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AB-1173 Public Utilities Commission: organization. (2025-2026)

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AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 05, 2025

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 25, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 1173

Introduced by Assembly Member Patterson

February 21, 2025

An act to amend Section 307.2 of, and to add Section 307.3 to, the Public Utilities Code, relating to public utilities.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1173, as amended, Patterson. Public Utilities Commission: organization.

Existing law vests the Public Utilities Commission with regulatory authority over public utilities, as defined. Existing law establishes within the commission ~~the independent Public Advocate's Office of the Public Utilities Commission to represent and advocate on behalf of the interests of public utility customers and subscribers within the commission's jurisdiction.~~ *an ethics officer within the legal division of the commission who is designated by the general counsel of the commission. Existing law requires the ethics officer to institute a program of enhanced ethics training for all commissioners and employees of the commission and to provide confidential advice to commissioners and employees of the commission relative to the commission's Conflict of Interest Code, Statement of Incompatible Activities, and limitations on ex parte communications.*

This bill would require the commission, on or before July 1, 2026, to establish an online portal or email address to report ethics concerns to the commission.

This bill would prohibit a staff member who ~~moves from the Public Advocate's Office of the Public Utilities Commission to~~ *is employed by* the commission from working on ~~any matter that the staff member participated in while employed at the office. a proceeding at the commission for which the staff member, before their employment by the commission, was listed on a formal filing for the proceeding or sponsored testimony within the proceeding.~~

~~Existing law establishes an ethics officer within the legal division of the commission designated by the general counsel of the commission.~~

~~This bill would require the commission, on or before July 1, 2026, to establish an online portal or email address to report ethics concerns to the commission.~~

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 307.2 of the Public Utilities Code is amended to read:

307.2. (a) There is within the legal division of the commission an ethics officer who shall be designated by the general counsel. The ethics officer shall be responsible for both of the following:

(1) Instituting a program of enhanced ethics training for all commissioners and employees of the commission, including training concerning the commission's Conflict of Interest Code, Statement of Incompatible Activities, and limitations on ex parte communications.

(2) Providing confidential advice to commissioners and employees of the commission on compliance with the commission's Conflict of Interest Code, Statement of Incompatible Activities, and limitations on ex parte communications. The ethics officer shall maintain the confidentiality of the commissioner's or employee's identity unless the commissioner or employee expressly indicates a desire to communicate their identity to the commission.

(b) On or before July 1, 2026, the commission shall establish an online portal or email address to report ethics concerns to the commission.

SEC. 2. Section 307.3 is added to the Public Utilities Code, to read:

307.3. A staff member who ~~moves from the Public Advocate's Office of the Public Utilities Commission to~~ *is employed by* the commission shall not work on ~~any matter that the staff member participated in while employed at the Public Advocate's Office of the Public Utilities Commission.~~ *a proceeding at the commission for which the staff member, before their employment by the commission, was listed on a formal filing for the proceeding or sponsored testimony within the proceeding.*