

Media Release

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**STATEWIDE COALITION CALLS FOR CPUC TO ENDORSE FAIR, EFFECTIVE,  
INDEPENDENT ENERGY EFFICIENCY SYSTEM**

Women's Energy Matters (WEM), Sierra Club-California, and the California Coalition for Energy Efficiency are asking the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to "hold" the vote and rewrite the proposed decision on Energy Efficiency, which ends a four year experiment with independent programs and returns control of California's \$400million/yr. energy efficiency system to utilities. The decision was issued for comment during the holidays, with the vote currently scheduled for Jan. 13, 2005. This would have been the first meeting for two new Commissioners but their swearing-in has been delayed.

Paul Fenn, co-chair of Sierra Club-California's Energy Committee and author of the Community Choice law that allows cities to leave utilities and run independent energy systems, stated: "The utilities have a fundamental conflict of interest with saving energy, but the proposed decision puts them in charge of all energy efficiency, even in Community Choice cities. It directs utilities to select "superior" non-utility programs with a small portion of the funds, ignoring their antagonism to effective non-utility programs."

Starting in 2001 the Commission invited cities, non-profits and independent businesses to apply to the CPUC to propose and run programs with 20% of the funds. WEM has worked to preserve non-utility programs in the face of utility opposition, as a public interest party ("intervenor") in the CPUC's Future Energy Efficiency proceeding.

WEM's Exec. Dir., Barbara George charged: "The proposed decision ignores the record of independent programs, which have saved more energy per dollar than utilities. It also ignores the first-ever audit of utility programs, which found inflated energy savings claims, negligence, excessive administrative costs, and favoritism in selecting contractors."

Ken Smokoska, Co-Chair of Sierra Club-California's Energy Committee and a San Diego solar advocate, noted, "This decision will have a big impact on California's economy and environment, so we ask Commissioners to take time to consider the most environmentally sound and cost-effective policy. Sierra Club-California supports the California Standard Offer system proposed by WEM and the California Coalition for Energy Efficiency because it is fair and transparent and greatly increases opportunities for independent energy efficiency providers. A similar system in Texas has produced 40% more energy savings compared to current California programs."

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