



December 13, 2017

Citizens Committee for the Selection of the Executive Director of the Office of Public Accountability
Blanca de la Cruz, Jack Humphreville, Mac Shorty, Tony Wilkinson, and Elva Yanez
Los Angeles City Hall, Room 1060
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Ratepayer Advocate Search

Dear Members of the Citizens Committee:

RePower LA is a broad-based coalition consisting of community organizations, environmentalists, labor, and small businesses that support a more sustainable, equitable, and modernized Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). The coalition seeks investments in clean energy and energy efficiency programs at DWP, incentives that are equitably accessible to all of its ratepayers, and in quality jobs that will help LADWP continue to flourish as a reliable public utility.

We are writing to encourage your committee to select and appoint a Ratepayer Advocate (RPA) that will expand the vision of the Office of Public Accountability (OPA). While the Ratepayer Advocate has done a great job improving transparency and accountability of ratepayer spending at DWP, the office has taken a narrower, more reactive approach, with analysis primarily focused on fiscal performance. Yet a more holistic analysis is needed.

The search for a new Ratepayer Advocate is the perfect opportunity for your committee to expand their role to include studying how programs and plans will serve all ratepayers and help meet sustainability mandates, in addition to the current focus on fiscal matters and risk management. There should be an additional layer of analysis, that is informed by the Equity Metrics Data Initiative (EMDI). For example, this can include considering the additional benefits of future proposed sustainability programs that may cost more upfront financially, but could service a wider swath of previously underserved ratepayers, provide good jobs, or help to advance the Department towards a more financially or ecologically sustainable business model. This would also facilitate innovation in helping DWP meet its various environmental and equity oriented goals, such as transitioning to 100% renewable energy.

Ratepayer Advocate offices elsewhere have incorporated equity into their best practices. Under the Public Utilities Commission section of the San Francisco Charter (Art. VIII B, Sec. 8B.125), for instance, San Francisco's Office of the Ratepayer Advocate is tasked with taking into account efficiency and equity along with fiscal feasibility when she or he sets rates or makes other changes to utility services.

By redefining the Ratepayer Advocate position to include also undertaking a nuanced and comprehensive analysis that includes fiscal responsibility, equity of programming within underserved communities, and environmental sustainability, your committee will ensure a visionary RPA that will help usher in a new progressive and thoughtful era of LADWP planning and programming.

Sincerely,

The RePower LA Coalition