

Riverside Public Utilities State Legislative Platform

Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) is a municipally owned public utility and a member of the California Municipal Utilities Association. As stewards of a publicly-owned utility, the Mayor, City Council and Board of Public Utilities work to protect and enhance the value of the utility for Riverside residents. In this spirit, RPU has been committed to planning for and implementing Utility 2.0, a strategic plan to advance the utility's infrastructure and technology. Every RPU customer is a utility owner, with a direct stake in policies that affect rates and services, unlike the customers of investor-owned, State-regulated utilities.

FOCUS AREA #1: Promote and support local control by allowing municipalities flexibility to proactively implement programs and policies

Local control is central to the operation and success of a publically owned utility and allows for lower rates, community involvement, public accountability, local decision making and full attention to customer service. As a locally owned municipality, RPU is not under the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) like investor owned utilities. Attempts by the State agencies to exercise jurisdiction over and regulate municipally-owned utilities would have a significant (detrimental?) impact on the rate-setting authority of the City Council and the Utility Board's support of local programs and services, and the approval of utility sites and facilities.

As conservation and efficiency measures continue to play a significant role in creating a sustainable community, the utility must have control of implementation of these measures to allow for RPU's continued success.

Related State Action Items:

- Promote and protect the ability of publicly owned utilities to set their own rates.
- Protect against any State mandated feed-in-tariff that gives the State authority over Power Purchase Agreements or that seek to establish a rate and rate-making method that would result in a solar subsidy for non-participating customers.
- Support a thoughtful approach to encouraging distributed energy resources (DER) in which the security of the utility is never compromised, local control is fully maintained and the rates of the local customers are not higher as a result of DER (?) in a service territory, or that the public's interest is outweighed by (... in the interest of...) a generation owner.
- Defend the utility against any efforts allowing state agencies such as the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the California Energy Commission (CEC) and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to assert jurisdiction over Publicly Owned Utilities.
- Ensure that RPU has the ability to build a portfolio of renewable resources that is tailored to the unique needs of the Utility.

FOCUS AREA #2: Support green energy initiatives and drought resiliency measures while ensuring implementation of those measures will not cause undue burden on the ratepayer or resources.

California continues to have a growing demand for water and power. As a state we work to meet this demand while simultaneously working to promote and implement environmentally friendly policies and regulations. Riverside supports green efforts and works to ensure the Utility is in step with California's changing policies. In this spirit, it is of utmost importance that RPU be allowed to implement best practices for the Utility and our customers. One size fits all legislation and regulations are problematic and can result in disadvantages for our customers.

State Action Items:

- Ensure individual utilities can implement green programs and regulations with the utmost flexibility. This will protect the utility and rate payers against undue harm.
- Support reasonable water use efficiency measures with greater incentives for local recycled water projects.
- Support implementation of a renewable energy portfolio standard that does not compromise reliability, does not jeopardize existing or future out-of-state contracts for renewable energy, recognizes the need for greater access to transmission, and provides cost containment mechanisms.
- Advocate for the California Cap and Trade Program revenue to be allocated back to customer-owned utilities to be used for renewable energy projects, research and development, energy efficiency measures, and other utility-specific projects which lead to either the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions or encourage renewable energy.
- Defend against efforts that specifically target utilities based on their size and would cause those utility customers to bear a disproportionate amount of the regulatory and cost burden.

FOCUS AREA #3: Maintain and protect reliable, affordable energy and water delivery to the City

Regulatory and geographic hurdles continue to strain the State's grid as it struggles to meet the growing demand for water and power. Despite these challenges, Riverside embraces its obligation to provide reliable energy and water delivery to its customers by proactively maintaining the local distribution system, protecting valuable infrastructure, supporting the enhancement of the statewide electric and water conveyance system and securing new reliable sources of water and energy.

Additionally, the State is currently experiencing the worst drought in 500 years. RPU encourages the efficient use of water and works to educate rate payers about best water practices.

State Action Items:

- Encourage greater incentives for local water use efficiency programs that include alternatives to (?) achieving the end goal of sustainable resource use.
- Support interagency collaboration to support reliability on a regional level.
- Support legislation which develops and communicates the appropriate risk assessments and standards for all drinking water contaminants and ensures that through the regulatory process, a protective public health standard other drinking water be established using the best available scientific and technological data.
- Support legislation that encourages a streamlined approach to water reuse regulations and funding. Legislation should recognize each community and their diverse approach to water reuse as a critical component to their ongoing efforts to provide reliable, sustainable water supplies and conservation of drinking water.