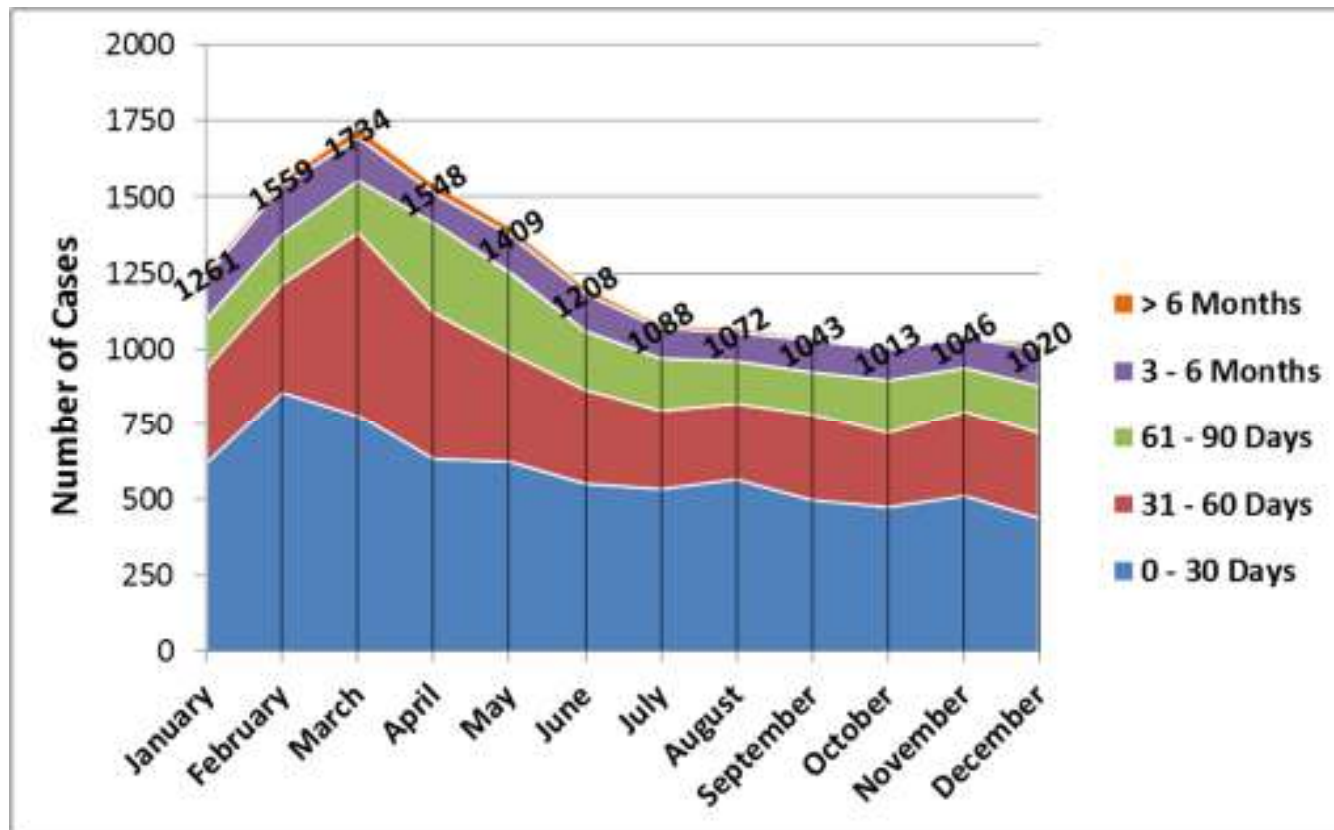
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Open Written Cases by Age 2017

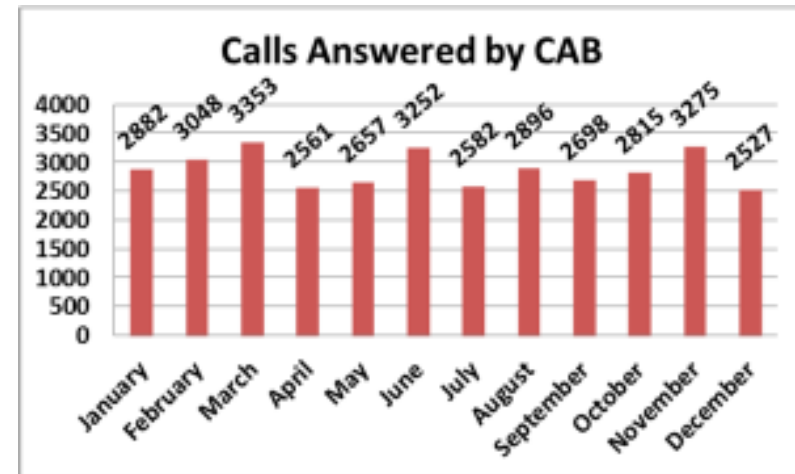
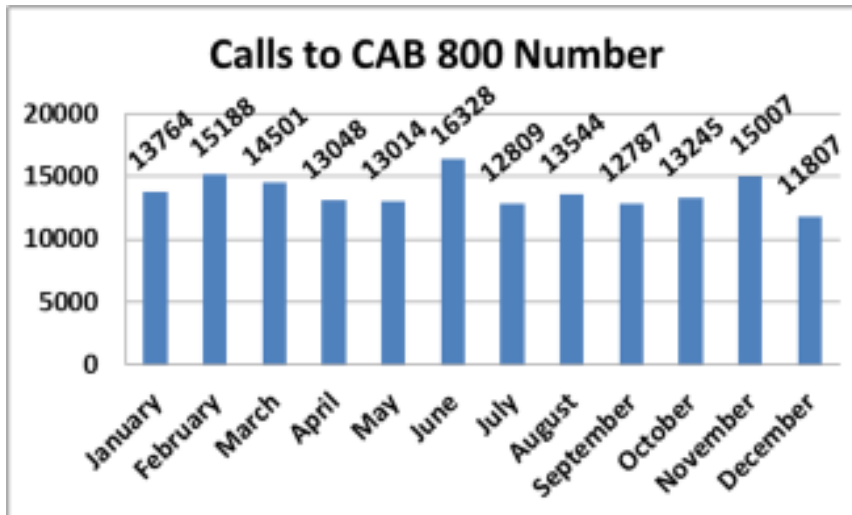
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CAB Phone Contacts for 2017

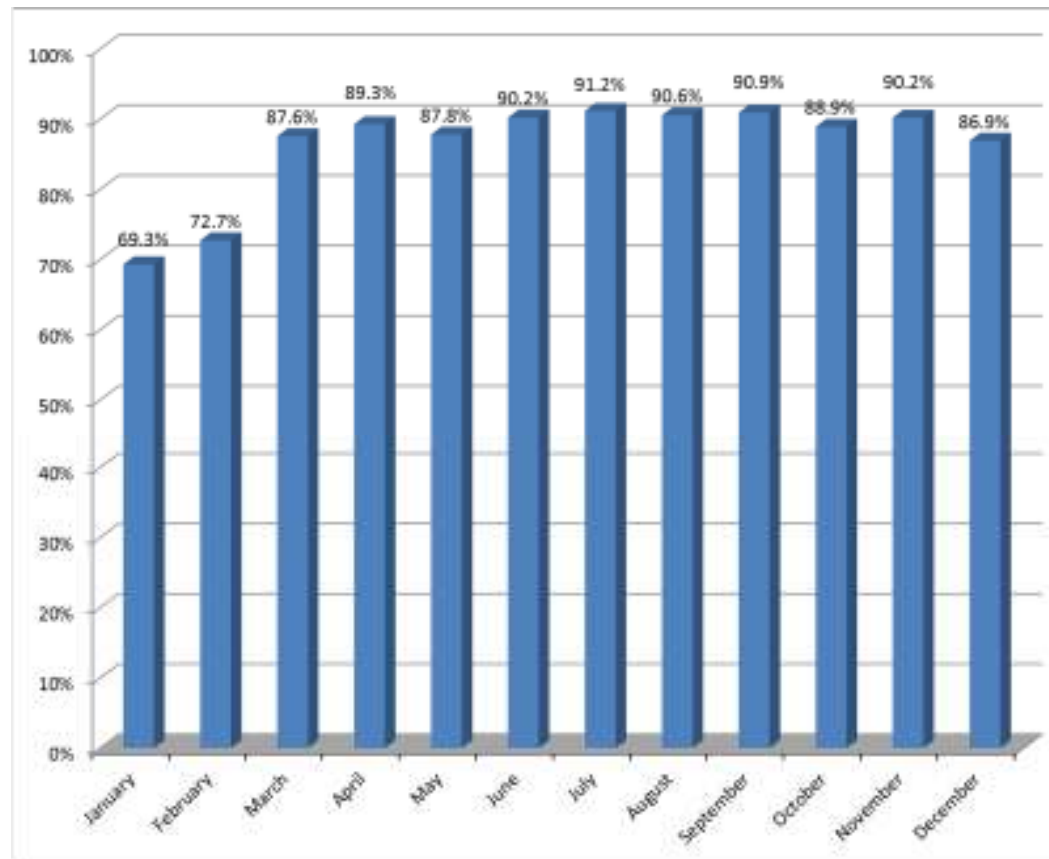
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Level of Telephone Service Provided for 2017

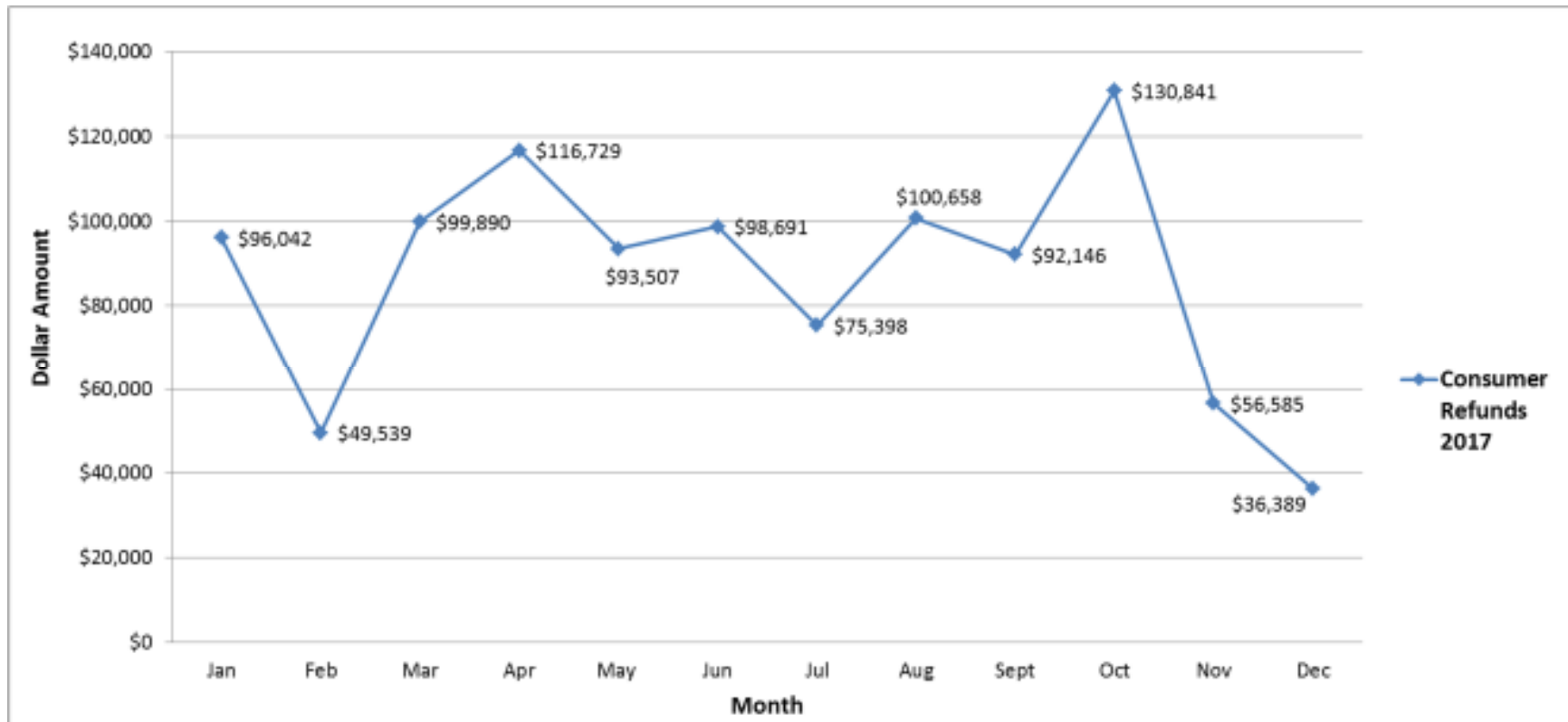
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Refunds to Consumers for 2017 – Total \$1,046,416

Assist consumers in filing, tracking, and resolving complaints





Improving Consumer Assistance 2018 and Beyond

- Coordination with other CPUC Divisions
 - Created structure for information sharing with ED
 - Advise industry divisions, ALJ division and Commissioner Offices regarding consumer issues
- Actively working on technology upgrades
 - Foundational work with IT and CDOT
 - In-house work to improve technology and process
- Explore methods for obtaining useful consumer feedback to improve service





Improving Consumer Assistance 2018 and Beyond (cont.)

Offering Consumers Options to Contact CAB Outside of Regular Business Hours:

- Robust information is available via the 800 number but consumers are directed to call back during business hours if live assistance is needed
- Explored options and best practices to allow consumers to leave voicemail or enter into a call-back queue after hours
 - Technology is available for these options - offered under Calnet 3 contract
 - Create processes/prioritizations for adding vmails into normal workflow
- Early this summer CAB will pilot a voice mail option on weekends





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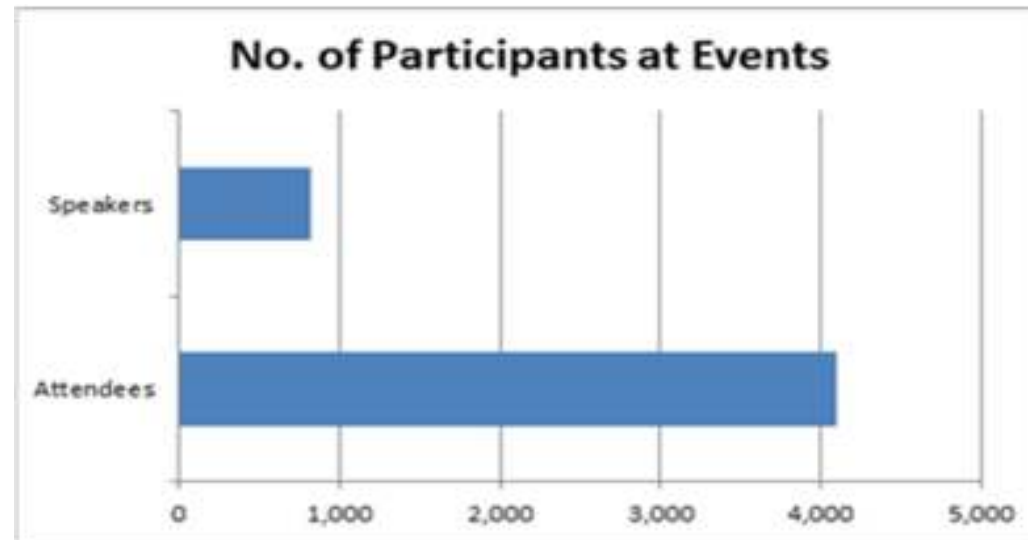




Public Participation Hearings

Educate and Assist Consumers Concerning the Services They Use Through **Public Participation Hearings and Other Events:**

- Organized, promoted, and staffed 80 events in 2017
 - 41 Public Participation Hearings and 39 other events
 - 4,105 attendees and 821 speakers
 - Estimated cost for office: \$54,708.65



- Created an online and print Public Participation Survey to assess consumers' preferred methods of communication; Survey results updated weekly and posted to the website
 - Survey handed out at events, linked to on the homepage, publicized regularly on social media, and ULR (www.cpuc.ca.gov/publiccomments) provided in auto-generated email responses and submission page for online CPUC comments/complaints





Outreach

Educate and Assist Consumers Concerning the Services They Use Through Outreach:

- Maintain an extensive database with more than 7,000 local government contacts and more than 650 community based organizations
 - Tracking in 2018: Number of phone calls; Number of emails; Number of miles traveled in state car; Number of inquiries/issues fielded from local officials/CBOs
 - Topics include those relevant to each city/county, as well as those that may be, or should be, of interest to the city/county, such as California Advanced Services Fund, Rail Safety, Disadvantaged Communities, Climate/Electric Vehicles
- Conducted 310 meetings with local electeds/officials in 2017
- Participated in more than 145 community events
- Engaged in approximately 6,000 emails and 500 phone calls with stakeholders





TEAM/CHANGES

Educate and Assist Consumers Concerning the Services They Use Through TEAM/CHANGES:

The TEAM (Telecommunications Education and Assistance in Multiple-Languages) and CHANGES (Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electric Services) programs provide telecommunications and energy education and complaint resolution to consumers with a focus on those who are not proficient in English.

- **Outreach**

- CHANGES

- Community Based Organizations held 86 community events with 401,073 attendees in 11 different languages
 - Media Outreach: 1,463,100 potential circulation in nine different languages

- TEAM:

- Community events: 844,523 attendees in 18 different languages
 - Media Outreach: 1,443,334 reached in 10 different languages

- **Education**

- CHANGES: 33,111
 - TEAM: 36,269

- **Complaint cases resolved**

- CHANGES: 972
 - TEAM: 1,715

- **Needs assistance cases resolved**

- CHANGES: 3,045
 - TEAM: 717





Energy Upgrade California

Educate and Assist Consumers Concerning the Services They Use Through **Energy Upgrade California**:

- Energy Upgrade California® (EUC) is a statewide initiative committed to uniting Californians to strive toward reaching our state's energy goals.
- This statewide marketing campaign was created to motivate and educate California residents and small businesses about energy management.
- 3 year \$75 million ratepayer funded multi-channel marketing campaign consists of paid media, paid social, website, community based organizations, public relations.





Compliance with Strategic Directive-06

- CPUC staff believe the organization is substantially in compliance with SD-06.





Questions?

