

Utility Tax Action Toolkit

Some Background:

Last year, the Legislature passed a new law (AB 205) which includes a provision that requires PG&E, SCE, SDG&E, and CCAs to charge all ratepayers a new Utility Tax. This Utility Tax is completely uncapped, with unlimited potential to grow. AB 205 was passed without any public hearings or discussion.

Now, the utilities and some other organizations are proposing to charge all ratepayers not on the CARE or FERA program the highest Utility Tax in the country: between \$30 and \$70 per month.

These proposals will INCREASE utility bills on millions of working and middle class people who live in apartments and smaller homes that use lower than average electricity. The Utility Tax will also remove the incentive for people to reduce their energy bill through conservation efforts, energy efficiency, or solar panels.

The Legislature created this mess, and now they need to fix it by repealing the Utility Tax provision in AB 205: Public Utilities Code Section 739.9.

Here's what you can do to help:

1) Call your state Assemblymember and Senator and tell them to repeal the Utility Tax.

It is possible your lawmakers voted for AB 205 without understanding the consequences. Educate them about what is being proposed and how it would harm millions of people. You can [look up their phone number here](#).

Here's a suggested message. Feel free to modify it:

Hello, my name is _____. I live in _____. I am asking you to repeal the Utility Tax provision in AB 205. The Utility Tax will increase electricity bills on millions of working and middle class households. The Utility Tax will also discourage all forms of energy conservation. Since the Legislature voted for the Utility Tax, the Legislature needs to fix this mess. Will you support a repeal of the Utility Tax? Thank you.

2) Spread the word

Here's a suggested social media post to Nextdoor, Facebook, or your preferred social media platform. Feel free to modify it:

*I just learned that the state Legislature passed a new Utility Tax that could be between \$30 and \$70 per month on all ratepayers not on the CARE or FERA program. Everyone would have to pay this no matter how much electricity you use. Analysts say this will increase utility bills on people who live in apartments, condos, and smaller homes that don't use a lot of energy, and also discourage energy conservation, efficiency, and solar panels. Seems like a big giveaway to the utilities! I suggest people call their state assemblymember and senator to repeal the Utility Tax. Look up your Legislators' phone numbers here:
<https://secure.everyaction.com/p/pZuWrrAYOE2Kz-cprcREgQ2>*

Here's some tips for writing Letters to the Editor:

- Your letter should be 150 words.
- Reference the Utility Tax proposals that will increase electricity bills for millions of working people, discourage conservation, and undermine rooftop solar.
- Then write, in your own words, why you think the Utility Tax should be stopped.
- Statistics are good, not required, and use only one. Here's a [fact sheet with info](#).
- Make it personal. Use plain language, from the heart.
- Here are [directions for submitting letters](#) to most of the state's major newspapers.

3) Meet with your state legislators

Your lawmakers need to hear from you to learn about how a high Utility Tax would harm millions of people. Many legislators have local open houses or town hall events where you can speak with them directly about issues like this. You can [look up their contact information here](#), and get on their mailing list to get a heads up about local events they'll be attending. Here is a [list](#) of upcoming town hall meetings we know of.

Here are tips for what to say to your legislators if you do meet with them:

- **Assume good intentions.** Because of the sneaky way the Utility Tax was rammed through, many legislators were unaware of what they voted on. This is a chance for you to educate them about the negative impacts of the Utility Tax and ask them to repeal it.
- **The most important point to make:** Even a \$30/month Utility Tax will increase bills on millions of people who do not use a lot of energy. The vast majority would be people who live in apartments, condos, and small homes (who do not have solar). In addition, it will penalize people who have installed solar panels or practice energy conservation.
- **This [information sheet](#) can help you make an "elevator pitch".** You can also [print and give them this handout](#). Below is some background as well.
- **Pose a question:** "Will you support a bill to repeal the Utility Tax?"
- **Don't monopolize their time.** Other constituents will want to speak too. Be brief. Consider practicing what you will say beforehand.
- **If you attend, let us know how it went.**

If you have questions before you attend:

- Give us a holler by emailing info@SolarRights.org. We're happy to help you!
- We are also holding a training on how to talk to your legislators every Thursday at 2:30pm. [Register here](#).

4) Ask organizations you know to join the opposition letter

Consider contacting local organizations in your community that might be affected and asking them to join this [open letter](#) to state legislators calling on them to repeal the Utility Tax. We can arrange for an expert to make a presentation to local clubs and committees, and we can also help you do the same. Contact info@solarrights if you want more help and guidance.

Got other ideas or need some more guidance? We'd love to help! Email info@solarrights.org

More Information and Resources:

- [Text of AB 205](#) and [who voted for it](#)
- [How AB 205 passed without any public discussion](#)
- [Fact Sheet](#) and [Clean Coalition Filing](#)
- [Letter](#) from 22 Assemblymembers to CPUC opposing high fixed charges
- [Oped](#) from Sen Josh Becker and Asm Marc Berman
- [Analysis of prominent energy economists](#)
- [Analysis from Environment California](#)
- [Utility Tax Coalition Letter](#) and [form to sign on](#)
- [Utility Tax in the News](#)
- [Clean Coalition webinar](#)
- [Environmental justice webinar](#)