ENERGY EFFICIENCY EXAMINATION

SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY PROGRAM YEAR 2017

UTILITY AUDIT, FINANCE AND COMPLIANCE BRANCH
AUGUST 5, 2019

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http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/utilityaudits/

Thanks to:
Angie Williams, Kevin Nakamura, and Jieli Feng

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Executive Summary

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) was established by Constitutional Amendment as the Railroad Commission in 1911. The Legislature passed the Public Utilities Act, expanding the Commission's regulatory authority to include natural gas, electric, telephone, and water companies as well as railroads and marine transportation companies in 1912. One of the Commission's duties is to oversee billions of dollars expended on energy efficiency (EE) programs funded by California ratepayers. These EE programs are predominantly administered by the four major Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) in California. They are Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Edison Company (SCE), San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E), and Southern California Gas Company (SCG).[1] The primary purpose of these EE programs are to develop programs and measures to meet energy savings goals and transform technology markets in California.

The Commission's Utility Audit, Finance, and Compliance Branch (UAFCB) conducted the examinations of the EE programs pursuant to Ordering Paragraph (OP) 17 of Decision (D.) 13-09-023. Additionally, the Commission has statutory authority to inspect and audit the books and records of the IOUs to ensure that ratepayers' money is well spent, specifically, pursuant to Public Utilities Code (PUC) Sections 314.5, 314.6, 581, 582, and 584. UAFCB conducted this examination in accordance with Generally Accepted Governmental Auditing Standards (GAGAS).

The scope of this examination covered the period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017 or PY 2017. The purpose of this examination was to ensure that SDG&E was in compliance with EE program rules and regulations and to determine whether its reported EE expenditures were accurate, allowable and verifiable. For the examination on SDG&E's EE program, expenditures of selected EE programs and subprograms administered and implemented by SDG&E for the period under audit were reviewed. The specific SDG&E EE program and subprogram areas examined are included in the scope section of this report. Based on the examination, the following findings were identified:

- Finding #1: Lack of Compliance with Accrual Policy and Procedures Relating to its EE Program Costs for PY 2017
- Finding #2: Overstatement of the Efficiency Savings and Performance Incentive (ESPI) Award Amount for PY 2017
- Finding #3: Misclassification of EE Program Costs in PY 2017
- Finding #4: Failure to Follow GAAP While Closing its Accounting Records

[1] San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) and Southern California Gas Company (SCG) are affiliated subsidiaries of SEMPRA Energy.

Examination Report

BACKGROUND

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) regulates investor-owned electric and gas utilities in California. Through its regulatory oversight, the Commission is responsible for overseeing the energy efficiency (EE) programs which are principally administered and implemented by the four major Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) in California and funded by California ratepayers. The four major IOUs in California are Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Edison Company (SCE), San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E), and Southern California Gas Company (SCG).[2] The primary purpose of these EE programs are to develop programs and measures to meet energy savings goals and transform technology markets within California using ratepayer funds.

To meet California's aggressive electricity and natural gas energy efficiency goals, the Commission authorized billions to the EE programs, which are funded by electric and gas rates included in ratepayer bills.[3] The IOUs have greatly increased its costs and budgets through rate increases for administering and implementing these EE programs over time. Prior to 2016, the Commission authorized the IOUs budgets for the EE programs based on a three-year program cycle. In Rulemaking (R.) 13-11-005, the Commission contemplated moving away from authorizing the EE budgets on a triennial basis and towards authorizing the EE budgets on an annual "rolling" portfolio basis. As a result, the IOUs PY 2016 EE portfolio budget was the first year to utilize the new "rolling" portfolio process. Consistent with an annual EE program portfolio, the Commission provided ongoing funding for EE programs from 2015 onward. As such, the Commission extended the existing EE program through 2015, and authorized the IOUs to use the 2015 annual spending levels until the earlier of 2025 or when the Commission issues a superseding decision on funding level.[4]

These EE programs span a variety of sectors encompassing residential homes and commercial buildings, large and small appliances, lighting and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), industrial manufacturers, and agriculture. Within those sectors, the EE program utilizes a variety of tools to meet energy savings goals, such as financial incentives and rebates, research and development for EE technologies, financing mechanisms, codes and standards development, education and public outreach, marketing and others. The Commission also adopted the Efficiency Savings Performance Incentive (ESPI) mechanism with the intent "to motivate the utilities to prioritize EE goals, while protecting ratepayers through necessary cost containment mechanisms." [5] In D.13-09-023, Ordering Paragraphs (OP) 15 and 16, the Commission authorized an incentive award to be paid to the IOUs as a management fee equal to 12% of authorized Codes and Standards (C&S) program expenditures and

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[2] San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) and Southern California Gas Company (SCG) are affiliated subsidiaries of SEMPRA Energy.

[3] Public Utilities Code (PUC) Section 381 established a Public Goods Charge (PGC) that consumers pay on electricity consumption for cost-effective energy efficiency, renewable technologies, and public interest research. PUC Section 900 established a natural gas surcharge to fund cost-effective energy efficiency and other public purpose programs.

[4] D.14-10-046, OP 21

[5] D.13-09-023, page 2

3% of authorized non-resource (NR) program expenditures, respectively. Furthermore, in OP 17 of D.13-09-023, it directed the Commission's Utility Audit, Finance, and Compliance Branch (UAFCB) to verify the C&S and NR program expenditures for the purposes of awarding these management fees.

In conducting the annual EE program examinations pursuant to D.13-09-023, OP 17, the UAFCB's primary objective is to ensure that the IOUs are in compliance with EE program rules and regulations and to determine whether the EE expenditures claimed by the IOUs were for allowable purposes and supported by appropriate documentation, such as invoices, contracts and relevant records, and were recorded and reported appropriately for the period under examination.

Specifically, UAFCB's objectives for the examination on SDG&E's EE program are to determine whether:

1. SDG&E's costs recorded and reported for the period January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017 or program year (PY) 2017 were relevant to the EE program and subprograms, supported by appropriate documentation, and in compliance with: (a) Commission's guidelines, including, but not limited to D.13-09-023, D.12-11-015, D.14-10-046, D.15-10-028, the rulings in R.01-08-028, Energy Division's memo dated October 22, 2009, and any relevant subsequent amendments; and (b) SDG&E's established internal policies and procedures.

2. Program design, structures, processes, implementation, cost and controls of SDG&E's EE programs were in compliance with: (a) Commission's guidelines, including, but not limited to D.13-09-023, D.12-11-015, D.14-10-046, D.15-10-028, the rulings in R.01-08-028, Energy Division's memo dated October 22, 2009, and any relevant subsequent amendments; and (b) SDG&E's established internal policies and procedures.

For PY 2017 EE funding levels, SDG&E filed Advice Letter (AL) 2951-E/2512-G on September 1, 2016 pursuant to Commission directives in D.14-10-046 and D.15-10-028. On June 7, 2017, the Commission's Energy Division (ED) approved SDG&E's Supplemental AL 2951-E-A/2512-G-A which, among other things, authorized SDG&E a total EE portfolio budget of $116.4 million, including $4.7 million for the Evaluation, Measurement and Verification (EM&V) budget, in ratepayer funds to administer and implement the EE programs for PY 2017.

SCOPE

UAFCB developed the scope of its examination based on consultation with the Commission's ED, UAFCB's prior experience in examining SDG&E's EE program, and Commission directives. The scope of this examination on PY 2017 is limited to the expenditures and activities of the following EE program and subprogram areas:

1. Overall EE Program Cost Reconciliation
2. Codes and Standards (C&S) Program and Subprograms
3. Non-Resource (NR) Program and Subprograms
4. Local Government Partnership (LGP) Program and Subprograms
5. Third Party (TP) Program and Subprograms

In addition to examining the expenditures of the above selected EE programs and subprograms, we also reviewed the monthly, quarterly claims, and annual EE reports submitted by SDG&E and uploaded on the Commission's California Energy Efficiency Statistics (EEStats)[6] and California Energy Data and Reporting System (CEDARS)[7] websites. A follow-up review was also performed on its prior recommendations in its PY 2016 EE audit [8] to determine whether SDG&E has implemented the appropriate corrective actions.

For this EE examination on PY 2017, UAFCB has divided the examination into two separate reports. The second examination report covering SDG&E's Local Government Partnership (LGP) and Third Party (TP) programs will be issued as a supplemental to this report.

METHODOLOGY

To address the examination objectives and assist the Commission in its oversight over the EE programs, the procedures performed include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Obtained an understanding of the EE program by reviewing relevant laws, rules, regulations, PUC codes, decisions, resolutions and advice letters.
- Obtained and reviewed SDG&E's accounting system, accounting policies, processes and procedures for recording, tracking, and monitoring EE program costs.
- Assessed whether the SDG&E's policies, procedures, and practices comply with the EE program requirements.
- Evaluated the design, structure and purpose of each EE program and subprogram area included in the scope of this examination to ensure compliance with Commission directives.
- Performed analysis of expenditure data to identify any anomalies or significant variances.
- Reviewed relevant reports filed with the Commission to determine accuracy of reported EE program data and information and ensure compliance with applicable rules and program requirements.
- From SDG&E's accounting data, judgmentally selected expenditure transactions for review and testing.
- Requested and reviewed supporting documentation such as purchase orders, detailed invoices, contracts, receiving reports, timesheets and additional documentation as needed for the expenditure transactions selected for testing.
- Reviewed relevant contracts to determine if contract terms and provisions adequately supported the objective and purpose of the EE program.
- Reviewed SDG&E's accrual entries and verified the cutoff of expenditure transactions to determine if proper expenditure amounts were recorded and reported in the proper accounting period.

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[6] The California Energy Efficiency Statistics (EEStats) website is a repository of utility-submitted reports to the Commission.

[7] The California Energy Data and Reporting System (CEDARS) website securely manages data associated with demand-side management (DSM) programs, ensuring quality and improving communication between DSM Program Administrators (PAs), the Commission, and the Public.

[8] UAFCB report entitled *"Energy Efficiency Audit, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Program Year 2016,"* issued on August 3, 2018.

- Traced expenditures recorded in SDG&E's accounting records to supporting documentation and determined whether costs were reasonable, allowable, verifiable, and relevant to the EE program.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1: Lack of Compliance with Accrual Policy and Procedures Relating to its EE Program Costs for PY 2017

Condition:

1. SDG&E incorrectly recorded $14,528 in PY 2017 expenditures belonging to PY 2016, resulting in an overstatement of Codes and Standards (C&S) program expenditures reported to the Commission in PY 2017. A detailed description for this exception amount is included in **Appendix B**.

2. SDG&E incorrectly recorded $97,758 in PY 2017 expenditures belonging to PY 2018, resulting in an overstatement of Non-Resource (NR) program expenditures reported to the Commission in PY 2017. A detailed description for this exception amount is included in **Appendix B**.

An overstatement of EE program expenditures has been a repeated finding in prior Commission examinations including, but not limited to, PY's 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Criteria:
PUC Sections 581, 582, and 584 require that the utility provide timely, complete and accurate data to the Commission. PUC Section 793 requires that accounts, records, and memoranda prescribed by the Commission for a corporation subject to the regulatory authority shall not be inconsistent with the systems and forms established for corporations by or under the United States. The EE Policy Manual (R.09-11-014), Version 5, dated July 2013, provides policy rules for the administration, oversight, and evaluation of the EE program.

SDG&E's Customer Program – Program Advisor Handbook (Handbook) 2016, Version 6.2, dated December 2016, provides, among other things, accounting policies and procedures for the administration and implementation of its EE program. Specifically, in Section 8.4, its states that "In accordance with GAAP, an accrual is to ensure that all valid significant and larger incurred expenditures/credits are accurate and that all liabilities are recorded in the company's financial statements. Expenses incurred and not yet invoiced prior to the end of each month should be accrued."

Cause:
SDG&E improperly recorded and accrued expenses to PY 2017 due to the inconsistent application of its own internal accrual policy and procedures.

Effect:
Failure to record expenditures in the proper period and program year resulted in an overstatement of EE program costs reported to the Commission by a total of $112,286 for PY 2017. It is critical to

ensure that EE program costs are accurately recorded and reported since these programs are funded by ratepayers. An overstatement of expenditures can lead to an overpayment in incentive awards to SDG&E. Furthermore, an overstatement in expenditures may lead to higher than anticipated authorized budget amounts in future years since SDG&E develops its future year EE budgets on prior year costs. This practice can result in over-collections in ratepayer funds that support the EE program.

Recommendations:
SDG&E should ensure compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and its own internal accrual policy and procedures for the proper recording and reporting of EE expenditures funded by ratepayers. SDG&E should reduce its C&S and NR program costs by a total amount of $14,528 and $97,758, respectively, for PY 2017.

Finding 2: Overstatement of the Efficiency Savings and Performance Incentive (ESPI) Award Amount for PY 2017

Condition:
In D.13-09-023, the Commission authorized the IOUs a new Efficiency Savings and Performance Incentive (ESPI) awards mechanism to promote achievement of EE goals. The ESPI mechanism offers each IOU incentive awards in four performance categories – Energy Efficiency Resource Savings, Ex-Ante Review (EAR) Process Performance, Codes and Standards (C&S), and Non-Resource (NR) programs.

In D.13-09-023, Ordering Paragraph (OP) 15 and 16, the Commission authorized an incentive award to be paid to the IOUs as a management fee equal to 12% of authorized C&S program expenditures and 3% of authorized NR program expenditures, not to exceed authorized expenditures and exclusive of administrative costs.[9] The decision also ordered verification of the C&S and NR program expenditures for the purposes of awarding the management fees.[10]

Based on our sample selected for testing of the C&S and NR program expenditures, SDG&E overstated its ESPI award for PY 2017. Based upon its recalculation, UAFCB has determined that the revised ESPI base amount for calculating the NR program management fee incentive award amount should be adjusted to $6,464,982 for PY 2017. For the C&S program, the revised ESPI base amount should be adjusted to $1,086,546 but no reduction to the ESPI award amount is required since SDG&E's base amount is capped at $1,035,710 for PY 2017 pursuant to Ordering Paragraph (OP) 3 of D.13-09-23[11]. A detailed recalculation of SDG&E's revised ESPI award amounts for the C&S and NR programs in PY 2017 are provided in the tables below.

[9] The C&S and Non-Resource programs support energy savings but do not provide direct energy savings.
[10] D.13-09-023, OP 17
[11] D.13-09-023, OP 3.C limits the C&S Program Management Fee to 12% of approved C&S program expenditures, not to exceed authorized expenditures, and excluding administrative costs.

Table 1

C&S ESPI Recalculation	
Reported C&S ESPI Base	$1,101,074
UAFCB's Audit Exception	(14,528)
Revised C&S ESPI Base	1,086,546
C&S Earnings Rate	12%
Revised ESPI Award[12]	**$ 130,386**

Table 2

NR ESPI Recalculation	
Reported NR ESPI Base	$6,562,740
UAFCB's Audit Exception	(97,758)
Revised NR ESPI Base	6,464,982
NR Earnings Rate	3%
Revised ESPI Award	**$ 193,949**

Criteria:
Commission D.13-09-023 authorizes an incentive to be paid to each IOU as a management fee equal to 12% of authorized C&S program expenditures and 3% of authorized NR program expenditures, not to exceed authorized expenditures in each program year, and excluding administrative expenditures.

Cause:
When SDG&E overstated its EE program costs as stated in Finding #1, it also overstated its incentive award amounts for PY 2017.

Effect:
SDG&E overstated their NR incentive award amounts filed in AL 3307-E/2722-G. The proper incentive award amounts should be $193,949 for the NR programs in PY 2017.

Furthermore, it is critical to ensure that the savings claimed are accurate. The overstatement of incentive award claims by the IOUs may lead to higher than anticipated authorized budgets in future years that are funded by ratepayers since SDG&E develops its future year EE budgets on prior year costs.

Recommendation:
Since SDG&E has filed AL 3307-E/2722-G to claim its NR program incentive awards for PY 2017, the Commission's Energy Division (ED) should adjust SDG&E's management fee incentive awards to $193,949 for the NR program when SDG&E's 2017 ex-post ESPI true-up AL is processed.

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[12] SDG&E identified a maximum cap of $109,303 for its PY 2017 C&S management fee component in AL 3307-E/2722-G, Attachment A.

Finding 3: Misclassification of EE Program Costs in PY 2017

Condition:
SDG&E incorrectly charged a total of $156,437 to the Direct Implementation (DI) cost category that should have be recorded to the Marketing cost category for the Local-IDSM-ME&O-Local Marketing (EE) program (Program ID #3260) in PY 2017.

Criteria:
PUC Sections 581, 582, and 584 require that the utility provide timely, complete and accurate data to the Commission. PUC Section 793 requires that accounts, records, and memoranda prescribed by the Commission for a corporation subject to the regulatory authority shall not be inconsistent with the systems and forms established for corporations by or under the United States. The EE Policy Manual (R.09-11-014), Version 5, dated July 2013, provides policy rules for the administration, oversight, and evaluation of the EE program.

Cause:
SDG&E improperly recorded $156,437 to the DI cost category that belongs to the Marketing cost category due to the misinterpretation of charges contained in several invoices.

Effect:
When SDG&E misclassified costs to the incorrect cost category, it caused the DI cost category in the Local-IDSM-ME&O-Local Marketing (EE) program (Program ID #3260) to be overstated and Marketing cost category to be understated by a total of $156,437 in PY 2017.

Recommendation:
SDG&E should adhere to its own accounting policies and procedures in recording EE program expenditures to ensure costs are charged to the correct cost category and accurately reported to the Commission.

Finding 4: Failure to Follow GAAP While Closing its Accounting Records

Condition:
As in its prior recommendation for PY 2016[13], SDG&E elected to extend its accounting cut-off period through February 2018. According to SDG&E, it has adjusted its practice of recording costs and adjustments through February of the following year based on UAFCB's prior recommendation in its audit on PY 2016. However, SDG&E was unable to make appropriate adjustments for PY 2017 due to the timing of UAFCB's previous recommendation.

Criteria:
Sections 581, 582, and 584 require that the utility provide timely, complete and accurate data to the Commission. Section 793 requires that accounts, records, and memoranda prescribed by the Commission for a corporation subject to the regulatory authority shall not be inconsistent with the systems and forms established for corporations by or under the United States. The EE Policy Manual

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[13] Refer to UAFCB report entitled "Energy Efficiency Audit, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Program Year 2016," Finding 3, pages 9 and 10.

(R.09-11-014), Version 5, dated July 2013, provides policy rules for the administration, oversight, and evaluation of the EE program.

Cause:
According to SDG&E, "Maintaining the open year for 2017 program costs through February 2018 allowed for a program cycle cut-off which reduced the need for carry-over funds to the 2018 program cycle. This also allowed for actual invoices to be processed against estimated accruals, for more accurate, post inspection, programs costs and reporting."

Effect:
When SDG&E elected to extend the cut-off period through February 2018, the practice is a departure from GAAP. Specifically, this accounting practice allowed SDG&E to overstate its PY 2017 expenditures by including year-end activities incurred in January and February 2018 to PY 2017.

Recommendation:
Although SDG&E adjusted its practice of recording costs and adjustments through February of the following year based on UAFCB's recommendation in its audit on PY 2016, SDG&E should ensure that its accounting practice for the EE program is in accordance with GAAP for the proper recording and reporting of EE expenditures funded by ratepayers.

CONCLUSION

In conducting our examination, UAFCB obtained a reasonable understanding of SDG&E's internal controls, which were considered relevant and significant within the context of our examination objectives. UAFCB does not provide any assurance on SDG&E's internal control. Any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls that were identified during the examination were communicated to SDG&E's management and identified in this report.

SDG&E's management is responsible for the development of its policies and procedures to ensure that its EE program is administered and implemented in accordance with Commission directives. The Commission is responsible to ensure the ratepayers' monies funding SDG&E's EE program explicitly support the EE goals and strategies and protect ratepayers' funds against improprieties and abuse.

UAFCB conducted this examination in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). Those standards require that we plan and perform the examination to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence on the subject matter against criteria in order to draw a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our examination objectives. UAFCB believes that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our limited examination objectives.

Based on our sample tested, UAFCB determined that, except for the items noted in the Findings and Recommendations section, SDG&E has complied, in all material respects, with the recording and reporting requirements of the EE costs for the audit period of January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017.

The report is intended solely for the information and use of the Commission and SDG&E and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Angie Williams, Director
Utility Audit, Finance, and Compliance Branch and
Enterprise Risk and Compliance Office

Cc: Ed Randolph, Director, Energy Division
Simon Baker, Deputy Director, Energy Division
Manisha Lakhanpal, Supervisor, Energy Division
Kevin Nakamura, Supervisor, UAFCB
Jieli Feng, Auditor, UAFCB

Appendices

APPENDIX A
Applicable Rules and Regulations

Rule/Regulation Types	Reference	Description
Public Utility Code	Section 314	Guidance providing the Commission the authority to conduct audits consistent with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), and to follow-up on findings and recommendations.
	Section 381	Guidance mandating the Commission to allocate funds spent on EE programs that enhance system reliability and provide in-state benefits including cost-effective EE and conservation activities.
	Section 581	Guidance providing the Commission the authority to require a utility to file complete and correct reports in prescribed form and detail.
	Section 582	Guidance providing the Commission the authority to require a utility to timely provide applicable records.
	Section 584	Guidance providing the Commission the authority to require a utility to furnish reports to the Commission.
Decisions & Rulemaking	D.09-09-047	Adopting Efficiency Savings and Performance Incentive Mechanism
	D.12-11-015	Approving 2013-2014 EE Programs and Budgets
	D.15-10-028	Establishing a "Rolling Portfolio" process for regularly reviewing and revising EE goals for 2016 and beyond.
	D.14-10-046	Establishing EE Savings Goals and Approving 2015 EE Programs and Budgets (Concludes Phase I of R.13-11-005).
	R. 13-11-005	Establishing a proceeding in which to fund the current energy efficiency portfolios through 2015, implement energy efficiency "rolling portfolios", and address various related policy.
Advice Letters	AL No. 2951-E-A/2512-G-A and 3307-E/2772-G	2017 Authorized Budget Filing and Request of SDG&E for its 2016 and 2017 EE Saving Incentive

APPENDIX B
Summary – PY 2017 Exam Adjustments

PrgID	Program Name	ESPI Category	Cost Category			Total
			Admin.	Mktg.	Direct Imp.	
3250	SW C&S – Appliance Standards Advocacy	C&S	$0	$0	$14,528	$14,528
	Total C&S Program		**$0**	**$0**	**$14,528**	**$14,528**
3247	SW-ET-Technology Assessment Support	NR	$0	$0	$78,871	$78,871
3254	SW-WE&T-Centergies	NR	0	0	18,887	18,887
	Total NR Program		**$0**	**$0**	**$97,758**	**$97,758**

APPENDIX C
SDG&E Responses

In an email addressed to UAFCB staff dated July 1, 2019, SDG&E stated that "SDG&E has reviewed the draft report and will not be submitting any comments to the report."

APPENDIX D
Evaluation of Responses

UAFCB did not have any responses to evaluate since SDG&E did not have any comments to UAFCB's draft report dated June 17, 2019.