

A Local Elected's Toolkit:

# IMMEDIATE ACTION TO LOWER ENERGY BILLS



To: Local San Diego Elected Officials  
From: Climate Action Campaign

## The Problem

### PRICES ARE SKYROCKETING

For over ten years, electricity bills have skyrocketed.

**105% Increase:** Since 2014, the average bill for a San Diego family has more than doubled.<sup>1</sup>

**A Debt Crisis:** Today, nearly **2 in 5 SDG&E customers** are behind on their bills.<sup>2</sup> They owe money they simply do not have.

**There's no end in sight.**

## The Cause

### THE "MORE SPENDING, MORE PROFIT" MODEL

Our three big utilities (SCE, SDG&E & PG&E) are for-profit monopolies. Their business model is designed to reward shareholders, not to save families money.<sup>3</sup>

### HOW THEY MAKE MONEY:

Rather than making a profit on the electricity itself, they're able to profit from building things like new wires, poles, and power plants.

- 1 The utility builds an expensive project.
- 2 The State (CPUC) allows them to charge families for the cost of the project plus a **guaranteed 10% profit**.
- 3 **The Result:** The more they spend on expensive hardware, the more profit they make. They have no reason to find the cheapest way to do things.<sup>4</sup>  
*SDG&E's 2025 profits were recorded at \$563 million.<sup>5</sup>*

1. California Public Utilities Commission, Public Advocates Office, The Consumer Advocate at the California Public Utilities Commission: 2022 Annual Report (2022), <https://www.publicadvocates.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cal-advocates-website/files/press-room/reports-and-analyses/annual-reports/2022-annual-report.pdf>, at 3.

2. California Public Utilities Commission, Public Advocates Office, *Q4 2025 Electric Rates Report* (Feb. 2026).

3. Malena Carollo, *One Reason Your Power Bill is High: Baked-In Profits That Critics Call Excessive*, KPBS (Feb. 3, 2025).

4. Ruthie Lazenby, Sylvie Ashford & Mohit Chhabra, *Power Struggle: California's Electric Utility Ownership Dilemma*, Policy Brief No. 20 (UCLA Sch. of Law, June 2025), at 8.

5. Sempra, *2025 10-K Form*

# Action Plan

As an elected official, you can move three specific "levers" to protect your residents.

## Lever 1: Use Your Political Voice

Utilities have lobbyists; families have you.

### Update Your Legislative Platform

Ensure your City's 2026 legislative agenda prioritizes bills that lower costs and increase utility accountability.

### Send in the City Attorney

Your city has the right to "intervene" (act as a legal party) in state rate-setting meetings. Tell your legal team to challenge the utilities every time they ask for a price hike.

### Pass Local Resolutions

Introduce and pass City Council resolutions explicitly endorsing state reform bills. (e.g., "*Resolution in Support of the Ratepayer Protection Act*"). Sending these formal declarations to state representatives and the Governor creates visible political pressure.

## Lever 2: Support Local Non-Profit Power

Break the monopoly by **supporting Community Choice Energy**, like San Diego Community Power or Clean Energy Alliance.

- **Local Control:** These are non-profits run by local boards, not Wall Street.
- **Reinvestment:** Instead of sending 10% profit to shareholders, these programs put money back into your community to lower rates or fund local projects.

## Lever 3: Organize Your Community

### Host a Town Hall

Bring your residents together to talk about their bills. Record their stories to send to state regulators.

### Petitions & Comments

Organize public comment drives during open CPUC dockets to demonstrate widespread community dissatisfaction to regulators.

### Partner Up

Join forces with other cities, climate, and consumer groups. A "united front" of local governments is much harder for utilities to ignore.