



JIM DESMOND

**SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

February 23, 2022

Dear Governor Newsom,

As Supervisor of the Fifth District representing North San Diego County, I am writing to request that the State of California immediately implement measures to alleviate rising energy costs, providing relief to the ratepayers of San Diego.

My office has been contacted by residents concerned with the sudden rise in energy costs and increases in utility rates. My constituents are concerned with their ability to pay for recent increased energy bills, especially seniors who are on fixed incomes. With already out of control housing costs, gasoline prices, and the cost of goods due to inflation, many San Diegans struggle now more than ever to survive under the weight of these rising costs.

Considering the recent rise in rates, the State of California should review costly energy regulations under the State's control and provide temporary relief to ratepayers. Drivers of the recent rate increases include the exorbitant cost of natural gas, renewable energy infrastructure to meet State mandated targets, the growth of public benefit programs which are offset by other rate payers, and the cost of wildfire mitigation measures. California is expected to have a \$45.7 billion budget surplus in 2022. Part of that surplus should be used for wildfire mitigation measures and renewable infrastructure to meet state goals, relieving ratepayers from the cost burden, and lowering energy bills.

With wildfires now a year-round threat in California, it is imperative that the region continue to invest in infrastructure that reduces the risk of wildfires. On the backs of local ratepayers, SDG&E has spent \$3 billion in the last 10 years to strengthen community resiliency, harden electric grids, and underground powerlines. Investment in infrastructure to reduce the risk of wildfires are ongoing. However, these costs are funded by local ratepayers, included in monthly energy bills. The State of California should relieve ratepayers by offsetting these projects with state budget-surplus dollars. The State should also look to offset costs of utility-constructed clean power projects. Again, these also fall on the backs of San Diegans in every SDGE bill.

With more people working from home and increased adoption of personal electric vehicles, reliance on energy will grow. To many working San Diegans, and those such as seniors on fixed incomes, the recent 24.6% jump in gas rates and 7.8% increase in electricity rates are more than they can afford...in an already expensive California. The State's budget surplus comes from

taxpayers, many of whom have suffered mightily from a pandemic, losing their job and seeing gas prices rise dramatically. Let's give it back to the taxpayers by lowering their energy bills.

I urge you to act now to lower energy bills for San Diegans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Desmond". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Desmond" clearly distinguishable.

JIM DESMOND
Supervisor, 5th District
County of San Diego