

IMMEDIATE ACTION TO LOWER ENERGY BILLS



To: Local Orange County Elected Officials
From: Climate Action Campaign

The Problem

PRICES ARE SKYROCKETING

For over ten years, electricity bills have skyrocketed.

106% Increase: Since 2015, the average bill for an Orange County family has more than doubled.¹

A Debt Crisis: Today, **1 in 5 households** in California are behind on their bills. They owe money they simply do not have.²

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.³

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**.⁴

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.⁵

*SCE's 2025 profits were recorded at \$4.9 billion.*⁶

1. California Public Utilities Commission, Pub. Advocates Office, [Q3 2025 Electric Rates Report](#) (Nov. 2025) at 5.

2. Ibid, at 4.

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

4. "State Regulators Vote to Keep Utility Profits High, Angering Customers." Los Angeles Times, 18 Dec. 2025, [www.latimes.com/environment/story/2025-12-18/state-regulators-vote-to-keep-utility-profits-high-angering-customers](#)

5. 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.

6. Edison International & Southern California Edison, [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 Orange County Power Authority 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.