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January 24, 2012

Honorable Leland Yee
State Capitol
Room 4074
Sacramento, CA 94248

RE: SB 981 (Yee) – Public Utilities Commission Employee Regulations – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Yee,

On behalf of California Common Cause and our 400,000 national members, please accept this letter of support for Senate Bill 981, which shuts the revolving door between the Public Utilities Commission and utility companies, which are subject to its regulatory authority, for two years.

SB 981 would prohibit a commissioner or executive employee of the Public Utilities Commission from becoming the employee of a public utility subject to the regulatory authority of the commission pursuant to the Public Utilities Act for two years, after leaving the employment of the commission. This bill would intrinsically prohibit the commission from hiring someone, who in the previous two years was an employee of a public utility subject to the regulatory authority of the commission, as an executive employee of the commission. The bill would essentially prohibit any person from holding the office of commissioner who, in the previous two years, was employed by a public utility subject to the regulatory authority of the commission.

California Common Cause strongly supports this legislation because there is a direct conflict of interest for employers and employees that would benefit from the existing revolving door between the Public Utilities Commission and the public utilities that are subject to the regulatory authority of the commission. The commission's purpose is to serve Californians and protect ratepayers. The commission must be able to conduct itself as an objective oversight agency without the undue influence of industry insiders.

For these reasons, Common Cause looks forward to partnering with your office. Please contact me at pung@commoncause.org or (916) 520-4070 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Phillip Ung
Policy Advocate