

January 30, 2019
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Dear Senator Skinner:

I am concerned about public utilities. The recent bankruptcy filing of Pacific Gas and Electric along with Judge Alsup's comments on safety call out for a change in how power is regulated. An error by a power company often means great costs to a large swath of society from gas line explosions and rolling brownouts to burned out cities. Such risks require strong regulation with regulators answering to the general public. I worry that attempts to reduce risks by levying fines on a limited liability entity which can then turn around and file for bankruptcy constitutes poor risk management. Other failed approaches have included shifting control to a single judge, using criminal liability against a few high rollers as with Enron or just giving public handouts after the fact as with banks in 2008 or previous problems at PG&E. Direct public control by a dedicated board or tight regulation appears to be needed.

Please assure me that you will keep public utilities answerable to the public.

I am very proud to be a California resident and a large part of that derives from our sensible progressive government.

Sincerely,
Eric Babson