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PG&E's new rates, round two.

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Last week, several sharp-eyed readers of the Chronicle and SFGate noticed a key piece of information missing from a story I wrote about PG&E's new electricity rates.

The story, which you can read [here](#), focused on some of the broader issues raised by the new rate structure, approved by the California Public Utilities Commission on May 26. The biggest of those issues: raising bills for people who use relatively little power while cutting bills for those who use the most.

I attached to the bottom of the story a chart showing what the new rates will be for customers in each tier of usage. PG&E bases its rates on the amount of electricity each customer uses, with usage ranked in four tiers.

I mentioned in the story that as a result of the CPUC vote, the boundaries between the tiers will shift. Many people who now qualify as tier-one customers will end up in tier two, and many now in tier two will move up to tier three.

But as some of you noted, I didn't say what the new boundaries will be. And if you want to get a sense of what's going to happen to your monthly PG&E bill, that's something you need to know.

So here's the skinny:

Starting on June 20, PG&E will change the usage baselines in all the climate zones across its vast territory, covering northern and central California. The baseline is the minimum amount of kilowatt hours of electricity needed to satisfy most of the monthly energy needs of a typical PG&E customer, and it's different for customers in different geographic regions. It also changes between winter and summer. Finally, there are different baselines for customers whose homes only use electricity, versus those that use both electricity and natural gas.

If the number of kilowatt hours you use in a month is equal to or less than the baseline, you're in tier one. If your monthly usage is 130 percent of the baseline or less, you're in tier two. Use up to 200 percent of baseline, you're in tier three. Above 200 percent, you're in tier four.

In almost all of PG&E's climate zones, the baseline will decrease on June 20. So if you've been using 100 percent of the old baseline, you'll end up in tier two rather than staying in tier one.

To figure out your old and new baselines, you'll need to do two things. First, [click here](#) to check PG&E's climate zone map. Note that each zone is identified by a letter.

Now, check the chart below, and look up the letter for your climate zone. The numbers you see are kilowatt hours used in a month.



Fossils & Photons - Energy and Clean Tech
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BASIC QUANTITIES			ALL-ELECTRIC QUANTITIES					
Baseline	Current	New	Current	New	Current	New	Current	New
Territory	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
	SUMMER		WINTER		SUMMER		WINTER	
P	506	469	390	384	616	552	1,072	1,024
Q	255	230	381	353	340	279	692	583
R	555	524	372	353	711	641	985	912
S	506	469	384	363	616	552	967	864
T	255	230	296	275	340	279	610	508
V	294	368	335	411	506	595	831	1,009
W	595	567	344	329	837	721	882	689
X	371	337	381	353	374	316	692	583
Y	374	359	402	399	460	432	933	927
Z	270	242	350	320	393	343	952	680

Source: PG&E



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PG&E

So, for example, if you live in San Francisco, you're in zone T, and your new summer baseline will be 230 kilowatt hours in a month, down from the old baseline of 255. If you live in SF and use only electricity -- no natural gas -- your new summer baseline will be 279 kilowatt hours in a month.

One last important thing to note: if you end up in tier two, not all of your usage will be billed at tier two's rate. To use the San Francisco example, the first 230 kilowatt hours you use will be billed at tier one's rate, which you can find by going back to my original story and checking the chart at the bottom. If you go, say, 25 kilowatt hours over that baseline, then 25 kilowatt hours will be billed at tier two's rate. The same applies for tiers three and four.

Hope that helps. And kudos to all of you who asked the question.

Posted By: David R. Baker (Email) | June 02 2011 at 05:32 PM


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 **doomsday** 10:14 AM on June 6, 2011
 But remember the Bush/GOP boot lickers embraced de-regulation as the answer to all our problems.... hows it working for you now ?
 REPLY (0) POPULARITY: 0 [Report Abuse]

 **ptysell** 7:57 PM on June 3, 2011
 These progressive rate schedules are a joke.
 PG&E needs to charge the same per KWH regardless of how much you use.
 REPLY (1) POPULARITY: 0 [Report Abuse]

 **ridiculous** 5:32 PM on June 3, 2011
 Pathetic, Greed & Extortion has sunk to another (can it be possible) new low. These people are really slime. We pay the salaries of the CPUC yet these clowns bow down to anything those there are supposed to regulate want. Get rid of the CPUC and their outrageous salaries and get people who will protect the interests of consumers.
 REPLY (4) POPULARITY: 3 [Report Abuse]

 **Mattblum** 4:50 PM on June 3, 2011
 I no longer conserve. Do what I please because I know that I will be shafted regardless. I also refuse to sign up for the program where they can turn down my AC on really hot days. True, I pay for the privilege of messing with them, but then, I will pay anyway. At least this way I get a certain measure of satisfaction back.
 REPLY (4) POPULARITY: -1 [Report Abuse]
 ▶ 2 replies

Manny88 4:25 PM on June 3, 2011

Step one: push conservation.
 Step two: install smart meters.



Step three: fire meter readers.
 Step four: lower cut offs for tiers.
 Step five: increase price for lower tiers.
 Step six: COUNT ALL THE EXTRA \$\$\$\$\$.

...oh and put out an ad campaign portraying yourselves as the good guys.

PUBLIC POWER NOW!!!

REPLY (3) (2) POPULARITY: 1 [Report Abuse]



fotoamateur 3:11 PM on June 3, 2011

Sounds like the typical double whammy - PG&E lowers the baseline so as to move more folks into higher tiers...and raises the rates on the lower tiers!!!!

REPLY (8) (0) POPULARITY: 8 [Report Abuse]



bobagent21 2:43 PM on June 3, 2011

Where do you get which area you are in?

REPLY (1) (2) POPULARITY: -1 [Report Abuse]

2 replies



quintanus 2:43 PM on June 3, 2011

Please make landlords submeter their apartments rather than charging the whole building for one meter at tier 4.

REPLY (2) (1) POPULARITY: 1 [Report Abuse]



whozzat 2:35 PM on June 3, 2011

Spread the costs over all the customers.. this sounds like the socialism that the republicans are always crying about.. and yet, PG&E is a profitable corporation. Funny, they have no problem with it now, since the shareholders will be reaping benefits and their campaign coffers will be filled.

REPLY (2) (3) POPULARITY: -1 [Report Abuse]



sunsetsfnative 2:34 PM on June 3, 2011

And the results, record profits!!!!!!!!!!!!

REPLY (6) (0) POPULARITY: 6 [Report Abuse]

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