



September 16, 2025

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
1021 O Street, Suite 9000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1167 (Berman) - Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The undersigned organizations respectfully request your signature on Assembly Bill ("AB") 1167, the California Ratepayer Protection Act. AB 1167 will protect ratepayers from funding for-profit utilities' political and promotional activities in their gas and electric bills. AB 1167 is commonsense legislation that furthers California's efforts to address energy bill affordability.

Utilities should not be slipping the costs of their advocacy into customer bills, but as previously reported in the *Sacramento Bee*, this is what utilities like SoCalGas have been doing for years.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, PG&E spent millions in customer funds earmarked for wildfire safety on television ads to promote its safety image.<sup>2</sup> AB

<sup>1</sup> Joe Rubin & Ari Plachta, *SoCalGas fought a key California climate solution for years. It cost customers millions*, SACRAMENTO BEE (Aug. 17, 2023),

<https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article277266828.html>.

<sup>2</sup> NBC Bay Area, *PG&E plan to use wildfire funds on ads sparks critics' fire* (June 7, 2024),

<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/pg-e-plan-wildfire-funds-ads-outrage/3559932/>.

1167 will shine a light on utilities' political influence machines and help curb utilities' abuse of millions of dollars of customer money.

AB 1167 establishes a needed structure to ensure utilities keep their political and promotional expenses out of customer bills. It clearly defines the activities utility shareholders must pay for. It then increases transparency so misuse of customer money is much easier to spot. States like Connecticut that have adopted similar transparency provisions are now identifying millions in political influence costs shareholders must pay for.<sup>3</sup> To incentivize compliance, AB 1167 requires the Public Utilities Commission impose penalties when a utility is caught attempting to pass political and promotional costs onto customers.

Following states like New York, Maryland, Colorado, and Maine, AB 1167 also prohibits utilities from charging customers for the costs of their expensive memberships in outside lobbying groups like the American Gas Association and Edison Electric Institute. These provisions of the bill will catch California up with best practices adopted elsewhere.

California residents are already facing an affordability crisis with their utility bills, and they deserve to know their money is going toward the core utility services they receive, not promotional advertising, lobbying, and other activities primarily for shareholder benefit.

For these reasons, we ask you to sign AB 1167. Please feel free to contact Kurt Johnson, Community Energy Resilience Director at The Climate Center ([kurt@theclimatecenter.org](mailto:kurt@theclimatecenter.org)) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kurt Johnson  
The Climate Center

Daniel Barad  
Union of Concerned Scientists

Laura Neish  
350 Bay Area Action

Roger Lin  
Center for Biological Diversity

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<sup>3</sup> Energy & Policy Institute, New Laws Curbing Utility Political Spending Saving Ratepayers Millions of Dollars (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://energyandpolicy.org/new-laws-curbing-utility-political-spending-saving-ratepayers-millions-of-dollars/>. Savings from this provision alone would far exceed implementation costs.

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