

CALIFORNIA CITY-COUNTY STREET LIGHT ASSOCIATION  
CAL-SLA

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**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

In my last article in this publication, and in the cover letter accompanying the invoices, I discussed the history and purpose of the California City-County Street Light Association (CAL-SLA). I am determined to make the mission of CAL-SLA known to the agencies we represent. Apparently I have not reached everyone. I continue to receive numerous calls and emails with questions about CAL-SLA and its activities. Below I have compiled the most frequently asked questions. Hopefully this will give you a better understand of CAL-SLA.

**Q: How long ago was CAL-SLA formed and for what purpose?**

**A:** CAL-SLA was organized in 1981 for the dual purpose of representing local governments before the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the purpose of achieving equitable street light rates and acting as a clearinghouse for information on other street light matters. Currently we address traffic signal rates in addition to the street light rates.

**Q: Which cities and counties are members of CAL-SLA?**

**A:** One important fact is that all cities and counties in California that take street light service from the three major investor-owned electric utilities—Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE), and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E)—regulated by the CPUC are members of CAL-SLA. CAL-SLA represents each city or county when CAL-SLA intervenes and participates in rate cases on behalf of the cities and counties.

**Q: Is there an application to complete or contract to sign with CAL-SLA?**

**A:** No. CAL-SLA is an ad hoc organization so there is no specific contract with any city or county for membership and there is no application to complete. All cities and counties taking street light service from PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E are members of CAL-SLA.

**Q: Why should our city become a paying member of CAL-SLA? Won't we pay the same electric rates for street lights that the CPUC authorizes for all cities and counties?**

**A:** While it is true that all cities and counties will pay the same electric rates that are authorized by the CPUC, whether or not they are paying members of CAL-SLA, without additional support from all the cities and counties CAL-SLA's intervention at the CPUC and bargaining position with the three electric utilities will be diminished. If that happens there is a strong possibility that rates will be set by the CPUC that equal the rates requested by the electric utilities at the expense of the local governments. CAL-SLA needs to pay for an attorney and energy consultant to represent cities and counties before the CPUC.

**Q: Is CAL-SLA really that effective in getting lower rates?**

**A:** Yes, the CPUC treats street lighting as a separate customer class. CAL-SLA is the only organization that speaks solely for street light customers—cities and counties in California. In the past 25 years CAL-SLA has intervened and actively worked on every major rate case concerning the three utilities: PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E. CAL-SLA has saved California cities and counties more than \$100 million in lower electric rates for street lighting.

**Q: How much are membership dues?**

**A:** CAL-SLA dues are based on population. The membership dues could be based on the number of streetlights and traffic signals in each agency. However, this is not practical as many agencies do not know how many street lights are in their jurisdictions and the annual dues would have to be adjusted each year. Population based annual dues is a common practice used by various organizations.

**Q: When and where is the next CAL-SLA conference?**

**A:** We are planning a spring conference for the first part of May 2009 in Monterey. You will receive an announcement once the conference site is secured and the agenda is set. Please contact me if you would like to make a presentation or if there is a particular topic you would like to see addressed at the next conference.

**Q: Where can I get more information on CAL-SLA?**

**A:** If you need additional information about CAL-SLA you may go to our website [www.CLA-SLA.org](http://www.CLA-SLA.org), email me at [calsla@yahoo.com](mailto:calsla@yahoo.com), or call me at 415-250-3551. You may also contact the CAL-SLA attorney, David J. Byers, Esq. (650-377-4890, [dbyers@landuselaw.com](mailto:dbyers@landuselaw.com)) or CAL-SLA energy consultant, Reed V. Schmidt (510-653-3399 x 111, [rschmidt@bartlewells.com](mailto:rschmidt@bartlewells.com)).