

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Feb. 23, 2005

Contact: Barbara George, Women's Energy Matters, 510-915-6215

**Women's Energy Matters Appeals CPUC Decision  
Giving Control of Energy Efficiency to Utilities**

Women's Energy Matters (WEM) chose the occasion of the California Public Utilities Commission's En Banc Hearing on Climate Change February 23 to announce that it will file an "Application for Rehearing" and take the CPUC to Court if necessary, to reverse the Commission's Jan. 27 decision to give control of California's ratepayer-financed energy efficiency system to utilities rather than fund independent, competitive programs that saved more energy per dollar in a recent CPUC experiment.

Barbara George, Executive Director of WEM charged that the decision ignored utility "gaming" of the energy efficiency system such as claiming 600% more energy savings than are actually produced with Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs) installed in businesses. She noted that the utilities may be contributing to emergency energy shortages because of their failure to produce the energy savings that they claim. WEM's statement (attached) concluded, "Putting utilities in charge of energy efficiency is like putting Enron in charge of the grid."

George said, "Scientists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warn that we need to reduce emissions by 60-70% immediately to have any hope of controlling the warming. Energy efficiency and conservation are prime tools for reducing power plant emissions that account for more than a third of global warming gases. The polar bears know rhetoric from reality. We're all on thin ice and there's no time to fool around with phony energy efficiency programs."

Last fall, the CPUC proposed to grant \$2 million for utilities to develop an emissions reporting system with the Climate Change Registry that will enable utilities to claim emissions credits for energy efficiency and demand response programs, although business and residential customers actually pay for a large part of the work. WEM's comment on that ruling noted that the President of the Registry, Diane Wittenberg, was previously a Vice President of Southern California Edison.

See Attachment: WEM Statement - CPUC Climate Change Hearing