

May 18, 2026

California Energy Commission
Attn: Commissioner David Hochschild, Chair
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Return of Unspent California Schools Healthy Air, Plumbing and Efficiency (CalSHAPE) Program Funds to Utility Ratepayers

Dear Chair Hochschild and Commissioners:

On behalf of the more than 800 businesses, nonprofit organizations, associations, and employers represented by the North San Diego Business Chamber, I respectfully urge the California Energy Commission to return unspent California Schools Healthy Air, Plumbing and Efficiency (CalSHAPE) program funds to utility ratepayers in accordance with the program's statutory intent and funding structure.

The North San Diego Business Chamber is a non-partisan, apolitical business advocacy organization whose mission is to build vibrant communities through stronger commerce. More than sixty percent of our members are small businesses. Collectively, our members represent more than 300,000 employees throughout the San Diego region. Consistent with our member-adopted Legislative Principles, the Chamber supports policies that promote economic competitiveness, affordability, transparency, fiscal accountability, and the responsible stewardship of public and ratepayer resources.

We understand that approximately \$194 million in CalSHAPE funding remains unspent following the conclusion of the program. These funds were collected from utility ratepayers for a specific and defined public purpose. While the Chamber supported the goals of improving school infrastructure and healthy learning environments, the reality remains that a substantial portion of the funding was ultimately not utilized for its intended purpose.

California employers, workers, and families continue to face significant economic pressures. Small businesses across our region consistently identify rising utility costs, inflation, regulatory compliance expenses, insurance premiums, and workforce costs among their most pressing challenges. Any opportunity to provide meaningful financial relief should be carefully considered, particularly when those funds originated from ratepayers themselves.

The Chamber believes that when ratepayer-funded programs conclude with significant unused balances, those funds should be returned to the ratepayers who provided them whenever authorized by law. Redirecting such funds to alternative purposes, regardless of merit, risks undermining public confidence in the administration of ratepayer-funded programs and creates uncertainty regarding whether future program funds will be used consistent with their original purpose.

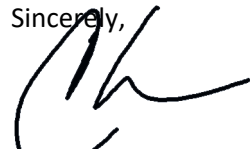
Returning these unused funds would:

- Provide immediate financial relief to California households and employers.
- Help offset rising utility and operating costs impacting small businesses.
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility and accountability in the administration of public programs.
- Reinforce transparency in the management of ratepayer-funded resources.
- Strengthen public trust that funds collected for a specific purpose will ultimately be used or returned consistent with legislative intent.

The North San Diego Business Chamber respectfully encourages the California Energy Commission to ensure that any remaining CalSHAPE funds eligible for return are credited back to utility ratepayers rather than redirected to unrelated purposes.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter and for your continued commitment to serving the people and businesses of California. We appreciate your attention to policies that support affordability, accountability, and economic opportunity throughout our state.

Sincerely,



Chris Thorne
Chief Executive Officer
North San Diego Business Chamber

cc:
California Energy Commission Commissioners
Relevant Legislative Leadership